



Brooklyn Action Corps

Neighborhood Association

February 25, 2020

RE: River Plan / South Reach proposed draft

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission,

The Brooklyn Action Corps neighborhood association is excited to see continued progress in the Willamette River Plan for our neighborhood. There are many elements of the Plan which we support, some of which are detailed below.

However, we recommend that the Commission does **not** refer the proposed draft to City Council unless amendments are made. We believe that the Plan's commitments to restoring Brooklyn's river access are not sufficient or timely enough to fulfill the vision of the Plan.

Neighborhood river access for Brooklyn

As the Plan details, **Brooklyn is the only neighborhood in the project area which lacks direct neighborhood access to the river.** We believe that river access must be re-established in a way that will: provide safe and direct access for all ages and abilities; minimize out of direction travel; connect easily to key bike, pedestrian, and transit routes; and improve access to and from neighborhood commercial corridors.

We strongly support the intent of Actions R4A, R4B, C1A, C1B, and any others related to re-establishing Brooklyn's historic access to the river. However, we do not support the current "6 to 20 Years" timeline for these Actions and recommend "Next 5 Years" instead. Given that even these actions — important as they may be — do not directly fund or build river access, we do not believe that further delays are justified.

These Actions represent unfulfilled commitments stretching back for decades. As the Plan states [Chapter 3, Section C, Riverfront Trails and Connections, Key Issues and Opportunities]:

The Brooklyn Neighborhood Plan (1991) identifies an objective and actions that seek to “re-establish Brooklyn’s access and historic link to the Willamette River.” This objective is still an unmet priority to the community almost 30 years after completion of this Plan.

For a detailed history of Brooklyn's river access — and current lack thereof — please see the enclosed historical perspective from Brooklyn Action Corps board member and historian Don Stephens.

We believe that the Plan should direct bureaus to prioritize long-standing unfulfilled objectives when implementing the Plan. Following only tribal collaboration, which is by far the longest outstanding need, neighborhood river access for Brooklyn is long overdue.

Establishing a Brooklyn neighborhood waterfront park

Developing waterfront park space in our neighborhood (referred to in the Plan as "Haig Park") is an essential complement to river access. We support Actions R1E and R4B, but strongly recommend moving their timeline up to "Next 5 Years" to be concurrent with related Actions R4A and others. This space will provide an anchor to the neighborhood's river access, and even if developed ahead of neighborhood river access, will demonstrate the potential of the connection.

Services along Springwater Corridor

Beyond simple access to the river, additional services and amenities are needed to make it truly accessible for all ages and abilities. We support Actions R3C and R3D and the addition of restrooms, benches, wayfinding, and other services that will help make the waterfront somewhere that everyone can enjoy.

Swim beaches and access to water

River access needs to include a safe and accessible connection to the water itself, for swimming and other in-river recreation. We support Action R7A to study and implement direct river access.

Improve public transportation access

We support Actions C2A (Sellwood) and C5B (SW Portland) to improve public transportation access to the river. While there are no Brooklyn-specific Actions in the Plan today, we encourage the inclusion of Brooklyn-specific plans for quality transit access as part of re-establishing river access.

Better neighborhood bike and pedestrian options

Willamette Greenway trails on both sides of the river are great facilities for commuting, neighborhood travel, and recreation. We believe that to create a more resilient network, reduce trail conflicts, and provide safe and direct river access, parallel and complementary bike and pedestrian routes are necessary for the Plan to realize its full potential.

The Plan does not currently include any Actions which specifically address these neighborhood bike and pedestrian routes. While the majority of adjacent neighborhoods' streets fall outside the Plan area, we believe the Plan should include Actions which explicitly instruct for partners to study and implement improvements.

Climate action

All Actions in the Plan must be viewed through a lense of climate action and climate justice. We support Actions that explicitly consider climate change, such as Action W7A, but encourage the adoption of climate criteria for all Actions. Actions that reduce carbon emissions, such as better bike and pedestrian connections, should be prioritized.

Support tribal nations and the urban native community

We welcome and encourage guidance on culturally-important locations, access needs , and programming. We support all Actions in the plan to that end.

2040 Vision

There is much to be excited about in the 2040 vision outlined in this draft. However, for that vision to be fulfilled, there must be commitment to concrete, timely actions that will work steadily towards it .

We again underscore that this Plan includes unmet objectives that pre-date even the previous 20-year plan. This time, let's get it right and make the commitments necessary to fully realize the Plan's vision.

We thank the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and all partner agencies for the effort and vision presented here, and look forward to seeing it realized as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



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