

S·M·I·L·E

SELLWOOD MORELAND IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE
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February 23, 2020

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission
River Plan / South Reach Testimony
1900 SW 4th Ave, Suite 7100
Portland, OR 97201

Dear Commissioners:

The Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) has reviewed the Proposed Draft Report of the South Reach River Plan and offers the following comments. Below we refer to Volume 1, Chapter III, Policies, Objectives and Recommendations.

- **Floodplain management and Climate Resilience Objective 8, page 46, evaluating future landslide risk:** We endorse this objective. Many residences are adjacent to the Sellwood Bluff in our neighborhood and susceptible to landslides. For example, 1433 SE Reedway had a landslide that closed trails below for months and the house had to be moved 15 feet back from the bluff in 2014.
- **Recreation Objective 13: Retire viewpoints, pages 62-63:** This report and specifically this objective fail to resolve the longstanding conflict between the river (g and n) and scenic (s) overlays. Oaks Bottom has River-general (g) and River-natural (n) overlays which essentially prohibit tree pruning and removal. The Sellwood Bluff above Oaks Bottom has an s-overlay which has additional development restrictions to preserve the scenic view. The conflict is that trees in Oaks Bottom often block the view from the scenic overlay. Property owners in the s-overlay are still burdened with development restrictions even though there is no longer a scenic view. This is bad land use policy and unfair zoning. Retiring viewpoints is not enough. Either remove the s-overlay from properties that no longer have a scenic view or retain the s-overlay and actively manage trees in Oaks Bottom to preserve the scenic view. Resolving this conflict should consider ecosystem health, Oaks Bottom recreation, property owners along the Bluff, benefits of a scenic view from the Bluff, benefits of the tree canopy on the view of the Bluff from the Springwater Corridor, River, and west side, and probably other factors.
- **Riverfront Communities, Sellwood, Objective 2, page 77:** With regards to respecting the historic character of the Sellwood neighborhood, please add a reference to the Sellwood-Moreland Neighborhood Plan¹ and the Sellwood-Moreland Main Street Design

¹ <https://beta.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2020-01/sellwood-moreland-neighborhood-plan-1998.pdf>

Guidelines² which are being finalized now and should be approved by SMILE this spring.

- **Policies, Objectives and Recommendations, Objective #1, Vol 1 Pt 1, pg 31;** We recommend increasing the setback for development from 50 feet to 100 feet to provide for improved wildlife habitat.
- **Scenic Resources Inventory -Greenway Trail East Scenic Corridor, Vol 2 Page 106:** The Greenway Trail East description doesn't include the existing waterfront trail south of Spokane Street, parallel to the Springwater Corridor. We request that this Scenic Corridor trail be included in the inventory and that future extensions and connections to the north and south, as shown on Map 2-7, be described for future implementation. This should include documentation that the waterfront trail currently ends at a locked gate at the north property line of the Portland Rowing Club.
- **Scenic Resources Inventory -Greenway Trail East Scenic Corridor, Vol 2 Page 106:** We request that the undeveloped SE Grand Avenue right-of-way from SE Linn Street to SE Ochoco Street be included as part of the Greenway Trail East to provide a pedestrian pathway alternative to the busy Springwater Corridor trail. This is consistent with a proposal currently being considered by PBOT for a community-initiated Pathway project.
- **Scenic Resources Inventory -Greenway Trail East Scenic Corridor, Vol 2 Page 106:** Access to the Oaks Amusement Park Beach (SRSE04, Vol. 2, Ch. 2 Page 68) via the stairs down from Oak Amusement Park is restricted for most of the year via a locked gate at the top of the stairs. There is currently a sign saying the gate is unlocked during daylight hours, but for the last several years the gate has been locked at nearly all times, even in the summer and when river levels are low. We recommend the gate be unlocked during predictable posted hours to provide public access through Oaks Amusement Park.
- **Policies, Objectives and Recommendations, Vol 1, Pt 1, pg 77 and 78:** We support the proposed Objectives #2 and #3 Actions to improve the Sellwood transportation system to and along the riverfront for all modes of travel to safely accommodate residents and visitors to the area.

This testimony was discussed at public meetings of the SMILE Land Use Committee on February 5, SMILE Natural Amenities Committee on February 5, SMILE Transportation Committee on February 19, and the SMILE Board of Directors on February 19. The SMILE Board of Directors approved this testimony on February 19, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact me at simonrfulford@gmail.com. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Simon Fulford
President, Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League

² <http://www.sellwood.org/2020/02/17/draft-sellwood-moreland-main-streets-guidelines/>