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# The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

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dogs in Gabriel Park  
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## Southwest community divided over park fee increase

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

The Portland City Council last month heard three hours of public testimony for and against a proposed increase in park-related development fees. Southwest community activists were represented on both sides of the issue.

The Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation proposes to increase the Systems Development Charges (SDCs) that it imposes on new development from an average of \$3117 per unit to \$8632 per unit in the central city. The fee would increase to \$7,879 elsewhere.

They would also impose a new SDC charge for commercial development or expansion at a rate of \$410 per employee. Currently, the bureau says, the fees pay 26 percent of the cost of the new parks that increased development, and the population it brings, needs. The rate ranks 12th among 14 state jurisdictions that have such fees.

The increase would make Portland's rates the highest in the central city, and second highest to Sherwood elsewhere. They would pay for 75 percent of the cost of needed new parks.

"We all have our favorite parks, we all treasure our parks, and (since 1998) they are recognized as part of our infrastructure," Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who oversees the Parks Bureau, told the City Council.

According to Saltzman, "Access to parks is extremely important. (Developers) pay for the impact of growth, which is a fair way to pay for the infrastructure that's needed for growth. The business community has consistently supported our parks. Livability is consistently at the top of the list when businesses decide where to locate and relocate."

While no one questioned the need for park development, business groups complained that the amount of the increase was excessive, and would seriously hinder housing and business development.

Representatives of the Portland Business Alliance, Building Owners and

Managers Association, National Association of Industrial Office Properties, Home Builders Association, Columbia Corridor Association, Small Business Advisory Council and Commercial Real Estate Economic Coalition all made this argument.

Beverly Bookin of the Commercial Real Estate Coalition said the City Council needs to look not just at this increase, but also at the cumulative impact of all fees and charges on development. Jim McCauley of the Home Builders suggested that instead of traditional park development the city utilize "surplus lands" owned by government jurisdictions or dual uses of open spaces such as the grounds of "Jackson and Stephenson schools."

Jim Thayer, president of the Southwest Hills Residential League, took this position. He agreed that parks are important, and said that in business he has recruited firms to come to Portland "often on the basis of our splendid park system."

However, he said, with an economic downturn looming and two new bond measures being proposed, the proposed increase is "too dramatic too fast." He also complained that he received notice of the proposal for the first time on November 2. "The process needs to be fixed," he said.

Don Baack, chair of the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association and the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Trails Committee, agreed with this last assertion. "This is not citizen involvement," he said. He also aired some long-standing grievances with the Parks Bureau.

According to Baack, SWNI had recommended developing new park land in the Collins View neighborhood, "and parks instead, for their own reasons, added land to Gabriel Park." When he began to develop the southwest trail network, he said, "Everyone I talked to said don't go through the Park Bureau. It will take too long and cost twice as much."

Margot Barnett of West Portland Park took issue with Baack and Thayer on t

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This classic buckboard carriage is pulled by two draft horses as a part of the Holiday Gala in the Village, December 8. Sponsored by the Multnomah Village Business Association, the ride starts and ends at Key Bank on Southwest 35th Avenue and Troy Street. (Post photo by Don Snedecor)

## Southwest Trails committee plans system of bicycle boulevards

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

The Southwest Trails Committee has prepared a draft recommendation to the city for official bikeways through southwest Portland, many of them low-cost bicycle boulevards.

Both Trails Committee chair Don Baack and city transportation planner Greg Raisman credit volunteer Keith Liden for spearheading the effort.

The Portland Office of Transportation sent out notice earlier this year that it was upgrading its official bicycle route map, "and we realized we in Southwest hadn't done nearly as much work as other areas in identifying good routes," Liden told The Post.

Moreover, the plan in existence needs updating. "It emphasizes putting bike lanes on big streets like Dosch, Sunset and Taylors Ferry," Liden said.

"They're all expensive and difficult to do. We could wait for Santa Claus to come bring us a bag of money, but we decided it was better to take advantage of the streets we do have."

Their method of doing so was to propose a system of bike boulevards. These are designated routes on streets where the traffic volume is low enough that bikes and cars can safely share the road without the use of lanes designated exclusively for bikes.

Liden's effort started with "some folks sitting around a table with a map and magic markers." The group took six rides to "investigate what works."

People said things like, 'Oh, Jesus, this is steep!' and 'We'd need to do something about that intersection.' We

whittled down what we had to at least a draft list."

This was aired at an early December open house at the Multnomah Center attended by about 50 people. Liden and his committee were still processing the feedback they have received.

Examples of proposed boulevards are Southwest Boundary Street and Fairmount Boulevard. They also have identified a route utilizing several local streets between Gabriel and Kelly parks.

For these routes the committee is calling principally for directional signage, but also some improvements to aid in the safe crossing of busy streets.

They are asking for bike lanes on some particularly steep uphill areas where bikes must slow to a few miles an hour. They are also calling for some new bike lanes to complete partial routes, such as a lane along Southwest Vermont Street between Capitol Highway and Gabriel Park, and on lower Dosch Road between Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway and Boundary Street.

"We probably have more routes now than we really need," Liden said, but this could give the city a range of choice if one of the routes proves problematic. For instance, they have several routes that cross Southwest Taylors Ferry Road.

There are few places where there are traditional intersections on the road, and "Taylors Ferry is not a street you want to ride a bike on any further than you have to," he said.

At press time the subcommittee was set to air its proposals at a second open house on December 29. It can be viewed at swni.org, or at bikeportland.org.

## Tuba Christmas



More than 200 tubas (including a number of Sousaphones) performing songs of the season as well as a crowd sing-along, at the 17th Annual Tuba Christmas, December 15 at Pioneer Courthouse Square. Like last minute shopping, for many the tuba concert has become a holiday tradition. (Post photo by Don Snedecor)

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