



May 20, 2010

Ryan Marquardt
Milwaukie Planning Department
6101 SE Johnson Creek Blvd.
Milwaukie, OR 97267

Dear Ryan:

Below is my response to the question about non motorized boat access raised by the Milwaukie planning Commission at the May 11 Planning Commission hearing on Milwaukie Riverfront Park.

- **Document the "discouragement" of the non-motorized boat access at the Riverfront.**
 1. **What type and location of launch was originally proposed?**

A gravel access ramp for non-motorized boats was located at the north of the parking lot proposed for the motorized boat launch. The non-motorized launch was to a 6 foot wide gravel path from the parking lot to the water.
 2. **Which agency (or agencies) discouraged the proposed launch?**

At the pre application meeting in July 2008, a representative of National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) stated that providing multiple human access points to the Willamette River along the length of the park would increase regulatory scrutiny. The non-motorized launch, as originally proposed, added additional human access to the riparian area below the ordinary high water level and decreased the vegetative area in the Water Quality Resource Area on the site.
 3. **What formal correspondence have we had (if any) this matter?**

The applicant does not have any written correspondence between the City and NMFS on this issue. The project team discussed the agency's concern and determined that removal of the proposed launch would increase the chances that the project's Joint Permit Application would be favorably reviewed. The team remains confident that the existing boat launch, boarding dock and the transient dock provide adequate accommodation for non-motorized boat launching.

4. How might the current application to Corps of Engineers be modified to address non-motorized boat access?

Based on previous Riverfront project reviews by the Corps, the design team believes that the Corps of Engineers would require a formal design modification for the Riverfront Park submittal if the proposed changes would significantly impact the project's environmental impact. That is, if the footprint of the project, or materials proposed, were changed such that the impact on sensitive species or habitat would be significant, the Corps would require a new design and analysis to be submitted.

Reintegrating a dedicated launch for non-motorized boats, north of the proposed motorized boat launch, would be a significant change to the original Joint Permit application.

5. What would the ramification to the project of this application modification be?

James Holm, of the Corps of Engineers, is the reviewer of the City's Joint Permit Application for the Milwaukie Riverfront Park. The applicant was unable to reach Mr. Holm before the time of this submittal. However, the team believes, based on experience with similar submittals, that if additional riparian edge disturbance was proposed now, as part of the Riverfront Park design, to accommodate non-motorized boat access, the original application would have to be denied, revised and resubmitted. The applicant estimates that such an action would add at least two years to the projects' approval process, postponing grant applications and project construction for that same amount of time. (The current Riverfront Park application was submitted to the Corps in February 2009 and a response to the application is anticipated no sooner than December 2010.)

Alternatives considered for accommodating non-motorized boaters:

Three design modifications are being considered by the applicant to accommodate non-motorized boaters. To our knowledge, none of these would require a modification of the application to the Joint Permit Application to the Corps of Engineers.

- **Do not modify the plan in any way and allow use of the boat ramp, boarding dock and transient dock by both motorized and non-motorized boaters.**
- **Modify the height of all or part of one of the forks of the transient dock to accommodate non-motorized boats.** The current height of the transient dock is 18" above the water. Lowering part of or all of one fork of this dock to 6" above the water level would make kayak, canoe and dragon boat access much easier. This type of dock is currently used by non-motorized boaters on the east side of the Willamette River just north of OMSI, in Portland. The access ramp to this Portland dock is, in fact, steeper than the ramp proposed for Milwaukie Riverfront Park (3:1 vs 4:1 as proposed in Milwaukie.) The


distance a kayaker is required to travel from a vehicle to the water is also shorter in the proposed Milwaukie design than it is in the existing Portland facility.

- **Add a gravel overlay to the boulders currently proposed to the south of the motorized boat access dock.** The addition of a layer of gravel to the area to the south of the motorized boat launch dock would accommodate kayaks, canoes and dragon boats without requiring significant changes to the Riverfront Park design.

This option would require a small parking and staging area, called a “ready lane”, on the river side travel lane of the parking lot which would allow users to park and unload and stage their paddle craft and then go park their car in the parking area. They would return and launch their boats upstream (south) of the dock on the gravel launch area. Alternatively, they could walk their craft down the dock and place it in the water. This separation would minimize potential conflict between users at time of launch and retrieval.

We regret that we were unable to contact Mr. Holm before this time and hope to bring further information to the Planning Commission on May 25th to share with the Commissioners.

Sincerely,



JoAnn Herrigel
Community Services Director

