

Japanese Gulch Subcommittee Meeting – July 8, 2015

City Hall, Council Chambers,

7:00pm – Opening:

Present at Meeting: Tom Little, Dustin Well, Demarree Clay, Tyler Thompson, Nic Morin, Susan Gearheard, Karl Almgren, Jennifer Berner (Kristen Kohorst emailed her comments for the subcommittee to review)

Jennifer Berner opened the work session proposing a fifth meeting to be July 29th or August 5th to provide an additional meeting to recap and summarize the conversations.

Introductions: With two residents present for the meeting, the subcommittee and staff introduced themselves and included if the subcommittee member was a resident or non-resident.

Following the introductions, the subcommittee was asked to email any revisions to the July 1, 2015 Notes to Jennifer.

Karl Almgren provided a quick clarification regarding the priorities in the Japanese Gulch Master Plan within the Comprehensive Plan. During a previous meeting, the subcommittee was discussing transportation traits and stated that ‘Japanese Gulch should be everything that the Mukilteo Speedway is not’. Staff clarified that one priority, ‘A Complete Transportation System’, that was added as a benefit of the master plan. The subcommittee agreed with the addition.

A short recap of the Dog Park conversation then followed including the conversation about trail designation.

The subcommittee then began discussing the trail configurations. While the original considerations of the trails should be divided based on use, the subcommittee identified that the concept of mixed use trails is much more ideal for the following benefits:

- Trails will recognize the historical uses prior to the City’s purchase;
- Multi-use trails will provide more trails for all users;
- Conforms to the survey feedback; and
- Maintains intuitive trail usage as many trails intersect.

As the subcommittee discussed the use of trails, the subcommittee began discussing the right-of-way on trails and how the trails currently experience courtesy between user groups. The subcommittee identified that bikes should yield to everyone which is consistent with standard trail etiquette. It was stated that it is best to follow the uniform standard for trail etiquette so it is consistent with other trails. As the discussion continued, the subcommittee identified that the current system is functioning and that implementation of signage should be identified to sustain the courtesy system. Trail etiquette such as ‘Announce Yourself’ or ‘Call your Pass’ could be phrases utilized on signage at kiosks or bollards at trailheads to better illustrate trail etiquette.

In the survey, many respondents identified maps and trails as a primary ingredient to best cater to a wider range of users and to engage with the amenities (nature, Dog Park, trails, community garden etc.) This continued the conversation related to trail etiquette that all signage should be very graphical, concise, and clear.

The subcommittee then started to discuss opportunities as each user group starting with hikers. The subcommittee identified that:

- Wayfinding needs to assist in identifying where you are;
 - o Paradise Valley and Cold Creek have excellent examples of wayfinding;
- Most of the current trails are intuitive as all the trails lead to the mainline (ridge trail);
- Fire Response can utilize a lift bucket method to allow them to get throughout Japanese Gulch.

The subcommittee then was asked by staff to consider the trails that are proposed on a current concept for removal. Staff identified that some of the proposed trails for removal are either redundant or lead off property. The group also continued the discussion with the concern on erosion that may lead to turning the trail into a natural area. As the group began circling the discussion back to the hiker user group, one subcommittee member specifically discussed the ideal of stacked loops accessible from 19th Trailhead that allow the option of a 20 minute loop or a longer loop at 40 minutes. Staff and Nic provided clarification that the design of the trails coupled with the wayfinding must be fluid to provide a mindful experience within Japanese Gulch. Specifically, looped paths are ideally located within a trailhead portion. Staff clarified that the maps and wayfinding will identify specific loop opportunities.

As the subcommittee transitioned from the use of the trail to the trail characteristics, the use of gravel was identified to be used minimally, but used when necessary. There was discussion on that people use the trails year-round not seasonal use. The subcommittee reflected on some comments by a resident at the 2nd Open House who discussed limiting the maintenance trail, and the subcommittee identified that the preferred option was to use gravel from the 76th Street Trailhead to the Hill Court Intersection along the mainline trail. Mainline trail should be a sustainable design and possible reroute.

As the subcommittee continued discussing the view point of the trail from a hikers perspective, Nic identified that the term ADA should be replaced with Accessible to further include a wider range of individuals within the less-mobile community to include parents with strollers. This divulged the conversation into discussing the accessible trail at the 76th Street Trailhead and how that trail was paired down significantly due to cost and the area was lacking a place of significance. As the conversation continued the subcommittee identified that perhaps the Arboretum (Mukilteo School District property) should be identified within the options on how it would function if implemented. This idea centered around two concepts for changes to the 76th Street Trailhead that may be needed if the property was developed.

The discussion then transition towards the concerns of slope stability and staff provided clarification that additional work from a geotechnical engineer may be required to assist in identifying manners to stabilize the slope area. The area of concern was specifically where the current stair case was built. The

stair climb was ideal to take pressure of the current stair case route that provides a B-Line to the top of the hill.

As the subcommittee continued discussing the maintenance trail, options that were identified about using the green-line trail included with a one-way bike path, and then the green-line trail was considered as a multi-use trail separate from the maintenance trail. As the subcommittee discussed this, they identified that by having two parallel trails; one trail will become more attractive and will be used heavily. This topic was revisited and identified that the green-line trail should be joined with the maintenance trail as 'swoops' that may feature a biking skill such as a skinny, table top, or other minimally invasive technical challenges.

The discussion continued to identify a specific area near what is known as the trough trail that currently has some pedestrian cut-through routes that may require some replanting.

As following the specific conversation on the trough trail, the subcommittee discussed the concepts of utilizing overlooks and if there were real viewpoints or not. Nic, provided the subcommittee some background related to the photo that was included within an overall concept and identified that particular overlook was very costly and that the overlook opportunities in Japanese Gulch can include:

- Small pullout in the trail with short hand fence;
- More prominent spot to enhance views;
- To be strategic for step-a-side;
- Provides passing zone;
- Benches could be used as a resting stop;
- Everything must be pragmatic ;
- Flat area at bottom of stairway to be improved;

The subcommittee identified that the viewpoints should be as natural and minimal as possible.

As the conversation began to wrap up, Nic explained the importance of understanding the vegetation management areas within the park plan as well as embracing the story telling both in naming the historic cultural aspects of the park, but also the habitat. These conversations lead into discussing the possibility of natural art within Japanese Gulch. Unlike Carkeek Park that features sculptures, the subcommittee identified that the area is pristine through nature, not the art. While the group discussed that natural art was less favorable, there may be subtle art that occurs organically from uses such as rock stacking. The subcommittee identified the concern that natural artists may attempt to utilize too much material within the gulch and remove the habitat qualities for their art. The subcommittee did identify and agree that art should be placed and integrated within the landscape at 5th Street and the 76th Street Trailhead.

With two residents present for the meeting, the discussions ended at approximately 8:45pm to allow for public comment.

Charlie Panczerwski

- Haven't seen projection on how many people and will use it → peak usage → and where will they park?
- Where are the restrooms and how far are the restrooms from other areas – concerns with families with young children
- The number of people that participate will impact the wildlife including birds and animals
- The area will require more maintenance, and would like to see the estimate of the costs of projects even though some may be built by volunteers.

Jon Boyce

- Thought this process was going to include recorded meetings for public record not notes
- Transparency has been disappointing,
- Where are the restoration phases for restoration? Believes there should be more emphasize on restoration
- Beaver Pond near Precht not addressed
- As long as a BMX component is included, I will oppose the plan
- How much will it cost?
- When the plan is done, he believes that the plan should go to an advisory vote by the residents
- Most experience with children in the park, but has concerns regarding bicyclists and conflicts in the gulch
- Politeness is very good, don't break it
- Pedestrian only advocate, by pedestrian for pedestrian, don't even have to think about bikes, great area to rest
- Lack of infrastructure at the 76th Street and 44th intersection
- No Greenhouse Gasses identified
- Adding Car trips
- Believes the plan is dead on arrival at voting blocks