

Washington Park Running Trail Improvements
Summary of Public Comments
August 3rd, 2011

The following summarizes the comments DPR received after the initial trail re-alignment was posted online and in the park. Some comments were paraphrased, shortened or combined when they had the same central point.

1. Drainage – Many of the current sections of trail have puddles due to rain or excessive sprinkler runoff. In winter, there is icing. *A reason for the re-alignment in some sections of the path is to improve the trail surface. Trail grading or underground drainage measures such as gravel and pipe will help with this effort as well.*
2. Sprinklers – Runners want a choice of paths to run on to avoid the sprinklers. Realign the sprinklers to avoid hitting the runners, especially along Franklin and Downing. *It is impractical to design an irrigation system that avoids the trail. Efforts will be made to improve drainage on new trail sections and to review irrigation schedules to avoid watering the trail during or near peak running times.*
3. Mile Markers – The existing markers are not visible and need to be replaced. *These will be replaced with upright markers at ½ mile and full mile points.*
4. Trail Distance – The current trail has a length of 2.62 miles. This is equivalent to a half-marathon in 5 laps. *Proposed changes equate to a length of 2.5 miles and the upright mile markers will be a great help in planning a specific distance run.*
5. Trail Paving – Do not pave the trail in concrete. *The trail surface will remain crusher fines. Some concrete will have to be added at the southeast entrance to manage a trail intersection.*
6. Safety of Trail – The new alignment parallel to Virginia is a concern for safety. Many runners use the trail at night or early morning and visibility from the road will be reduced. The trail will be in the dark. *The new alignment through the trees is still highly visible from Virginia since there is no understory of plants to obscure the view. In addition, lighting will be installed along the path where it veers away from the road.*
7. Move the trail off Virginia only by a few feet to create separation – *this will not solve the ice issue and there are too many tree roots that would be impacted by the necessity to build a wall to hold back the slope. The new alignment has better drainage, solar exposure and less impact on existing trees (one tree would have to*

be moved and several old trees are sick and dying and will be removed in the near future anyway).

8. Franklin Street Trail Hazards – The section along Franklin is currently dark and people open their car doors loading and unloading vehicles which obstruct the path. The path is too narrow for two people to pass each other. *The narrowness of the path along Franklin south of the fire station has caused another informal trail to develop on the west side of the existing trees and the resulting erosion has exposed many tree roots. The long-term impacts of this situation are causing compaction to the tree roots, likely killing this row of mature street trees well before their expected lifespan. This is one of the main reasons for re-locating the trail in this area. Adding signage to warn users of opening car doors will not alleviate the compaction/erosion issue or be effective in resolving the vehicle/runner issues.*
9. Division of the Southeast Corner of the Park – Do not cut up the grassy area across the bridge, as it is the location for wedding photos, volleyball games and picnics. Clean up the southeast corner to make it more formal, but keep the path in the same location. *The original proposal to cross the bridge was suggested to minimize conflicts at the southeast corner of the park, to eliminate the trail section with the severe side-slope along Gilpin, and to allow for gateway entrances to the park along Louisiana. After consideration of the park user comments, this option was changed and the trail will be routed south of the grass bridge over the ditch on a new pedestrian bridge. A gateway design is currently underway at the crosswalk to South High School parking lot and at the corner of Gilpin and Louisiana.*
10. Move the existing headwall of the City Ditch bridge at Louisiana to the north to expand the sidewalk width to accommodate the trail there – *this proposal is too costly and it creates conflict along Louisiana that we are trying to avoid. The project proposes a new, small pedestrian bridge across the ditch just to the north of the park edge to keep the trail off Louisiana and to alleviate trail/park entrance conflicts at the corner of Gilpin and Louisiana.*
11. Lily Pond Shoreline – Protect the Lily Pond shoreline and do not bring runners along it. This is currently a quiet, historic area used by painters and other passive park visitors. *The trail alignment along the east edge of the pond was the closest location to the existing trail that would address our issues along Franklin while still protecting the integrity and quiet character of the Lily Pond/Evergreen Hill area. The historic features will not be removed or altered. The new trail provides a smooth, fairly flat grade, and good visibility by removing the overgrown junipers from the DeBoer Rock Garden beds east of the Lily Pond. The layout reflects a design proposal by the FANS to restore that area to its historic condition. Additional lighting will be installed in this area to further increase visibility and safety of users.*

12. Virginia Avenue/Marion Parkway Entrance – Currently, the trail intersects the road at a place where cars and cycles entering and exiting the park are at a clearly designated stopping point. Do not move the crossing further into the park, as it will cause more conflicts with other users. *The current intersection of Virginia and Marion is a major conflict point with bicycles, pedestrians and vehicles crossing, turning and moving through. The proposed trail alignment removes one user group from the conflict zone to an existing stop intersection in the park. The new trail will be flanked with rumble strips on either side, and painted red to warn cyclists, vehicles and other wheeled users to slow down.*
13. Icing along Virginia Avenue - Run the road during the brief periods where the north side is difficult to navigate. *The risk of runners being injured after falling into the street or off the steep edge during bad weather or being hit by a passing car when running in the road to avoid the ice on the trail is not a viable public safety option. Moving the trail off the park edge and to the top of the slope will decrease the risk of injury and will also lessen the ice build-up on the trail since melting ice can flow downhill.*
14. Better Projects to Spend Taxpayer Money On – There are more important projects to spend money on such as adding porta potties or keeping the rec center open longer. This path is not broken and does not need to be realigned or fixed. *This project is entirely funded by a private donor who is willing to spend \$250,000 to improve the experience and safety for those using the path.*
15. Corner Trail Creep - Runners are cutting the corners of the park causing the path to get wider and destroy more and more turf and tree roots. Add paving on either side of the trail to keep it a constant width or add raised landscaped beds to direct traffic. *Options to create landscaping areas to direct runners are included in this project. Adding concrete on both sides of the trail is impractical in most instances.*
16. Too Many Curves - More curves, corners and trail obstructions by trees means less visibility and greater likelihood of conflict between trail users. *A refinement of the proposed alignment will reduce tight curves.*
17. How will you prevent people from running on the old trail? *The old trail will be removed and the trail transitions obscured with landscaping and grading (not unlike the principle applied on mountain trails when they are re-routed). In all entrance areas we will provide a new connection into the park or make use of an already existing connecting path (adding a sidewalk along the fire station to connect to the trail, adding a sidewalk along the Marion entrance to connect south to the park road, adding a trail at the NW corner to connect to the new trail, improving existing path at SW corner and adding a concrete sidewalk north from the corner to the bus stop)*

18. More Scenic/Healthier – The proposed alignment provides a more scenic experience for runners with more elevation change diversity. This is better from a training standpoint. It's also healthier to move runners away from vehicle exhaust right next to the road (and safer too). Don't plant any bushes in this tree-covered area to maintain visibility. *The point of the realignment was to protect mature landscapes, reduce icing/drainage problems, restore the intended width and reduce user conflicts. Creating a more interesting route was just an added benefit. No shrubs will be added in the forested area to ensure good visibility.*
19. Keep Southwest Corner – Running through the trees at the southwest corner is a pleasant experience. *The trail at this corner has become too wide and the compaction of the ground is damaging the trees. If the trail were to continue as is, the trees would not survive. Additionally, the corner is a major entrance into the park and thus is a conflict point. The proposed alignment brings the running trail further in to protect the trees and to allow for a larger gateway entrance at this location. An additional light will be provided to increase night visibility in this area.*
20. Remove two trees to keep trail at SW corner and enhance pedestrian ramp area – *our goal is to save all of the Golden Rain Trees at that corner by removing the trail. There will be a future Gateway project to address the entrance experience in this location.*
21. Path at the Fire Station – It is our preference to keep the path around the perimeter to maximize distance. There is plenty of warning if the sirens go off and the drinking fountain is needed. *The drinking fountain can be relocated to another place along the trail – potentially along the South East entrance. This way it will serve more park users. While there is a warning signal to alert runners to a truck leaving the fire house, it still leaves potential for an unsafe situation and it puts an additional stress on the firemen. Also, fire trucks maneuvering to get back into the building causes a risk as well – as do runners running in Virginia rather than waiting for the truck.*
22. Move the Curve at Arizona and Gilpin – The crusher fines have migrated in this area and are killing the grass. This is a mud hole because it is shady all the time. Move the trail to the west of the trees. *The trail will be repaired at this corner.*
23. Leave the trail along Gilpin in its current location – *that is the new plan, we will install a retaining wall on the park side of the trail of maximum 2 ft. in height to keep the grade level on the path and to keep the path at 10 ft wide.*
24. Geese – Reduce the number of geese. *This project includes running trail improvements only.*
25. Cars/Bike Loop Conflicts – Keep the cars off of the bike loop to avoid conflicts. *This project includes running trail improvements only – another parks project*

- resulting from the recently completed Master Plan will begin to address those conflicts on the park road.*
26. Trail Paving – Do not pave the trail in concrete. *The trail will continue to be crusher fines.*
 27. Avoid Picnic Area – The proposed alignment on the north side disturbs the existing picnic area. Avoid this area completely. *Option 1 on the west side of Lily Pond has been eliminated to preserve the integrity of the picnic site. The proposed alternative trail alignment will follow closer to the back of the fire station and skirt the current picnic area. Picnic facilities will be renovated in the future and moved further away from the proposed trail alignment.*
 28. Muddy Corners – The corners keep getting wider and they are muddy. Add some bushes to keep these areas under control. *Measures will be taken to reduce the widening effect that occurs at corners through installation of boulders and other low landscape obstructions in those areas of the park where the trail stays in place.*
 29. Use bollards to delineate the trail layout at the corners – *we feel that it is better to remove the trail from the corner in most locations rather than add a restrictive vertical element like bollards. Landscaping would also be more appropriate and effective.*
 30. Sprinklers are malfunctioning – Several sprinklers keep running for longer than an hour causing muddy areas. Fix the sprinklers, don't move the trail. *It would be helpful to identify on a map where these locations occur so they can be reviewed and adjusted to reduce the problem.*
 31. Nesting Site Disturbance at Lily Pond/in Evergreen area – *the proposed trail alignment is very close to existing trails and roads in areas that are already well-used and the project is not removing any food or nesting habitat to accommodate the trail. It is not causing a disturbance to existing conditions and if birds are nesting there now, it is unlikely that they will change their behavior.*