

Open House #3 – Post (11-7-2023)

Seems going through Arborwood would serve new future residents. Would developer be building trail even if first alt is selected? Seems like better use of financial resources to go through Arborwood

I prefer as much off road as is feasible

Sandy Fischer

Thank you for the great presentation. I have full faith that the study was objective and compete and the results reflect the best option. Please do not put too much weight on detracting comments. There is encroachment on all sides of every park in Kitsap County, I don't believe the STO is going to make anything worse or less of a park (this is with respect to NKHP, which, incidentally, already borders a golf course!). Sometimes I worry the loudest detractors get the most attention. I strongly believe the trail should go forward and be built according to the preferred alignments.

Respectfully,

Jeff Kirkham

Thank you for sharing these questions, Jayne. I was able to speak with people following the presentation, a number of whom had similar questions. We'll include your emails in written submissions, and I hope to have a chance to regroup with county staff about what they and the consultants heard in the next couple of weeks.

--Christine Rolfes

The detailed planning, research and data going into the NSTO Plan is impressive and conclusive of the preferred NSTO multi use trail route- Thank you to all participated in the study. I am hoping and believing that this plan will be used for future \$ acquisition to make the connections and NSTO a reality, to link the cross Washington State Trail, as well as the importance of linkages with the cross nation "Rails to Trails" connections.

I am hopeful that North Kitsap can look larger(outside our community as well as within) and with more vision for the future in alternative transportation routing

Lynn Schorn

Hi David,

Joe Lubishar sought me out after the meeting earlier this week to discuss the environmental rating and had a range of questions/comments – mostly about the north route through the NKHP. He is opposed to that alignment but our conversation was pretty civil. He asked me whether I knew of any good literature summaries about impacts of trails on wildlife and he followed up with an email to me about this yesterday. I sent him the attached document, which was done by Portland Metro Parks and provides a nice summary.

I'm thinking that I should have copied you on my email correspondence with him – sorry about that. Please consider this email a belated documentation of that interaction. I'll make sure I keep you in the loop on future emails that I may get from a public party. Have a great day. Thanks PHIL

Phil Struck

Struck Environmental

I have been attending these meetings since the conception of this project. My underlying belief is that the route (give or take a few turns and wetlands) was decided before all of these planning studies were even conducted. I think the planning studies created a more defined route for the first conceived intended route that was chosen by Pope. "John Rose" and his NKTA (which is an arm of Pope), now Rayonier and the "Stakeholders". The public had/has no chance in swaying this newest route and is a complete waste of the time of the people trying to protect the only two Heritage Parks in the Poulsbo area. Unincorporated Poulsbo citizens have no voice when it comes to this process. That is evident by the number of negative comments that the project received, especially in the second meeting. It is evident to anyone concerned about our dwindling wetlands, forests and wild species that this process is skewed and that the vision was created years ago and it is moving forward regardless of what the majority of the community has to say about it. I am very disappointed in the process.

Lisa Hurt
North Kitsap PAB member

The idea of this STO was conceived back in 2011 for a purpose that may no longer even be appropriate to today's situation. Why are we continuing to try to construct this without even looking at how it fits with the priorities of the current Comp Plan Update, the revisions of the CAO, and the PROS plan?

How about if we use what has been learned about the details of the terrain through the feasibility studies to understand more of what the earth is saying about what is appropriate for various areas of the landscape? Make use of this to figure out what it means for affordable communities and living and what type of transportation, for what purposes, would be most

useful and cost effective for the area covered by the NSTO. For example, can any of this info be used when considering revisions to the CAO?

Also, I would love to hear from people— both in the county offices and those living around here—why the time and money devoted to the NSTO concept and especially this feasibility study has been given priority over focusing on how to develop affordable living, housing, and community in the Kingston UGA and the surrounding areas where the NSTO is being investigated.

From your website you mention "positive " impacts to the environment. What are the positive impacts of the Four Streams route through the wetlands? There is no mitigation that can replace their function as a wildlife corridor and watershed for Grovers Creek. If you are interested in positive impacts, you should be pursuing improvements and expansion of Miller Bay Road including the culvert replacements. According to your latest spreadsheet, the Miller Bay Road/west Kingston Road segment would be cheaper and would actually provide some positive impact, in addition to future benefits to transportation. Pave roads not wetlands.

"...The study will look at potential impacts, both negative and potential positive to the environment.

The evaluation criteria include analysis of:

- Habitat connectivity and fragmentation
- Wetland impacts
- Wetland buffer impacts
- Stream impacts
- Stream buffer impacts
- Restoration potential
 - o Fish passage barriers
 - o Invasive vegetation etc."

Jayne Larson

1)The definition of NSOT the criteria used seem to be driving to a predetermined outcome rather than truly examining the true opportunities of the County to offer connectivity and natural experiences

- The first simple question to answer – Is this a ‘Sound to Olympic connector for others, outside of North Kitsap, or is it meant to fundamentally improve the lives of North Kitsap? The fundamental problem that continues to plague this effort is that it appears to be designed on the “rails to trails” model facilitating long distance bicyclists - while saying it must also accommodate wheelchair users, mother’s strollers, and the walkers. Yes, all these stakeholders need safer options that get us outside and connect to our natural resources, but that goal gets lost by the wholesale rejecting of improvements of roadway segments. These initial alternatives also ignore the diminution of the experience of the current users of the Heritage Park areas being proposed as NSTO segments.

- New accessibility to nature through this project could be accomplished by segments provide safe access the entrances of our parks (NKHP – from Arborwood/Miller Bay Rd/Norman Rd; Arness Park, GPC protected areas). This access could be enhanced by commitments by the

Kitsap County Park Dept to make good on smaller more manageable enhancement of specific segments of current trails, appropriately surfaced for wheelchair and stroller access with frequent benches in those parks. That is a way to achieve the goal of accessibility.

2) Analysis is missing a major criterion – Segment/alignment's ability to address other County priorities and needs while delivering this project,

- The roadway segments of South Kingston, West Kingston, Miller Bay, Gunderson all have need for wider shoulders for pedestrian and non-motorized safety. The South and West Kingston Road segments are in a UGA which has the requirement for Urban amenities that the County has not been able to provide to date. All these roads also have little or no Stormwater Water Quality infrastructure which also is a state and local priority in the County's Stormwater NPDES Permit. West Kingston is a main route for students to go to the Middle School and High School.

- A additional criteria should be added to the spreadsheet which scores each segment's potential to achieve, as a byproduct of its building, additional service to the County to achieve improvement or completion of their other infrastructure, permit or UGA services requirements. This important metric is missing from this discussion, particularly when roadway segments are given low scored because of high costs for infrastructure the County needs in any case! This project is a mechanism to amass, through creating grants and other partnerships, the achievement of many goals.

3) The RCO objections to use of the NKHP is valid and the County should not try to minimize or mitigate those natural resource services, functions, and values away. The County should share what "options" they are considering to address the RCO's objections.

- If the County is considering some kind of mitigation tradeoff for permission to degrade the nature resources in the Heritage Park, they should discuss those ideas.

- How can the County's commitments to preservation of Heritage Park spaces be believed in the future if they will be modified when it is considered expedient for the county to change their commitments.

- Since the maintenance activities in the current Heritage Parks are not budgeted activities by park staff but rather are taken on by volunteers, how can the maintenance of any future 'path' be expected to be done? Maintenance of a 'path' on roadways would seem to be more reliable.

3) The GPC property was acquired because of its special natural properties. In addition to the (undisturbed in some cases) plant and animal habitats they include, they also have ecosystem services of stormwater management and water quality protection they provide. Cutting across to get to the clear-cut divide properties rather than going down Gunderson again degrade the natural areas rather than meeting the goals of the project and thoughtfully providing access to limited accesses to these protected resources.

4) There is a 10.5-foot corridor over the South Kingston Stillwaters Bridge that could be used for the NSTO, so the conclusion that that segment requires another solution thus making it infeasible is faulty and should be removed from the analysis.

- The north side of the bridge – the road should and the sidewalk measures 10' 6" and thus there is a 10 ft way over that structure. The walkways on either side of the bridge either already are or could be widened by judicious use or acquisition of small slivers of ROW. Here again, as mentioned above, building out a safe South Kingston segment to the to the future Arborwood entrance (with the Arborwood roundabout providing the road crossing) would fulfill a needed safety improvement for the Kingston UGA, yet unfulfilled by the County.

Betty Cooper

I am in favor of the proposed alignment. My travels sometimes take me to the Kingston ferry, and currently the only safe way there is by car. I want to be able to safely ride my bicycle. This paved shared use path would allow me to take one more car off the road and travel in a low carbon mode. It would also give me a chance to enjoy the North Kitsap Heritage Park, whose volunteers have done an awesome job of developing.

Charles Michel

30 some years of errand running by bicycle has proven, to me at least, the feasibility of bicycle travel. Both my wife and I are concerned about the actual, and projected, increase of automobile traffic on our already marginal roads, and hope more effort will be made to separate cyclists and pedestrians from automobile traffic. The proposed NSTO would be a big help in that regard. Thank you

John Wahlfors

Safe dedicated bike trails are a necessity for transportation, leisure bike travel. Look at Europe and their bike trail systems. We are so far behind.

Cindy Ashton

I applaud the committee's work on their extensive evaluation of alternative routes. The route they have chosen makes the most sense to me. I have walked or ridden my bike through much of the proposed route and alternatives and can understand the basis of their decision making. I also appreciate the value of a paved shared use path through our county as it provides:

- environmental benefits by allowing people to have a safe alternative to driving their vehicle to grocery store, park, school and community events.
- health benefits by allowing more folks with mobility issues/ parents with young children to access safe trails for exercise and well being
- economic benefits of a trail system are well documented in other communities including the North Olympics which has seen a \$2,000,000 increase in economic activity from trail users. This is a "green" economic benefit as it encourages users but not vehicle traffic increase.

Mark Schorn

Oct 25th meeting was very well presented and should have cleared up many questions/concerns about the project status and proposal. Really appreciate the depth of

research and disciplined approach to determining the optimal possibilities for trail routing. I am very much in favor of the STO as it will enhance safety for cyclists, access to nature for people of all abilities, and connectivity to parks and communities. I also believe the STO will spawn additional safety enhancements adjacent to the trail network (safe crossings, signage and caution lighting/features, curb ramps for the disabled. STO can be a catalyst for safe movement across North Kitsap. Thank you.

Steve Warnert

I watched the excellent presentation concerning the preferred alignment for the proposed N-S Olympic Discovery Trail Study and urge you to move forward with the project at proposed. The proposal advances years of considered planning in the most cost-effective and inclusive manner possible. The proposal is the most equitable and inclusive in that it provides all manners of active transportation opportunities to enjoy the most diverse environments possible, including parks and trails. The proposal meets all numbers of goals from providing safe routes children, cyclists and other users of active transportation, greenhouse gas reduction and affording simple rest and relaxation. The latter cannot be overstated and cannot fully be realized without access to parks and green spaces.

Helaine Honig

Dear Commissioners, I wrote you earlier today asking you to approve this trail project. I've been thinking. The Suquamish and S'Klallam natives are always so generous when it comes to their community. I think if they were welcomed into this project and asked their opinions, not only would they become part of this wonderful project. They can be very generous with their help and financial. I would be happy to join with other interested parties and meet with them to discuss the trail. Possible that is already been done. It's important to have them be part of the project and not just ask them for financial support.

Thank you
Sally Glivar

As a long-time member of both Kitsap Environmental Coalition and Kitsap Audubon Society, I am concerned about the exaggerated claims about the environmental harm that would be caused by routing the STO through the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park. Here are some facts:

- 1 – The STO will generally follow existing logging roads
- 2 – The proposed corridors are “tree farm” remnants that are exceedingly poor wildlife habitat
- 3 - The STO is more likely to foster habitat improvements that will benefit wildlife.
- 4 - People misunderstand what constitutes “habitat.” Wildlife does not thrive in “deep forest,” but along the margins and corridors where sunlit shrubs and forest merge.
- 5 - Every effort will be made to avoid genuine environmental harm in sensitive areas.

6 - Emotional rhetoric aimed at polarizing and dividing people does more harm than good. It demonizes groups of people whose hard work and tireless commitment made it possible to save the 3,000 acres that now make up our treasured Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park.

7 - It is insular to insist that this is exclusively about the environment, and that accessibility, inclusiveness and outdoor recreation deserve far less consideration.

Protecting birds, wildlife habitat and the environment are at the heart of Kitsap Audubon's mission. But we accomplish our goals through valued partnerships and alliances with other stakeholders who generally share our values. The 3,000 acres that now constitute Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park was saved by a coalition of diverse groups working together. We are grateful to all of our wonderful partners and know we couldn't have accomplished our goals without their cooperation and heartfelt support.

Gene Bullock

Commissioner Rolfes,

Accessibility for children, the elderly and people with disabilities is important to me personally, and to the community at large. I have some ideas on how to make that happen.

I encourage the Parks department to map out all of their trails within county parks. Designate which trails are "wheelchair accessible" and set short, medium and long term goals of building accessible trails in each park. The Commissioners could set policy that every county park have a certain % of its trails be accessible.

The county commissioners could "reserve" a portion of the transportation \$ to multi-modal projects. My suggestion would be that phase 1 implementation of transportation \$ dedicated to multimodal construction be targeted to specific planning projects that have been completed such as Port Gamble Heritage Park, Jarsted Park to Kitsap Lake Trail, and now North Kitsap Heritage Park. Paved, shared use paths are multimodal transportation facilities. The Parks department should lead in the planning and design of shared use paths within the parks. A role for the Parks Commissioners in the planning process would be beneficial, too. King County Parks are the lead in planning for their multimodal paved trails.

I walk, I bike, and I use a wheelchair. Being able to enjoy our parks no matter which mode of transportation I am using is essential for my personal health but also the health of our community.

Thank you for your leadership. I was impressed with all of the work on the North Sound to Olympics Trail and the presentation given to the public this week in Kingston. I filled out an electronic comment form.

Dianne Iverson

We just returned from a wonderful trip to Lewes, DE where we enjoyed an amazing 15-mile ride through the woods, near the beach, etc. NOT along roads. It is a huge draw for the community, verified by our friend who works at a bustling bike shop along the trail.

I walk and hike in N Kitsap Heritage Park AND the Port Gamble trails and am confident that paved trails through both of these areas would be nothing but beneficial. Bikes don't make noise and there are plenty of other trails where walkers/hikers can access natural trails away from the

paved trail if for whatever reason they don't like it.

Please give this paved trail through both parks the highest consideration. Look at Port Gamble trails. I live in Kingston and people say "Oh, where in Kingston?" I say "Near the Port Gamble trails." And the response? "You are SOOOO lucky!!!"

Lauren Roman

I attended the meetings and am very impressed with the level of detail in the studies of the different routes for the NSTO. The evidence supports the preferred routes from Kingston to Bond Road. I hope there is funding to construct the NSTO from Kingston through NKHP as one section, then both other two sections as one project so that this is a "trail to somewhere." NKHP is a public park and the NSTO will make this park accessible to all users as a public park should be. We should think of the NSTO as a restoration opportunity much as the Bainbridge section of the STO is being developed.

Judy Willott

I am puzzled by Kitsap Public Works pushing forward incessantly on this high impact trail, it does not seem to be a best use of this department with its crucial missions serving the County and lack of funds for other goals. How much Public Works budget, staff time and energy is going toward the STO trail?

(From the website: Public Works provides Kitsap County with a variety of services including traffic engineering and maintenance, stormwater management, road maintenance, resource recovery, disposal and recycling, waste reduction programs, wastewater management, and flood control.)

History with Rayonier. It is clear to me having been present in the development of this proposal out of the "String of Pearls" plan that the history of Raydient/ Rayonier (formerly Olympic Property Group) under the push of Jon Rose is the guiding force of the proposal. It is not a community led proposal. There are claims that there has been wide community outreach and support, or "unanimous support " at meetings for the STO during its planning-- and from my experience of living here through it all, I disagree strongly. A community survey was skewed and poorly designed. Similar to the current Raydient proposed multi- sports complex, the corporation pushed a proposal to benefit its properties. In this case, Jon Rose spearheaded the formation of the North Kitsap Trails Association to garner support from recreational bicyclists.

At the beginning, the proposal for the String of Pearls plan stated: "Across every community and every age bracket, people said their highest priority was walking and hiking trails. The beauty of simple walking trails are that they can be built and maintained by volunteers, have minimal environmental impact and provide people of all ages the opportunity to get outside and enjoy nature." Yes, this was a vision many community members agreed with.

But from simple walking trails, the STO project has morphed into a high impact trail system needing costly engineering and destroying habitat and critical areas in parks to primarily benefit

recreational bicyclists. Many community members agreed with simple walking trails that fit in with the environment, and also saw the need of having improved roads that could provide safe bicycle transportation. My concern is that this project has been overtaken by recreational bicyclists, including out of County recreational tourists such as Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance. The project is not representing the full breadth of community expressing the desire for habitat conservation AND safe connectivity for functional bicycle travel for community members to commute and do business.

Cost Burden to Kitsap County Taxpayers. Where in this paved shared use trail proposal are the cost estimates for the trail clearing, grading, building across diverse and challenging terrain, mitigation to disrupted critical areas, RCO conversion costs, and most importantly ongoing costs for maintenance? How are taxpayers going to fund this trail which benefits human recreation over conservation values and true connectivity between communities? How is Public Works going to manage all of this while barely able to keep up with current commitments? This is not what we as taxpayers want to pay for when so many other needs are going unmet.

Preservation of North Kitsap Heritage Park I realize the bicycle trails through Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park have been heavily built and utilized already. PGFHP has become a place for high-speed active bike recreation and bicycle tourism. In contrast, North Kitsap Heritage Park remains a quieter place for conserving habitat and critical areas and traveling respectfully through a less impacted environment. I am very concerned about the paved multi-use trail proposal through NKHP in particular. The North Kitsap Heritage Park Stewards group have come out against the STO cutting through the park, except for one steward who is an avid bicyclist and was chosen to be on the trail study working group. I hope you will also listen to the NKHP Stewards perspectives on the plan for this special park.

That the trail feasibility study ignored some other routes such as West Kingston Road is extremely frustrating and shows a predetermined push to use NKHP for the STO route, whether it is environmentally appropriate or not. The route along West Kingston Road is a traffic route for both the middle school and high school; this would be a most logical corridor for a bike path. I would ask that this be looked at again, it is also fairly level compared to the topography through North Kitsap Heritage Park.

Another route not considered is the already developed White Horse trail which could possibly be used in collaboration with the Suquamish Tribe. This would make use of an already developed trail and not require new development, while possibly sharing upkeep.

I am particularly disgusted with the proposal to seek a "conversion" to sidestep the RCO requirement in its grant contract to use the property for habitat and conservation. This is not an honest move, and should not be allowed to go forward.

Beth Nichols

I am a frequent hiker in North Kitsap Heritage Park. I am opposed to the NSTO going through the Park because the wide paved path and/or boardwalk would destroy wetlands and critical habitat. The PROS Plan and Comp Plan both call for preserving and protecting critical areas and habitat. We should maintain these protections.



Randena Walsh

Please support the Preferred Alternative. There is currently no safe bike or pedestrian facility on roads connecting Kingston to Port Gamble, and no facility that provides access into or through either of these parks for young children, the elderly, or people with disabilities. County Public Works has built less than 1% of the bike facilities proposed in its Non-Motorized Plan. Miller Bay Rd, Bond Rd, and SR 104 remain unsafe for bicycles. As a cyclist who is required to ride on the roads, and a walking enthusiast, I strongly urge you to support the preferred alternative to the STO. Thank you.

Sandy Kienholz

The NSTO is a boondoggle. It is a recreational trail and misses the needs of the community and obligations of the County. Non-motorized access and safety is needed between N Kitsap communities, the County's climate change goals are clear, but the NSTO is a drive to recreational facility. The proposed investment with the NSTO misses the mark - shoulders should be added to roadways, speeds should be lowered and enforced, and non-motorized improvements focused on reducing car travel should be made. There are plenty of recreation opportunities in N Kitsap for bikers and walkers while most public ROWs are frightening for non-motorized users. Please stop the madness with the NSTO and focus on the best return on investment - follow the County's pledge to reduce GHGE and its obligation to make public ROWs safe for all users. Respectfully,

kent scott

A paved trail that encroaches on what are currently well functioning, well utilized natural areas serving native plants (ongoing restoration) and animals (including humans) is a travesty, and a function of lazy knee-jerk thinking.

No name

Dear All, I came to the recent presentation of the NSTO project with a favorable attitude about the concept, but after seeing the presentation and possible routes, I was horrified. It was like watching someone take a puzzle piece and try to fit it into the wrong puzzle.

I would like to see this project done the right and good way. Go back to the original idea of the string of pearls, which is to connect communities. Start in Kingston, the urban growth area and connect it to Port

Gamble, then Suquamish and Indianola. Create the non motorized transportation system for people to get where they need to go every single day. This is what our community really needs.

Leave our beautiful forest parks alone. They are treasures for us to leave to future generations. We don't want a road through our park forests. They have been ravaged enough over the last 150 years. We want them to heal and we want to help restore them. In this time of climate change and uncertainty Mature Forests are Irreplaceable!

In the name of transparency, let's understand that this plan did not come from the county, for the county, but from the developers for the developers. If a project was presented as your current concept versus the one I am proposing you would see a lot less public support for your project and most of the public in favor of my proposal. Go ahead and find out for yourself by letting the community vote.

Sincerely, Marion Allen

The STO, as planned for North Kitsap Heritage Park wetlands, ignores the catastrophic decline of amphibian and small mammal populations. Also, the impending loss of wetland insect pollinators. "Drain the Swamp", a popular political invective, reveals our contempt for the wetlands that sustain ecosystem viability. The kowtowing to a group of environmentally ignorant, entitled white guys on bicycles is reprehensible. An act of willful ignorance by Kitsap County Parks Department, Kitsap County Commissioners and a group of cynical, hypocritical antienvironmentalist "Stewards" at Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park. The proponents of the STO just don't care about the consequences of their greed.

Thomas Doty

Much gratitude to the many individuals, communities and municipalities that have been working to make the North Sound to Olympics trail a reality. After years of commercial and personal development this priority cannot be easy. Having walked many trail systems in Europe I can only hope for minimizing the amount of trail that is open to motorized vehicles. If I could wave a magic wand, the trail system would not be asphalt and would only be available to walkers and bicycles. Today's standards will likely include electric bikes, scooters, wheelchairs, etc. Thus, the need for a hard surface. Thanks for the opportunity to express my opinion.

Steve and Helene Schmitz

Steven Schmitz

I hope they do this. More bike paths away from cars to nice places through nice places is always good for a community.

Jacob Simon
