

My name is Lisa McConnell and I am a steering committee member of the Eastside Trail Advocates.

I'd first like to introduce our group, our vision, and our goals. We are a grass roots organization, consisting currently of individual members. What we envision is a paved continuous pathway that provides a safe public thoroughway on the Eastside Corridor, offering community and business opportunities all along the pathway, not just at stops, at significantly lower public investment. We are advocating the trail be considered and discussed as the priority item it deserves to be and we are concerned about the nature of discussions which relegate pathway planning to an afterthought, if a thought at all. My father, bless his big engineer heart, always reminded me of the 4 Ps of engineering: Planning Prevents Poor Performance. Rail advocates have already been making their case. The time for serious talk about a pathway on the Eastside Corridor is right now.

Who we are NOT is anti-rail. However, we do support the findings of the Puget Sound Regional Council's 2! studies done on this very corridor, stating that commuter rail is not feasible in the short to midterm future. A pathway, with much lower investment, maintenance, and operating costs, makes sense now and in the future, whether a rail is in place or not.

A pathway needs to be considered more than just a recreational trail, as it is referred to, even in the current MOU. We would like Port Commissioners to know that bike commuting compares, apples to apples, with other transportation options. Burke Gilman weekday bike commute trips meet or exceed 23 Metro bus routes in ridership. This trail has the potential to be the I405 of the Bike Pedestrian system on the Eastside.

But looking at the trail as a transportation commodity is selling its potential value short. A well planned pathway invites visitors to spend time, and more importantly money, in the communities it serves. Think of the pedestrian traffic we see on Lake Washington Boulevard on even slightly sunny days. Or the amount of bicycles outside Redhook Brewery just off the Sammamish River Trail.

Many cities have already realized the synergy of well planned pathways and local businesses. For example, The Great Allegheny Pathway in Pennsylvania, despite tough economic times, had trail attributed revenue in 2008 increase to 40.6 Million Dollars and it had 7 and a half Million dollars paid in wages.

We agree that this corridor is a fabulous, once-in-a-lifetime amenity that deserves to be done right and done well, for the maximum benefit of all of us who are paying for this system.

We are here to find out specifics on the Port of Seattle's involvement in the Eastside Corridor.

We understood that previously the Eastside Transportation Partnership was going to host the public process to help decide the corridor's disposition. Will that still be the case? What type of public process will now decide the corridor's disposition? We would like the Port of Seattle to announce as soon as possible the details and schedule of the public process.