

December 11, 2013

RE: Munjoy Heights

Dear Chair Morrisette and Members of the Planning Board;

Portland Trails would like to take this opportunity to offer our comments on the proposed Munjoy Heights development. Portland Trails' staff have met on several occasions with the development team and City staff to address the trail connections and overall pedestrian experience, and while we still have a few questions and concerns, we continue to be pleased with the direction the proposal has taken since the first plans.

We believe the following areas deserve attention as you consider the Munjoy Heights proposal:

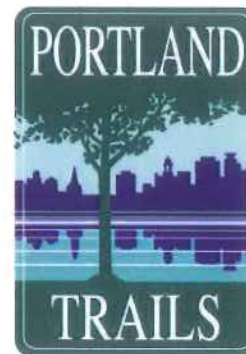
- Trail 'nodes' - We remain concerned that the two locations designated as 'guest parking' are also trail heads. These locations ('nodes') should be visible and inviting, and serve as natural meeting points which help transition between the public and private realms. It is important that they not be consistently obstructed by parked cars. While this is a constrained site, we are optimistic that there is a design or operational solution, and hope to work further with the developer in this regard. Any guidance the Planning Board can provide would be welcome as we seek to balance public safety, parking and a positive pedestrian environment.
- Year-round maintenance of the connections to East Cove and the Jack Path - We feel this should be built in to the long-term maintenance obligations of the Condominium Association, as the improvements will be on their property. This could be folded into the eventual property management contract at minor additional expense to the owners. We feel the Planning Board should require maintenance of these features so that they will be usable year round.
- Public Access Easement - Portland Trails is working with the developer to craft an easement which will allow the public to access and pass through the shared-street portions of the property to connect to the Jack Path and East Cove Street. We are comfortable with the draft easement, but need to finalize the language with the applicant.
- East Cove Street connection - this is a critical link that Portland Trails has been seeking to establish for some time, and will serve to further integrate the development with the community. We feel the developer has done his part to enable this connection. Portland Trails will continue to work with landowners along East Cove to formalize public access rights to the border of the Redfern property.

We are optimistic that the travel way and streetscape as proposed will complement the pedestrian experience as residents and visitors pass between Walnut Street and the remaining Jack Path trail section. We are particularly pleased with the Shared Street/'woonerf' concept, which seems a good fit for this short street section. Focusing on how people will use the space and encouraging active use of the 'roadway', rather than simply designing for the movement and storage of cars is a healthy approach, and we believe it will have numerous benefits for the residents and the community. We hope that this creative use of the common travel-way will set a good precedent for Portland as we seek to create more active, creative and vibrant places.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments, and for your service in making Portland a great city!



Kara Wooldrik
Executive Director, Portland Trails



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