

**D&C Standards Update  
July 11, 2006  
Meeting Notes**

This meeting was a follow-up to the June 20 meeting, continuing the discussion about Trail Location in Parks. Eight representatives of parks, ODOT, consultants and conservationists, and eight District staff participated. Terry Keyes facilitated the discussion, with staff taking notes summarized below.

Summary

Terry Keyes asked the group to work toward the common ground between the District standards and the parks' objectives, which he characterized on the white board as:

<b>PARKS</b>	<b>DISTRICT STANDARDS</b>
<i>Objective:</i> Build a paved trail network	<i>Objective:</i> Protect water quality in stream corridors via buffers
<i>How:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use stream corridors</li> <li>• Trails 10 – 12' paved (12 – 14' with shoulders)</li> <li>• Flexible trail placement</li> </ul>	<i>How:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum trail width 10'</li> <li>• Trails in outer 40% of buffer</li> <li>• Mitigation 1:1 less than 3'</li> </ul>

Nora Curtis noted that emails and communications after the June 20 meeting made it clear that not all the issues had been discussed, and the District is seeking a fuller understanding before drafting any revisions. She provided background on changes to the standards in 2004. In that process, the standards were revised to allow trails to be located in the outer 40% of the buffer. During the same revisions, the buffer on the Tualatin River was increased from 50 to 125-feet. The impact of this change on trails adjacent to the Tualatin River was not recognized at the time and was an unintended consequence.

The group discussed the implications of trail widths and materials in competing for grants and complying with ADA requirements. Opinions and interpretations of the requirements are varied, planners are unclear about where there is flexibility for trails near waterways, and points for grants may be biased toward ADA. Carrie Pak reported that Metro does not give credit for pervious pavement, but does give it a higher rating for grant applications.

The group also discussed issues outside the reach of the standards, including the shortage of appropriate land for trails, the cost constraints of publicly-funded park projects, the inherent conflicts of bringing people close to natural resources while protecting them, easements, and the role of developers in where and what type of land the parks receive or buy.

Related issues include the cost and maintenance of low impact development techniques, and that the District's streamside planting efforts for temperature management potentially limit trail mitigation sites. Astrid Dragoy clarified that District staff interprets the standards to require enhancement equal to the width of the path--not the entire 50-foot buffer—and requires no additional enhancement in previously enhanced areas. She also noted that the District has provided additional flexibility for trail placement in the last two standards revisions, from zero encroachment, to 25% and now 40%.

Conservationists view the vegetated corridor standards as a minimum safeguard for the resource, and assert that even pervious trails impact temperature, microclimate, nutrients, etc. They expect the park districts to model best management practices for trail alignments and low impact development.

Consensus began to emerge with the group's agreement that the condition of the corridor is key, new development and redevelopment present different options, site specific analysis makes sense, and the District and parks staff should collaborate routinely early in the planning process for better trail alignments. The alternatives analysis required for various permits and grants could be used to site trail alignments, and need not duplicative.

ODOT representative Claire Carder clarified some of the requirements, and offered to convey these messages to ODOT:

- There is a need for flexibility in awarding grants to avoid environmental impacts.
- There is a need for incentives for jurisdictions working cooperatively.
- There is a need for outreach about the process for exceptions to better protect natural resources.

Final comments from participants spanned these ideas: trails don't always need to be near water; need information about the stream dynamics before planning; limited resources belong to everyone, and trails should be in easements outside the vegetated corridors for the public health; complete communities need to provide for trails, vegetated corridors, and the built environment; parks need to do their best to stay out of vegetated corridors; working cooperatively will help parks deal with constraints; and, the District needs strong policy statements to stay out of vegetated corridor and work together.

Nora summarized that there have been many misperceptions, but that with continued education and cooperation we can develop alternatives that meet everyone's needs. The stakeholder meetings indicate the need to clarify rather than significantly modify the standards. In conclusion, Terry summarized the group's common ground as:

- First alternative: keep trails outside vegetated corridors
- Clarify that 10-feet of paved trail with shoulders usually equals 14-feet
- Clarify that the standards were intended to allow trails along the Tualatin River to encroach to 30 feet from the resource, the same distance allowed for corridors with 50-foot buffers
- Flexible dual trails
- Utilize low impact development techniques when trails are in the outer 40 %
- Two methods for District approval of trails:
  1. Current tier analysis
  2. Joint (parks/District) trail site planning
- May require new developments to dedicate trail right of way outside the vegetated corridor; different standard for trail placement on existing park property
- Substitute tier analysis with Metro-required alternatives analysis for trail segments that are not master planned
- Buffer condition is criterion for trail location (i.e. high quality vegetated corridor = no trail)

#### Next Steps

Staff will draft language for review by September.