Perrin Picone

Firstly, Thank you so much for your time and energy to this massive project! I strongly support the restoration of the Deschutes Estuary and the project's commitment to improving pedestrian, bicycle, recreational, and environmental access. I would like Ecology and DES to consider an additional opportunity as the project moves forward: creating a continuous greenway and pedestrian connection between the restored estuary, the historic Olympia Brewery area in Tumwater, and the residential neighborhoods along Capitol Boulevard South.

The Heritage Park Trail is a wonderful example of how environmental restoration and pedestrian access can work together. However, many of these beautiful public spaces remain disconnected from the neighborhoods immediately surrounding them. Residents can live remarkably close to the Deschutes River, Capitol Lake/Estuary, Tumwater Falls, and the historic brewery property while still needing to drive in order to comfortably and safely access them.

I encourage the project team to evaluate the feasibility of a pedestrian and bicycle greenway extending south from the existing Heritage Park/Deschutes trail network toward the proposed berm and historic brewery area, with a connection to Capitol Boulevard South. The WildWood Neighborhood Center has available land across the street that would be worth investigating for a possible connection with your Historic Berm. (see image attached)

Rather than thinking of the project's pedestrian improvements only as circulation within the restoration area, I hope the agencies will consider how this investment could become part of a larger connected greenbelt. A safe, landscaped walking and bicycling corridor could connect residential neighborhoods directly to the estuary, Tumwater Falls, the brewery district, existing parks, and eventually other regional trail systems.

Such a connection could advance several goals already identified by the project: expanding public access to the restored landscape, encouraging multimodal transportation, reducing dependence on automobiles for short recreational trips, improving equitable neighborhood access to public open space, and creating opportunities for people to experience and understand the restored river and estuary as one continuous ecological system.

It could also provide an important ecological opportunity. Where feasible, a greenway could incorporate native vegetation, habitat restoration, stormwater management, and wildlife connectivity rather than functioning simply as a paved transportation corridor.

The restoration of the Deschutes Estuary is a rare opportunity to think at the scale of generations. We are restoring the connection between the river and Puget Sound; I hope we will also consider restoring the connections between the river and the communities that surround it.

Please evaluate opportunities for a continuous pedestrian and bicycle connection from the project area south toward the historic brewery/Tumwater Falls area and east toward Capitol Boulevard South, including potential connections with existing or planned trails, public rights-of-way, utility corridors, and publicly or institutionally owned lands. The Heritage park trail that connects the Capitol Campus is a prime example of a continuous pedestrian connection at this scale. (see attached Image)

A true Deschutes greenbelt could allow someone to leave their home on foot or bicycle and travel through neighborhood, river, forest, wetland, estuary, and downtown without first getting into a car. That would be an extraordinary public legacy to build alongside the restoration of the estuary.



