



# City of Stevenson Planning Department

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**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Ben Shumaker  
**DATE:** June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
**SUBJECT:** Trail of the Gods Retaining Wall Options

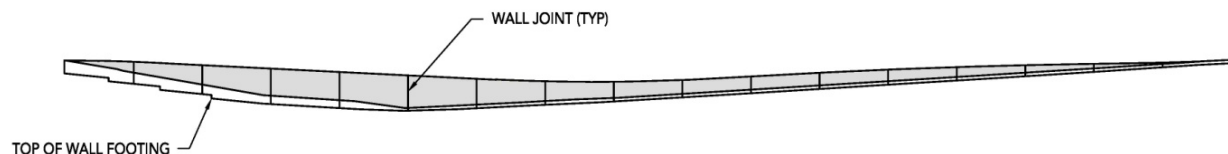
## Introduction

This memo introduces several options to provide a more pleasant facing on the retaining wall recently constructed along Rock Creek Drive as part of the Trail of the Gods pathway extension. Staff is asking for City Council direction or action in order to pursue one of the options presented or generate ideas for staff to pursue a different option.

## Background

Overcoming the elevation changes between Rock Creek Drive and Mallicott Road required either a great deal of earthwork outside of the right-of-way or installation of a retaining wall. The length and height of the wall were determined in order to meet standards associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and WSDOT specifications for multi-use trails.

Early designs for the face of the retaining wall included a basalt facing option to bring the design elements established downtown and along Rock Creek Drive farther out along the pathway system. The construction cost estimates for the basalt facing were \$125,000, and because the project was already over the grant-level cost estimate, staff chose to explore other options. Gabion walls were dismissed from consideration as was the type of fake basalt facing seen on the Second Street side of the County's jail. Reasons for dismissal ranged from concern for long-term durability to questionable levels of quality control for the lower-cost options. Ultimately staff and the contract engineers agreed to engineer the retaining wall to structurally hold the basalt facing if one could be established as part of a future project to provide additional finishing amenities in the area (basalt pillars, decorative fencing, interpretive signs, wayfinding signs, trash cans, etc.). In the meantime, native ivy has been planted at the face of the wall with the intent that it will grow to cover much of the western quarter to third of its length.



That decision has been questioned by many in the community, including the Planning Commission, who suggested holding a design competition to generate ideas about the future look of the area. This memo represents Staff's first return communications since the Council asked for the Planning Commission's suggestion to be explored.

## Low Cost Option

Simply painting the face of the wall may prove to be the lowest cost option to cover over the bare concrete face currently greeting visitors of our west end. City staff recently explored this option and was given a rough estimate of \$2,500-3,000 for materials and labor for one coat of masonry primary and two coats of colored paint (Staff would recommend the Olive Green color that serves as the Rock Cove District's designator in the City's *Wayfinding Master Plan*).

## Low Cost Option- Paint Wall Face

Total Cost Estimate	Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$2,500-\$3,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low Cost</li> <li>Completes project with little ado</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May still not reflect desired quality</li> <li>May still be a vandalism target</li> </ul>

### Mid-Range Option: Budget-Dependent Design Contest

An option previously discussed includes the City hosting a design competition for community members, university students, and/or private design consultants to submit concepts for the City to complete. In this completion, the City could offer a financial incentive of ~\$3,000 for the winning design (Staff has consulted legal counsel and understands this incentive would be considered reimbursement for a service, not a gift of public funds). The design contest would ask participants to provide a design for the 1,481 square foot wall face that would project less than 6 inches, would place less than 63 pounds per square foot of pressure, and would be estimated to cost less than \$27,000 (or some other amount authorized by the Council). Additional costs are included in case engineering (design, structural, or construction) is necessary.

### Mid-Range Option- Budget-Dependent Design Contest

Total Cost Estimate	Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$40,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-Range Cost</li> <li>Builds community through inclusion in design/decision making</li> <li>Reflects desired quality in a direct, measureable way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not generate enough interest</li> <li>Disconnect between design and construction may mean best designs cannot be completed under budget</li> <li>Staff is inexperienced in work of this type</li> </ul>

### High-End Option: Basalt Facing

Returning to the previous idea to add a basalt face to the wall represents the higher end of solutions staff would recommend. This option would adhere a 4" thick basalt veneer to the face of the wall. The cost estimate for this item is likely on the lower end because it is based on the now-old construction cost estimate of \$125,000. Additional costs are assumed for the current construction climate and the added contractor mobilization and construction engineering costs that would've been shared as part of the bigger project.

### High-End Option- Budget-Dependent Design Contest

Total Cost Estimate	Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$150,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High quality of design expressed throughout community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High Cost</li> <li>Makes a second amenity phase unlikely</li> </ul>

### Decision/Guidance

After considering the above list of potential options, staff asks for Council direction on the best path forward. The Council is encouraged to think of this as a preliminary list only and provide other recommendations or solutions that may need to be further explored.

Prepared by:



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