



Leana Kinley <leana@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Opposition to Cascade Ave. restrictive use - Port of Skamania County

Pat Albaugh <pat@portofskamania.org>
To: Scott Anderson <scott.anderson@ci.stevenson.wa.us>
Cc: Leana Kinley <leana@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Wed, May 18, 2022 at 7:38 AM

Good Morning Mayor Anderson.

The Port of Skamania County Commissioners met Tuesday (5/17/22) and would like to record their unanimous and strong opposition to restricting Cascade Avenue access as proposed in the 2023 6-year TIP.

The Stevenson waterfront area is used by tens of thousands of visitors each year and home to many residents and dozens of businesses. It is accessed via two city roads (Russell and Cascade). Russell Street access has an at-grade railroad crossing. Cascade Avenue provides an important egress/access point that goes under the railroad tracks. Any restrictive use of this road creates a safety hazard for all residents, businesses, and visitors on the waterfront.

Cascade Avenue is not an ideal road but it has served the community for decades and City staff did a wonderful job replacing the bridge over Kanaka last year. Please don't endanger and inconvenience city residents and visitors but instead simply consider grading the road and keeping it open for use.

Unfortunately I am out of town Thursday but would happily meet with you or any City Council member after I return Friday afternoon.

Thank you for your consideration – Pat

Pat Albaugh
Executive Director
Port of Skamania County
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To: Stevenson City Council
From: Bernard and Kristi Versari, SW Cascade Ave. Stevenson
Date: May 18, 2022
Re: 2023-6 year TIP - Kanaka Underpass Project and Kanaka Underpass-Ped Walkway

We live and work on SW Cascade Avenue in Stevenson. Upon reviewing the proposed 2023 Stevenson TIP we were surprised to see and have great concerns about the proposed Kanaka Underpass Projects at the east end of Cascade Avenue which would convert the primary vehicle road to a paved bike and pedestrian only trail/path.

The proposed Kanaka Underpass Projects included in the Proposed 2023 TIP would place bollards across the roadway to prevent vehicle access. The current primary vehicle road would be converted to a paved "trail/path" restricted to bikers and pedestrians only, with \$10,000 proposed in 2023 for the pedestrian walkway and \$80,000 proposed in 2028 for paving.

The Kanaka Railroad Underpass has long been a primary vehicle multi-use graveled roadway providing access and egress to/from Cascade Avenue along the Stevenson waterfront for vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians.

Closing this roadway underpass to all vehicles would harm residents, offices, businesses, and visitors along Cascade Avenue/waterfront. The continued use of the underpass is critical for both public safety and practical reasons to all who live, work, and visit the waterfront. A few examples and cases in point:

- Trains can/do stop and block the Russell Street access/egress to Cascade Avenue for lengthy periods of time due to train or track issues.
- Mechanical issues with the railroad quad gates located on Russell can prevent access/egress.
- Back-to-back mile-long trains can block Russell access/egress for extended periods of time.
- The number of trains is continuously increasing and many trains are transporting flammable products through Stevenson. The 2016 crude oil train derailment in Mosier and the resulting fire points to the need for measures that would improve safety and evacuation options in such situations (not impair them).
- Increasing wildfires in our area also point to the need for an enhanced evacuation plan from the waterfront, especially in the busy summer months when large numbers of visitors and vehicles are present. The Kanaka underpass road is critical to this evacuation plan.
- Immediate EMS and police access to the waterfront is critical for emergency reasons. In the event of an extended RR gate closure at Russell for any of the above reasons, immediate access/egress to and from SW Cascade Ave. via the underpass is required for public safety.
- Relying on someone to come with keys to unlock/remove the bollards is an unacceptable plan when every minute counts.

Stevenson, like Cascade Locks, is fortunate to have a primary vehicle mixed-use underpass access/egress to its waterfront. We urge the Stevenson City Council to keep the Kanaka Underpass Roadway open to vehicles. The current road should be improved and properly maintained to provide safe and practical access/egress to and from SW Cascade Avenue.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns when evaluating the inclusion of these proposed projects in the City of Stevenson's 2023 TIP.

Martin Hecht
To: bernard Versari

Cc:

- Jeff Logosz;
- Martins Gorge Tours Group;
- Pat Albaugh

Mon 6/6/2022 7:36 AM

Attention city council members:

We were very surprised to learn of the proposed closure of the Cascade Avenue underpass, and wish to express our opposition. Having resided in Stevenson as homeowners for the last 32 years (since 1990), we have come to rely on this route as a favored alternate anytime we need to access any of the waterfront businesses, including Clark & Lewie's restaurant, Skamania Acupuncture, and the Stevenson Farmers Market on the waterfront.

As owners & operators of Martin's Gorge Tours, we commonly showcase the Stevenson waterfront to our visiting guests. We proudly display the past efforts of the City & Port to collaborate on the reconstruction & restoration of our waterfront including the waterfront path, the boat launch, the boat landing, the access for kiteboarding at east point, and the access for windsurfing at Bob's Beach. We often schedule visits and tours of Skunk Brothers Distillery, and we commonly pickup guests from the cruise ships for private tours of the Bonneville Dam & Interpretive Center. Our tour guests always enjoy viewing the boats, kiteboarders, windsurfers, surf skis, outriggers, fishermen, and people enjoying a picnic or visit to Theo Park. What they don't appreciate is waiting at the railroad crossing for a slow freight train, as they watch their valuable tour time dwindle away!

We wish to suggest that the City council revisit the pending proposal to close this valuable waterfront access. We would much prefer to see this road maintained as a much needed and viable alternate railroad crossing.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter!

Martin & Christine Hecht
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