

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.