



Grindstone Creek Trail Public Input Summary 10/24/12 Report

Methodology:

1. Public Input Meeting on August 30, 2012 (63 responses)
 2. Online Survey held from 8/31/12 – 9/17/12 (20 responses)
- Two questions were asked of both groups:
- a. Please comment on what you like about the proposed trail alignment. Please be concise.
 - b. What would you change about the proposed trail alignment? Please be concise.

Summarized Responses (83 Total):

Approve of Grindstone Trail – Total: 55

August 30, 2012 Interested Party Meeting -40 Total
Online survey – 15 Total

Opposed to Grindstone Trail – Total: 28

August 30, 2012 Interested Party Meeting – 23 Total
September Online Survey – 5 Total

Comments by category:

In support:

- a. Approve of the trail utilizing “orange” alignment: (Public Input Meeting - 21/Survey - 14)
- b. Approve of the trail utilizing alternative alignment option to improve connectivity, scenic value or to avoid flood plain: (Public Input Meeting - 17/Survey – 0)
- c. Approve of the trail utilizing alternative alignment due to eminent domain: (Public Input Meeting - 2/Survey - 1)

In opposition:

- a. Opposed to the trail due to eminent domain (Public Input Meeting - 15/Survey -0)
- b. Generally opposed to the trail (Public Input Meeting - 5/Survey – 5)
- c. Opposed to the trail citing an abundance of trails or too expensive (Public Input Meeting - 3/Survey - 0)

Public comments follow – including those received after the survey ended on 9/17/12.

Grindstone Trail Public Input

Public Input Meeting held on August 30, 2012 - Comments

Participants asked to respond to the following:

1. Please comment on what you like about the proposed trail alignment. Please be concise.
2. What would you change about the proposed trail alignment? Please be concise.

Public Input Meeting/Approve of the trail utilizing "orange" alignment: (Public Input Meeting - 21/Survey - 14)

1. Question #1: I am a fan of the Path due to the scenic views, yet still close enough to streets/businesses that gives a little sense of security.
Question #2: I am not sure if the people who would be effected by this would be reimbursed or not but I truly believe it's for the betterment of the community.
2. Question #1: I thought the proposed plan was great, and honestly couldn't get much better. My house is next to the Hinkson Creek Trail and have never once encountered problems, noise or otherwise. This plan looks like the trail visibly stays clear of residential areas for the most part and is hidden within forests located around it. I am all for new trails.
Question #2: I would not really change much; maybe simply angle the trail to clear away from the residential areas since that seems to be the only concern from residents of the neighborhood.
3. Question #1: I like the use of the existing level land. I like that it is along a creek and does not cut through property. I like that it is the most economic use of public funding.
Question #2: Nothing
4. Question #1: Connects to Maguire Blvd and eventually to new high school. Hopefully will be connections into East Pointe.
Question #2: nothing
5. Question #1: This alignment minimizes impact on residences while opening up the developing east side of the city to thousands of people for decades to come.
Question #2: blank
6. Question #1: I really like the proposed trail alignment. I think that the trail would be a great addition to Columbia's many trails.
Question #2: I wouldn't change anything about the proposed trail alignment.
7. Question #1: All
Question #2: None

8. Question #1: I have been anxious for this trail extension for quite a while. I think it will be a great addition to east Columbia. I have been very excited to see the new trail.
Question #2: I think a trail access and parking should go where Bluff Creek Blvd. Dead ends by Hollywood Theater. It would take advantage of the area, give people in neighborhood an access point without trespassing.
9. Question #1: I like the idea of adding another trail to Columbia. Specifically I like the orange route as it does not cut through the neighborhood.
Question #2: For the orange trail, I would like to see it extend further into the blue trail. I don't like the options that go through the neighborhood as it takes away from the nature feel.
10. Question #1: The ability to use existing bridges and natural paths. The proposed connection to the school also makes the trail a well used trail.
Question #2: I think it would be helpful to have more access to the trail via the community.
11. Question #1: I like the path along the creek bed. For my age being level is an issue so I can go further.
Question #2: blank
12. Question #1: I like the location of the trail. As a student, it's pretty close to campus and easily accessible.
Question #2: I love running on trails and being out in the wilderness, but don't like feeling like if something bad happened that no one would know about it. I would like more of an even combination of woods and neighborhoods us to feel more safe.
13. Question #1: I like the trail because they are out of the woods and the orange alignment doesn't effect that much and is going to grow the Hinkson Creek Trail more.
Question #2: I really wouldn't change a lot about the proposed plan. The only thing that I would change is not so close the houses.
14. Question #1: Proposed trail looks great!
Question #2: Nothing
15. Question #1: I like the idea of connecting the trail. It would make the trail riding experience more enjoyable.
Question #2: I like all of the ideas
16. Question #1: Natural wooded areas and grasslands. It utilized unused areas. I like the trail.
Question #2: Could be longer possibly
17. Connecting primary trail on west Columbia (Perche Creek Trail) over Harmony Creek and back along Sunflower St/Rt. E area. We have no trail facilities on this side and

riding your bike along Gibbs and ZZ is not exactly safe. – Bridge over Harmony Creek so that flooding doesn't prevent you from riding.

Question #2: The purple proposal to also be primary proposal

18. Question #1: I like the orange proposed trail because of the level of elevation change. This will make it very accessible to everyone.

Question #2: It would be nice, as a runner, to have a small portion that had some elevation change but I realize that it would make it less accessible to all guests.

19. Question #1: I really appreciate the drive to create more trails in Columbia. Using a very scenic and ADA accessible route fits perfectly within the explained master plan. I really like the future plan to connect to the high school.

Question #2: Although the trail leads into a subdivision, the overall big picture of the proposed trail overweighs my opinion of saving the property or the subdivision.

20. Question #1: It would be away from the main flow of traffic with the convenience of easy access. It is ADA accessible. It won't take away from the other time for construction in the city so other roads with continue to be fixed.

Question #2: N/A

21. Question #1: I like how much is connected and how far it reaches through this part of town, giving lots of people access to it.

Question #2: I am not sure what safety will be implemented, but since it stretches away from residential areas and into the woods. Hopefully some kind of safety protocols are in place, like emergency stations like on campus.

Public Input Meeting/Approve of the trail utilizing alternative alignment option for to improve connectivity, scenic value or to avoid flood plain:

(Public Input Meeting - 17/Survey - 0)

1. Question #1: I like that Columbia is trying to add more trails. My only concern is the people's backyards that it will cut through. But overall I feel that the trails are a good idea.

Question #2: I would try to make the trails go another direction rather than going through peoples' backyards. That could cause some unwanted traffic.

2. Question #1: Nothing

Question #2: From what I have read, the trail would have no access from the Bluff Pointe neighborhood. There is no benefit for the neighborhood. I would also allow people to have access to homes that the trail would run behind.

3. Question #1: (1) The alignment along the creek requires multiple crossings which will damage the creek (2) A natural animal corridor will be impacted negatively (3) 2 neighborhoods will be affected by having cul de sacs turned into de facto trail heads

Question #2: Go through Waters Moss Conservation area. It is cheaper, won't impact the creek, and having a section for the trail with some hills (still ADA compliant) will be more interesting for runners and cyclists.

4. Question #1: I like the idea that they are trying to build a trail to Lemone.
Question #2: Not run it through peoples' yards
5. Question #1: Sounds like it would be easy to do.
Question #2: Put it somewhere that it won't flood.
6. Question #1: blank
Question #2: The proposed trail alignment has a lot of positive attributes, however, the one thing I would change is the possible connectivity to downtown and it negatively impacts the surrounding families. Also expenses for flooding maintenance.
7. Question #1: I like the expansion and connection of the trail system extending across Columbia. I think it is very advantageous to bikers and runners who feel crowded on the other trails in the area.
Question #2: Not a change but I would vote for the path (green or yellow) that runs near the movie theater, rather than the orange path.
8. Question #1: Violet is the trail I liked best. That proposed idea is much more needed and further away from traffic. I use the trails to run and that would make the run much more enjoyable.
Question #2: My only concern is when it passes under HWY 63. That is a very busy area and just concerned with noise, safety and trash from vehicles.
9. Question #1: The trail system is a good amenity for the city. People out and about makes for a better community.
Question #2: \$30-00 35-00 \$40-00 on yellow trail –figure 2- appears to border on go through a person's yard. The consultant said that 1% of the workers on Lemone Industrial commute by bicycle. That is 1% of 3000 = 30 – this trail is too expensive and destroys the privacy of a whole subdivision for 30 maybe bike riders? - No population density @ beginning of end of trail – 1st Hollywood Theatre, now this?
10. Question #1: Creek walking. Staying near water keeps it interesting and more beautiful to walk next to.
Question #2: Avoid getting within 100 yards of homes. Switch sides of the creek.
11. I like how it's attempting to connect the town with a trail system. The yellow trail in figure 2 would be my choice to go on an adventure across town. It appears to have more access points that are not neighborhood invasive.
Question #2: Don't do the orange trail to many large long bridges will take away from the value of homeowners and the user values. The creek floods very wide in 2 of the 3 areas the bridge will have to be very large to say within ADA
12. Question #1: I like the idea of trails in Columbia. I like the idea of connected trails (if everyone is 100% in agreement w/ the plan).

Question #2: Keep trails on lands that desire the trails. Only build if 100% of the people along the trail are in support. Eminent domain is unacceptable for any non essential construction. Also trails need to go somewhere. No through peoples backyard. Se we feel like we are being watched while exercising on the trails.

13. Question #1: I feel the route (trail) should go up Stadium. It would be less expensive and not bother the owner in East Pointe subdivision.

Question #2: Same as above.

14. Question #1: I like that the trail would connect users to new areas that can/will be developed in the near future. I also like that the trail takes into account ADA requirements.

Question #2: I think the proposed location could be improved. I think some land owners are upset about the trail idea. I think other areas might be more welcoming. Ease of access is important consideration too.

15. Question #1: As a college student I do like the trail but can see how community members would not like it. They can sometimes provide a risk for people. If a community doesn't want something they have to right to let people hear their voice.

Question #2: I would take it to places where more college students live. Maybe closer to "The Reserves" apartments and other places.

16. Question #1: I like how it is connected to other existing trails as well as the connection of the new school.

Question #2: Try to avoid more of the backyard. Also, think of access for the neighborhood.

17. Question #1: I think the trail is a good idea for people in the community to get exercise. I do feel bad for the people who live in the neighborhood that will have this trail in their yards. If it makes sense to build then I would not be opposed to it.

Question #2: If there is any way to make the trail not go through neighborhoods then it will maybe be more accepted. It will allow for people to get exercise without disturbing the neighborhood then I believe it will be beneficial.

Public Input Meeting/Approve of the trail utilizing alternative alignment due to eminent domain:

(Public Input Meeting - 2/Survey - 0)

1. Question #1: its starting point at the Grindstone Creek Area.The alternate route (Green) provides much more beautiful space for those who will use it. It provides more shade than actual proposed route. The alternate route (Green) will allow for more varied terrain for hikers/bikers to use without having to drive to further parks. The alternate (Green) uses the property that is already owned/controlled by the City (eminent domain mentioned I below comments)!/

Question 2 Do not go through private land owners' property! Eminent domain is not appropriate to use for this trail! Stop putting the welfare of trees over the rights of current property owners! Use tax money where tax payers want it! Transfer these funds to

other trails that neighborhoods want and do not force us to use our tax money for a trail that will actually take our property!

2. Question #1: While we love the idea of a trail near our neighborhood, we are absolutely opposed to using eminent domain as the answer and infringing on the rights of property owners.

Question #2: blank

**Public Input Meeting/Opposed to the trail due to eminent domain:
(Public Input Meeting - 15/Survey - 1)**

1. Question #1: I do not like the proposed plan area. I am 62 years old; have been involved in City and County government for many years. My views are precise and those views are that never pursue property from private property owners when you can route otherwise. Question #2: My proposal would be to route the trail (taxpayers' money) through an area that would be applicable for all those involved. This could be done. Leave the private structure alone.
2. Question #1 – blank
Question #2: Against this due to the eminent domain of homeowners. This is not an essential project. Money should be used for other projects. Should not be spending new money in this economy. Hold on to money, for maintenance, etc, for other projects
3. Question #1: Nothing
Question #2: I support the Clyde Wilson Trail which those residents themselves support. This present trail proposal is, in my opinion, a misuse of eminent domain to claim personal property.
4. Question #1: I do not like the proposed alignment as it is predicated upon seizing private property through the possible use of eminent domain. This is an abuse of this method and an abuse of the people that will have their property seized. There is no public necessity to support this seizure. This should only be used for a clear need, i.e. a school, fire station, etc...
Question #2: Spend the \$1.7 million for this section of recreational trail on existing parks and not to complete this foolish plan.
5. Questions #1: I think it is very sad to cross anyones property (a family live there) for the cities gain. Very sad shame on the City of Columbia.
Question #2: blank
6. Question #1: I don't want it!! It is not necessary and a waste of money. Why do you want to take a home owner's property and provide for a "maybe" user? Have you people ever seen this area after a rain storm? I think not. You have no idea how much debris floats down the creek.
Question #2: Forget the whole idea. Take the money and spend it more wisely.
7. Question #1: Blank

Question #2: I am concerned about the trail going through private property. I see the use of eminent domain for a recreational trail as a misuse of the original intent of eminent domain by the founding fathers. I would also prefer a trail that makes realistic walking/biking to MU and the center of Columbia – current trails are not safe for this purpose.

8. Question #1 I do not like it. It is an unneeded, unwanted trail that does not achieve most of the objectives proposed for the trail. It is an absurd amount of money for a trail that does not connect any neighborhoods or businesses. there are much better alternate routes that do achieve the objectives for less money. Question #2: Transfer funding to a wanted and useful trail – the Clyde Wilson east west trail. Do not abuse eminent domain and take private property for a recreational trail. Or use the alternate route through the city controlled property – a wonderful route with parking – great access in short – this proposed route is the wrong route.
9. Question #1: I am not in favor of a trail at all thru this property if it abuts a person's personal property. If there must be a trail I'm most in favor of the green trail that actually goes up and around within the largest portion of land and hooks up with stadium and "get about" lanes.
Question #2: -Crossing the creek 5 times is very expensive. -The trail should not go thru personal property or obtained thru the domain process. -This trail is not wanted by our neighborhood.
10. Question #1: Do not support it and don't see the need for it. Question #2: The issue is taking away a major portion of a neighbors back yard. Non needed expense to build it. Allows access to private property. Will not connect with anything near town.
11. Question #1: blank
Question #2: Advocate for the funds to be transferred to other desired trails that do not have current funding. Utilize tax-payer money appropriately for projects that the tax payers want and need. Do not build multiple bridges and a concrete road through a 100 year flood plain, wetland and wildlife corridor. Do not use Eminent Domain to take private family's backyards for a recreational use.
12. Question #1: Review overall options carefully, as if you lived there!?
Question #2: Please don't take what my friends have worked and are still working for. Please don't invade their privacy. Protect our properties and its families. Please don't make a trail through their own back yard.
13. Question #1: Don't like. I would like it better if it was relocated to a different location, not on somebodies property and not in a flood zone.
Question #2: Change Eminent Domain" don't like that our neighbors have to sacrifice their property for ugly bridges and roads.

14. Question #1: Not a thing! I don't understand how the City Parks & Rec can justify ceasing personal property when the City has property that could be used. We, the tax payer & residents in Bluff Pointe are vehemently opposed to this eminent domain. Question #2: Scrap this proposal all together and support the Clyde Wilson Trail where the residents want the trail.

15. See below

routes through the conservation area because, in their opinion, the grade was too steep, yet the location of the proposed trail connection with Maguire Blvd. is the same slope. Commuters coming off the proposed trail and going to IBM would have an additional long and steep hill to traverse to their destination. This would probably be a challenge for a few hardy recreational bike riders, but for the regular commuter riding this route on a warm and humid day would be inconceivable.

A few questions to summarize;

- Are the businesses and residents along the Grindstone Creek corridor being asked to help fund a trail they will not have anymore direct access to than they presently have.
- And, are they being asked to give up private property to accommodate a "Johnny come lately" business (IBM) that receives tax abatements, when these residents and businesses have been paying taxes all along?
- Does a trail along the creek best meet the goals of Get About Columbia by providing direct pedestrian and biking routes from areas of commerce and residence to campus and the central city?
- Is putting a trail down through the ecologically fragile Grindstone Creek gorge (Hinkson watershed) the best use of taxpayer money considering it will cost almost \$2,000,000.00 for a 1 mile stretch?
- What does it cost to build one mile of four lane highway?
- Will this trail become an Albatross around the necks of Parks Dept. management when it becomes a redundant trail because commuters opt for an easier and more direct route to their destinations, yet this high maintenance trail will still need repairs?

In conclusion, never again will I take one of Parks and Recs. little engineered with preconceived outcome surveys. Also, along with many of my neighbors and other city residents I have spoken with, in regard to this subject, will I ever vote for another tax benefiting the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department!

Public Input Meeting/Generally opposed to the trail: (Public Input Meeting - 5/Survey - 5)

1. Question #1: Nothing
Question #2: I would love to have it along Stadium through the Waters-Moss, out of the flood plain and use existing infrastructure to solve existing transportation and safety issues. Then we could have something different!
2. Question #1: Nothing (repeat of #13)
Question #2: I would love to have it along Stadium through the Waters-Moss, out of the flood plain and use existing infrastructure to solve existing transportation and safety issues. Then we could have something different!

3. Question #1: I am in favor of trails, but not this one. It is not good stewardship of the park's money. Do not destroy the creek! We have lived about it for 19 years and seen it flood several times.
Question #2: Blank
4. Question #1: nothing
Question #2: Go thru Waters Moss
5. Question #1: nothing
Question #2: The trail should be rerouted to stadium and go through Sheppard neighborhood north off Stadium

Public Input Meeting/Opposed to the trail citing an abundance of trails or too expensive:

(Public Input Meeting - 3/Survey - 0)

1. Question #1: I favor trails but not this one – building in an alluvial flood plain will be expensive to maintain. This creek floods extensively at times.
Question #2: Cost – you can build 1 mile of interstate for 1 million. 1.7 million is too much and wasteful.
2. Question #1 and 2: I use the trails but there is more need for one more far from everywhere! – The cost for so many bridges for such a short trail. Bad use of tax payers money. – Don't believe the city should have the right to reduce property values. Studies presented are old and do not consider crime rate increases such as home invasions
3. Question #1: blank
Question #2: I don't like the trail is so close to a few individuals' properties. I am also concerned and question the flooding in that area. Also not sure about the start/stop point locations. I would not approve of this trail. Columbia already has many trails. I would not want my tax money supporting this. I find it unnecessary.

Online Survey Conducted 8/31/12 - 9/17/12 - Comments

Survey/Approve of the trail utilizing "orange" alignment:

(Public Input Meeting - 21/Survey - 14)

1. Question #1: I favor this trail proposal alignment. It's the simplest, offers the natural scenic beauty at the maximum, is away from roads and busy commercial centers, has lots of trees and wildlife, and has very do-able inclination (elevation) for less athletic bikers and walkers. And it will link up with the 3,000+ potential users/employees of Lemond Blvd Industrial Zone, as well as connect to the next decade of housing growth to our east and northeast.
Question #2: I would add visual hindlers of artificial woven grass, attached to a sturdy (woven, chain-link) fence to visually hide the backyards of those nearby residential areas. This will greatly lessen the likelihood of trespass, as well as visual intrusion on their

privacy. These vertical green mats should be at least 8 feet tall. And I doubt this will add much to the overall cost of the trail extension...as I'm imagining the needed visual hinder length to be less than 100 meters.

2. Question #1: I would prefer the orange route as it would be the prettiest route and the most enjoyable. I just wish it would not interfere on private property.
Question #2: anything that would ease the concerns of the property owners.
3. Question #1: This will be a beautiful nature trail through a wooded creek valley, as well as an important transportation connector to a major employment/industrial area
Question #2: No changes
4. Question #1: It is the safest and most accessible route. It is the most-commuter-friendly route and is most consistent with the goals of the trail network (both existing and planned).
Question #2: I agree that compromises should be made to reduce impacts to adjacent Bluff Creek property owners (e.g., the lower-profile bridge suggested by the engineers). I encourage inclusion of neighborhood connector to East Point area (via road stub by theatres) and to Bluff Creek area -- if a route is acceptable by neighborhood.
5. Question #1: I prefer the trail route that follows the creek. No one wants to ride on Stadium Blvd. I'm also in favor of paying a fair market value for the condemnation of the one or two properties as needed.
Question #2: No trails should run through the woods of the Waters-Moss Conservation Area.
6. Question #1: The trail would continue enhancing Columbia's trail systems to encourage people to enjoy the beauty of the trails and the ability to walk, bike, and use a wheelchair to promote physical activity and live healthier lives
Question #2: Nothing.
7. Question #1: I think the proposed Grindstone creek trail alignment is wonderful and cannot wait for it to be built!!
Question #2: I would not change a thing!
8. Question #1: Connecting the MKT to the business park east of Highway 63 w/o travel on major roads and minimum hills. This is a major addition to the City's trail system significantly reducing the US 63 problem.
Question #2: Nothing. This appears to be the best possible route for the trail given the roads, hills and underpasses.
9. Question #1: I like that it is in a beautiful area. It will be a really nice addition to the network and will serve many people on the east side of town in the years to come. I also like that it avoids as many developed areas as possible.
Question #2: If we could avoid all private homes that would be nice but the overall benefit to the community is great and this alignment appears to minimize conflicts with

land owners, although not all. It is unlikely that we'll ever build a road, sewer or trail that has 100% agreement from all parties.

10. Question #1: It is my understanding that some neighbors are opposed to the construction of this trail? I think continuing to connect this city by trails has been such a positive experience even after some protested. The benefits are too great! Please honor the commitment that has been made to the citizens of Columbia! Thank you for all of your efforts!

Question #2: I would change nothing.

11. Question #1: It's FLAT and my kids won't whine while riding their bikes.

Question #2: Not sure I know enough about the alignment to comment. Just make it flat (like the MKT - which is most often far too crowded for young children to ride) and my young family will use it.

12. Question #1: This is a great trail addition to the city's network. A great alternative to getting to the eastern part of Columbia.

Question #2: Nothing. Route looks to be very reasonable.

13. Question #1: I think the proposed alignment of the trail is perfect. There is no other way to get through the area and the people who live there will come to enjoy I am sure. just look at the houses along the MKT. My backyard is the new trail and park at Bonnie View. It's great!

Question #2: get it done faster

14. Question #1: The alignments are excellent as is. Let's get those trails built ASAP.

Question #2: No change.

**Survey/Approve of the trail utilizing alternative alignment due to eminent domain:
(Public Input Meeting - 2/Survey - 1)**

1. Question #1: It stays away from most of the homes in the area.

Question #2: I don't think building a trail is proper use of eminent domain, depriving families of their yards and privacy against their will. If people ride bikes to work, there are already bike lanes on many streets (including Stadium) that they can use to ride on.

**Survey/Generally opposed to the trail:
(Public Input Meeting - 5/Survey - 5)**

1. Question #1: Nothing

Cancel it completely. Those funds could be used in a much wiser way during these times of financial distress. Some of the roads around town could use those funds. It is a total waste of money

2. Question #1: NOTHING

Question #2: I think the city can/should find other ways to use our hard earned tax dollars & a new trail that could possibly flood seems like a HUGE waste of time & our money

3. Question #1: I don't like the proposed trail alignment because it destroys the natural beauty of the current trail. Since I have lived in part of Grindstone Creek the city has released urban hunters into the area to kill off the wildlife, now they want to complete the urbanization by paving it over.
Question #2: Leave what remains of a natural area within the Columbia City limits. Columbia already has multiple urbanized parks, e.g. Stephens Lake Park, Cosmo Park, etc.
4. Question #1: Nothing
Question #2: Not take through private property. Not build through Floodplain. If private developer proposed this there would be a deafening outcry from city planners in regard to conservation and environment.
5. Question #1: I don't see the need for this trail. Better to extend Stephens Park trail south.
Question #2: I would not build this trail that leads to an industrial site. Better to serve residential areas.

Additional Input

Email received October 22, 2012

Hello Mr. Hood and Mr. Griggs,

I am forwarding you an email I sent to the members of the Parks and Recreation Commission. I found your email addresses on the City website.

My husband and I plan to attend the meeting scheduled for this Thursday night since I understand that the Grindstone Trail will be discussed.

Thank you.

Janice

From: Janice A. Harder [mailto:janice@harderlaw.com]

Sent: Monday, October 22, 2012 10:50 AM

To: 'marin.blevins@gmail.com'; '5meow@socket.net'; 'b2kpauls@yahoo.com'; 'Lhutton60@gmail.com'; 'tkloepfel@shelterinsurance.com'; 'mjdonlsn@gmail.com'

Subject: Grindstone Trail project

Hello,

I understand that you are members of the Columbia Parks and Recreation Commission, and that you will be discussing the Grindstone Trail project at an upcoming meeting. I am forwarding you an email I sent to Barbara Hoppe and the other City Council members:

Dear Council Representative Hoppe,

My name is Janice Harder and my husband Ray and I live in the East Pointe neighborhood at 1806 Bluff Pointe Drive.

I am writing regarding extension of the Grindstone Trail. From what I see, you are supporting the diversion of the 1.5 million dollars from the Grindstone Trail project to other projects. My husband and I support construction of the Grindstone Trail and are opposed to the money for the

trail going to other projects. The parks tax that was passed by the citizens of Columbia was specifically for the Grindstone Trail and substituting a lesser-quality trail would not be proper.

There is a group of people in our neighborhood that has been vocal in its objection to the trail. However, that group, I feel, does not constitute a majority of our neighborhood. I do not think it speaks for the neighborhood as a whole. I remember that you were at our last neighborhood meeting in April where at the end, there was an impromptu vote to oppose the Grindstone Trail. However, I think the number of people attending that meeting represented less than half of the total households in the neighborhood, and not everyone at the meeting raised their hand to vote against the trail. The annual neighborhood meeting is simply a time for interested residents of the neighborhood to get together and talk about any issues that exist, but there is no requirement for a quorum, and no official decisions are made. Many people never attend those meetings.

I think how this all started is that there are two homeowners whose property would be taken by the City to build the trail as currently designed. When it became known that these homeowners did not want their property to be used for the trail, many people supported these homeowners which came to mean that they did not support the Grindstone Trail.

I know personally that there are many people in our neighborhood who do support the Grindstone Trail. People who support the trail may not want to get involved because it would appear that they are going against the two homeowners. Eminent domain was an issue at the meeting and some people are against eminent domain no matter what the situation. I think this is the wrong way to look at the situation.

I respect the homeowners who do not want their property to be used for the trail, and I am supporting the trail itself and not necessarily the use of eminent domain to take property. However, construction of the Grindstone Trail was specifically voted on by the voters of Columbia. By a large majority, the people voted for 1.5 million dollars to be used for the Grindstone Trail. I do not think the City should now be able to go against the vote of the people and use the money for an inferior project.

My son, Dan Harder, and his wife Margaret also live in the neighborhood at 1803 Bluff Pointe Drive, and he has been vocal in making this point. As he said at the recent meeting of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, he has been planning on the trail being built ever since the election happened and “the parks tax won.” He was shocked to see that now the trail may be scrapped and the money used elsewhere.

Instead of scrapping the Grindstone Trail project, I think the City should look at ways of making it happen without taking property from the two homeowners. At the meeting of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, Mike Griggs mentioned that Allstate Consultants has determined that it might be possible to build the trail without using any of the two homeowners’ property. Also, at the meeting, Ian Thomas offered an alternative that the trail be constructed in segments, with the controversial areas being left until a later date. As he said, this is a long-term project. It should be expected that there would be opposition in a situation like this where someone’s property might be taken. But over time, the opposition may decrease, or other options could become

available. I think that these possibilities should be explored. Even if the trail narrows for a short distance, that should be preferable to not having the trail at all.

My son and husband are avid bikers and are familiar with trails in Columbia. According to them, the two alternate routes being proposed are not scenic, and they are dangerous and hilly. I often walk on the Grindstone Nature Trail, and think it is a beautiful area. A continuation of this trail through the wooded area would be fantastic. Further, I believe that this was the intent of the voters when they approved the parks tax.

Finally, I want to point out that the Grindstone Trail is for the entire City of Columbia, not just our neighborhood. I'm surprised that a small group of people can change a project that was voted on by the entire City. I assumed the Council anticipated there could be some opposition when they put it on the ballot. Also, I would point out that on the emails going out by the people opposing the trail, there are many people on the email distribution list who do not live in our neighborhood.

My husband and I hope the City will continue on with the Grindstone Trail project as approved by the voters, and that the City will work through the various issues which are to be expected in this type of situation.

Thank you for your service on the Council.

Janice

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