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Memorandum

To: Jon Rose, President
Sue Schroader, Project Manager
Olympic Property Group

From: Richard Shaw

Date: June 19, 2007

Project Name: North Kitsap Trail System

Subject: Trails and Open Space or Greenways System

*Trails and Open Space or Greenways System
Consideration of a Program Component at Port Gamble, Hansville and Arborwood in Kitsap County*

OPG has an opportunity to develop a plan for an extensive trail and open space/greenways system throughout the Kitsap Peninsula. The trail system can be developed as both a regional trail network throughout the Kitsap Peninsula as well as a community network of trails at Port Gamble, Hansville and Arborwood. There have been studies and reports written by the National Park Service, Trust for Public Lands, and the Rails to Trails Conservancy presenting compelling evidence that trails and open space/greenway systems are a highly desired amenity and produce economic value and benefits.

Greenways are corridors of protected open space managed for conservation and recreation purposes. They generally follow natural features of the land and are most successful when they link parks, historic sites, and cultural features with each other and populated areas. Trails can be used for hiking, walking, bicycling, horseback riding and other forms of recreational transportation. Some greenways include trails while others do not. OPG already has a framework for the trails system using the historic logging roads and the preserved open space such as the Old Growth Forest can be the beginnings of the Greenway system.

In recent years open space and trail systems associated with new or existing development are more often perceived as an investment that produces important economic benefits rather than an avoidable expense. In addition to economic benefits, research has shown that there is a social benefit in accessible open space and trails as well as an environmental gain.

Economic Benefits

- Economic Boon for Communities and Regions

Tourism and recreation-related spending is stimulated by trails and greenways. Tourist opportunities such as bike rentals, river rafting tours, restaurants, retail and lodging are related to trails systems.

Just as new businesses are created the development of a trails systems results in the expansion of existing businesses related to tourism and travel according to a National Park Study.

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Job growth is created through trail-related construction and maintenance. Both the initial construction and on-going maintenance and expansion of the trails and open space system provide on-going employment.

Development of a greenway and trail system preserve linear space for future infrastructure needs and help shape growth and define where development occurs.

The presence of trails, parks and open space increase the perceived quality of life and are a high priority in attracting new businesses.

Outdoor recreation represents one of the most vigorous growth areas in the U.S. economy and much of it is supported by public and private open space. According to a National Park Service report the tourism/leisure will soon become the leading U.S. industry.

- Impact on Property Values

Trails are the number one amenity potential homeowners look for according to the National Association of Homebuilders.

Properties which are adjacent to open space amenities sell more quickly according to a report from Scenic America.

Trails and open space are ranked a top amenity for new master planned communities by the National Association of Realtors.

People are willing to pay more for property close to parks and open space than property that is not according to a National Park Service report.

- Environmental Economic Benefit

Greenways can serve as flood plains to mitigate damage caused by flood and help in the management of flood control.

Preservation of economically important landscapes such as watersheds is less expensive in the long run than the construction of infrastructure of lean polluted water.

Forested open space is valuable for cleaning the air of pollutants, contribute to storm water retention, and saving money that would be spent on storm water retention infrastructure.

Greenways provide links through fragmented habitat, protecting plant and animal species, enhancing the environment for users and creating a healthier ecosystem.

- Historic Preservation and Community Identity

The unique landscape preserved by a trails and greenway system provides the opportunity to turn geographic resources into community trademarks

Establishment of trails and greenway corridors can aid in preservation of historically significant locations which add to character and attractiveness of the community or region

The linkage of culturally and historically significant locations allow the visitor to physically experience places where historical events occurred, creating a unique visitor/tourist experience

A trails system utilizing part of the logging road system would help preserve these historic routes used by the lumber industry

Enhancement of the sense of community identity through a recognition of the cultural and historical assets of a place enhances the sense of community and the identity of the community, creating an attractive destination.

Examples: *Regional Trail Systems*

Great Allegheny Passage

1998 study found that the direct economic impact of the Great Allegheny Passage, a 150 mile trail connecting Cumberland, MD and Pittsburgh, PA was \$14 million a year. A rise in real estate values and opening of several new businesses was seen in Confluence, PA, one of the first trailhead towns. (Allegheny Trail Alliance)

Mineral Belt Trail, Leadville, CO

This 12.5 mile trail loops the city of Leadville and meanders through aspen groves, coniferous forests, wildflower meadows and the historic Leadville mining district. In the months following the opening the city reported 19% increase in sales tax revenues. Restaurants and lodging facilities report that they are serving patrons who have come specifically to ride the trail. (National Recreation Trails Association) **(Pix)**

Mineral Wells to Weatherford Rail-Trail

This trail near Dallas, TX attracts approximately 300,000 people annually and generates local revenues of \$2 million. (National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse)

Little Miami Scenic Trail, Ohio

A trail users study by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments found that users spent an average of \$13.54 per visit on food and beverage, an additional \$277 per person on clothing, equipment and accessories for use during the trail trip. With an estimated 150,000 users per year the economic benefit is significant. (Miami Valley Trails Website)

Misphillion River Greenway, Milford, DE

The greenway east and west of Milford, DE consists of 2600 of preserved open space. The open spaces are connected by a mile long Misphillion Riverwalk which also connects the downtown business area and cultural areas to the open space system. The Greenway and, in particular, the Riverwalk are credited with revitalizing the downtown of Milford which was nearly vacant ten years ago with new businesses, retail sales figures exceeding \$200 million and 250 new jobs. (Delaware State Parks)

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

In Montana, an estimated 75,000 visitors to the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River and the Lewis and Clark Trail, contribute \$750,000 annually to the economy of the area around the 149 mile river corridor. (Bureau of Land Management)

Examples: *Communities with Public Trail Systems*

Aspen, CO

The Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Program was established in 1990. It has been successful that Pitkin County citizens voted in 1999 to continue the program for another 10 years. To date the Program has preserved 14,000 acres of open space with 38 miles of recreational trails. Some of the lands have been purchased by the county, some are still in private ownership and some are protected as open space conservation easements. This program contributes to the popularity of Aspen as a resort destination and its continued high real estate values.

Highlands Ranch, Douglas County, CO

Highlands Ranch is a 22,000 acre community 16 miles south of Denver. The community includes 70 miles of trails system that connects all the varied uses in the community including residential, educational, commercial and retail. The trail system is also one the most valued amenities of the community. Fifty-seven percent of prospective home buyers cited trails as a top amenity. Highlands is also known for its trail running popularity, a sport which has increased twenty-two percent since 1998. Highlands was developed almost 25 years ago, but continues to be a popular residential location and its property continues to increase in value. (Urban Land Institute)

Boulder, CO

Boulder has more than 40,000 acres of open space, much of it in a ring of Greenbelts around the city. Beginning in the 1970's when the open space system was designated Boulder residents began to pay more to live near these open spaces including trails and steam corridors. The average value of property adjacent to the greenbelt would be thirty-two percent higher than those 3,200 feet away. In one neighborhood total property values increased \$5.4 million after the Greenbelt was designated. Boulder's property values continue to remain some of the highest in Colorado due a great deal to the amenity of the open space and trails system. (National park Service)

Seattle, WA

A study completed by the Office of Planning in Seattle stated that property near or adjacent to the 12-mile Burke Gilman Trail sold for 6% more than other houses of comparable size. The trail is located in Ballard, an older neighborhood near Lake Washington and connects with the Sammamish River Regional Trail and the I-90 Bridge Bike Trail.

Salem, OR

According to Elizabeth Brabec in her article "On the Value of Open Spaces", land adjacent to a greenbelt was found to be worth about \$1,200 an acre more than land only 1,000 feet away.

Berlin, NH

Berlin is a paper mill town located near the White Mountains National Forest. It attracts six million visitors a year who tour the town through a trails and walkway system. The trails explore the history and heritage of the paper and pulp industry as well as educate the visitors about the unique ecosystem of the forest. (Trust for Public Lands)

North Lake Tahoe, NV

A partnership between communities, USFS, and the California Tahoe Conservancy has developed an extensive trail system along the perimeter of Lake Tahoe. The system has attracted visitors for biking, hiking, and rock-climbing as well as winter sports such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. This has created business opportunities in each of the areas that support the activities, such as equipment rental, restaurant and food services and lodging. Visitor surveys over the last five years show a direct link between visitor stays and the trail system. When compared to other recreational amenities, including water based uses; the Tahoe trail is the most desired amenity. It is also cited as the main reason to extend a stay in the region.

The above are a few of the examples of the economic benefits of regional and local trails and open space/greenway benefits. There has been a vast amount of study into this subject and a large amount of information available. Some of the most informative studies have been done by the National Park Service, The Trust for Public Lands, Rails to Trails, Urban land Institute, and Scenic America.