

## Amy Johnson

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**From:** EVAN WHITE <epwhitehouse@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 12:47 PM  
**To:** CityRecorder  
**Subject:** Rural-Hoyt Trail Connection, Additional Comments  
**Attachments:** Pioneer.docx

I do not want to burden the record, but after reading public comments, I think it might be helpful to re-enter the comments that I made nearly eight years ago (received by the City Recorder on July 13, 2012), representing the unanimous views of the Sunnyslope Neighborhood Association.

Several persons mentioned public safety. Paragraphs #2 and 3 of my 2012 comments discuss this issue and give the names of three people I know who were injured while riding bikes on Commercial. It hasn't gotten any safer.

One commentator presented voluminous real estate statistics, as if they tell some story. The story that you should be hearing is that walkability enhances real real estate values, as I mention in paragraph #4. The website [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com) -- still exists, and is proof that people pay more for property when they are able to walk to work, shopping, or recreation.

I have in my files a letter to the Planning Commision, from Friends of Pioneer Cemetery, dated December 7, 2004, stating that " *We welcome responsible and appropriate recreational use of the cemetery.*"

Finally, when I lived on Fairmount Hill, I regularly walked to work and took the bus home. That would be much more unsafe and unpleasant for those who live on the south side of Pioneer Cemetery.

Thank you for your service to our City.

**Comments of Sunnyslope Neighborhood Association  
On LUBA Remand of City Initiated Vacation of Public Right-Of-Way at Pioneer Cemetery**

My name is Evan White, and I live at 4553 Brock Loop S., just north of Sprague High School. I am Land Use Chair of the Sunnyslope Neighborhood Association. At its regularly scheduled meeting on May 17, 2012, our board voted to oppose any further City efforts to vacate this public right of way, at least until such time as the City has completed its transportation planning and developed both a plan and funding for a pedestrian and bike path connecting Hoyt Street and Rural Street. Nine board members were present and the vote was unanimous.

A bike/pedestrian path through Pioneer Cemetery will help Council achieve one of its most important goals. It will also reduce accidents, discourage potentially lethal bike travel, enhance property values, and improve the physical and financial health of city residents.

**1) Help achieve better connectivity, one of Council's most important goals.** Council has clearly stated that it seeks better bike and pedestrian connectivity.<sup>1</sup> Pioneer and Mt. Crest cemeteries share a fence that is 3,000 foot long, severing bike or pedestrian connectivity between the Candalaria and Fairmount neighborhoods, or between the Sunnyslope neighborhood and downtown. This tall barbed-wire tipped fence is the only significant barrier to north-south connectivity for Sunnyslope neighbors who want to bike or walk to or from downtown.

**2) Reduce accidents.** Lack of a path through Pioneer Cemetery forces cyclists (and pedestrians) to divert to Commercial Street. As noted in the decision of the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA), *"Commercial Avenue is a busy north-south arterial street that is auto oriented and not particularly pedestrian or bicycle friendly."*<sup>2</sup> Two of my former co-workers have had bicycle accidents on Commercial Street. Dave Astle was able to transport himself to the Emergency Room, thankful that he was not run over by a car. Tom Riordan had his arm broken.<sup>3</sup> And my former wife, Kaaren Hawkes, had her collar bone broken. All three feel fortunate to be alive and still living in Salem.

**3) Liberty is lethal.** Lack of a pathway through Pioneer Cemetery encourages my neighbors to use Liberty Street when bicycling to and from downtown. But there are no bike lanes along Liberty between Hansen and Browning. Riding on sidewalks is both prohibited and unsafe because mailboxes are set into the sidewalks on both sides of the street. The posted speed limit is 35 mph, but traffic generally moves at about 40 mph. A slight "hump" at one road section creates a risk that an automobile might quickly be "on top of" a bicyclist, especially at night.

**4) Improve property values.** *"Walkable neighborhoods have become hot commodities across the country. According to a 2011 survey conducted by the National Association of Realtors, nearly 80 percent of respondents look for homes in pedestrian-friendly areas.. At least two large*

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<sup>1</sup> Council Goals, July 11, 2011; "Vision 2020 Principles," Council Agenda item 4.2C, January 9, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals, LUBA No. 2011-2012, page2, emphasis added.

<sup>3</sup> Portland is generally considered more bicycle friendly than Salem. However, it was in Portland that the daughter of another former co-worker, a recent graduate of West Salem High School, was killed while riding her bicycle.

*brokerages with offices in the Portland area – Windermere and John L. Scott – are routinely using Walk Score [[www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)] as a marketing tool on their listings.”<sup>4</sup> Salem depends on property tax revenue for its fiscal health. Mayor Anna Peterson and other community leaders are concerned that only 66 percent of the Salem workforce choose to live here.<sup>5</sup>*

**5) Improve resident financial and physical health.** The benefits of physical exercise need no explanation, but there is a synergy with the Salem-Keizer Transit District. Some residents may want to walk one way, and take the bus home or vice versa. Improved connectivity would help families who struggle with higher gasoline costs, or who are stranded because (unlike Portland, Corvallis and Eugene) Salem lacks weekend bus service. Gasoline prices tripled from 1970 (36 cents per gallon) to 1990 (\$1.16 per gallon) and tripled again by 2010 (\$3.05 per gallon).<sup>6</sup> Currently, the price of gas at the South Salem Shell Station is \$4.06.

### **Sunnyslope Shows The Way**

The Sunnyslope Neighborhood has bike/pedestrian paths which link streets and provide a safe and pleasant way to walk or bike. (See attached photos) These paths can be compared to a potential path through the Pioneer Cemetery, which I’ve measured to be approximately 448 feet. I will discuss five of these paths.

Two paths let me walk to Roths or to a location from which I could catch the bus. From Sunnyslope Park I can use a path between two houses that is approximately 161 feet long and connects to Kurth. After a short walk, I can then enter another path, 197 feet long, that goes between four houses and connects Boston Court S. to Redinger Ct. These paths let me (and school children) avoid a section of Cunningham that does not have sidewalks.

Another path, approximately 367 feet long, connects 12<sup>th</sup> Place S. to Skyline Boulevard, and helps neighbors and school children avoid walking along Skyline, which has no sidewalks.

Two paths with a combined distance of about 416 feet connect Rock Creek to Maplewood. The first section goes from Rock Creek to Red Leaf (214 feet), then, crossing Red Leaf (30 feet), a second path connects to Maplewood (172 feet). These paths help children walk safely to Secor Park and Crossler Middle School.

### **Conclusion**

It is unclear why the city would initiate a proceeding to give away a valuable public right of way that is needed for an important bicycle or pedestrian connection between the Sunnyslope, Candalaria and Fairmount neighborhoods.

Attachment: Photo of Cemetery & photos of bike/foot paths in Sunnyslope Neighborhood

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<sup>4</sup> “Walkability ranks high among buyer desires,” Oregonian, April 2, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> “Which way are commuters headed?” Statesman Journal, April 10, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1977 and 2012.

**Pioneer Cemetery Path – 448 feet**

**20<sup>th</sup> Pl. S. to Skyline – 367 feet**

**Maplewood to Red Leaf – 172 feet**

**Red Leaf to Rock Creek – 214 feet**

## Amy Johnson

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**From:** Vanessa Nordyke  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 25, 2020 7:21 AM  
**To:** CityRecorder  
**Subject:** Fwd: Proposed Pioneer Cemetery access

Vanessa Nordyke  
Salem City Council, Ward 7  
City phone: (971) 707-3732

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**From:** james.douglas@yahoo.com <james.douglas@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 4:20 PM  
**To:** Vanessa Nordyke  
**Subject:** Proposed Pioneer Cemetery access

Hi Vanessa,

We are writing to express our desire for having an additional access through Pioneer Cemetery. We are both Salem natives and have lived in Salem much of our lives, and much of that has been in either the Fairmount or Candalaria neighborhoods.

We think it's a shame to not have an easy, direct, public way to travel by foot between these two great neighborhoods. The current accesses between the two neighborhoods are either 1) circuitous (the path west of City View Cemetery) or 2) next to Commercial St South, one of the busiest vehicular boulevards in the mid-valley.

We feel that having a pedestrian-friendly way to travel through Pioneer Cemetery would benefit our city, by encouraging more pedestrian travel and thus reducing travel by car, and also allowing both neighborhoods the easy and pleasant travel in both north and south directions. People in Candalaria could much more easily get to downtown locations and Fairmount residents could much more easily access businesses south of them.

We love Pioneer Cemetery, it is a true gem. And we love the work that The Friends of Pioneer Cemetery have done. But this gem is virtually unknown due to the fact that it is nearly inaccessible. The only current access is the small single entrance on Hoyt Street. We believe that having an opportunity for more people to access Pioneer Cemetery would actually help The Friends of Pioneer Cemetery's work and visibility.

In summary, we are for for having an additional access to Pioneer Cemetery, an access that is controlled with the same hours of operation as the current access, which would allow the Fairmount and Candalaria neighborhoods to be easily connected by pedestrians.

We applaud your efforts to move this process forward.

Sincerely,

Jim Green

Kathy Lelack-Green  
512 Rural Ave S  
Salem, OR 97302

## Amy Johnson

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**From:** Jeff Schumacher <jeff.schumacher@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 11:49 AM  
**To:** CityRecorder  
**Cc:** Vanessa Nordyke; Tom Andersen  
**Subject:** April 27 City Council meeting - potential Rural-Hoyt Trail Connection  
**Attachments:** 2020.04.23 Comments for Council meeting on Apr 27, 2020 - trail between Rural & Hoyt.pdf

Hello,

Please see comments for an item on Monday's City Council agenda - the upcoming motion from Councilor Nordyke for a potential trail connection between Rural and Hoyt.

These comments include the "official" position of the South Central Association of Neighbors as well as more personal comments compiled from conversations with other neighbors that are not on the SCAN board.

Thank you,  
Jeff Schumacher  
SCAN chair, 2019-20

April 23, 2020

Jeff Schumacher  
SCAN chair, 2019-20  
1945 W Nob Hill St. SE  
Salem, Oregon 97302

**Re: *Motion from Councilor Nordyke regarding a potential trail connection between Rural and Hoyt Avenues S in the vicinity of the Pioneer Cemetery.***

The South Central Association of Neighbors supports a pedestrian connection between upper Rural and upper Hoyt. This connection is mentioned in the City's Transportation System Plan as needing further study to determine the final location and design - SCAN supports the City undertaking this further study now with the ultimate goal of connecting the Fairmount Hill neighbors with the Candalaria neighbors.

In my time on the SCAN board - about six years - the vast majority of our board members have supported the possible connection of Rural Avenue to Hoyt Street along the western border of Pioneer Cemetery. Most recently, SCAN passed a motion of support for this connection at our November 13, 2019 meeting. There were ten votes in favor and zero against this motion.

I've also been asked to convey the support of many individual Fairmount Hill neighbors. When this request was made we were anticipating an in-person hearing rather than a virtual meeting with no live testimony (and our goal was to avoid repetitive testimony). However, I will still briefly summarize some of the many points supporting this connection through City property that will benefit two neighborhoods.

Initially, it is worth noting that this issue has come up before. I haven't been around for the entire history but my sense is this issue has been resurrected because a connection between upper Rural and Hoyt has long-standing support from many neighbors and it is inherently a good idea.

We should have safe, convenient ways to move around our City without driving. This connection would allow parents in Candalaria to easily access Fairmount Hill Playground. It would allow Fairmount Hill neighbors easy access to the commercial corridor - from the FedEx Office store to Roth's Vista Market to Venti's and more. The connection may not make a



measurable difference in traffic counts along Commercial Street but it would have a measurable impact in quality of life for those neighbors in Candalaria and Fairmont Hill that would enjoy convenient walking access to a few of Salem's amenities.

Currently, if a neighbor travels between Fairmount Hill and Candalaria without a car there are no great options. Walking along Commercial Street is thoroughly unpleasant, and made extra unpleasant if you have kids. Being near fast moving cars - while on foot - is uncomfortable for many people, and the road noise makes conversations difficult or impossible. Another option, and one that has been cited by opponents of this connection at Pioneer Cemetery, is the Fairmount Park trail. This trail heads west from Fairmount City Park and drops down to Crestview (just above River Road). This trail is hardly a substitute for a connection at Pioneer Cemetery as it is neither a direct nor convenient connection between Fairmount Hill and the heart of the Candalaria neighborhood (to say nothing of connecting Fairmount to the Commercial corridor).

Regarding Pioneer Cemetery, I should point out that every person I spoke to who wants this connection along or through Pioneer Cemetery has a deep appreciation for the Cemetery. It is universally admired, and its preservation is incredibly important to these neighbors. However, preserving the Cemetery is not necessarily contrary to also wanting to improve the Cemetery. It is important for our neighborhoods to evolve - even historic neighborhoods. We shouldn't put old things in a time capsule, and we can preserve Pioneer Cemetery while still increasing access to it in a way that both benefits its adjacent neighbors and also adds awareness and vitality to the Cemetery and its important role in our City's history.

In regards to Pioneer Cemetery's historic status it is important to consider some context. First, it is surrounded by a chain link fence that was installed in the 1980s. As I understand it, this fence was installed as a reaction to some serious vandalism. Second, there is a road for cars into the Cemetery. In fact, the road does a loop through the Cemetery. Adding a connection for pedestrians - which would allow a north/south connection from Hoyt to Rural - may upset some people that value keeping Pioneer Cemetery exactly how it is but I would submit the Cemetery has always been subject to change. And allowing people to traverse it on foot strikes me as far more historically accurate than allowing cars or installing chain link fences.

Finally, I think it is important to acknowledge that some of the risks mentioned by those opposed to this connection have cited do exist. There are risks to headstones toppling over, there are risks to encroachment onto grave sites, there are risks of vandalism. All of these risks currently exist, and if pedestrians are allowed to cross into Pioneer Cemetery at that northwest corner it is possible that those risks would be increased. But those risks are also being managed - there is no reason to think we cannot continue to effectively control and mitigate those risks.

And there is a chance that increased access to Pioneer Cemetery would actually decrease the risks; more people using a gate through the Cemetery could mean more people would help keep inappropriate behaviors at bay. And just as importantly, increased access could mean more people will learn about Pioneer Cemetery, its important place in our City's history, and the value to our community in preserving it.

The City staff should determine what options are available to make this connection a reality.

On behalf of SCAN and neighbors in support of this connection, thank you for your consideration.



Jeff Schumacher  
SCAN chair, 2019-20