

## Jamie Donaldson

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**From:** GigiG <april6427@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 10:59 AM  
**To:** Jamie Donaldson; MERRILL William B. \* Bill  
**Subject:** 24-123957-PLN

Hello;

I am writing in response to the letter we received about the proposed changes to Bailey Ridge Park.

We are Gretchen and William Merrill, and we live at 3754 Tayside St S, directly across from the park and in sight of some of the proposed changes. We have lived here since June 2008.

I have reviewed the proposal and have the following comments:

The proposal is vague. It states, "A Class 3 Site Plan Review site for improvements to Bailey Ridge Park, including restoration to portions of Chambers Swale and construction of a new pathway linking Illahe Court S and Tayside St S, with a Class 2 Adjustment to eliminate the lighting requirement for pedestrian lighting...".

One: what are the other improvements than the restoration of the swale and the singular new pathway? That is not clear.

Two: the map provided does not show a legend showing the items marked as pathways, but I am assuming they are pathways given my familiarity with the park as I am in it multiple times a day, every day of the week. The proposal states "a" pathway, but there are several paths in the map.

Three: what material will the pathway be constructed of? Bark? Gravel? Concrete?

Four: I have noticed several healthy trees in the park with orange marks on their trunks. Is there an intent to take down healthy trees? There are many dead or dying trees in the park that warrant removal before removing healthy trees for a pathway, that, in all honesty, already exists, and is already used regularly by the neighborhood on a daily basis.

Five: What is the plan for the wildlife in the park? There are nesting chickadees and cowbirds in the ground currently and also birds getting ready to nest. There are breeding Great Horned Owls in the trees. Deer sleep up there. Rodents and snakes also live up there. What is the plan for them? In the past, the City came up and mowed over existing nests in the spring and mowed over snakes as well. A mowed over baby bird is devastating to find and even a sliced-up snake is sad.

Six: For the swale, again, a great deal of wildlife feed around there and live in there. As I am up there every day, I know we have Black-capped and Chestnut-backed chickadees; Dark-eyed Juncos; Golden-crowned Kinglets; Orange-crowned warblers; House, Lesser, and Gold Finches; Anna's Hummingbirds; Mourning Doves; Spotted Towhees; Cowbirds; Song Sparrows; Blue and Scrub Jays; Pine Siskins; and even Bluebirds. I notice in the Sheet Notes the Chambers Swale is considered a wetland.

Seven: What is the timeline for this project? How long will it take? What kind of equipment will be used, and will it block the street in front of our homes on Tayside?

Eight: What is the maintenance budget for the pathway? As you can see from the gravel area with the picnic benches, weeds and grasses grow up quickly. And we have vast amounts of poison oak in the park. As a formal pathway is likely meant to encourage more people to walk through and use the park, is there going to be any action to remove the poison oak?

Given the budget issues facing the City of Salem right now, I have grave concerns with spending time and money on this proposed pathway. I understand the swale may be a different concern for the homes downstream, yet also have concerns for the wildlife, and would like to see that mitigated. It does not make sense for the City to spend money on a pathway in a neighborhood park, when it will not take out the existing poison oak, dead trees or mow the grass that grows so tall and becomes so high it is a fire danger more than twice a summer. The City cannot maintain the park as it is, let alone with anything new. I do not see the point in moving forward with the pathway. Frankly, I would much rather see money going towards keeping the library open more days than on a project that is of questionable benefit for such a small number of people.

Thank you.

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