

Jim Chasse East Portland Action Plan Member

At a tree planting along the I-205 Multi-Use Path in the Montavilla neighborhood, East Portland Action Plan (EPAP) member Jim Chasse paused to recall his biking past.

"I used to ride my bike up and down Mt. Tabor delivering newspapers," Chasse said, as he pointed across the distance to the hills of Mt. Tabor.

An avid bicyclist, Chasse has been biking the I-205 Multi-Use Path, which parallels 16.5 miles of the I-205 freeway, for 20 years. While "it's a beautiful path as it is," Chasse also said that the path has some room for improvement.

On March 20, Chasse spent the morning making a long-term investment in the path's aesthetic beauty by joining in a community tree planting. The planting was part of a three-year project among Friends of Trees, ODOT and Metro to green the path with thousands of native trees and shrubs.

In addition to enhancing the path for bordering neighborhoods and everyone who uses it, the plantings will reduce air pollution, minimize storm-water runoff into streams and rivers, and provide habitat for wildlife and songbirds. When complete, ODOT will showcase the project as a statewide model for considering the greening of other transportation corridors.

As a member of the Powellhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association and as the EPAP liaison to the I-205 Multi-Use Path, Chasse has been a strong advocate for improvements to the path. He recently joined Friends of Trees and ODOT in submitting a grant proposal for \$50,000 to the City of Portland in consideration of the greening project.



East Portland Action Plan Member Jim Chasse has been a dedicated supporter of improvements to the I-205 Multi-Use Path. In June, he will lead a community bike ride highlighting artwork along the path.

Project Description

A three-year community-wide effort among ODOT, Friends of Trees and Metro to green the I-205 Multi-Use Path with thousands of native trees and shrubs.

Benefits

- Improved neighborhood livability
- Enhanced experience for path users
- Increased wildlife habitat
- Decreased stormwater runoff
- Increased environmental equity among communities

Project Funding

- \$410,000 from the Metro Natural Areas Bond Measure's Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grant Program
- \$80,000 from East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District
- Generous support from:
 - J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.
 - IKEA
 - Cantel Sweeping
 - Collier Arbor Care
 - HSBC Bank USA, N.A.
 - Portland General Electric
 - Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

Jim Chasse East Portland Action Plan Member

"The I-205 Multi-Use Path is going to be a key part of the transportation system in far-east Portland," said Chasse, who will lead a community bike ride highlighting art along the I-205 Multi-Use Path this June. "It connects to everything north and south for bicyclists and pedestrians."

Recognizing the path's potential, ODOT has recently embarked on other improvements in addition to the greening project. Working with TriMet, ODOT secured nearly \$4 million in federal stimulus funds to add lighting from Lents to Gladstone and to construct a new under-crossing at SE Division Street. ODOT has also invested \$50,000 in an I-205 Multi-Use Path study to identify opportunities and constraints. The study has resulted in an action plan for designing and implementing future improvements along the path, some of which were echoed by Chasse.

"The path could be made wider and have better crossings like at Killingsworth Street and over Johnson Creek," Chasse commented.

ODOT plans to pursue funding to make such improvements. In the meantime, the agency will continue in its three-year greening project with Friends of Trees and Metro.

"I like the trees," said Chasse, who is also an enthusiastic gardener. "I have 17 big Douglas firs on my property and 21 different varieties of Japanese maples in my yard."



www.facebook.com/I205MultiUsePath
www.facebook.com/friendoftrees

To learn more about the people contributing to this project, visit:
www.oregon.gov/odot/hwy/region1/i205_mup/profiles.shtml

