

# March 2001 Monthly Report

## Chris Woo, Community Outreach Specialist

### Neighbors West-Northwest

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#### **Overview**

March was a month of change for the Tanner Creek Stream Diversion Project and the Community Outreach Specialist position. Significant changes in construction plans for upcoming segments of the Combined Sewer Overflow system, a change of management in RCI (BES' contractor for Tanner Phases 2 & 5) and the planned expansion of work in Goose Hollow and the Northwest District are keeping project staff busy. My duties as Community Outreach Specialist continue to be performed with more day-to-day independence as my position becomes more integrated into the operational structure of Environmental Services and the Tanner Creek Projects. March was not without its challenges and I am continuing to monitor some ongoing issues as described below.

#### **Tanner Creek Construction Updates**

##### Phase 5

Without mincing words, Phase 5, with construction from 10<sup>th</sup>/Lovejoy to Naito Parkway, has become a persistent problem for nearby businesses, commuters, the contractor and more than a few City bureaus. Due to a limited structural failure in a retrieval shaft on Naito Parkway and the subsequent displacement of groundwater, adjacent sections of Naito began to sag as much as 10 inches. The initial sinking of the road in early February continued to be followed by a series of mechanical and engineering problems and as a result work is still being performed on Naito with no reliable estimates of when the road will be returned to normal use. However, tunneling activities, once begun, proceeded more rapidly than expected in more difficult soil than was expected and as a result tunneling operations in Phase 5 are complete and the TBM (Tunnel Boring Machine) is expected to begin work at NW 17<sup>th</sup>/Flanders the second week of April.

##### Phase 2

Work in the Goose Hollow area began in early March with the installation of a jacking shaft at SW 16<sup>th</sup>/Taylor for use in the insertion and operation of the TBM and pipe segments. Work has progressed well with no complaints from nearby businesses or residents. Work at SW 16<sup>th</sup>/Jefferson began the last week of March although it was preceded by extensive utility work on the part of Northwest Natural Gas and the Water Bureau. 16<sup>th</sup>/Jefferson will be difficult to manage in terms of parking and access. I continue to work with nearby businesses to find alternate parking solutions. Meetings with KGW staff, Lincoln H.S. Principal Peter Hamilton and nearby business owners have given me a clear indication of their needs and the needs of the people they serve.

The final section of work for Tanner Creek Phase 2 will be the crossing of Burnside. Currently, the plans for the crossing include the open-cut excavation of the street and an intricate “hard” detour (meaning signal changes, sign changes and re-striping of streets) of traffic between 19<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenues. RCI has submitted a proposal to tunnel underneath Burnside to reduce many of the traffic snares and shorten the current construction time estimate of 3 months. RCI’s proposal is currently being evaluated but it remains unlikely that tunneling Burnside will be a feasible option.

Work has returned to NW 17<sup>th</sup>/Flanders and crews are working to erect a 20-foot high sound barrier around the work site. Machinery, including a two-story tall soil separation plant will be housed behind the wall. The sound wall and modifications to equipment used at 17<sup>th</sup>/Flanders are the result of a noise variance permit obtained by RCI to perform 24-hour tunneling operations at the site. The Office of Noise Control Noise Review Board granted the permit on February 14 following an “accelerated application” by RCI. Eight days later the Neighbors West-NW Coalition Board filed an appeal of the variance permit on the grounds that proper review and notification were not adhered to. The process of obtaining the variance permit, the responsibility of the contractor, City staff and myself in performing community notifications and internal relations within the City became significant points of discussion. Following several meetings with Environmental Services, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement and NWNW staff, it was agreed that the appeal would be postponed pending a presentation to and decision by the NWDA Board. Following a presentation by Mark Hutchinson of the BES, the NWDA Board voted to allow the 24-hour construction under the guidelines and restrictions established in the variance permit.

As a result of the debate over issues surrounding the 17<sup>th</sup>/Flanders noise variance permit, more attention is being fixed upon the work of RCI. The City Noise Control Officer, Paul VanOrden, has committed to monitoring the situation as does Environmental Services staff. Residents and businesses near 17<sup>th</sup>/Flanders will be given a list of contacts who can be reached 24-hours a day should they have concerns regarding construction disruptions and the like. RCI is currently in the process of filing another application for a noise variance permit, this time for SW 16<sup>th</sup>/Taylor. More advanced public outreach is underway thanks to the improved coordination of RCI and City staff. A community meeting regarding the effects of tunneling will be held April 16, followed by a presentation to the GHFL Board on April 19. The permit is expected to go before the Noise Review Board on May 8.

## **Miscellaneous Information and Activities**

**ONI Summit** – Joined NWNW staff and others for lunch, unable to attend rest of summit due to conflicts with my training schedule as a volunteer mediator with the Neighborhood Mediation Center.

**Lunch with Joe Annett** – Compared notes with Joe Annett, my counterpart for North Portland. It is evident to me that of the four neighborhood-based Community Outreach Specialist positions in the City, mine is more focused on construction related activities, mediation and mitigation. Joe and my other counterparts work primarily with educational resources on watershed health.

**Meeting with PFE** – Tanner Creek staff met with Lisa Strader of Portland Family Entertainment for a second time March 14 to discuss the possible impacts of the upcoming Burnside work to PGE Park. PFE has adopted a “deal with the hand you’re dealt” approach regarding the Burnside construction. Tanner Creek staff will continue to coordinate with PFE on such matters as event traffic, parking, alternate transportation etc. The next meeting with Lisa will be April 9.

**CSO Tunnel Open House** – The open house to discuss recent changes to the planned construction of the CSO Tunnel was held at Fire Station 1 on March 13. Attendance was approx. 25-30 people. The CSO Tunnel is a large consolidation trunk that will run under Waterfront Park and Naito Parkway where it will continue on to the waste processing plant in North Portland. The planned route for the Tunnel will no longer extend through the entire length of the Northwest Industrial Area. Instead, the Tunnel will run to the area near Terminal One where it will cross underneath the Willamette to a pump station that will be constructed on Swan Island. The upriver crossing will limit disruption in the Northwest Industrial Area as well as regulatory and environmental problems down-river.

**Tanner Creek Phase 4** – An open house was held on March 26 to elicit comments from neighbors for use in planning the upcoming work. Tanner 4 will lay pipe using traditional open-cut measures along NW Flanders from 19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Avenues, behind Uptown Shopping Center and up to the top of Burnside. The open house was fairly well attended (30+ visitors) with several surveys, displays and project staff available for neighbors. Tim Dabreiner, consultant from Barney & Worth organized the event. I have been assigned to begin work with the Phase 4 project at some time in the near future although specifics have yet to be arranged.

## **Roundup of Meetings for March**

BES Public Involvement staff update	5
Tanner Phases 2 & 5 weekly update	4
Resident/business coordination	4
Misc. Tanner Creek staff update	3
Site “fix-it” tour w/ Tanner Creek staff	3
NWDA General Board	2
NWNW Coalition Board	1
Pearl Plan-Trans-Design	1
City Council Meetings	1

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