

**From:** Karen Strudwick  
**To:** Van der Vieren, Monica  
**Cc:** reagan.dunn@kingcounty.gov.; Zahn, Janice; parkboard; Lassiter, Dan; Amson, Blayne; Kingham, Jammie  
**Subject:** Coal Creek Park/Red Cedar Trail project: Thanks for the tour and some comments  
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Monica:

Thank you again for taking my friend, Judy, and me, along with my guide dog, Saskia, on a tour of the Red Cedar Trailhead work site at Coal Creek Park last week. It certainly gave me a much clearer understanding of the changes planned for the trail and surrounding area.

I've been very impressed by how much thought you and your colleagues are putting into your efforts to make the new trail more accessible to people with disabilities and, thus, to everyone else. If the proposals we discussed could be fully implemented, they would definitely make the park a far more attractive and welcoming destination for everyone, including those of us with vision loss.

From that particular perspective, a few ideas that I'd definitely like to see move ahead are:

--Placing tactile guidance strips along the trail to indicate where people with vision loss should or shouldn't go.

It would be very helpful if a line of raised bumps (Think rumble strips along roadways) could be laid down to clearly divide the trail into two lanes of "traffic." Guide dogs are trained to recognize changes in terrain (texture of the surface, elevation) as obstacles, much as they view both individuals and groups of people in their path. Thus, a tactile "median" in the trail probably would signal to them to stay on their side of the pathway and not veer left into "oncoming traffic," even if it meant slowing down and not overtaking (circumventing an obstacle).

You might also consider using a tactile strip on the ground in places where a fence can't be used, similar to how such strips are used along the edges of the platforms at our regional light-rail transit stations.

--Providing audio content.

I'm delighted that the project is considering adding this feature to the trail, both on-site and through content that can be downloaded to a smart phone app. It will enrich the experience of visiting the trail so much! Often, people with vision loss visit places but come away not truly knowing what was there unless they have done extensive research beforehand or have been lucky enough to go there with someone who is both knowledgeable and descriptive.

--Posting information about guide dog etiquette.

We discussed adding signage at the trailhead and online about this, similar to that about horses at Bridal Trails State Park. Such information is already available at the Guide Dogs for the Blind website ([www.gdb.com](http://www.gdb.com)) but, when you're ready to actually move ahead, I'm sure the school's Outreach department would provide more concise verbiage suitable for a sign.

Also, you might consider adding a symbol representing a person with a disability and even a person with a guide dog to any signage that depicts various types of park-goers and hikers.

--Better transportation to and from the area.

Finally, I'd like to point out again that if you build it, people with vision loss or other disabilities may not come if we don't have an easy way to get there. I realize that you're not in charge of public transit But those who are should know that transportation is too often the sticking point for those of us who would like to visit parks and get out on the trails in our beautiful region. This is true not just of parks and trails in outlying areas of King County, but even in Bellevue, including Coal Creek Park. Improved and more direct access on Metro buses , with a safe drop-off and pickup stop and a marked path to the trailhead, or even service through Metro's Trailhead Direct would undoubtedly prove popular with all users.

Well, enough from me! I'm glad the Northwest Association of Blind Athletes (NWABA) has already provided constructive feedback. In addition, in reaching out, I emphasized to various guide dog user groups as well as the two national consumer groups for blind people that this project will serve as a model and encouraged them to weigh in. I hope some of their members will respond through the web survey form or directly to your Inbox.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions and to keep me posted as the project unfolds. I've appreciated this opportunity to help improve my community and I'd be happy to help again in whatever way possible.

Thank you so very much again for working to make the outdoors more accessible.

Kind regards,  
Karen Strudwick and Saskia