



April 27, 2015

Members of City Council and the Seattle Parks Board of Commissioners,

As a pediatrician who has lived and served patients in South Seattle's Rainier Valley for the last 4 years I would like to write in support of the Cheasty Trail project. Green space has proven benefits to health and it is in short supply in our neighborhood. This need is made clear by the health disparities between our neighborhood and other Seattle neighborhoods.

As you know Seattle's Rainier Valley is one of the most ethnically diverse zip codes in the United States. This ethnic diversity, however, also comes with significant economic diversity and marked health disparities compared with other neighborhoods in the city. In the Rainier Valley, 16% of families with children live below the poverty line. Residents are two to three times more likely to die from heart disease or diabetes, and their life expectancy is nearly 10% shorter than residents of nearby neighborhoods. The consequences of family poverty are particularly hard on children, who make up a quarter of the area's population. Rainier Valley has the highest rate of asthma hospitalizations among children in all of King County, nearly double the county average. Also children in our neighborhood have higher rates of depression, suicide and physical abuse.

Green space improves health through improved opportunities to exercise and through reduced pollution. Access to nature improves community connection and increases awareness of conservation needs.

I urge you to help meet a crucial need in our neighborhood by putting your support behind the Cheasty Trail project.

Thank you,

Christopher Jones, MD
Medical Director
HopeCentral Pediatric and Behavioral Health