



Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Regional Trails White Paper

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Introduction

This white paper summarizes best practices and lessons learned from regional trail case studies of regional trails in Oregon to inform policy development for the Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Regional trails may serve both recreation and transportation uses. When planned and managed effectively they may provide benefits to local communities and the state. Case study results indicate that interagency coordination, governance, local support and “trail champions” are key factors in the success of regional trails.

I. Background

The AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities defines a shared use path as a non-motorized facility that is physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic and notes that “trails” and “shared use paths” may have different design guidelines. For example, AASHTO recommends concrete or asphalt pavement for shared use paths, but notes that unpaved surfaces may be appropriate on rural, recreational paths.¹ The ODOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guide adopted AASHTO guidelines for shared-use path design.² The Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guide published by ODOT in 2011 states that shared use paths serve both “recreational” and “utilitarian” users and establishes guidelines for path width (ten feet is typical).

For the purposes of this white paper, regional trails are identified as non-motorized trails. Trails identified for these case studies are over five miles in length, open to the public, and lie on public lands, public rights-of-way or easements. Trails connect cities, parks, and other destinations and may connect to other trails, creating a network. The trails may be a corridor for transportation or a recreational destination. However, it is often difficult to categorize bicycling and walking trip purposes given that individual trips often serve multiple purposes. Given that regional trails usually traverse distances over several miles, trail segments may serve a variety of transportation functions, user types, and design standards. Thus, regional trail development should consider the need to balance design consistency and user expectation with diverse trail user needs and surrounding land use context.

Funding for Regional Trail Projects

Although regional trails often serve both recreational and transportation uses, different federal funding streams may be available if the project serves primarily a recreational or a transportation function. For example, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants are available for off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including rails-to-trails conversion projects.³ The Recreational Trails Program funds recreation-oriented trails projects, which may include park facilities.⁴ In Oregon, bicycle and pedestrian facilities on or off the highway right-of-way may be eligible to receive ODOT *Enhance* funding, while the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) funds recreational trail projects and administers federal recreational trails grants.⁵ The ODOT *Fix It* funding stream only applies to projects located within rights-of-way. For the first time in the program history, the 2014 *ConnectOregon V* awards could be used for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

¹ American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials. Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities. 2012.

²ftp://ftp.odot.state.or.us/techserv/roadway/web_drawings/HDM/2011%20HDM%20Rewrite/2012%20Appendix%20L%20Bike%20Ped%20Design%20Guide.pdf

³<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>

⁴http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/

⁵http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/Pages/stip/stip_enhance.aspx

II. Considerations

This white paper details five case studies of regional trails in Oregon, including two examples of completed trails and three trail projects in the planning stages. Each regional trail project is multi-jurisdictional, often involving complex arrangements between multiple cities, counties and agencies. The regional trails case studies include information such as trail uses, models for maintenance and funding, and challenges and barriers to implementation.

III. Case Studies

For each of the five case studies, the project team interviewed individuals involved with the regional trail project to gather information on planning, implementation, maintenance, and governance of regional trails.

I-205 Multi Use Path

The I-205 Multi-Use Path (I205 Path) is a bicycle and pedestrian facility owned and managed by ODOT.⁶

The path parallels Interstate 205 between Vancouver, Washington and Oregon City, Oregon. The route also follows part of TriMet's MAX Green Line light rail. The trail is popular for transportation and recreational users, with access to parking at public transportation stops along the way and other amenities (e.g., restrooms, drinking fountains, and bicycle parking). The various segments are connected by on-street facilities.

Trail Planning and Development

The I205 Path was originally built in the early 1980s as part of the I-205 highway project in response to the "Bike Bill" requirement to include bicycle and pedestrian facilities with new or rebuilt highway projects. The TriMet Green Line opened for service in 2009, which provided an opportunity to connect the I205 Path with nearby destinations, as well as provide bicycle parking facilities at light rail stations.⁷ In planning the Green Line, TriMet coordinated with ODOT and the City of Portland, made connection improvements to transit, and between transit and the path, and added sound walls to protect path users from noise pollution. Additionally, the project constructed a new grade separated connection and multiple new trail connections. ODOT funded a Feasibility Study (ongoing) and Action Plan to outline potential improvement projects for the path, including lighting, landscaping, safety, and accessibility improvements.⁸ ODOT also secured federal funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) to improve landscaping, lighting conditions, and crossings.

Function, Benefits and Use

The I205 Path is a non-motorized transportation and recreation facility. The path provides connections with high-capacity transit facilities in some segments, whereas other sections serve more recreational uses. The Intertwine Trail Alliance, a coalition of more than 60 Portland area conservation, public health, parks, trails, conservation education and active transportation organizations, coordinates manual bicycle and pedestrian counts at locations on the I205 Path (as well as other regional trails in the Portland Metro area). The I205 Path is part of the envisioned regional trail system, which currently includes 250

⁶ http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/Pages/i205_mup/index.aspx

⁷ <http://TriMet.org/pdfs/history/railfactsheet-greenline.pdf>

⁸ http://library.oregonmetro.gov/files/i-205_at_corridor.pdf

miles of regional trails and is planned to include 37 regional trails in Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington.⁹

Count data were collected by volunteers from the Intertwine Alliance during same month and week, and during peak hours each year. Other information was gathered from intercept surveys of trail users. According to a summary of trail count data from 2008-2012, 72% of walkers use trail for recreation, while 64% of bicyclists use trail for recreation, and 29% of bicyclists use trail for commuting.¹⁰ Approximately 18% of bicyclists used the trail in the winter, compared with roughly 26% who use it in the other three seasons. Walkers use the trail most often in summer (about 28%), slightly less often in fall and spring (about 26%), while about 17% of walkers use the trail in winter.

According to a stakeholder interview with ODOT, a major benefit of the I205 Path is that it is a community asset that many use for recreation and commuting. According to a stakeholder interview with TriMet, it appears that higher trail usage began to occur after the Green Line began operating, but data are not available.¹¹ Additionally, a transportation benefit of the trail is that it connects bicyclists and pedestrians to transit and improves access to light rail transit stations.

Annual Count Data (Average 2 hour peak counts)	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Site 106 – Weekday					
Bike	67	-	-	65	81
Walk	42	-	-	12	12
Other	5	-	-	0	1
Total	114	-	-	77	94
Site 109 – Weekday					
Bike	-	-	-	-	155
Walk	-	-	-	-	12
Other	-	-	-	-	1
Total	-	-	-	-	168

Figure 1: I205 Path Intertwine Count Data, 2008-2012¹²

Funding and Maintenance

ODOT plays a major role in this regional trail because it owns and maintains the right-of-way. ODOT Region 1 routine maintenance activities include sweeping, landscaping, and responding to reported issues such as lighting outages or roadway debris. ODOT currently funds maintenance activities on the I205 Path through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) maintenance allocation from “Fix It”, while improvements are funded through the STIP “Enhance” program, allocated on a competitive basis.

With the construction of the Green Line, ODOT and TriMet entered into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) stipulating that TriMet will assume maintenance responsibility for the path sections that are located within light rail station areas.

⁹ http://theintertwine.org/sites/theintertwine.org/files/file_attachments/Intertwine_Bi-StateTrailsPlan.pdf.

¹⁰ http://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/intertwine_trail_use_snapshot_2008-12.pdf

¹¹ Interview with TriMet staff

¹² Note that there are no counts from 2009-2010 due to trail closures related to the Green Line construction.

ODOT secured grant funding and implemented (with partners) several maintenance and improvement projects, such as:

- A partnership with TriMet for lighting improvements with construction of the Green Line. Funding was secured with TriMet for a \$4 million ARRA grant to install overhead lighting.
- A partnership with TriMet and the City of Portland to construct an undercrossing at Division Street to improve crossing safety and access to transit. The undercrossing project was funded by ODOT.
- A “green- the-corridor” effort to plant over 4,000 trees and shrubs, funded with a \$410,000 Metro Nature in Neighborhoods grant and in partnership with Friends of Trees.¹³

The project with Friends of Trees was noted as a positive partnership that helped engage local communities, support environmental justice, improve aesthetics and perceived safety of the I205 Path. This project also aimed to improve stormwater retention and reduce the amount of runoff that flows into nearby Johnson Creek.¹⁴ ODOT Region 1 also implemented enhanced wayfinding and developed a “I-205 Path Atlas” to improve navigation. In order to enhance community involvement and maintenance activities, ODOT Region 1 is interested in developing an “Adopt-a-Trail” program for local neighborhoods to take care of path sections or neighborhoods gateways.¹⁵

Barriers and Challenges

Current challenges for I205 Path users include crossings at major arterials, lack of lighting in some areas, and safety concerns. Lighting is usually considered a personal security issue, although it may be a traffic safety issue at on-street crossings. Additionally, maintaining the I205 Path is often a challenge due to the lack of sufficient funding. In some segments of the trail, safety and public perception issues include crime, transient activity, and encroachment of waiting transit users onto the path. In order to address the issue of user conflicts between transit riders and I205 Path users, ODOT and TriMet constructed a fence at the Gateway Transit Center light rail and bus station.

Next Steps

There are several ongoing projects that present opportunities to integrate improvements with the I205 Path. For example, there is a current initiative to develop an off-road recreational area within highway right-of-way adjacent to the I205 Path (Gateway Green).¹⁶ Future improvements to on-street crossings and bicycle and pedestrian facilities will also be implemented as part of the Sunrise Corridor project¹⁷ and within the City of Maywood Park.¹⁸

Bear Creek Greenway

The Bear Creek Greenway is a paved multi-use trail that connects to five cities, natural areas and eight parks in southern Oregon. The Bear Creek Greenway is currently 20 miles, with two at-grade crossings at rural roadways. The main portion of the trail runs for 17.5 miles from Central Point, through the heart of Medford, to Ashland. A one-mile section of trail recently opened north of the Jackson County Expo/Fairgrounds.

¹³ http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/Pages/i205_mup/index.aspx

¹⁴ <http://intertwine.tumblr.com/trails/i-205-corridor>

¹⁵ Interview with ODOT – Region 1 staff

¹⁶ <http://www.gatewaygreenpdx.org/brief-history-gateway-green-project>

¹⁷ <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/sunrise/SunriseConstructionImpactssheet.pdf>

¹⁸ http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/STIP/ODOTR1_I205PathMaywood.pdf

Trail Planning and Development

In 1973, the Oregon state legislature enabled Jackson County to begin planning and acquisition of the Bear Creek Greenway.¹⁹ ODOT constructed the first section, and subsequent sections were developed as local funding became available from grants and donations (1973-2008). The five cities and one county also conducted land acquisition and planning throughout the trail development process. For the past thirty years, the 1% allocation of highway funding dedicated to bicycle projects has helped to fund a Special Projects Manager in Jackson County, whose duties include helping to manage issues for the Bear Creek Greenway trail.²⁰

Function, Benefits and Use

The intended functions of the Bear Creek Greenway were recreational and non-motorized transportation. However, the mix of recreational and transportation uses varies throughout the different segments within the trail corridor. A survey identified that 55% of bicyclists and pedestrians on the segment in Medford used the trail for recreation and 45% used the trail for transportation.²¹ Additionally, the Greenway trail is used frequently for large events such as half-marathons. According to an interview with Jackson County staff, many bicyclists will not use the Greenway for transportation on the weekends because it is congested with walkers or other slow-speed users.

Jackson County installed three bicycle and pedestrian counters on the Bear Creek Greenway. Currently, Jackson County uses bicycle and pedestrian trail count data to show usage on the trail and to identify trends. Jackson County staff stated that count data helps make the case for receiving trail funding, and provides empirical evidence of trail usage.²²

According to a stakeholder interview, the main benefits of the trail are to provide an alternative commuting route to a four-lane highway with “inconsistent” shoulders. The trail provides a “different level of user comfort” and many county residents have stated that they “wouldn’t ride to work without the trail.” According to a stakeholder interview with Jackson County staff, the trail is also seen as having environmental benefits, health benefits, and economic benefits from improved quality of life.

Funding and Maintenance

The Bear Creek Greenway operates under a public-private funding model: a private foundation collects donations and provides public information, while Jackson County in collaboration with the five other jurisdictions manages and maintains the trail. In 2004, the partners²³ developed the Bear Creek Greenway Management Plan to address trail management and maintenance issues throughout the corridor, including safety, surface management, vegetation, and future capital improvements. The Management Plan was funded by ODOT and the Rogue Valley Council of Governments. The plan recommended that one entity (i.e., Jackson County) manage the Greenway for more efficient maintenance, improved safety, and improved prioritization due to the ability to monitor conditions across the entire trail corridor.

As recommended by the plan, Jackson County and the five cities entered into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to define roles, responsibilities and contributions to manage the Greenway.²⁴ The Bear

¹⁹ <http://www.bearcreekgreenway.com/history/>

²⁰ Interview with Jackson County staff

²¹ The trail manager noted that this survey likely underrepresented utilitarian bicyclists.

²² Interview with Jackson County staff

²³ The five cities, Jackson County, ODOT, and the Bear Creek Greenway Foundation.

²⁴ <https://www.ci.medford.or.us/files/greenway%20iga.pdf>

Creek Greenway IGA stipulates that each jurisdiction will contribute to a maintenance fund managed by Jackson County, with an advisory committee comprised of all jurisdictions. Further, the IGA states that Jackson County will provide staff support, and each jurisdiction shall maintain insurance. The funding amount required of each jurisdiction is determined by a formula based on population estimates and estimated Greenway mileage.

The Bear Creek Joint Powers Committee is a coalition of jurisdictions that manages the trail based on the IGA. The committee typically meets monthly or quarterly. Each jurisdiction contributes to the Major Maintenance Repair Fund, which supports asphalt repair, emergency repairs, and supplies funds for grant matches. For example, the committee used repair funds to match an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant to repair tree root damage on seven miles of the greenway. In an earlier phase of this project, Jackson County was awarded funds through an Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (ORPD) Recreational Trails Program grant to test methods to repair tree root intrusion.²⁵ The trail manager noted that the Bear Creek Greenway demonstrates a successful model for governance and management among multiple jurisdictions.

Barriers and Challenges

The main challenges for the Bear Creek Greenway development and planning phase were land acquisition and securing funding for construction. Typically, Jackson County acquired right-of-way and applied for Transportation Enhancement grants to construct segments of the Greenway. In the past and currently, the Bear Creek Greenway Foundation typically provides funding for the local match.²⁶ Local stakeholders contacted for this case study suggest that it can be a challenge to depend on non-profits for long-term funding and management of some trail projects. Maintenance was also identified as a challenge for management of the Bear Creek Greenway, and includes tree root and flood damage, vandalism, and addressing safety and security concerns. This case study illustrates the challenges and opportunities when working with multiple jurisdictions, agencies, and non-government entities and the importance of clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Next Steps

Jackson County intends to extend the Bear Creek Greenway north and south (connection to Emigrant Lake). Currently, local residents are advocating for on-roadway facilities in addition to the trail because the route is not sufficiently direct for commuting purposes. Stakeholders indicated that there is currently a need to make future on-street connections from the Bear Creek Greenway to low-volume county roads. Jackson County plans to look for future opportunities to routinely accommodate trail connections and bicycle and pedestrian improvements with ODOT projects,²⁷ for example, ODOT incorporated a trail undercrossing as part of the Highway 140 extension project, utilizing Transportation Enhancement (TE) Immediate Opportunity Funds.

North Santiam Trail

The North Santiam Canyon Trail project was identified for a former heavy rail corridor between Lyons and Idanha in Marion County. According to OPRD staff ODOT acquired the rail right-of-way in the 1970s, which had been acquired by the federal government in the 1950s to construct a dam (Detroit Lake).²⁸

²⁵ <http://www.odotmovingahead.com/2012/12/bear-creek-greenway-reconstruction-work/> The local match was also provided by the Joint Powers Committee maintenance funds.

²⁶ <http://www.bearcreekgreenway.com/learn/vision-history/>

²⁷ Interview with Jackson County staff

²⁸ Interview with North Santiam Canyon Economic Development Corporation (NSCEDC) staff

The rail infrastructure was removed in the 1970s, and currently the majority of the corridor (with the exception of a short segment in Mill City that is a trail) is a rail bed that has not been redeveloped. The proposed trail would connect rural communities and provide recreation opportunities and access to multiple state park facilities, the Willamette National Forest, the North Santiam River and Detroit Lake. The project area included connection to the Cascading Rivers Oregon Scenic Bikeway, which runs from Detroit to Estacada in Clackamas County.²⁹ The rail corridor is adjacent to a rural highway (Highway 22). According to Mill City staff, the project corridor also has the potential to connect to logging rail beds on state forest land, which could be converted to trails in the future.

Trail Planning and Development

With the assistance of a Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) grant from ODOT, the North Santiam Canyon Economic Development Corporation (NSCEDC) and partners completed a feasibility study for the trail project in 2003-2004. After the initial effort, the project encountered some difficulties and has not progressed. The major entities involved in the North Santiam Canyon trail project included the five communities along the corridor, Marion and Linn counties, the NSCEDC, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, ODOT, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Forest Service.

The 2004 “Canyon Journeys” feasibility study engaged stakeholders, reviewed existing resources in the project area, and proposed a trail system concept for the various sections along the corridor.³⁰ The feasibility study also identified phasing of trail construction (beginning with several sections adjacent to Mill City). The feasibility study recommended that project partners develop a governance structure for the trail system, work with adjacent property owners to address concerns, and partner with local agencies (Linn County, Marion County, and ODOT) to incorporate paved shoulders into roadway improvement projects.

Additionally, the North Santiam Watershed Revision (USFS- 2007)³¹ and Marion County Parks Master Plan³² recommended constructing the regional trail system, and the Mill City Parks Master Plan recommended extending the existing rail-trail located within the city.³³

Function, Benefits and Use

As stated in the feasibility study, the major goals of the project are to encourage tourism and economic productivity, enhance quality of life, and provide a non-motorized connection to North Santiam communities as a safe travel alternative to Highway 22. This proposed trail would provide a link to tourism destinations such as Detroit Lake, a scenic bikeway and national forest land. Additionally, the proposed trail corridor would serve a transportation function by linking rural communities, allowing walkers and bicyclists to travel between cities such as Mill City and Gates.

Funding and Maintenance

From 2005-2007, OPRD worked with local partners to develop catalyst projects between Mill City and Detroit Lake to implement the concept plan.³⁴ The project team identified two feasible connections, and Marion County was awarded grant funding to develop approximately four miles of trail (Maple Rest Area

²⁹ http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/BIKE/Pages/Cascading_Rivers.aspx

³⁰ North Santiam Canyon Alternative Transportation Link Feasibility Study: Canyon Journeys. North Santiam Canyon Economic Development Corporation.

³¹ http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5435084.pdf

³² <http://www.co.marion.or.us/NR/rdonlyres/90F73E9A-E444-48EA-9F0F-F14F133BC827/54284/ParksMasterPlanwAppendicesJuly212010.pdf>

³³ <http://www.ci.mill-city.or.us/documents>

³⁴ Interview with ORPD staff

to Niagara). The planning process previously identified potential grant funding sources for trail development. Given that the trail project has not been constructed, there was no information available regarding trail maintenance.

Barriers and Challenges

The idea to create a rail-trail in the North Santiam Canyon was initially met with opposition from adjacent property owners, who had concerns about privacy and property access. In the 1980s, the majority of these legal claims were resolved, ensuring that private property owners would have property access, with the exception of a property owner who pursued litigation against the project. Due to the pending litigation, lack of funding to pursue a legal process, and lack of formal champion, state agencies did not move forward with the project and Marion County did not use the grant money it was awarded within the prescribed timeline.

In 2009, Mill City was awarded a Transportation Enhancement (TE) grant from ODOT and a grant from OPRD to make improvements to the existing rail-trail, including repaving, park facilities, signage, and street furniture.³⁵ However, both grants were withdrawn upon mutual agreement between the agencies and the city. The applicants encountered challenges in funding park facilities using TE grant funding. Eventually, Mill City secured a grant from OPRD to make park facility improvements.

Next Steps

Mill City plans to pursue future grant applications to make improvements to the existing rail-trail segment that was constructed in the 1980s and exists within the city. The City has a request for bid for an engineering study to assess the condition and maintenance of the pedestrian bridge across the North Santiam River, which is part of the rail corridor within Mill City.³⁶ The Mill City Parks Plan (2014) also recommends that the City work with Linn County to develop a cost estimate to build a missing trail link through a grant application to ODOT or OPRD.

According to stakeholders, the project partners will need to resolve outstanding legal issues start a new public engagement process, and identify supportive local entities and strong governmental partners in order to reengage the regional trail project.³⁷

Salmonberry Corridor Trail and Yamhelas Westsider Trail

This case study compares two examples of trails under development in order to explore the challenges of implementing rail-to-trail conversion projects. Comparing these two trails, the Salmonberry Corridor and Yamhelas Westsider trails are similar because they both intend to serve recreational and transportation users and connect to rural communities through a rail-to-trail conversion.

³⁵ Interview with NSCEDC staff

³⁶ <http://www.ci.mill-city.or.us/events/press-releases/requestforproposalforbridgeinspectionsservicesopen>

³⁷ Interview with NSCEDC staff

Salmonberry Corridor Trail

The Salmonberry Corridor is an 86-mile former railroad right-of-way that runs from Banks in Washington County to Tillamook on the Oregon Coast. The corridor passes through eight cities and two counties, and the majority of the corridor is currently owned 'fee simple' by the Port of Tillamook Bay.³⁸ Part of the corridor also includes an active rail line used for an excursion train. In 2007, a storm damaged a substantial portion of the corridor and rendered it infeasible for heavy rail service. As a result, an effort began to develop a regional trail along the Salmonberry Corridor. The Oregon Legislature authorized funding for trail planning, and the project is currently in the concept planning and public outreach phase.³⁹ In 2014, the Salmonberry Corridor was awarded EPA Environmental Site Assessment grant for the portion of the project located in Tillamook County.⁴⁰

Trail Planning and Development

The major entities involved in the Salmonberry Corridor project are the Port of Tillamook Bay, OPRD, the Oregon Department of Forestry, and Cycle Oregon. The lead agency for the master planning phase is OPRD. The trail planning effort assumes that the trail will have multiple user groups, multiple trail design standards, and that trail concepts will complement existing recreational uses (walking, biking, hunting, fishing and equestrian).

The draft concept plan, released in September 2014, identifies design options and corresponding planning-level cost estimates for the four segments. For example, a higher design standard will be used for the coastal section, while the Coast Range segment (see appendix for map) of the trail will require an unpaved, more informal trail standard due to its remote location and the existing and potential future storm damage. The concept plan also recommends catalyst projects for each segment to maintain momentum, as different segments will be developed at different times. The team has identified ten catalyst projects and will begin prioritizing projects in 2015.

According to OPRD staff in a stakeholder interview, legislative and stakeholder support has been a key factor in the success of the project, in terms of moving the project forward to obtain initial funding for the master planning process and environmental assessment. Further, the strong stakeholder support for the Salmonberry corridor project may allow entities to work together more effectively and to potentially address any local opposition that may arise in the future.⁴¹

As part of the master planning process, OPRD has conducted several public meetings to provide information and gather community input.⁴² Generally, the public meetings indicate community support for the Salmonberry Corridor project, particularly among coastal residents.⁴³ Small groups of stakeholders have expressed concerns about rural residential impacts, as well as impacts resulting from commercial forestry and dairy operations.

Function, Benefits and Use

According to a stakeholder interview with OPRD, the primary functions of this trail project are recreational and transportation. Additionally, the trail is expected to support economic revitalization of coastal communities in Tillamook County. Segment D (coastal) has the greatest potential for commuting

³⁸ https://salmonberrycorridor.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/salmonberry-corridor-draft-concept-plan_9_11_14-1.pdf

³⁹ <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2014R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB1516>

⁴⁰ <http://salmonberrycorridor.wordpress.com/2014/06/03/salmonberry-corridor-awarded-400000-epa-grant/>

⁴¹ Interview with OPRD staff

⁴² <http://salmonberrycorridor.wordpress.com/2014/09/17/public-open-house-meetings-on-salmonberry-corridor-concept-plan/>

⁴³ Interview with OPRD staff

use among the four segments within the corridor, as the trail would provide an alternative to Highway 101 and create connections to schools and between communities.⁴⁴ In general, the major benefits of the project are that the Salmonberry Corridor provides unique access to forest lands and creates an extension to Portland Metro regional trails.

Funding and Maintenance

The draft concept plan discusses possible funding sources for the trail, including salvage of heavy rail, coordinated repair work with the Oregon Coast Scenic Railway, and contributions from a telecommunications company (due to a fiber optic cable easement in the corridor). The plan notes that either OPRD or a combination of state, local counties, and non-profit groups could manage the corridor in the future.

Barriers and Challenges

According to a stakeholder interview with OPRD staff and other planning documents, the main challenges in moving toward implementation of the Salmonberry Corridor Trail are:

- Extensive and costly bridge repairs needed within the Salmonberry segment
- Future maintenance challenges due to flooding
- Existing right-of-way constraints within the coastal segment
- Temporary access points and easements that may be required during construction in more remote parts of the corridor.
- Future need to rail-bank corridor in order to remove remaining rail infrastructure

Other barriers to implementation noted by stakeholders include the need for a long-term, sustainable funding source and the difficulty of addressing concerns and communicating project benefits to a diverse group of stakeholders.⁴⁵ A governance structure among the project partners will need to be established for management of the trail before the project moves forward.

Next Steps

The draft concept plan states that in order to implement the trail project, project partners need to assess the conditions of all bridges and tunnels, including geotechnical, brownfield, hydrological and engineering studies, and develop repair cost estimates. The team must also conduct a full title search and secure all remaining easements.

According to stakeholders, the immediate next steps for the project are to complete and adopt the concept plan in any and all entities affected by the trail project, establish a governance plan for trail management, prioritize funding initiatives, and begin the capital campaign. Prioritization of catalyst projects will begin in 2015, and additionally the corridor needs to be rail banked before the heavy rail infrastructure can be removed.

⁴⁴ Interview with ORPD staff

⁴⁵ Interview with ORPD staff

Yamhelas Westsider Trail

The Yamhelas Westsider Trail plans to convert the historic Westsider rail line into a 17-mile multi-use recreational trail.⁴⁶ The trail corridor runs parallel to a rural highway (Highway 47), and would improve accessibility to communities in wine country, including McMinnville, Lafayette, Carlton, Yamill, Cove Orchard, and Gaston. Long term, there is a possibility for future connection to the Banks-Vernonia Trail and the Portland metro area.

Trail Planning and Development

Initially, community members discussed the possibility of a “wine train” along the rail corridor; however this idea was determined to be financially infeasible. Community residents began meeting in 2011-2012 to discuss the idea of a trail on the Yamhelas Westsider corridor and brought ideas for funding to Yamhill County (the grant applicant).⁴⁷

The Friends of the Yamhelas Westsider Trail led the coalition to develop the trail project and, using their own funds, paid for an appraisal that reduced the railroad’s asking price to approximately \$2.4 million. In 2013, the Yamhelas Westsider project partners were awarded a Transportation Alternatives grant from ODOT to purchase 10 miles of the right-of-way.⁴⁸ Currently, the project coalition is seeking additional funding to acquire the entire right of way. In 2014, the coalition applied for ConnectOregonV funding and OPRD, but were unsuccessful.⁴⁹

Function, Benefits and Use

The intended function of the trail is both transportation and recreation. The project aims to attract bicycling tourists to the vineyards located in rural Washington and Yamhill counties, and also to provide a more comfortable alternative to Highway 47 for bicyclists and pedestrians traveling between Yamhill County communities along the corridor. Additionally, the project would provide additional access points to multiple recreational facilities. The proposed trail would also create a non-motorized connection between small rural communities, and support the development of regional trail networks.⁵⁰

Barriers and Challenges

According to a stakeholder interview with OPRD, the main barrier to implementation is the need to secure additional funding for right-of-way acquisition. The project coalition has not been successful in recent funding applications due to limited available funding and the lack of a master plan or public process to demonstrate the overall purpose behind the right-of-way acquisition.

Next Steps

The immediate next steps for the project are to develop a concept plan for the Yamhelas Westsider trail in order to develop implementation priorities and in hopes of becoming more successful in future grant applications.

IV. Summary

Case studies of regional trails provide best practices and lessons learned from trail planning and implementation in Oregon. These case studies demonstrate that regional trails can serve both

⁴⁶ <http://www.yamhelaswestsidertrail.com/>

⁴⁷ Interview with ORPD staff

⁴⁸ <http://www.yamhelaswestsidertrail.com/article?articleTitle=odot-grant-awarded-for-yamhelas-westsider-trail---3--news>

⁴⁹ <http://www.newsregister.com/article?articleTitle=yamhelas-westsider-trail-goes-0-for-2-on-grants--1403829757--13565--home-news>

⁵⁰ Interview with ORPD staff

recreational and transportation uses, and that different trail segments of the same trail may serve different functions. Additionally, trail usage and travel patterns can potentially change over the lifetime of a regional trail.

Many case studies also note the tourism and economic development potential of regional trails. Regional trails can provide access to public lands, wine growing regions, and coastal communities, and provide opportunities for bicycle touring. Organizations such as Cycle Oregon and Travel Oregon may be critical stakeholders and partners in implementing tourism-focused trail projects in rural Oregon. Additionally, rural trail projects have the potential to enhance accessibility for rural communities, as many trail corridors provide a non-motorized alternative to rural highways. Some riders may consider rural highways uncomfortable due to the extent of bicycle accommodation currently provided and interaction with motor vehicles. Consideration should be given to the value added when weighed against the costs of construction and maintenance. Regional trail case studies demonstrate that bicycle and pedestrian count data is and can be used effectively to communicate trail usage and benefits to decision-makers, as well as reinforce the transportation function of trail projects.

In order for trail projects to build and sustain momentum to the implementation stage, it is critical that an agency and/or local organization be a “champion” and take ownership of the project. As demonstrated by the North Santiam trail project, a local champion is needed to address concerns, obtain and use grant funding, and address local concerns and potential opposition. Regional trail case studies indicate that successful trail projects develop a clear governance structure, which may include interagency agreements for trail management and maintenance.

Regional trail case studies indicate that state and local governments often partner with other agencies and local organizations to fund and implement trail projects. For example, ODOT partnered with non-profits and other agencies to implement maintenance projects and enhance community engagement (i.g., Friends of Trees). Additionally, regional trail projects coordinate and partner with regional transit agencies to improve bicycle and pedestrian last-mile connectivity to transit. Regional trail case studies indicate that non-profit organizations can be successful partners for fund-raising and getting a project off the ground (i.g., a “Friends of the Trail” group).

In general, many trail stakeholders indicate the need to improve on-street bicycle and pedestrian connections to rural state highways in order to support the transportation use of regional trails. Trail project stakeholders indicate potential opportunities to incorporate trail connections through routine accommodation within local (highway) projects.

ODOT’s role in some regional trail projects has been as a funding partner, through the management of federal transportation grants, or as the owner of a trail right-of-way. Trail case studies suggest state agencies such as ODOT and OPRD could continue to play a role in supporting local governments (urban and rural) in technical assistance, funding opportunities, and strategic implementation of bicycle and pedestrian improvements throughout the state.

Bear Creek Greenway



Figure 2: Map of Bear Creek Greenway

North Santiam Trail

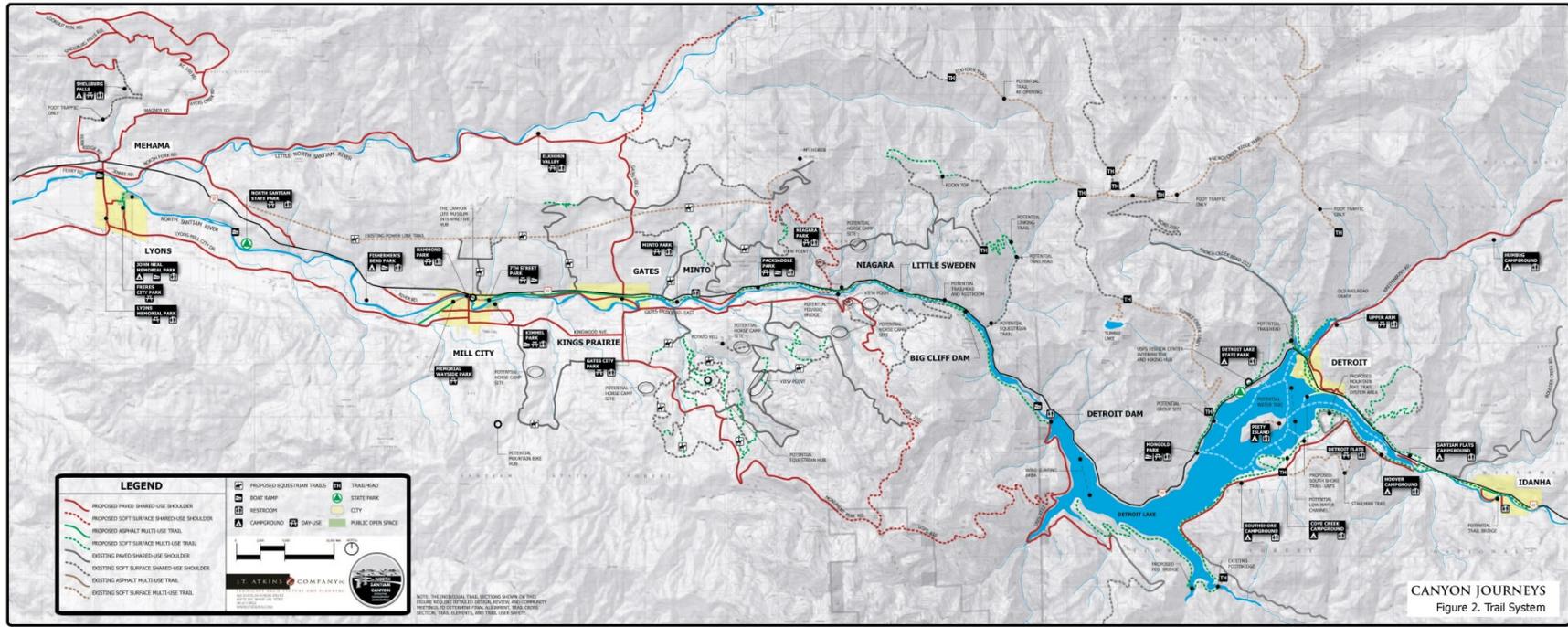


Figure 3: Proposed North Santiam Canyon Trail System

Salmonberry Corridor Trail



Figure 4: Map of Salmonberry Corridor Trail Concept

Yamhelas Westsider Trail



Figure 5: Map of Proposed Yamhelas Westsider Trail