

A Case Statement For Active Transportation for the Council Creek Regional Trail Communities:

A 15 mile walking and bicycling corridor that would directly connect 4 Cities in Washington County and provide a unique example for the region.

Description of Demonstration Project:

The goal is to plan and construct the Council Creek Regional Trail in west Portland/Metro to serve as a primary transportation and recreational conduit for bicycle and pedestrian travel. The objectives for this project include; provide recreational opportunities and alternative modes of transportation, increase multi-modal travel options between town centers and the Hillsboro Regional Center, connect West Metro Cities to alternative mode of transportation, access to nature and educational opportunity, add buffer to help protect wildlife habitat, green space and water quality, and provide alternative mode of travel to a variety of land uses (i.e. commercial, industrial, and residential).

The corridor is located at the western edge of the Portland/Metro region and directly connects 4 Cities. It extends from the City of Hillsboro Regional Center at the existing HCT (“Max”) system, through Washington County, the City of Cornelius, City of Forest Grove, to City of Banks, a distance of approximately 15 miles, with easy access to U.S. Highway 26 (the Sunset Highway), connecting to the existing Banks/Vernonia State Trail (bicycle, pedestrian and bridal paths) and thereby to the new Stub Stuart State Park. This Council Creek Regional Trial would also close the gap in a larger approximately 80 mile regional loop including the Crown Zellerbach Trail, Rock Creek Trail and a future 127 mile trail to the Oregon coast (Path to the Pacific), which would be a signature brand for the State. Work would be done in and serve several severely distressed areas.

Key Benefits:

Safety

The corridor lies astride a single major road connection to the 4 Cities, Highway 8 and 47 with limited bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This forces unsafe bike and pedestrian travel routes. Several bicycle and pedestrian fatalities have occurred in and around the corridor. Multi-use trails are safer than on-street facility types, since they avoid conflicts with auto traffic. Hazards posed by traffic is a significantly limits walking and cycling activity.

Economic Development

Project will help promote an increase in cycling/walking to stimulate that retail market. It will also decrease expense related to the use of the automobile. Studies show that under most conditions property values increase when trails are developed nearby. Quality of life serves as a competitive niche in attracting talent and new companies. Foster our recreation and sustainable industries niches and attract new firms. Reduce health care cost. Directly serves large concentration of underserved and environmental justice populations.

Mobility

Connecting 4 communities in 15 miles with a multi-use pedestrian system provides a perfect opportunity to create an active mobility option. This proposed active transportation corridor has the potential to carry a significant part of the transportation load. With nearly half of all trips under three miles (FHWA 2006), expanding safe, active transportation choices—which are perfect for short trips—can make a significant contribution to the overall transportation load. Active Transportation Builds Communities.

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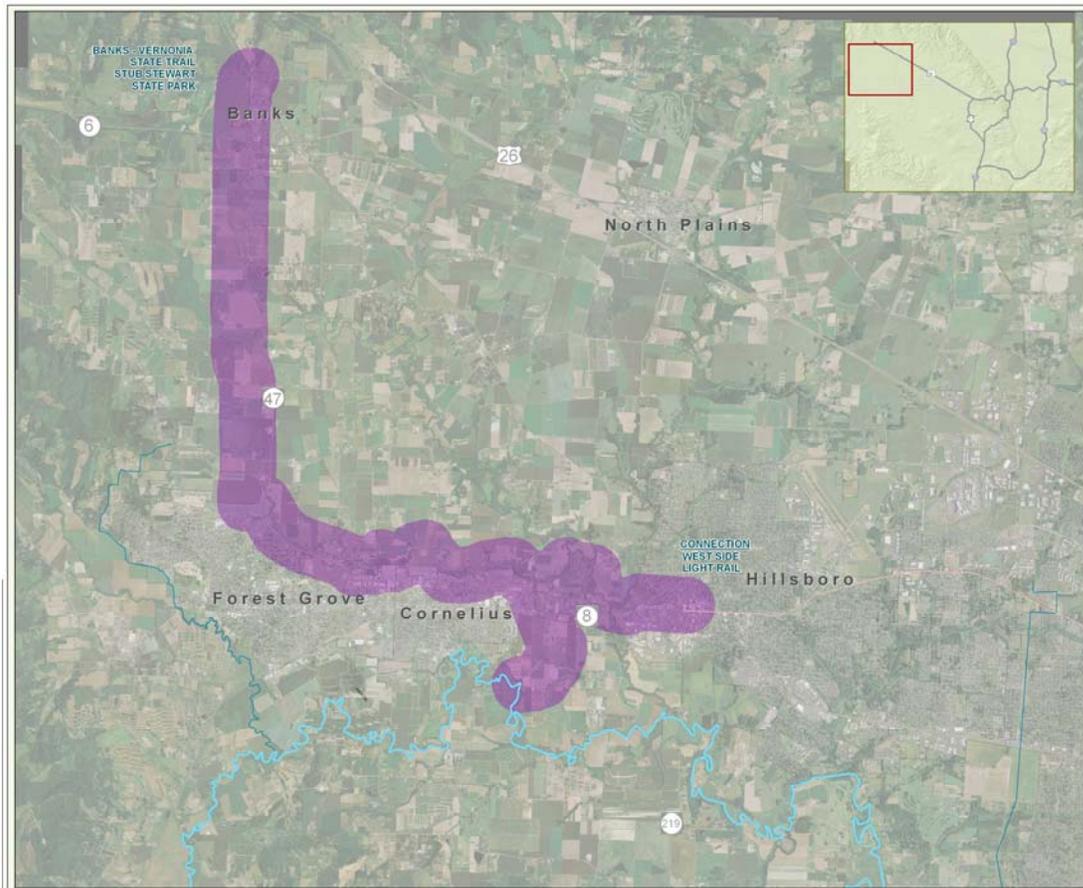
Environmental

Adding a desirable active transportation option in this existing 15 mile state Highway corridor would help to keep our air clean. Auto travel accounts for about 30% of US air pollution. Auto travel is a significant source of water pollution and this is a critical water clean-up basin. Increased walking and bicycling reduce greenhouse gases and helps to foster environmental stewardship. Council Creek Regional Trail could be literally a stones throw away from Council Creek therefore giving access to nature and educational opportunities. It would also provide a buffer to help protect wildlife habitat, green space and water. Today's generation of children have less direct connection with nature than previous generations. Trail corridors are an opportunity to create and protect wildlife habitat and improve that human connection.

Health

Nationally, Americans' lack of physical activity is leading to an increase in a variety of health conditions including hypertension, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, which will soon eclipse tobacco as the number one preventable cause of death in the United States. Studies have shown that people living in communities with walking and cycling facilities walk and cycle more. Bicycling and walking provide a way to integrate physical activity into busy schedules, and have been demonstrated to improve these conditions as well as to contribute to emotional well-being.

Council Creek Regional Trail Corridor Map:



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Other General Project Information:

Cost/Funding Information:

Total project estimate presented below were prepared by a local planning/design firm. Development phase work has already been programmed to receive federal funds with local matches. Funding for the engineering/design phase is expected to come from a variety of sources including state, local, recreational, environmental, and private sources. The Council Creek Regional Trail Committee continues to seek funding opportunities.

The total Project Estimate is as follows:
\$104,000,000 (conceptual estimate 08 \$'s)

Total Project Cost Estimate Includes:

- 1) Development Phase Report = \$242,240 (2010-2013 MTIP Program Funding)
- 2) Engineering/Design = \$5,000,000
- 3) Construction = \$46,000,000
- 4) Land Acquisition = \$53,000,000 **

** Land may be acquired through dedication, donation or use of existing right-of-ways, which could lower this cost estimate.

Partnership:

The Council Creek Trail has already had numerous opportunities for public support and participation process through its concept plan designation as a regional trail by Metro Regional Services in 2002. In 2008 Council Creek Regional Trail was also identified as one of twenty regional trail packages reviewed by the public through Metro's Connecting Green initiative. A very similar public process will be done in future work. The City of Forest Grove, along with several other stakeholders has and continues to fully support the Council Creek Regional Trail. Ten government agency support letters are available upon request. Key stakeholder agencies in support of this project include Metro, NW ACT, Oregon State Parks, Washington County, City of Hillsboro, City of Cornelius, and City of Banks.

Other Corridor Consideration:

The corridor is approximately a mile or two wide, bounded on the north mainly by agricultural use, much of it in field crops and nursery plantings, which generates significant employment. Also, some of the land to the north side of the corridor has been identified as potential urban reserve. It is bounded on the south side by Urban Growth Boundaries. The eastern end is surrounded by a mixture of agricultural and urban land. The western end is surrounded by mainly agricultural land. This trail would provide an alternative mode of travel to a variety of land uses (i.e. commercial, industrial, residential, and institutional).

The corridor begins in western Hillsboro (regional center), an area of low density, and mixed land uses. There is considerable potential for the development, and redevelopment of this part of Hillsboro, which is close to the downtown. This trail would increase multi-model travel options to the Hillsboro Regional Center.

Cornelius with a population in 2007 of approximately 11,000 has the longest average commute for employment of the 26 jurisdictions in the Region. There are an estimated 3,500 more employed Cornelius residents than there are jobs within the City and the nearby agriculture areas. That is approximately half of the City's work force that commutes to work outside of the City to jobs in Forest Grove and Hillsboro. All of these workers that travel to their jobs currently cause vehicular congestion, pollution, and wasted energy from the longest average commute in the region.

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Forest Grove (Town Center) is a long-established country town, with a current population of about 20,000. Major employers include Pacific University (Hillsboro Campus too), Merix, and several major plant nurseries and small manufactures. It both attracts employees, and exports workers to other communities. Tourist attractions include McMennamins Grand Lodge, the Sake One sake brewery and a compact and historical downtown.

The City of Banks is a very important endpoint to the Council Creek Regional Trail considering its signature brand Banks-Vernonia State Trail with access to nearby Stub Stuart State Park. Furthermore, the City of Banks would be another future connection point between Council Creek Regional Trail and the 120 mile extension of a multi purpose rails-to-trail to the Pacific Ocean or Tillamook.

The corridor lies astride a single major east/west road, Highway 8, which runs from Beaverton, through Hillsboro, and Cornelius to terminate in Forest Grove. Highway 8 is basically a 4 lane facility with sections of dual, 2 lane couplets in the cities. Level of service on Highway 8 remains acceptable, except during peak hours, but continued growth will eventually lead to congestion. Expansion options are limited, as there are no other continuous east/west streets in the corridor. Highway 47 runs north/south through Forest Grove and into Banks, and could potentially cross the corridor.

The corridor is also near two railroads. The railroad line north of Highway 8, which has the closest tie to this corridor, is the former Oregon Electric Forest Grove Branch, which runs from Hillsboro to Forest Grove and the ROW is owned by ODOT. Only minimal local freight is currently operating. The Forest Grove Light Rail extension is currently being planned in this ROW.

Another important aspect of this corridor is transit service provided by TriMet #57 bus line and Ride Connection to surrounding communities. The #57 bus service has recently been upgraded to "Frequent Bus" services, running every 15 minutes, resulting in significant increased ridership. There is no other transit service in the corridor and currently jurisdictions are having discussion on how transit could be enhanced or extended.

Council Creek is also another important feature in the corridor as it parallels more than half the corridor and could potentially cross the corridor. The Corridor would add a buffer to help protect wildlife habitat, green space, and water quality.

The Corridor also includes several Metro owned wetlands and open spaces.

The corridor is unusual in that it has only one main roadway running its full length Hwy 8/47, making it vulnerable to congestion as the communities and the corridor continue to expand. The multi modal gap in this corridor is trying to be reduced with this project and an extension of light rail. Furthermore, as explained above jurisdictions are looking for ways to enhance transit in this region.

Underserved population and/or environmental justice communities would be served by the proposed project and how the project benefits that population has been identified. Information provided from maps that summarize census information organized at a block group level, demonstrate concentrations of underserved and environmental justice populations were used. Based on the maps this project would directly serve:

- Large groups 2-4 Environmental Justice Populations.
- Low to medium density of elderly and disabled.
- A large area of low to medium density of low income, minority, and Hispanic Residents.
- A significant very low-income population.
- A significant Hispanic population.
- A significant American Indian/Alaska Native Population.
- A significant Non-English-Speaking population.