

Public comments received via the Port's website or via email during the 30% design review period for the Touchet Valley Trail, April 12 – May 13, 2021.

Public Comments	Port Response
So it looks like your planned trail will take out a good portion of my existing fence line. Does your plans include replacement?	The trail will only be built on land owned by public entities - the Port of Columbia (majority land-owner), the City of Dayton, the City of Waitsburg, and Washington State Parks. The Port will work with adjacent landowners on a case-by-case basis to address structures, such as your fence, that have been constructed on Port property.
This all sounds like a money grubbing plan by dummycrates...Its B/S to say nothing is expected to happen or cause problems. If this is not put to a vote by the people that LIVE in these 2 towns then its being pushed thru like the last phoney election that gave the Presidency to a criminal thats nothing more than a puppet for the globalist....This is a bad dream and Jeni D and some of her money grubbing friends gave it to the commissioners and are spending tax payers money in developing this trail and building it!!!!	Thank you for sharing your opinion.
I would like to first say a big THANK YOU to the Port and Port Commissioners along with others that have participated to pull together all of this information. I don't have to agree with all the projects taking place in my county but I do need all of the information possible in order to make an educated decision on where I stand. Pulling together all of the data, the drawings, the stats, etc. is often quite daunting but it is that information that will allow us all as county residents to make that educated decision. That being said, I am at this time 100% behind the project and support the continued efforts of the Port and others to pursue additional information, gather more input from other community members and address issues as they arise. If and when the time comes for our community to vote on any aspects of this project, I want my vote to come from a place of knowledge and not just a knee-jerk reaction in either direction. I truly appreciate the time that the Port employees as well as the Commissioners have devoted to keeping us all well informed of progress being made and look	We appreciate your taking the time to evaluate and review the data presented prior to making a decision and appreciate your support.

forward to seeing this project come to fruition. It would be a true draw for visitors as well as potential new residents. The benefits of a well-planned trail system will prove to be a boon for our county. Thank you!

How many people have stated they are apposed to this trail vs those for the trail? Where does the money come from for the yearly maintenance. A lot of the documents state they would be using volunteers, what happens when you can't get that volunteer help. There is a lot of wording in the documents of "could be, may be, or might" I am assuming that there will be a more confirmed contract with firmer wording yet to come??

The Port of Columbia conducted an online community survey in Summer 2019 which received 346 responses. Of the respondents, 49% were Dayton residents, 21% were Waitsburg residents, 10.7% were residents of unincorporated Walla Walla County, and the remainder were residents of other parts of the region. The results showed 52.6% extremely excited, very excited, and 11.3% somewhat excited about the trail idea for a total positive response of 82.8%. 15.7% of respondents were opposed to the trail, and the remainder didn't know or care. throughout 2020 and 2021, the Port has heard directly from many people that are in support of the trail, and many who are opposed. Several people who are in support of the trail have told us they are afraid to speak up for fear of public shaming or retaliation. During the 30-day comment period opened two weeks prior and two weeks after the Public Information Meeting held April 26th, we received 53 comments. Of those, the majority were in support of the trail. The money for yearly maintenance will come from the existing budget of the Port of Columbia. Some of our current funds that are used in the repayment of bonds from the construction of buildings will be available for other uses starting in 2026. The funds used for debt repayment would more than cover the cost of annual maintenance. Requests will also be made to the Cities of Dayton and Waitsburg and to Washington State Parks for maintenance assistance. No new taxes are proposed for this project. The Blues Crew, a volunteer trail maintenance group out of Walla Walla, has already pledged their help in maintaining the trail. A local resident has already pledged to "adopt a mile" for garbage pick-up. The volunteer interest is very good for a trail that has not yet been built, but ultimately, in the absence of volunteers, the Port will be responsible for maintenance. The "would, could, should" language is there because we are not far enough along in planning to consider the documents we posted to be final. We will continue to research operational models and maintenance options to refine the plan until there is something to actually maintain.

<p>In my opinion this project needs to die. It is a pure waste of money.</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing your opinion.</p>
<p>Just put me on your list, please! Stoked about the trail!</p>	<p>Thank you for requesting to stay involved and updated on the process. We appreciate your enthusiasm.</p>
<p>I'm a farmer and am astounded in the chemical/ spraying issue. These are restricted use chemicals being used by farmers in the route and by trail maintenance crews. It is obvious without a farmer and a certified crop advisor in your steering committee the lack of proper answers are being put up. One you need someone familiar with crops grown on the route and what chemicals they do use. Peas are grown along the tracks and sprayed for bugs. These chemicals are very explicit in their label about stay out time. Your answer provided is one off label that is illegal and two your advisor making that comment needs their license revoked. This is a zero tolerance issue and your answer needs removed before reviewed by a qualified licensed person. These chemicals will kill. A family innocently riding the trail with two small children get exposed to the chemical by a legal and licensed operation. The first to die will be the children. Who is going to have to live with the deaths? With different weed spectrums have the other hiking trail areas cited looked at your weeds for their recommendations and do they have a legal license to do so? The current weed control is a failure and that will only make the hiking trail be closed. I have picture from last summer I can provide if the commissioners didn't check the trail late summer. The mess was obvious across from the fairgrounds the past several years. The only thing helping is the goodwill of adjacent owners concerned with the lack of control by the port. Puncture Vine is rampant in areas as well as Russian Thistle which scratch and will puncture tires and shoes. Need way more on weed control. Check your cleaning days. Cleaning once a week and twice a week for 7 months can NOT make 19 days. There are 52 weeks in a year and 33 extra days make 85 so you're 66 days short using your calculations. Thanks and I'm trying to be neutral on the project but</p>	<p>You are correct that a math error was made on the preliminary maintenance outline, so that error has been corrected. We welcome a farmer or agricultural chemical specialist to join our steering committee to help address these concerns. Let us know if you are interested in serving. We have consulted with actual trail maintenance staff, who are certified applicators, and with the Washington State Department of Agriculture Pesticide Compliance Department. They have provided ideas for reducing negative impacts of pesticide spraying to both adjacent landowners and trail users. For adjacent landowners, the Port will be prepared to close portions of the trail for a defined length of time if notified by the landowner of a particularly hazardous spray, such as on peas. For less hazardous sprays, signs may be placed on the trail warning users that spraying is taking place on adjacent fields. For trail users, educational signs will be placed along the trail regarding the importance of agriculture to the community, the types of activities taking place on adjacent fields, warnings against trespassing, etc. Research will continue on this subject.</p>

<p>can't stand back and watch the incompetence and the math errors. Lives are at risk with your answers provided.</p>	
<p>I am grateful that there is going to be a public meeting about the trail and am looking forward to getting a status report.</p>	<p>Thank you for your interest in keeping updated in the planning process.</p>
<p>This is a fantastic project and essential for the overall health of our community. I do not see any negative impact and many positive ones from this project. If we want any type of an active commercial Main Street, this project is a critical component. Our community needs to support this and it needs to happen.</p>	<p>We are glad to hear that you feel the project will be a benefit to the community at large and Main Street in particular.</p>
<p>Prior to moving to Dayton, I lived in Spokane for 20 years. I biked the Centennial trail many times and appreciated the fact that I wasn't on the road with vehicles but safe within the boundaries of the designated trail. I'm looking forward to using such a trail here. I have cycled long distances on highways, and luckily have not had any accidents. Not everyone is so lucky. My husband will not cycle on the highways, so I'm left with cycling alone on the roads. We plan on visiting more rail to trails/rails with trails in the near future, and hope that one day, we can cycle this one together. Thank you for your work on the implementation of the TVT.</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing your personal experience as it relates to the proposed trail.</p>
<p>I highly recommend that these preliminary plans are accepted. These trails are especially beneficial for local citizens as they provide a way for almost anyone to get outside, get some exercise and to connect with other people. The trail provides another close to home healthy activity. Many cities have such trails and they have been an asset to the community for locals as well as visitors. Details about funding, maintenance and safety are workable!</p>	<p>Thank you for reaffirming the positive attributes the trail will bring to the community.</p>
<p>There are no Landowners on the committee. Can I drive my ATV/UTV on trail to access my property which has 5 year lease on the Proposed Trail? Railroad is fledgling and continues to need repairs. It appears only one vendor is still using services (Seneca), Port is not designed for maintaining for that. Why not put moratorium on trail until it can be decided if Railroad is viable. Seneca has documented it has Truck Freight as a better alternative to get the freight loaded at Pasco and on the main lines faster. The Trail could then be built where the tracks were. What is Cost</p>	<p>A community member and farmer who owns a large amount of land along the trail has now joined the steering committee. Costs will continue to be examined during further design work with a goal of reducing costs as much as might be appropriate. For the safety of the users, no motorized vehicles will be allowed on the trail except for emergency services vehicles. Existing leases on the railroad right of way will be honored until their expiration date, but may not be renewed if the trail will be construction on that portion of Port property. Railroad viability is a challenge, and the lack of connection with Union Pacific at Port Kelly isn't helping. This issue continues</p>

<p>structure looking like for taxpayers of Columbia County vs. Walla Walla County to pay and maintain the trail? I really think the cost is much too expensive and since we are absent of cost/benefit analysis, need to continue the moratorium until it can be proven a suitable funding source is available.</p>	<p>to be worked on and looked at by the Port Commission. No new taxes are proposed for construction or maintenance of the trail. State or federal funds that are already designated for active transportation purposes, meaning walking, biking, etc., are being used for design and will be used for construction. If we don't take advantage of those funds, they will be spent in a different community. They cannot be used for any other local projects. Existing funds will be used for maintenance - no new taxes are proposed. The Port has existing funds that are currently used to service debt on the construction of two new buildings and the remodeling of two existing buildings. Between 2026 and 2030, all of that debt will be paid in full on those 4 buildings, freeing up ample existing funds that can be used for maintenance of the trail. Most trail maintenance models that we have looked at make the owner of the land with the trail on it as financially responsible for maintenance. Since Walla Walla County doesn't own any land that the trail will be located on, they may not be asked to provide maintenance funds. The City of Dayton and the City of Waitsburg will be asked as they own a small portion of the land at either end.</p>
<p>I think the trail is a wonderful idea and I am super excited about using it!!! I think it will be great to have more options from town to walk my dogs, and I'm excited about a safe option to ride my bike. You all are doing excellent work!!!!</p>	<p>We appreciate your support and enthusiasm.</p>
<p>We would like to express our support for the Touchet Valley Trail. The trail would unify the towns of Dayton and Waitsburg offering limitless, no fee, healthy recreational opportunities with little to no environmental impact. The trail would encourage walking, running, and biking which could all have a healthy impact on both communities. The trail would also provide sporting activities such as fun runs or walks and the trail would attract visitors from other areas which would bring shoppers and diners to both towns adding a welcomed boost to the economies of both Dayton and Waitsburg. In the long run the Touchet Valley Trail will be a boon to the future economic, physical, and mental health of the region and well worth the price of maintenance and security.</p>	<p>Thank you for thoughtfully evaluating and weighing both the costs and benefits of the trail.</p>

<p>The trail was a great idea when first proposed and it's early development and planning shows it to be a sure winner for the region economically by drawing tourists far and wide. It will help out all local stores and restaurants and lodging. Those who oppose it for fear of increased taxes fail to note that the economic benefits far outweigh any taxation, and it's very possible that creative solutions (user fees, grants, volunteer action or others) will reduce or cover routine trail maintenance expenses without placing any or much burden on taxpayers. I think data from other such trails shows this. I look forward to using the trail for physical and mental health benefits, and a safe way to ride my bicycle between Dayton and Waitsburg while avoiding highways, and perhaps to future locations if the regional trail system develops further.</p>	<p>We appreciate your affirmation of the positive health, economic and mental health benefits the trail can provide to the community.</p>
<p>I am very excited about the possibility of this bike trail between Waitsburg and Dayton. It will provide a great nature and exercise opportunity for local communities and out of town visitors. I feel certain it will be of economic benefit to the communities as riders stop in the towns for meals and supplies. I have ridden on the Trail of the Coeur d' Alenes and stop for meals along the route. I hope the Port and volunteers can work with community members to make this wonderful opportunity a reality.</p>	<p>Thank you for your support and for sharing your personal experiences with similar trails.</p>
<p>My family and I have lived in the Dayton/Touchet Valley area since August 2001. We enjoy outdoor recreation in many forms. It has become increasingly apparent opportunities for safe bicycle riding, walking and jogging are limited. We enjoy the Touchet River dike, Rock Hill and Lewis and Clark State Park. These are relatively safe places to walk in the Dayton area, but riding bicycles, jogging and walking in interesting and new places is limited in our community. Riding bicycles, walking and limited jogging is common on the North Fork Touchet Road, Patit Creek Road and Kellogg Hollow, but not always the safest alternative since road shoulders, space for people AND vehicles is severely limited. The same concerns surface when jogging, riding bicycles or walking on State Highway 12. I am concerned for the safety of people who engage in these</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing your recreational safety concerns and supporting the trail as a part of the solution.</p>

activities as automobile traffic, trucks and farm equipment routinely use these public roadways. I strongly support the proposed Touchet Valley Trail. It is a welcome alternative to the current places to ride bicycles, jog and walk. The idea to travel portions of the trail from Waitsburg to Dayton is wonderful. The notion one could spend a morning riding a bicycle from Dayton to Waitsburg (and return!) is exciting. Safety for all who enjoy and engage in healthy activities cannot be understated. My family and I support the proposed Touchet Valley Trail.

At the meeting held in the pavilion it was stated there were 2 types of trail systems. One being the Rails to Trails where the rail line had been abandoned and the trail was built on top of the former railbed. The other was Rails with Trails where the trail is built along the tracks of an active railroad. This was what was envisioned for the Touchet Valley Trail. Now reading the Expressed Concerns and Questions page I saw 4 separate trail systems cited to help provide answers. For most not familiar with these trail systems and for the good of the study please state what types of trails each of those are. I looked them up and from my study they were all Rails to Trails systems that were placed on top of the abandoned railbed. My understanding is the Touchet Valley Trail is a Rails with Trails system with the trail being placed alongside the railbed.. If you are trying to sell it as Rails with Trails it would be nice to see 4 examples cited to then compare use and cost to as you can't compare apples to oranges. The current narrative is for Rails to Trails and the drawings show Rails with Trails. One or the other needs to be changed. Reality is how long is the rail going to exist. There are no cost savings now using the rail. Timeliness can not be depended on to get product shipped across the country. That has not been resolved and the problem is not the short-line operator. The trail could be constructed a lot cheaper if done after the rail line is abandoned. This started in 2015 long before the swimming pool issue was known and the current pandemic that has disrupted businesses. The port is well versed in how bad the economy is as they are handling grants to

The money being used for trail design cannot be used for a pool. It is funding from the Washington State Department of Transportation that can only be used for active transportation projects. If we give it back it will go to a different community. We agree with you on the importance of broadband internet for the community, and the Port is actively pursuing funds to build infrastructure that can be used by private internet service providers to provide fast, reliable service to our citizens.

The rails to trails example of the Bill Chipman Palouse Trail has bare ground weed control for 5 ft on each side of the trail, which is similar to what we are proposing for the Touchet Valley Trail.

A farmer who owns land along the trail has now joined our steering committee to help us adequately address some of these concerns.

help out the local businesses to survive these tough times. They know there isn't any extra money in the area to make the investment in the trail. They know full well that the community wants a swimming pool now more than a trail. They know with the pandemic there is more zoom meetings and people working remotely by internet and people are looking to move to more rural areas and are looking for high speed internet. We only have so much money to do this and there are now priorities higher than the current trail proposal. The grant only pays for the studies and construction hasn't even started and we know there are only so many things the community can support. With an active railroad the method of weed control is different. Just look at the existing railroad. All vegetation is killed and ground is bare. Look at your Rails to Trails examples you cited and there is nice lush vegetation along the route. Also, with an active railroad the train continually goes through very weedy areas between Dayton and Wallula and deposits those seeds along the rest of the route. As a farmer who farms along the track it is very obvious. When the ground is bare it makes a prime spot for weeds such as Kochia, Russian Thistle, and Puncture Vine to grow with no competition. Continual maintenance will be required to keep in check as they love the hot dry summer heat. Probably the worst thing that hikers and bikers hate on trails is Russian Thistle and Puncture Vine as they stick to shoes and will cause flat tires. If not controlled they will make the trail unusable. Weed control will need to be more frequent and expensive to maintain than a Rails to Trails concept that the narrative has illustrated. This again shows the need for a farmer and a Certified Crop Advisor on your panel to help make your plan flourish. The current economic conditions show there is no money to support the projects as things like high-speed internet are required to keep us viable in the future. The right choice is after this study is done is to shelve the construction until a Rails to Trails opportunity arises and that will give the community a chance to take care of other issues that have arisen since the beginning of the trail study. Get high speed internet in the community to help

<p>give more job opportunities to those that want to relocate here and be able to still do their jobs where they currently are at. More people here will increase the tax base to make the trail more feasible. That would be a Win-Win for everyone. Thank you.</p>	
<p>How long would the trail be? Would it be accessible from Walla Walla by bike? We travel part of the Coeur d'Alene trail every year and believe the local towns benefit from tourism through eateries and lodging, hopefully the same would be true for Dayton/Waitsburg.</p>	<p>The trail will be nine miles long. Thank you for your support.</p>
<p>In short if the committee proposing the Rails with Trails can't cite any examples of Rails with Trails why should we show any support of one? The only examples cited were Rails to Trails and they should be noted as such so that people reading your sheets will know what they are as there is a big difference. Thank you.</p>	<p>There are many examples of Rails with Trails projects that we have reviewed. Here are some links to examples:</p> <p>https://www.pedestrians.org/topics/rail-trails-gallery.htm</p> <p>https://railroads.dot.gov/sites/fra.dot.gov/files/2020-04/RWT_Report_Final_031620_0.pdf</p> <p>https://www.americantrails.org/images/documents/RWT-ITS-2019-Presentation.pdf</p> <p>https://www.railstotrails.org/resource-library/resources/americas-rails-with-trails/</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDnRrk39EYw</p> <p>https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/RailsWithTrails.pdf</p> <p>https://www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?name=rails-with-trails-design-management-and-operating-characteristics-of-61-trails-along-active-rail-lines&id=3491&fileName=Rails-with-Trails%20Report%20reprint_1-06_lr.pdf</p> <p>We compared the proposed trail to other trails in eastern WA and northern Idaho, but as you point out none of those are rails with trails. However, because of their proximity and similar farming practices along some of those trails we felt their experiences were informative. Also, even though the proposed trail is a rail with trail project we felt there was also similarity with the rails to trails projects because of the infrequent use of the rails and the very slow train traffic. We may not be able to find a similar rail with</p>

	trail project that has so little rail use and slow train traffic, but we will search for something similar.
<p>I understand the right to farm but the study needs to go more into details about when chemicals that are sprayed that require total closure for a time period such as an insecticide sprayed on peas which are a common crop along the trail and a long history in the valley so nothing new. Read the label for Dimethoate. It states no entry for 48 hours. Copied from the label:Corrosive. Causes irreversible eye damage. May be fatal if swallowed. Harmful if inhaled or absorbed through the skin. Avoid breathing spray mist. Avoid contact with skin, eyes, or clothing. This will usually be occurring during the Memorial weekend into the first couple weeks in June depending on maturity. This is a serious chemical and needs a serious answer. Who is going to enforce during good weather, vacation, or school is out and people wanting to get out but have a trail section closed for at least 2 days? If someone is planning to ride or hike the length of the trail do you think they are going to turn around due to ¼ mile of trail closed because of a sign or are they going to just ride on through? It has been established that farmers have a right to farm and that the port owns the actual trail property so that means they would take on the liability of enforcing keeping the people out? Then if someone gets sick from the spray who is going to take responsibility? Farmers need to know the real answers before they can even support. Farmers run big wide commercial equipment and it is hard to not have chemical go onto an 8-10 foot wide trail. Very hard to do with 120 foot sprayer. Will the port accept any responsibility or are they going to throw the farmer under the bus and claim chemical trespass onto their trail property? At the time the port shows no intention of maintaining their full right of way so chemical will be in close proximity to the trail. Please answer for the satisfaction of the farmers as just stating the right to farm doesn't answer the legal question. The chemical label states no entry for 48 hours there is no getting around that. The port owns the trail so are they going to fully enforce possibly multiple</p>	<p>As answered in your question above, we recognize the potential for conflict with particularly hazardous chemicals such as those used on peas and are willing to post signs on and/or close portions of the trail if needed, even for 48 hours. In speaking with the WSDA Pesticide Compliance representatives, they told us they receive very few complaints about spray from trail users. The Port is not a pesticide compliance agency, so we will not be taking a side in any conflicts that may occur. We will do everything we can to keep the farmers protected from risk while still operating the trail. The WSDA has suggested several educational methods that we plan to implement, including signage, to try to keep conflicts to a minimum.</p>

<p>closures for multiple days since there could be multiple pea fields sprayed at different intervals along the route? If the port feels they have no obligation, then that is a prime reason for no trail. Shows once again the lack of a farmer and certified crop advisor on your panel. Thank you.</p>	
<p>I have enjoyed discovering interesting and unique small towns when biking on trails in other states. Wandering off of one trail, I discovered that someone had converted their small house on Main St. into a beer garden. Two bike racks in front were full. Another town had opened a bagel and sandwich place along main street, just off of the same trail. Along another trail, someone had converted their home into an ice cream shop. In another town, I discovered a restaurant severing delicious home-cooked meals and pies. And in one town there had a local version of dairy Queen that also served hot dogs, burgers, fried catfish, and more flavors of shakes and sundaes than I'd ever seen at DQ. Like we have on Main St., Dayton could put signs at the end of the trail pointing visitors to the soda fountain at Elk Drug, sandwiches and burgers and pizza at all of our great eating establishments, and highlighting our historical points of interest. As this pandemic continues, the trail will add another option for exercise while remaining socially-distant. I wholeheartedly support the creation of this trail for its potential contribution to Dayton's economy, and the health of its residents.</p>	<p>We appreciate your sharing specific memories and experiences on their trails and hope others can experiences similar experiences locally in the future.</p>
<p>I am very much against the proposed Touchet trail because in essence it is already kept up by the railroad and is walkable for anyone who wishes to walk it. People can come here to our community by walking the railroad tracks and come for whatever reason they want. However, if coming to buy something they would have to carry it back in their hands. It is basically only a recreational thing not a money-making thing for our community. That recreational trail has been available for generations and still available today. It is not a viable recreation to bring money into our community. Therefore, I do not believe we should pursue this</p>	<p>Persons walking railroad tracks are walking on private property and generally considered to be trespassing. Also, use of railroad tracks for walkers or bicycles can be dangerous and railroads do not provide suitable access for wheelchairs, strollers or even bicycles. The railroad is not a trail system that should be used by the public. It is a violation of federal law to do so.</p> <p>No new taxes are being proposed for this trail. If we did propose new taxes we would be required to put it on the ballot for a vote. Please see answer below on voting.</p>

<p>adventure it will only raise our taxes for something that is already there.</p>	
<p>Since 1992 I have lived and worked in Dayton, first as an elementary school teacher and now as a hospital/community social worker. My wife and I raised three children and enjoyed all of the outdoor recreational activities locally available. When it came time to teach bike riding it was always a concern for finding safe locations to ride. I live in town, so sidewalks are often available, but once we reach the city limits we must share the roads, both paved and gravel. It is a harrowing experience to pedal down highway 12. I would never take my children that way, but I often see residents of Valley View trailer park forced to walk the shoulder. I cringe every time I see bicyclists, pedestrians, children, elderly trying to get to town beside the busy highway. By my count there are residents of three trail parks outside of Dayton and many homes on streets in town without sidewalks that would benefit from a safe off the street path for travel to/from home and downtown. Let's agree that strollers, wheelchairs, young families need this trail to safely access all that Dayton has to offer when private vehicles and buses are not available.</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the shortage of safe local biking and walking opportunities, especially for young families.</p>
<p>We are totally opposed to the trail! There will be no economic benefit to either Dayton or Waitsburg other than to sell a few more hamburgers, ice cream and soft drinks. There is nothing to do in either town as most of the store-fronts are closed. Then there is the cost factor to the citizens of Waitsburg and Dayton. We don't know how much it is going to cost us before the trail is finished, not to mention the annual upkeep! For these reasons and more we are adamantly opposed to this project!</p>	<p>We believe, and a draft economic study supports that belief, that there will be substantial economic benefits to Dayton and Waitsburg as a product of the trail. We will continue to examine cost savings options as the trail goes through further design work.</p>
<p>I am so proud to tell people that I live in Dayton, a town that has worked hard to identify community priorities for how they want to improve access and outdoor activities, and then follows through with it! Thank you for all your work as you continue through the complex planning process.</p>	<p>We appreciate your support and pride in your community.</p>
<p>I am in full support of the development of this trail. Currently I walk and bike on the Touchet River dike, and am grateful for the</p>	<p>Thank you for advocating for active and healthy lifestyles and for sharing your personal experiences.</p>

<p>opportunity to have a place that is safe and scenic for exercise and social engagement. The proposed Touchet Valley Trail would offer even more opportunities for healthy endeavors. I recognize that some people may feel that this trail is a poor use of public funds. In my opinion, anything that encourages our sedentary society to get out and move is a wonderful use of funds. A similar trail was developed along the railroad right-of-way in my hometown of Sedro-Woolley. It's become an amazing place for people to walk, bike, run, push baby strollers, and engage in healthy pursuits. Yes, there are issues that need to be mitigated for the Touchet Valley Trail. But the proposed plans look great to me and I'm on board with full support!</p>	
<p>Wondering why paving the entire 9.7 miles of trail is proposed. I've walked, biked, enjoyed numerous trails around the country with a mix of surfaces and a nicely graded gravel trail is excellent. Seems some cost savings could be seen w/o pavement except in specific areas.</p>	<p>When the community survey was conducted in 2019, an asphalt paved surface was by far the highest ranked choice by respondents, so that is the surface that was chosen. Since then, the crushed rock idea has been suggested. The engineering firm said there can be a supply issue with that product. During further design we will examine the options to reduce the amount of paved surface and reduce costs, if possible. Also, having some portions of the trail without asphalt may be more suitable for running or horseback riding.</p>
<p>I just LOVE this trail! Excellent presentation by everyone tonight. Thank you for holding this meeting via Zoom so everyone could safely attend. Keep it up - we, the silent majority, cannot wait to see this trail come to development.</p>	<p>Thank you for your support. We will continue to keep the community involved.</p>
<p>I thought the presentation on April 26th was a job well done. I believe the trail would be an enormous asset to the communities of Dayton and Waitsburg. It would benefit both communities by providing local residents with a recreational activity close to home and bring in needed dollars. If you haven't walked our Main Streets lately I suggest you do, we could use some visitors! I am all in for The Trail.</p>	<p>We appreciate the kind words and support.</p>
<p>Participating in the Zoom webinar as I type this and I am so impressed and proud of all of those who've participated in the hard work related to this project. It is very extensive, detailed, and</p>	<p>Thank you for these encouraging words.</p>

<p>thoughtful We are so lucky to have such dedicated, civic-minded people in our community and region.</p>	
<p>As a business owner and resident of Dayton I am all for a non motorized trail that links the Communities of Dayton and Waitsburg. It would offer both residents and tourists a safe place to ride walk and skate. It would not affect our local tax rates and would only add to land values and give the nice folks both communities a safe place to enjoy the natural beauty of the Valley.</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing the positive outcomes you see the trail bringing to the valley.</p>
<p>There are places on this designated "Trail" that it will literally be on someone's front or backyard. Where is the beauty in that. When I think of a trail I visualize going somewhere scenic that cannot be seen by vehicle. This particular site is right along a highway that you can drive or even bike or walk and see every thing that is seen by walking on the proposed trail. There is talk of economic tourism advantages to having this trail. Not many people are going to walk to Waitsburg and be capable of purchasing much more than lunch. How is that going to attract tourists?? Who is going to pay for cleaning up the farmers field of papers water bottles and etc? Sure I would not throw trash on other people's property and some of you who are reading this would not either. BUT, let's get real, there are many most likely most who would be using this trail who could care less about littering, trashing, and maybe even vandalizing other people's property. Stop this particular trail now.</p>	<p>There are all kinds of trails. Some are as you describe where they are in more wild country than this proposed trail, but there are also many trails in open rural areas, as well as within developed urban areas.</p>
<p>While I love access to safe outdoor recreation, I don't support this trail. The "costs" outweigh the benefits in my opinion. Infringing on others property and quality of life they sought out is wrong. I support taking your time and energy to create in town activities for locals and tourists. This trail will not fill our empty storefronts nor will children aimlessly wander it without their parents being concerned for their safety and well-being. Who is your target audience? We are a town with children and an elderly population, are you expecting these groups to heavily utilize it? This idea deserves to be put to vote. We, the community, business owners, property owners, and tax payers deserve the right to have our</p>	<p>Our target audience is broad. While we do expect local citizens to enjoy the trail, which benefits the health and well-being our community, we also know from other communities that trails are a tourism draw. The preliminary economic forecast estimates \$1.32 million in direct and indirect spending in the region annually due to trail visitors. Our hospitality, retail, and service sectors are hurting and could really use this boost, which is the primary reason the Port is pursuing this project. The economy of trails is well documented, and the type of spending by trail users is also well documented. Recreation amenities are also attractive to businesses and residents considering relocating here. Considering our death rate is so much higher than our birth rate, we need new people to move here to</p>

<p>opinions and voices heard. Help us help our community with safer, year round opportunities that better serve our population.</p>	<p>sustain our population. Also, many children and elderly will likely use this proposed trail for exercise and family outings. Taking grandchildren for a walk is a good family activity enjoyed by many.</p> <p>Please see two answers below this one regarding voting on the trail.</p>
<p>I strongly oppose the Touchet Valley Trail. Those for it ask yourself would you like a bike trail right up to your property line? You move to the country but now you have to deal with people trespassing, camping, crime, trash, drugs, human and animal waste? Then look at the cost to maintain. The small section to asphalt the dike was \$74,000, those for it should get to foot the bill. We should be allowed to have a vote if the majority want it then it continues if the majority don't, it stops.</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing your specific concerns regarding the trail. This helps us in seeking out positive solutions.</p>
<p>I had a question about your budget and wanted to get facts straight. Would you be willing to explain what the 5,000 is for in regards to elections and since there is a budget for elections why the trail proposal is not being put on the ballot? Thank you</p>	<p>The \$5,000 election expense is the estimated cost of having 2 Port Commissioners listed on the ballot. Each government entity in the county has to pay the Columbia County Auditor's Office a share of the total elections cost. We just received word that a new expense will be charged to the Port and other governments for the publication of a voter's pamphlet, so we will very likely be over budget on elections this year due to this new, unexpected expense. Now we have to pay for the primary election by ourselves, so our election line item is likely to be triple what was budgeted due to outside decisions. There are multiple reasons why the trail is not on the ballot for a vote. 1. A vote is not required unless new taxes are being proposed. No new taxes are proposed. 2. Port's do not have the legislative authority to run advisory votes. 3. The United States Constitution formed our country as a Republic - a representative democracy. This means people are elected to serve on boards, commissions, councils, etc., to operate our governments and make decisions on taxpayer spending. A system in which every decision had to be put to a vote would result in chaos. 4. When the Port kept hearing from the public that they wanted a trail between Dayton and Waitsburg, we participated in the Blue Mountain Region planning process to gather public input on the idea of a trail. We heard overwhelmingly positive responses to the idea. The trail idea was then added to the Cooperative Parks Master Plan for the city, the county, and</p>

	<p>the Port, which was adopted after each entity held a public hearing for a total of 3 public hearings. The trail was added to the Port's comprehensive plan after holding another public hearing, and the trail was added to both the City and County comprehensive plans after public hearings were held by each of those entities. This is the legal planning process required for projects, including seeking input from the public, which was followed.</p>
<p>As a current frequent bike rider in Dayton, I can't wait for the Touchet Valley Trail to be completed. Trails are awesome and bring so much to the communities that have them. My thanks to the people who are making this trail happen.</p>	<p>Your appreciation is noted and appreciated.</p>
<p>I am a total fan of this project and hope that it is completed. I also would like to submit a recommendation for the planners: please include doggie stations at the trailheads along with trash cans so dog-walkers can pick up after their dogs. Thank you.</p>	<p>Excellent input! Thank you for that specific, thoughtful suggestion.</p>
<p>Hi! I was wondering about information on the proposed trail. Is there a place to see the documentation of the ownership of the land that the trail would be on? I'm trying to learn what I can. Thanks!!</p>	<p>The 30% Design Drawings posted on the Port's website show the property lines. Click on the green 30% design Drawings button on this webpage: https://www.portofcolumbia.org/economic-development/touchet-valley-trail/.</p> <p>The Port of Columbia has a quit claim deed from the Union Pacific for the railroad property stretching from Dayton to Walla Walla. The land and the line were donated to the Port in 1996 by the Union Pacific Railroad. Deeds are public records and can be found in the Columbia County Records, or a copy of our deed can be provided by the Port to you upon request. As part of the trail design work that is currently underway, a title search was conducted in both counties, deeds have been researched, an aerial survey was conducted, and a ground survey was conducted. All research verifies Port ownership of the railroad right of way, and a final survey document representing the researched right of way will be completed and incorporated in to the design work.</p>
<p>Dear Commissioners, First, I want to say what a great job your director and her staff did on organizing and putting together last Monday's information meeting on the Touchet Valley Trail. I was impressed with the wide range of concerns, and experts from other trails in the state</p>	<p>Thank you for your thoughtful and detailed comments. Your support is appreciated.</p>

who were able to speak to their experiences with their communities and their ability to work successfully with stakeholders and adjacent landowners who were initially against their projects – even the engineers were able to keep it interesting.

I am writing to express my support for the building of the trail. It was exciting to see what the engineers and designers have envisioned. I am a bicyclist and look forward to riding down the valley. One thing that impressed us when we were moving here, and the many trips we made back and forth, was the ever changing light on the hills – dependent on season, time of day, crops and their stage of growth. It was beautiful and I look forward to seeing it without having to navigate traffic on Hwy 12.

Dedicated bike and hike trails are so much safer for those that choose alternative means of transportation. Remember the two accidents that happened on east Main Street before Covid? In separate incidents, a truck took out several vehicles at the old corner station on South 4th and a trailer broke loose and took out the corner of the furniture store. The trail will make it much safer for young and old to get about parts of town and the valley.

The fact that the building of the trail will not result in an increase in my taxes is also a big plus. It is my understanding that this type of funding has been federally allocated for alternative transportation in the federal budgets since 1977. Why shouldn't it be used to enhance the Waitsburg/Dayton area? Maintenance costs appear to be small in relation to project outlay. I am willing to sign up to pick up trash on a regular basis – adopt a mile - like people do for sections of the highway. I understand too that the Blue Mountain Land Trust's 'Blues Crew' will probably be doing maintenance and as a BMLT member will join the Blue's Crew to assist with trail maintenance.

We are frequent walkers of the levee along the Touchet as it comes into town from the south. We like being able to walk out of our house and take a walk close to nature. The river is restorative and restful. I have never seen illegal activity along the levee, which

I understand anti-trail people are afraid of - not even the hint of cannabis smoke. It would have been so great during the last year of Covid (which ain't gone yet) to have another outlet close by for outdoor walking and biking. One thing the Touchet Valley trail will provide that the levee trail does not is more miles of outdoor access for those who use personal transport to get around. The levee trail from Hwy 12 south is asphalt through the city park but then turns to gravel which prevents easy access for smaller-tired personal conveyances (motorized wheelchairs, road bicycles, etc.). We were wine tasting at Dumas Station (which the trail passes next to) last Friday and I got to talking with a couple that were over from Bremerton who were camping at the state park. This was their first trip out since Covid happened and their second trip to the park. They just love it over here and thought the trail a great idea – next time they could walk over to wine taste. We sat there enjoying good wine, good conversation, the sun shining, enjoying the beauty of the day at the edge of the fields.

The design of the entry into Dayton down to the Dayton Train Depot appears to clean up Commercial Street. This is a great benefit. We walk there once in a while and I am surprised how ignored and lackluster the area looks. That the trail funds would clean up and enhance this area is a benefit to the city and county, at no expense to either entity.

I have reviewed the document labeled 'Expressed Concerns and Questions from Landowners and the Public Regarding the Proposed Touchet Valley Trail' that the Port has posted on the Trails' webpage. It appears that concerns have been/will be addressed in design/build. Most of these issues have been dealt with on the other major Washington trails – the Bill Chipman to Palouse Trail, The Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail – they are not unique. Though having a trail is not going to make some people any smarter – they may walk in front of a car, they may step into Hwy 12, they already walk the railroad tracks, and they may walk in front of a grain truck. The point is that they can do these things now and if they are going to do them, they are going

<p>to do them no matter what. We don't stop driving because accidents happen. Nor, should we avoid building the trail because some people make poor choices.</p> <p>The possible economic benefits to the Waitsburg and Dayton communities are encouraging and within the mission of the Port. Learning from the presentation some of the past history of a thriving economy in Dayton and now seeing all of the vacant storefronts demonstrates that Dayton, and Waitsburg, need all of the help that they can get to facilitate small business development coming in – what will attract people to stop by? Or make Dayton or Waitsburg a day or week-end destination? Perhaps a new multi-use trail.</p>	
<p>I just wanted to complement you and the staff of the port of Columbia on their work on the Touchet Valley Trail. I don't know what the opponents are thinking but this is all very very good for the Dayton area and should be pursued as you have been. I am very grateful your professional staff is available and willing to work so hard.</p>	<p>Thank you for your recognition of our efforts.</p>
<p>I strongly support the trail between Waitsburg and Dayton!</p>	<p>Thank you for weighing in!</p>
<p>I can't see how this will bring anything to columbia county, except headaches. Revenue? Those that use the trail will bring their own water, most likely will not stay to eat. The others will bring their own stuff and leave it. Money could be well spent on other things. Residents are taxed enough already. Why should everyone pay for something not everyone will use!!! This should have been discussed with community prior to all the work done. Shame on you</p>	<p>No new taxes are being proposed for this project. If we did, we would be required by law to place that tax measure on a ballot for a vote of the people. Existing state and/or federal grant funds will be used for construction, and the Port will use existing revenues to maintain the trail. The trail was discussed with the community multiple times over many years before design began, and the Port is conducting this work because community members asked us to. This trail was voted a favorite by participants in the Blue Regional Trails Plan, the Port conducted an online survey that showed over 80% approval, the Port has held several public meetings and has invited community members to give input many times. This trail is listed in the Cooperative Parks Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plans for the city, the county, and the port, and those plans were adopted after public hearings were held by each public entity.</p>

<p>I support the development of the Toucher Valley trail between Dayton and Waitsburg. This trail will provide recreational opportunities for local residents for many generations to come! It is an example of forward thinking by local elected officials and will greatly enhance the quality of life in the Touchet Valley. Hopefully other local communities (Walla Walla) will follow suit by developing unused railroad rights of way for the benefit of our local citizens too!</p>	<p>Thank you for your obvious pride in your community and your concern for future generations.</p>
<p>I think the trail will be a long awaited and great asset for our local citizens and community. We can share our pretty part of the state with many others for all our enjoyment. Would love to ride my bike safely to Waitsburg and back, or just walk part of the trail for exercise. I'm very much in favor of constructing the trail. It appears every effort is being made to accomodate property owners along the trail route. I am not sharing my contact information because of the hateful negativity on anything new or different from a small percentage of our population.</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing. We appreciate the recognition of our efforts in working with property owners.</p>
<p>I strongly support the Touchet Valley Trail. I have been involved with the idea of a trail since the very beginning when I served on the Community Council committee on Outdoor Recreation in the Walla Walla area. I have attended all the large public presentations on the trail in Walla and Dayton and one Port of Columbia commissioners' meeting at the start of the Covid pandemic. I listened to the most recent presentation on Zoom on the 30% design.</p>	<p>Thank you for your ongoing involvement from inception to current stages. We appreciate your commitment.</p>
<p>I am an avid walker and bicyclist. Once this project is completed, it will be added to my normal list of local places to regularly include in my outings (I live in Walla Walla). The availability of nearby eateries to the proposed Touchet Valley Trail will also encourage me to plan for meals there on some of my outings. When I have visitors from out of the area, I will definitely plan an outing with them on the Touchet Valley Trail, along with visits to nearby points of interest, along with dining. Thank you for this outstanding addition to your communities.</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing your future hopes and dreams for recreating along the trail.</p>

<p>In my opinion the idea of a trail from Dayton to Waitsburg is a very flawed thought. Having children recreating next to an active rail line goes against any logical thinking.</p>	<p>Thank you for expressing your safety concerns regarding trail safety.</p>
<p>I am writing in support of the trail. My grandparents and great-grandparents are burdied in Dayton and I grew up fishing on the Touchet River. I love the area and the beauty of the river and a trail would help more people experience it.</p>	<p>Thank you for wanting to share the history of our unique community with others.</p>
<p>The proposed Touchet Valley Trail has lots of potential to benefit the communities and businesses of Dayton and Waitsburg, and to add to the quality of life for folks in those communities, as well as those from Walla Walla. I very much support continuing to evaluate and plan for this proposed trail. I think if we continue to talk and work together we can make this work out and not unduly affect anyone. In the long run, this trail should be a very good addition to our communities.</p>	<p>Thank you for your confidence in the ability of stakeholders to work out the challenges involved in this project.</p>
<p>While there are paths and sidewalks to go walking or riding on, they are somewhat limited. I am anxious to see this project get under way!</p>	<p>We appreciate your support.</p>
<p>I am extremely happy about the trail. I have been looking forward to this since hearing of it's inception and to see it nearly done, I'm excited! This is going to be a huge benefit for the Dayton and Waitsburg communities and for those that come to our area. Thank you for doing this and for thinking of the health of our community.</p>	<p>Thank you for your support and enthusiasm.</p>
<p>I missed the Zoom meeting concerning the Touchet Valley Trail. Is there still an opportunity to comment on this project? I would very much like to voice my support for it. I think it would be a wonderful asset and improvement for the region.</p>	<p>Support is always welcome. Thank you for taking time to make your voice heard.</p>