

**Questions and Comments submitted during the April 26, 2021
Touchet Valley Trail Public Information Meeting**

Questions/comments submitted during the live presentation	Initial response by steering committee, Port and/or the moderator	Follow up response by the Port and steering committee
<p>I have reviewed the diagrams and was curious if a bike pump track and skate park could be incorporated on the County land adjacent to the trail site? We have heard a lot of requests for these recreational activities. Thank you!</p>	<p>This can be added as a suggestion as we move forward. At this point the plans are sticking to the trail, but please submit your suggestion through the comment website. Thank you!</p>	<p>Thank you for your suggestion. We will consider this during the remainder of the design process.</p>
<p>How is a 9 mile trail from Waitsburg to Dayton with NO other access other than existing highways going to increase revenues?</p>	<p>We have some local businesses commenting in this meeting. Please let us know if this needs to be addressed after the content is delivered tonight. Thank you.</p> <p>The Touchet Valley Trail starts and ends in our downtowns. Review the map and see if that answers your question better than my answer.</p>	<p>Recreation tourism is a billion dollar-per-year industry. A preliminary economic forecast projects \$1.32 million in new direct and indirect spending in the region stretching from Walla Walla to Clarkston as a result of the trail. Further economic analysis is being done, and is based on existing trails in eastern Washington. Regarding access – trailheads (access points) are proposed at Lewis & Clark Trail State Park and Blue Mountain Station in addition to Dayton and Waitsburg. Additional access points will be considered as design continues.</p>
<p>What happened to the tax boone that was supposed to happen when the windmills were built. Our taxes were supposed to go down and that has not happened.</p>	<p>Thank you for that question. This question may require a more thorough and extensive explanation. Please refer back to the Port of Columbia website for a compiled list of all questions, with answers, received during this public meeting in the next two weeks. Again, thank you for coming and for participating in this project.</p> <p>The windmills are not on tonight’s agenda. The Port can provide you with a chart showing the tax effects from the windmill project.</p>	<p>There has been a tax benefit. Our tax base has grown over 200% since construction of the first wind project – more than double the rate of our neighboring Walla Walla County. This has resulted in additional tax revenue for local governments, and has reduced tax rates of individuals in the county. As an example, in 2003 the tax rate per thousand for the Payne/N&E of Dayton taxing district was \$13.80. In 2020, that rate had dropped to \$11.80, even with a newly voted-in emergency services levy and an increase in the state portion of the school levy. The bigger tax base has resulted in lower individual tax rates while allowing new services to be offered. If your tax bill did not go down, it is because the value of your property increased – not the tax rate. For more information on how tax rates have changed since the first wind project,</p>

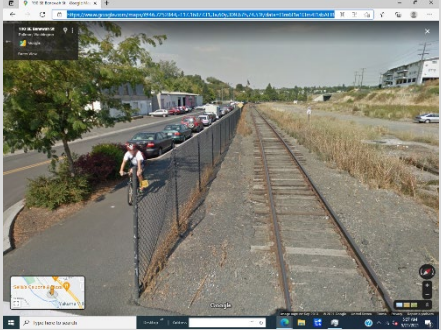
		visit https://www.portofcolumbia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Tax-Rates-Chart-2021.pdf
I think a Dayton pump track and skate park would bring business and funding to our area. I would work on grant writing to help fund the project. I will add this suggestion to your webpage.	Thank you	
Great data!	Thank you	
How about bike rentals?	I think you have identified one of many business opportunities that might be created by a trail project. Thanks!	
Is this still open for Q&A?	This question has been answered live. Feel free to type any questions you have and we will try to answer them here in the Q&A or live during the Q&A section following today's presentations.	
What about horses?	This trail will be accessible to all non-motorized recreation use, including horses. Horses require a different trail surface than bikes. Something to consider for expansion if the user need is there.	Horses will be allowed, but most riders would likely prefer a gravel or earth packed shoulder for better footing and safety. Also, horses may be spooked by bicycles going by or by strangers walking the trail and talking. Access and use by horses will be considered further as design work continues
I am wondering if the opponents to this trail receive information assuring them that they will be able to farm as usual and their private property will be respected and the community will benefit economically that they will get on board or will they remain in opposition regardless of the facts presented?	That's one of the goals of tonight's presentation. To share information that will hopefully help assuage concerns.	We will continue to share information and answer questions with the hope that more people will feel their concerns have been addressed. Some people may never support this trail, but many others do.
How will the final 10% of the design be funded if the grant covers only 90%?	This question was answered live by both Jennie D. and Brian (with Anderson Perry) that the final 10% design work will be incorporated into grants for construction, which is a standard approach. (refer to recording starting at 1:53:45 for more detail)	
As a cyclist who has cycled between Dayton and Walla Walla, I can say the toughest place to cycle is on Highway 12. A multi-use trail would	Thank you for that feedback. We have heard that many times. We are hopeful the development of a multi-use trail would not only offer the listed	

<p>sure increase safety for cyclists and bring folks to Dayton.</p>	<p>economic benefits, but also increase safety of all users within our community.</p>	
<p>If we were to install a new skatepark this would make up for the pool and it would target much more of the younger community rather than a trail.</p>	<p>A skatepark and a pool are great plans for the community, and we hope everything can be accomplished, but this specific grant funding is only for trails, and the funding isn't applicable to non-trail projects. Thank you for your comments though.</p>	
<p>What is the plan for public safety access to the trail in the areas where its far off the highway and no driveway cuts cross anywhere close to the incident. I grew up in an area with a massive trail system and on any lengthy section that didn't have public safety access they added in paths to trail for public safety access.</p>	<p>We have several law enforcement representatives presenting later this evening. If their presentation does not answer your question, they can respond to it during the live Q&A session at the end. This was answered live at 1 hr 55 minutes on the recorded program. Sheriff Helm responded that as far as responding to service the Sheriff's office will always respond and they would like access to the trail, as would fire and rescue. Jennie responded that the planning includes having emergency vehicles having special access to the trail.</p>	<p>There will be several trail intersections with driveways, roads and trail heads that will allow emergency vehicles to access to drive on the trail for accidents or enforcement needs. However, we will continue to examine this further as design work continues. Thank you for your suggestion.</p>
<p>Have you looked at alternatives to using asphalt as the trail's material? Many rails/trails in the Midwest use an alternative mix of fine gravels and bentonite. This results in lower costs and less maintenance. Asphalt is not permeable and if the base is not prepared properly (at higher expense) you will see freeze/thaw and root damage, higher maintenance costs. Gravel mixes used appropriately are less expensive, easier to maintain and very rideable by all styles of bicycles. (The fastest growing segment of the bicycle is gravel bikes.) The WW Valley and the extended region has the potential to become a premier area for cycling. Low traffic roads with interesting terrain are very appealing to the cycling community.</p>	<p>This is great information, and will be documented and shared with Brian and Ken (who are speaking on design right now). Thank you very much for sharing this with us, and they may be able to share more on this either later this evening or you can check back in the next couple weeks on the Port of Columbia website for further discussion on surfacing. This was answered live during the program (at 2 hrs 9 minutes) by the engineers. The summary of their comments is the asphalt was based on local availability of product and materials and they will take a closer look at that surface question, but they also want to make sure the trail is accessible for all users.</p>	<p>Alternatives to fully paving the full length and width of the trail will be examined as design work continues. Thank you for your comments and suggestions.</p>
<p>Lewis and Clark St. Park. Parking and restrooms. As we know, flooding through there is a major issue.</p>	<p>It has been an issue a couple times in the past 30 years or so, and it was and continues to be a part of the conversation regarding that location. Surfacing,</p>	<p>The restrooms will likely need to be elevated after careful placement because of a shallow water table in the area and past flood events.</p>

	<p>materials, and drainage may need to be specific for that purpose. Thanks for thinking of those types of concerns.</p>	
<p>What a great compliment to Dayton, BMS and Lewis and Clark State Park. This project has promise for this region.</p>	<p>Thank you for that feedback. We appreciate you taking the time to join us tonight.</p> <p>The multi decade histories of the Trail of The Coeur d'Alenes and Republic Rails to Trails provide compelling information of the economic success the trails provide to communities and how trail managers and numerous partners solve mutually significant challenges through responsible engagement. Understanding the successful histories will help people appreciate the opportunities provided by our project.</p> <p>We have some excellent presenters scheduled tonight that will bring exactly that information to the table. Thank you for bringing forth such a great point.</p>	
<p>What are some of the things that could be installed or implemented to lessen impact of foot and general traffic on the residential homes across from the Dayton end of the trail.</p>	<p>That is a great question. We will do our best to answer this live at the end of the presentation, assuming there is enough time. If we are unable to answer this question tonight, please refer to the Port of Columbia's website in the coming weeks for expanded answers to the questions received tonight. Thank you for participating in this meeting and for bringing your great questions.</p> <p>This was answered live during the program by the engineers (2 hr and 7 minutes on the recorded program). Summary of their response was the Dayton end of the trail is acting as a public sidewalk and they will have to consider this further, and it is usually taken on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>With or without the Touchet Valley Trail, there will be sidewalks and public open space throughout the entirety of the City. The City of Dayton has adopted Complete Streets Policies, which directs design and development of infrastructure that offers servitude to vehicular, pedestrian, and bike traffic – providing equitable access to all. Pedestrian traffic in the City is not considered an issue, as with or without the trail design, the City would be implementing measures to achieve the Complete Streets Policies goals. The main difference between standard Complete Streets design and the Touchet Valley Trail is that the bike lane and sidewalk are shared in the trail design</p>
<p>Huntsville: Main Rd. Cutoff Rd. intersection with US 12. Years ago, WSDOT approached Columbia County to abandon this horrible and</p>	<p>This is a great question. Thank you for not only presenting that question but providing that background information. It sounds like we have</p>	<p>Thank you for the suggestion! According to the Columbia County Public Works director, that is a county road and will be addressed by the county during the</p>

<p>dangerous intersection. I believe the R/R crossing's record that allowed that Rd. crossing was "iffy". Columbia County considered abandoning that intersection however Huntsville residents balked so nothing happened. This intersection needs to be eliminated in my opinion. I suspect that removal of that intersection may help in eliminating your need to move railroad tracks?</p>	<p>something we need to look more into. Please refer to the Port of Columbia's website in the coming weeks where we will fully address these more complex questions.</p>	<p>design process. If changes need to happen as a result of the trail to the rail crossing or intersection, then that will need to be coordinated by the Port with the appropriate agency. It is too early in the process to make a definite determination at this time.</p>
<p>Is the Washington State Parks going to require these users that park and use the facility to have the Discover pass like everybody else?</p>	<p>This is still being discussed and may be a possibility, as is the daily care/management of the trailhead.</p>	
<p>If someone walking the trail complains about a pesticide application, what is the process for dealing with the complaint? What will the farmer need to do, must he/she stop a spray operation during the complaint period?</p>	<p>Thank you for posing this question. We hope Tim S. with WSDA will answer this question live at the end of the presentation. If he is unable to, we will address this question fully in the comprehensive Q&A list that we will prepare in the coming weeks. The list will be available on the Port of Columbia's website as soon as we have it prepared. Tim Schultz or WA Dept of Ag. Pesticide Compliance Program answered this live (at 1 hr 56 minutes on the recorded program). A brief summary is that they would triage the call to determine the immediacy of the situation and determine a location to meet the caller, as it may take 2 hours or more to arrive. The farmer may not have to stop spraying, if the farmer continues he would hope the weather conditions and their applications are appropriate.</p>	
<p>The maintenance plan seems to include spray for weeds once annually. Isn't twice annually what's needed? The trail behind the Port has been noted to have maintenance needs that have not been met.</p>	<p>This question was answered live. That is a great question. The preliminary maintenance plan does not specify frequency of application related to weed control, but a soil sterilant is usually only applied once. We will discuss and determine frequency through consultation with professional applicators.</p>	<p>The maintenance plan has now been revised to clarify that it would likely include use of a soil sterilant, which is usually only needed once per season, with some spot spraying, as necessary.</p>

	<p>The trail behind the Port is managed solely by a very small and limited volunteer base. Yes, there are known issues with weeds along that trail. The volunteer group that manages that trail are always seeking additional help from other concerned citizens. If you are interested in connecting and volunteering to further improve the trail, please consider reaching out to the Port office for contact information to get involved.</p> <p>Thank you for joining us tonight and for bringing your questions! Your other question is slated to be answered at the live Q&A session shortly.</p>	
<p>Do we have a local Friends of the Touchet Valley Trail? Would it be beneficial to develop that support group for our area?</p>	<p>There is! The Friends of the Touchet Valley Trail can be found on Facebook. There are members of that group here tonight as well. Hopefully they can reach out to you directly with more information. Thank you for asking that question.</p>	
<p>Loreen, Are you going to discuss how many times the Centennial Trail hits the Spokane news for the crimes such as rapes and murders that have happened on that trail?</p>	<p>If Loreen isn't able to address this now or later in the meeting, then we will ensure it is addressed on the Port of Columbia Website in the next two weeks. Thanks for the question.</p> <p>Loreen answered this live (at 1 hr 59 minutes on recorded program). A summary of her response is: law enforcement on the centennial trail has a direct line to 911 if any issue, or call 311 to report illegal camping. The neighborhood in the Kendal Yards zip code is the poorest in WA. Law enforcement on the trail is not any different than any other location.</p>	
<p>One concern I have seen from those less excited about this project is: How many other trails run along an active train track? Are there trails that are set up like that we could compare our plan with?</p>	<p>While I do not have exact figures on the number of trails along active rail, they have been increasing the US over the past decade. An important thing to note for this corridor is the slow speed limit of trains (10 mph max) and the infrequent use by trains. We would be happy to follow up with more information on our website over the next few weeks.</p>	<p>We compared with rails to trails in eastern WA and northern Idaho because they are more similar to the proposed trail with farming nearby and rural surroundings, but we have found that there is 1,400 ft of rail with trail in Pullman with a fence to separate the two. We will continue to do further research to try to find similar trails with low frequency train use, and low speed trains, to compare with. (See photo of Pullman rail with trail below).</p>

		 <p>Only 1 percent or less of the 140,000 miles of railroads in the United States have a trail sharing the ROW with active rail lines. By the end of 2018, there were 343 identified rails-with-trails in the US, totalling 917 miles in 47 states. See link below for more examples. https://www.pedestrians.org/topics/rail-trails-gallery.htm</p>
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<p>Loren, could you touch on the homeless population on the trail. I know one concern I've heard from many locals is the homeless/transient population becoming invasive in our community due to the trail. With Spokane already having an established homeless community, does this population pose problems along any parts of the trail.</p>	<p>If Loreen isn't able to address this now or later in the meeting, then we will ensure it is addressed further on the Port of Columbia website in the next couple weeks. Thanks for the question, concern, and participation.</p> <p>Loreen answered this live during the presentation (2 hr and 2 minutes on the recorded program). She acknowledged that the homeless camping along the Spokane River has been a problem, and they can be close to services, but the homeless situation in the Spokane area in general has been a problem. Dave from the Bill Chipman Trail stated that the trail has been in existence for nearly 25 years and never had any regular negative impact with homelessness, but in the last 2-3 years there has been 1-2 homeless that might spend a night or two, mostly near Pullman. The benefit for the trail is that it runs along the highway and is easily seen from the highway.</p>	
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<p>A lot of history along the trail.</p>	<p>There really is. This sounds like another topic we need to explore further with you! Thank you for that feedback. Please consider sending an email to the Port of Columbia so we can further engage with you.</p>	
<p>Can you explain this? In an article dated September 6, 2017, the Gonzaga Bulldog posted that a man had attacked a woman in February of 2017. Since that incident, the Spokane county regional crime map showed that there had been 37 aggravated assaults, 66 thefts, 60 residential burglaries, 87 motor vehicle thefts and five individual robberies on or in the surrounding areas of the Centennial Trail near GU. These events prompted concerns regarding the trail's safety and how the SPD and campus security and public safety could work to ensure the safety of the community members.</p>	<p>Loreen answered this during the live presentation (see summary of her response regarding crime above).</p>	
<p>In other recreation areas I have visited which admittedly have mainly been camping type areas, human feces and waste paper is a common problem, has this been an issue in a trail type recreational area?</p>	<p>That's a great question. You're right, it can be an issue in camping areas and sometimes in remote trails that lack services. This trail would have services in Dayton, the State Park, and Waitsburg with possible other locations in between. This would hopefully mitigate this issue, as well as the fact that the trail will be highly visible from the highway. We may be able to address this concern more either in this meeting or on the Port Website in the next two weeks as well. Thanks for asking! This was answered live (2 hrs 12 minutes on recorded program). Dave from the Bill Chipman Trail said they had not seen this issue. Clara from State Parks said they see it in remote locations with services and they hope to be adding services to address it.</p>	
<p>Is the Sheriff's Department prepared for increased need of law enforcement due to the trail as compared to now?</p>	<p>From Sheriff Helm during the live presentation: We do not have dedicated resources for the trail at this time. We would respond to incidents and calls on the trail the same way we do for other calls in the</p>	

	<p>county. We do not have increased resources to dedicate solely to the trail.</p>	
<p>While there is still so much more to discover in this process of building a trail in our area, I think the work completed so far is absolutely stellar!! I am so excited about this project and excited to see how concerns and issues are addressed. Those concerns and issues allow for the Port and other entities to research and resolve or provide the best solutions possible. I didn't come to this meeting tonight expecting all the solutions, all the answers, all the details. Having an open Q and A has certainly brought other ideas, thoughts and concerns to the surface. And I am sure those will continue to be addressed by the entities involved in this project development. We will never, with any capital improvement project, make every single person happy. All we can do is build things with the best knowledge and expertise available.</p> <p>Thank you all for the work you all have done. And will do in the coming months.</p>	<p>Thank you, and we are glad you like the project thus far. As many have stated this evening, this is at only 30% design, so we are eager to continue to listen to questions and concerns and address them successfully through the rest of the design process. Thanks again!</p>	
<p>How would you access the trail from Walla Walla if you wanted to go by bike? Highway 12?</p>	<p>It sounds like most bicyclists take Middle Waitsburg Road from Walla Walla to Waitsburg.</p> <p>In the Blue Mountain Region Trails Plan, there is intent to bring full connectivity throughout the entire valley - which would offer improved connection between Walla Walla & Waitsburg. Someday we hope to partner with additional agencies to bring that to fruition, too. Here's a link to their website for more information: https://www.bluezonetrails.org/</p>	
<p>Sheriff Helm...you mentioned little or no complaints of loitering or vandalism along the dike trail. You did mention reports of drug activity along the trail. Is there an increased number of reports along the dike trail</p>	<p>This was answered live. Sheriff Helm answered that there was not an increased number of drug reports along the trail compared with other areas in Dayton.</p>	

compared to reports of drug activity in other parts of Dayton?		
Why not charge a user fee for the trail like the Hiawatha trail instead of expecting the taxpayers to foot the bill? We have to pay for fishing, hunting and vehicle user fees?	This was answered live by Shawn (2 hrs and 15 minutes on recorded program). That trail has a private operator who charges for bike rentals and bus shuttles.	The Hiawatha is operated by a private, for-profit business. The trail is owned by the US Forest Service and is leased to a private company that charges user fees. It is the vision of the TVT Steering Committee that the trail becomes a community asset – not a niche recreational opportunity as hunting and fishing are. The goal of the TVT is to provide equitable access to all people with different interests and abilities, hence the “multi-use” design. Inclusivity is one of the driving forces behind design, and assigning a user fee would eliminate that potential.
Terrific presentation! Thank you.	Thank you for coming!	
Is there a count of participants for this meeting?	<p>The attendance has varied throughout the presentation. Currently there are 50. At the highest we had nearly 100.</p> <p>I was watching fairly closely early on and I saw as high as 101 people in attendance!</p> <p>The total I saw was 96. - 25 panelists and 71 attendees.</p>	
I love the trail. Thank You	We do too!	