



Commission Workshop Touchet Valley Trail

MARCH 21, 2022

Introduction & Workshop Outline

- ▶ Background
- ▶ Why the Port Took on this Project
- ▶ Planning Process
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ WSDOT and Anderson Perry Contracts
- ▶ Site Survey and Document Research
- ▶ 30% Design Plans
- ▶ 30% Design Meeting
- ▶ Public Feedback & Adjustments
- ▶ Current Funding Opportunities



Background

- ▶ Starting in mid-2000s - EDSC and community members placed “more paths and trails” on our priority project list at our annual economic development planning meetings
- ▶ 2015 & 2016 – Trails were voted as one of top 3 projects to work on
- ▶ 2016 – 2018 – Blue Mountain Region Trails Planning took place with input from Dayton, Walla Walla, and Milton Freewater residents
- ▶ 2018 – over 100 people attended a workshop in Dayton on trail planning
- ▶ After a year of workshops, the Dayton-to-Waitsburg Trail concept was chosen as the highest priority out of all proposed trails in the valley.

Did We Have Support?

- ▶ As the trail idea was being discussed at community meetings and workshops, the following municipalities were also updating planning documents that set the stage for future land use decisions and municipal projects.
- ▶ Each of the plans for these local governments reference support for a trail between Dayton and Waitsburg:

City, County, and Port Cooperative Parks Master Plan

City of Dayton Comp Plan

City of Waitsburg Comp Plan

Columbia County Comp Plan

Port of Columbia Comp Plan

- ▶ At least one public hearing was held before adoption of the above documents.
- ▶ In the case of the parks plan, 3 public hearings were held – one at each entity.

Support for Seeking Funds

Early 2019 – Submitted an application to WSDOT for trail design funds.
Received support letters for the application from:

- ✓ Columbia County Board of Commissioners
- ✓ Walla Walla County Board of Commissioners
- ✓ City of Dayton
- ✓ City of Waitsburg
- ✓ Palouse RTPO
- ✓ Walla Walla Valley MPO
- ✓ Waitsburg Commercial Club
- ✓ WSDOT Regional Planning
- ✓ Community Council

Concept Plan Funding

- ▶ Submitted an application for technical support valued at \$100,000 to the National Park Service in 2019.
- ▶ Two NPS team members, professional landscape architects working as volunteers, and WSU Landscape Design students worked through the design charrette and finalized a Concept Plan.
- ▶ Community members worked on and gave input during the Design Charette.
- ▶ Anderson Perry is using the Concept Plan as a guide throughout their process.

Trail Planning Process

- ▶ June 2019 - Landowner Outreach – letters sent to adjacent landowners inviting them to meet with engineers and Port Staff. Used landowner list from County GIS map
- ▶ September 2019 – Two Public Information Meetings
- ▶ October 2019 – Design Charette & Public Meeting
- ▶ December 2020 – entered into contract with Anderson Perry for Trail Design
- ▶ March 2020 – Concept Plan Complete
- ▶ January 2020 – Design and Engineering began
- ▶ April 2021 – Public Information Meeting – 30% Design Stage

Surprise

- ▶ We had been hearing from community members for YEARS that they wanted a trail.
- ▶ Invited community into planning process early – thought we were doing the right thing.
- ▶ Heard frustration from some of the public that we didn't have answers to their questions.
- ▶ The process has helped us develop the answers to most questions.

Why Build a Trail?

There are many reasons to build a trail, but the Port's primary purpose for wanting to do so is

to bring new visitors to Dayton to spend money at our stores, hotels, restaurants, and businesses.

Proposed Economic Benefits

- ▶ A forecast of potential economic impacts was prepared in 2021 based on trail numbers from other rural communities.
- ▶ The forecast shows positive economic impacts from temporary construction jobs and visitor spending when trail is complete.
- ▶ About 22% of users are estimated to be from outside the region.
- ▶ Each visitor party is estimated to spend approximately \$72.66 while here.
- ▶ Even if you don't believe the numbers in this particular study, there are many regional, state, and federal studies that show the positive economic impacts of recreation (hunting, camping, boating, skiing, trails, and so on.)
- ▶ It is a lucrative industry that the Port can take advantage of to aid in the sustainability of our town and our neighboring community.

Compare to Lyons Ferry Marina

- ▶ Port worked with USACE to construct and maintain Lyons Ferry Marina starting in the 1970s
- ▶ Used funds from the state, such as the RCO
- ▶ Purpose was to provide recreational access to water for citizens of Columbia County and the region as the Snake River Dams were being constructed.
- ▶ Creates opportunity for private sector operator, provides jobs for the area and brings outside dollars into Columbia County
- ▶ Port contributes \$20,000 per year to help maintain the facility.
- ▶ Port work with Cities of Dayton & Waitsburg and with WA State Parks to construct and maintain
- ▶ Use funds from the state, such as the RCO & WSDOT
- ▶ Purpose is to provide recreational facility, bring visitors and outside dollars to our 2 small towns to support businesses, create economic activity.
- ▶ Provides opportunity for recreation business development
- ▶ Port would contribute approximately \$25,000 per year to maintain the trail.



Breakwater

ADA Accessible Fishing Dock
Fire Ring

Day Use Area

Store/Restaurant

Concessionaire's House

84 Moorages Slips

C

B

A

Well #1

18 Full RV Hookups

Parking Lot

Laundromat
Cabins

Tent Camping
Partial Hook-up sites

Upper Restroom & Showerhouse

Well #2

Starbuck / Lyons
Ferry Marina KOA

Playground

Proposed Site of Pull-Thru RV Spots

Google



Strategic Goals

3.1 Intent

Mission Statement: The Port of Columbia's mission is to maximize public resources and private investment to create jobs, provide infrastructure, and maintain and improve the economic vitality of Columbia County and its communities.

Core Lines of Business:

- ▶ • Economic Development
- ▶ • Commercial & Industrial Real Estate
- ▶ • Recreation (Lyons Ferry Marina, Trails)
- ▶ • Transportation (Columbia Walla Walla Rail Line, general freight mobility)

Lease revenue from commercial and industrial real estate holdings, tax collections, and grant funds are used to conduct economic development initiatives that provide county-wide benefits such as job growth, increased tax base, and improvements to the quality of life of our citizens.

Setting Goals and Developing Tactics: The Port's goals and tactics are based on fulfilling its mission for Columbia County. These goals were reviewed and agreed upon by Port staff and commissioners, and will guide the Port's work into the future. The Port recognizes that goals need to be adaptable based on changes in business, the economy, and in the community going forward.

3.2 Economic Development

Goal: Foster an environment that leads to the creation of jobs, new businesses, increases in the tax base, and a thriving local economy.

Tactics:

- ▶ 3.2.1 Maintain the ADO Contract with the State of Washington and measure the impact of the program.
- ▶ 3.2.2 Coordinate the monthly Economic Development Steering Committee (EDSC) that brings together representatives from the public and private sector to provide strategic direction of Columbia County Economic Development through coordination, accountability, and prevention of duplication.
- ▶ 3.2.3 Implement the county-wide economic development plan, with community input, that includes projects that have been prioritized with community members. **See Reference Document B**
- ▶ 3.2.4 Identify realistic value-added artisan food and beverage processing business targets/opportunities as well as individual firms for start-up, expansion, and relocation opportunities.
- ▶ **3.2.5 Support tourism, recreation, and historic preservation promotion efforts to increase the number of visitors and new residents to the county.**
- ▶ 3.2.6 Seek funding for design, engineering, and construction of a Port-owned fiber optic wholesale network in the City of Dayton and Columbia County. Partner with local and state agencies and funding organizations.
- ▶ 3.2.7 Provide economic recovery assistance to businesses harmed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3 Real Estate

- ▶ **Goal:** Provide space for new, existing, and expanding businesses to operate in, leased at a price that covers maintenance and future construction needs.
- ▶ **Tactics:**
- ▶ **3.3.1** Explore feasibility of constructing a third building at Blue Mountain Station.
- ▶ **3.3.2** Market available spaces and properties to potential businesses.
- ▶ **3.3.3** Analyze lease rates versus maintenance costs to determine needed return on investment.
- ▶ **3.3.4** Make continued improvements to Cameron Street Co-working space.
- ▶ **3.3.5** Explore feasibility of constructing a new building in the Rock Hill Industrial Park.
- ▶ **3.3.6** Provide broadband access to Port properties when feasible.
- ▶ **3.3.7** Explore possibility of annexation of Blue Mountain Station into the City of Dayton along with other adjacent commercial properties to reduce utility fees and increase ability to place signage along Highway 12

3.4 Recreation

Goal: Provide recreation opportunities that foster economic and community vitality.

Tactics:

- ▶ **3.4.1** Implement Lyons Ferry Marina Facilities Plan improvements as funding allows. **See Reference Document C.**
- ▶ **3.4.2** Continue design and engineering of the Touchet Valley Trail with an eye toward construction.
- ▶ **3.4.3** Support initiatives from the Cooperative Parks Master Plan (joint Port, City, and County Plan) and the Blue Mountain Regional Trails Plan (Walla Walla Valley-Wide). **See Reference Documents D & E.**
- ▶ **3.4.4** Coordinate with volunteers and professionals in the maintenance and improvement of the Rock Hill Trail. Plan gradual improvements such as a multi-seasonal surface and shade structures.

3.5 Transportation

Goal: Move goods efficiently and effectively through, into, and out of Columbia County.

Tactics:

- ▶ **3.5.1** Continue to seek funding for rail rehabilitation and research other uses for the rail corridor that would require a smaller investment.
- ▶ **3.5.2** Discuss importance of rail line with existing shippers. Support rail operator in efforts to regain grain traffic and find new shippers as long as rail line use remains feasible.
- ▶ **3.5.3** Participate actively in the PRTPO to support transportation planning initiatives that help Columbia County and the region.
- ▶ **3.5.4** Stay abreast of Washington State Department of Transportation initiatives that effect Columbia County. Advocate for relevant transportation improvements.
- ▶ **3.5.5** Support regional active transportation planning, e.g. walking, biking, and water trails

Site Survey & Document Research



- ▶ Information was provided by Anderson Perry during the meeting.
- ▶ Results of research show complete ownership of the right of way by the Port.

30% Design

- ▶ Information was shared by Anderson Perry during the meeting.

30% Design Public Meeting

- ▶ Bill Chipman – had two representatives from Whitman County Parks & Recreation Department who were able to answer questions about homelessness, litter, spraying, etc.
- ▶ Centennial Trail
- ▶ Palouse to Cascades Trail and Columbia Plateau Trail
- ▶ WSDA Pesticide Compliance – good discussion on spraying of pesticides
- ▶ Col Co Sheriff – able to answer questions about patrolling the trail and whether or not our existing trail increases drug traffic

Community Concerns

- ▶ Right-to-Farm
- ▶ Agricultural Spraying
- ▶ Right-of-Way Ownership
- ▶ Trail is Too Close to Hwy 12
- ▶ Working Railroad
- ▶ Too Many Driveways
- ▶ Liability
- ▶ Too Close to Working Elevators
- ▶ General Discomfort by Rural Landowners
- ▶ Homelessness & Vagrants
- ▶ High Costs of Trail Design, Construction, Maintenance, etc.
- ▶ Adequate Enforcement Resources?
- ▶ No Maintenance Plan

A document listing questions we have received and answers we have provided is on the Port's website. A link to the Public Information Meeting last year is also on our website. We had great input from the supervisors of other trails.

TOUCHET VALLEY TRAIL

A trail connecting the rural communities of Dayton and Waitsburg has long been a dream. The idea was first identified as a priority at Columbia County's 2015 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy meeting, and the Port began participating in the [Blue Mountain Region Trails](#) planning shortly thereafter. A trail between Dayton and Waitsburg was chosen as the top priority in the regional planning effort. Public workshops continued to show strong interest in the idea, so the project was added to the Cooperative Parks Master Plan and the Port's Comprehensive Plan

The Port received a technical assistance grant from the National Park Service for concept planning (see below), and a WSDOT grant for design and engineering. A steering committee made up of regional stakeholders meets monthly to support design of the project and make recommendations to the Port of Columbia Board of Commissioners.

Read more background info here: [Background Information, Benefits, and FAQs for the Touchet Valley Trail](#)

Please contact Jennie at 509-382-2577 or at jennie@portofcolumbia.org with questions.



TRAIL ZOOM MEETING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

30% DESIGN DRAWINGS

30% LANDSCAPE PLANS

INFO ON CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY CITIZENS

PRELIMINARY MAINTENANCE OUTLINE

PRELIMINARY ECONOMIC FORECAST

TRAIL COMMENTS VIA PORT OF COLUMBIA'S WEBSITE

TOUCHET PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING Q & A



Maintenance Plan

A preliminary maintenance plan was developed based on actual numbers from maintenance supervisors of trails

- ▶ Weed Control using WCC crews ~\$4,500
- ▶ Garbage Pick-up & Restroom Cleaning ~\$6,300
- ▶ Litter Pick-up ~ \$500
- ▶ Miscellaneous Repairs ~ \$5,000 - \$10,000

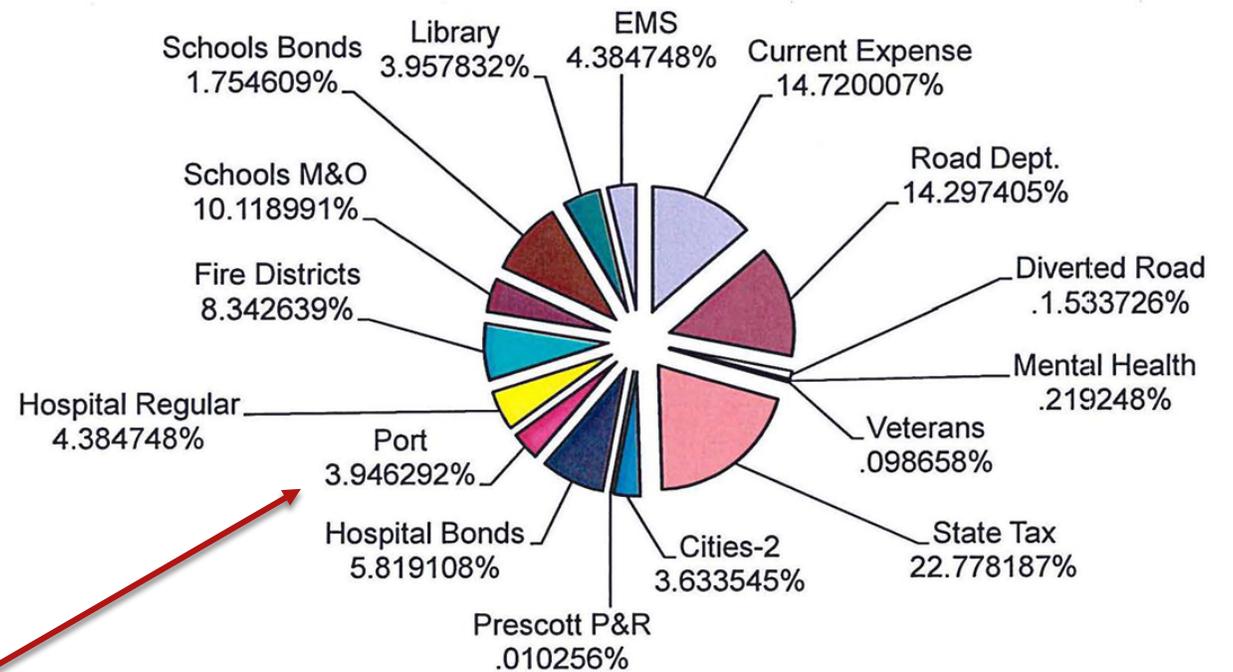
Total is estimated between **\$15,000 and \$25,000** per year

- ▶ Rail Operator is supportive of the trail, and believes that the trail will help with maintenance of the right of way

No New Taxes

- ▶ The Port has never asked the citizens of Columbia County to increase taxes for a project – ever – in our 63 year history
- ▶ Increasing taxes on Columbia County residents has never been considered as part of this project.
- ▶ It is normal to use taxes to pay for parks and recreation facilities.
- ▶ Columbia County has no county parks.
- ▶ Port also has revenue other than taxes.
- ▶ One of the smallest taxing districts in the county

2022 Tax Distribution for Columbia County



Revenue

- ▶ Taxes (\$470,000)
- ▶ Lease Revenue (\$296,865)
- ▶ Loans (called bonds) None planned for 2022
- ▶ Grants (\$2,475,000)

PORT OF COLUMBIA	
2022 Budget - Final	
Temporary Investment (Not included in cash on hand)	\$0
Beginning Reserve	\$100,000
Beginning Cash Balance	\$225,000
2022 REVENUES	
Tax Revenues: 2022 Port Levy	\$470,000
Leasehold Tax (passthrough \$ - Qrtly)	\$25,000
Rental Income:	
LFM	\$15,000
DTM	\$23,256
Office Bldg. #2	\$1,620
Office Bldg. #3	\$9,792
Ind. Bldg. #1	\$22,080
Ind. Bldg. #1A	\$5,400
Ind. Bldg. #2	\$45,490
Ind. Bldg. #3	\$15,600
Ind. Bldg. #4	\$9,300
Ind. Bldg. #5	\$10,000
Ind. Bldg. #6 (East)	\$37,200
Ind. Bldg. #6 (West)	\$11,433
Bell House	\$10,634
Bell Farm Crop	\$3,000
BMS Bldg. #1 Artisan Food Center	\$34,000
Railroad Leases	\$4,000
BMS Bldg. #2	\$31,200
Cameron Street Coworking	\$7,860
Miscellaneous	\$10,000
Utilities - AFC, BMS2, Cameron Co-Working	\$16,000
TOTAL 2022 REVENUES	\$817,865
MISC. GRANTS AND LOANS	\$2,475,000
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$3,617,865

Expenses

Maintenance is part of the Port's ongoing work and is budgeted for annually.

Marina

2022 EXPENSES		
PERSONNEL		
Adm. & General Salaries (Gross)		\$172,500
Commissioners Salaries (Gross)		\$5,400
Payroll & State Taxes (Port Share)		\$17,500
Health Care (WCIF, Port share)		\$23,000
Retirement (PERS, Port share)		\$7,100
ADMINISTRATIVE		
Advertising		\$25,000
Dues & Fees		\$3,300
Election Expense		\$7,500
Insurance		\$70,000
Janitorial		\$24,000
Leasehold Tax (passthrough \$ - Qrtly)		\$25,000
Miscellaneous		\$10,000
Office Equipment		\$7,000
Office Supplies		\$4,500
Promotional Hosting		\$2,500
Publications		\$250
State Auditor's Fee (next audit 2022)		\$10,000
Telephone		\$5,300
Travel/Meals		\$6,000
Utilities		\$45,000
Community Support		\$20,000
Economic Development		\$10,000
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES		
Architecture & Engineering		\$370,000
Accounting		\$16,500
Legal		\$3,000
Consultants (Planning, Surveying, etc.)		\$5,000
TOTAL ADMIN, GENERAL, & PROF EXP.		\$895,350
MAINTENANCE, CAPITAL IMP & PROJECTS		
Maintenance of Port Property		\$65,000
Land & Capital Improvements		\$60,000
Marina Maintenance & Improvements		\$20,000
Broadband Infrastructure		\$2,000,000
Special Projects		\$100,000
TOTAL CAPITAL IMPROVE. & LAND		\$2,245,000

Loans (bonds)

0% CERB loan for land and infrastructure. Paid in full 2029

2.5% CERB loan for hook-up to city sewer. Paid in full 2026

Banner Bank Bond for Transit/CHS bldg. Paid in full 2030

Banner Bank Bond to cover final AFC costs. Paid in full 2028

Banner Bank Bond to remodel IB#2 for USDA Service Center. Paid in full 2026

Banner Bank Bond to purchase red bldg. at BMS. Paid in full 2039

DEBT SERVICE	
CERB Loan - Bell Farm/Infrastructure	\$53,333
CERB Loan - Sewer	\$11,396
Ind. Bldg. #6 - Revenue Bonds A & B	\$56,165
GO Bond - AFC	\$27,193
IB# 2 Revenue Bond	\$50,600
BMS Bldg#2 GO Bond	\$29,291
TOTAL DEBT SERVICE	\$227,978

Public Feedback & Adjustments



- ▶ Information was shared by Anderson Perry during the meeting.
- ▶ Several areas of the trail have undergone changes based on community feedback.

Current Funding Opportunities

- ▶ RCO – application due May 3. Up to \$1.5 million, with some match required. Design funds already expended can be used as match.
- ▶ WSDOT – application due May 30. Up to \$3 million with no match. These funds can be used to match RCO funds.

Phasing Ideas and Estimated Costs

- ▶ Total 9.7 mile trail costs is \$12 million.
- ▶ Please note that the segments below may overlap, so the total estimated cost is more than the cost of the entire trail.

Length (miles)	Start	Finish	Estimated Cost	Estimated Cost per Mile
1.6	Caboose Park	Valley View Housing	\$2,800,000	\$1,800,000
4.2	BMS	State Park	\$3,700,000	\$900,000
2	State Park	Huntsville	\$3,400,000	\$1,700,000
2.25	Huntsville	Waitsburg	\$2,700,000	\$1,200,000

Questions from Commissioners

