

Frequently Asked Questions about the Council Creek Regional Trail



- 1. Where did idea for the trail come from?** The idea for the trail started with the City of Cornelius in the 1990s. It was adopted as a regional trail by the Metro Council in 2002. In 2008, the cities of Forest Grove, Hillsboro, Cornelius, Banks, and Washington County came together to find funding to move the trail forward. The trail concept is also included in many local and regional plans, including the *Regional Transportation Plan*, the *Bi-State Regional Trails System Plan*, and park and trail master plans for the cities of Cornelius, Forest Grove, and Hillsboro.
- 2. Why are we planning the Council Creek Regional Trail now?** In partnership with Washington County and the cities of Banks, Cornelius and Hillsboro, Forest Grove was awarded 2013 federal funds in 2009 to develop a master plan for the trail. The trail will provide transportation, recreation and access to nature opportunities for the surrounding communities. A goal for the 15-mile-long trail is to serve as a transportation and recreational facility connecting the communities of Forest Grove, Cornelius, Banks, and Hillsboro, public transit and other trail systems such as the Banks-Vernonia State Trail, the Salmonberry Trail, and local trails.
- 3. What are some primary objectives of the trail?**
 - Provide a safe and enjoyable place for families and children to recreate and exercise.
 - Increase safe and comfortable walking and bicycling access to destinations such as jobs, schools and parks.
 - Connect communities.
 - Provide access to nature and protect wildlife habitat and water quality.
 - Support local businesses and tourism.
- 4. What is the desired outcome of the master plan project?** Produce a master plan that identifies a preferred trail alignment, or route, based upon:
 - Input gathered from project partners, the public and other stakeholders.
 - Information on existing conditions within the trail corridor, such as information on uses within the corridor, natural resources, and other plans and projects.
 - Opportunities and challenges for each of the potential trail alignments.
 - Cost estimates and implementation options.
- 5. How is the preferred route chosen and approved?** A Project Advisory Committee consisting of senior staff from the four partner cities, the County, ODOT, and Metro will make the final advisory recommendations based on an extensive technical analysis, input from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, the public open houses, and from key stakeholder interviews.

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- 6. What opportunity does the public have to review and comment on the trail?** The public involvement plan for this project provides the opportunity for citizens to be involved in the process. A Project Advisory Committee and Stakeholder Advisory Committee consider public feedback on preferred trail routes as well as connectivity to destinations, road crossings, available right-of-way, existing infrastructure, trail user safety, and utilities in their evaluation. Three public open houses provide opportunities to share information and solicit public feedback, and public feedback is encouraged throughout the process. Public comments are summarized and forwarded to appropriate decision makers.
- 7. How does this project relate to the Tualatin Valley Scenic Bikeway and other regional trails?** The Tualatin Valley Scenic Bikeway intersects with the Council Creek Regional Trail and could potentially share the same route in some places. Other trails, such as the constructed Banks-Vernonia State Trail, and the planned Salmonberry Trail to the Pacific Ocean, will connect to the Council Creek Regional Trail providing tourism and business development opportunities.
- 8. I am concerned about the proximity of the trail to my farm. Are there examples of trails built near productive farm land?** Yes, many popular trails across the country are near working farms and work well. There are tested ways to protect farms from the impact of trails, including context-sensitive fencing, landscape buffers, and trail signs. One local example is the Banks-Vernonia Trail. Some farmers were initially worried about negative impacts from the trail, but the trail has been around since 1990s and has not caused problems for neighbors of the trail. Trails near working farms can benefit farmers too as people's appreciation for the soil-to-shelf story grows.
- 9. I'm worried about vandalism and illegal uses along the trail. Are there things that can be done to make sure this doesn't happen on the Council Creek Regional Trail?** These are legitimate concerns about trails. Research, surveys and experience find that trails actually tend to reduce such problems by attracting people who use the trail for recreation and transportation purposes. By creating recreational destinations and new transportation corridors, trails create an influx of legitimate users enjoying the amenities of the path or natural environment. This positive presence decreases isolation and diminishes the factors that attract illegal activity. There are many ways to address safety concerns. Context-appropriate fencing and landscape buffers, lighting, controlling vegetation, patrolling, and access and visibility of the trail are all proven ways to keep a trail safe and free from vandalism.
- 10. What happens after the master plan is finished?** Local governments will adopt the plan and update local trail and transportation plans with the alignment for the trail. Funding must be identified to design, engineer and construct the trail, a process which can take many years. When completed, the trail will be managed and maintained by the cities of Banks, Forest Grove, Cornelius and Hillsboro, and by Washington County.
- 11. Will condemnation be used to build the trail?** Eminent domain/condemnation would not be used to secure property for trail development. Jurisdictions buy from "willing ready sellers".