

YELM PRAIRIE LINE TRAIL- RIVER TO ROY

FEASIBILITY STUDY DOCUMENT

December 20, 2023



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PART I

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Following a collaborative process was an overarching goal and guiding principle throughout the feasibility study for the Yelm Prairie Line Trail "River to Roy" Project. Pierce County Parks would like to acknowledge the following groups and individuals who have supported this effort:

PROJECT TEAM PIERCE COUNTY PARKS

Brianne Blackburn

CONSULTANTS

Bruce Dees & Associates - Landscape Architecture

STEERING COMMITTEE

City of Yelm

City of Roy

Nisqually Indian Tribe

ForeverGreen Trails

Miles Sand and Gravel

YELM PRAIRIE LINE TRAIL COALITION PARTNERS

Backcountry Horseman of Washington – Nisqually Chapter

Backcountry Horseman of Washington – Pierce Chapter

Capital Bicycling Club

Cascade Bicycle Club

City of Roy

City of Yelm

Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition

ForeverGreen Trails

Nisqually Indian Tribe

Nisqually Land Trust

Nisqually River Council

Pierce County

Save the Roy Water Tower

Tacoma WA Bicycle Club

Thurston County

Parks, Arts, Recreational, &

Cultural Foundation of Thurston County

Travel Tacoma Mt. Rainer Tourism & Sports

Woodland Trail Greenway Association



PART II

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT
YELM PRAIRIE LINE TRAIL HISTORY
“RIVER TO ROY” FEASIBILITY STUDY
RECENT PLANNING EFFORTS
REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The land now identified as Pierce County has for thousands of years been the traditional territory and home for the Puyallup, Nisqually, Squaxin Island, and Muckleshoot people.

We respectfully recognize the people of these four federally recognized tribes as past, present, and future guardians of this land both culturally and legally, as evidenced by their respective treaties.

We acknowledge these Tribal governments and their respective roles today in protecting and taking care of these lands and resources. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work here. With this plan, we commit to working together in stewardship of their homeland where we mutually work, reside, and recreate.

YELM PRAIRIE LINE TRAIL HISTORY

Historically, the Prairie Line Railroad extended from Kalama on the Columbia River to downtown Tacoma. Constructed between 1870 and 1973, this was a busy railroad line for decades and fueled growth in the cities and towns it passed through until it was gradually displaced by a newer, flatter route (the one along the shoreline to Point Defiance in Tacoma). Since its heyday, much of the rail line has been abandoned, sold off, or railbanked including sections of the Yelm Tenino Trail and Yelm Prairie Line Trail.

By 1986, the section of the Prairie Line Railroad between Yelm and Tenino was abandoned and acquired by Thurston County in a railbanking agreement for development as the Yelm Tenino Trail. The trail now connects Yelm to the rest of Thurston County's extensive 57+ mile trail system. In 1998 Yelm acquired a 4.8-mile section of the Prairie Line between its main street, Yelm Avenue West, and into Pierce County toward the City of Roy. BNSF still owns the rail line north of Yelm's portion all the way to where it now joins Sound Transit's line. The initial section, referred to as Phase 1 in this study, of the Yelm Prairie Line Trail (YPLT) was completed as rail-with-trail when commercial rail was still envisioned.

Over the years, advocacy and support to develop the remaining rail corridor into a multiuse trail connecting Yelm to Roy has continued to grow, and the City of Yelm is currently working on their next phase of the trail.

"RIVER TO ROY" FEASIBILITY STUDY

As the YPLT continues to march north, the focus of this feasibility study is the "River to Roy" segment of the trail. Completion of the "River to Roy" segment is seen as a vital link to connect the cities of Yelm and Roy, to grow the regional trail system, and build on jurisdictional partnerships. The intent of the feasibility study effort is to identify next steps including trail alignment, acquisition, design, permitting and funding considerations which will all be critical components in moving the project forward. Another goal of the study is to showcase the need for the project and the positive impact the trail serves to bring to the surrounding community.



RECENT PLANNING EFFORTS

FOREVERGREEN TRAILS ADVOCACY

ForeverGreen Trails, a Pierce County-wide trail advocacy group, coordinated a multi-jurisdictional effort to support the completion of the Yelm Prairie Line Trail. ForeverGreen's campaign, started in 2019, recruited a coalition of 18 organizations, entities, and local governments to support the project. The effort garnered support of local, state, and federal elected officials, passed legislation in both Thurston and Pierce Counties, raised local matching funds for regional grants, provided technical support for grant and railbanking processes, recruited in-kind title research support, elevated the trail in the Pierce County Parks, Recreation and Open Space update with identified funding, and acquired an in-kind planning grant from National Parks Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS-RTCA). ForeverGreen has also maintained a steady stream of information for the public about the trail via its website, social media channels, and press releases for local print and online publications.

NPS-RTCA PLANNING GRANT

NPS-RTCA support was utilized in the YPLT pre-planning process. The intent of the grant is to assist communities in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors. The program does not provide financial assistance or monetary grants. NPS-RTCA does provide technical assistance to community groups, nonprofits, tribal governments, national parks, and local, state and federal agencies to assist with their recreational projects.

COALITION PARTNERS

The following groups and jurisdictions are coalition partners that have formally endorsed the project. The coalition was instrumental in spreading awareness about the project and demonstrating widespread community support for the project for grant agencies through letters of support. The Tacoma Washington Bicycle Club and the Foothill Rails-to-Trails Coalition provided local match funding allowing the City of Roy to apply for a planning grant from the Puget Sound Regional Council (which it was awarded in late 2019). The coalition will continue to be a resource for the trail throughout its phases of development.

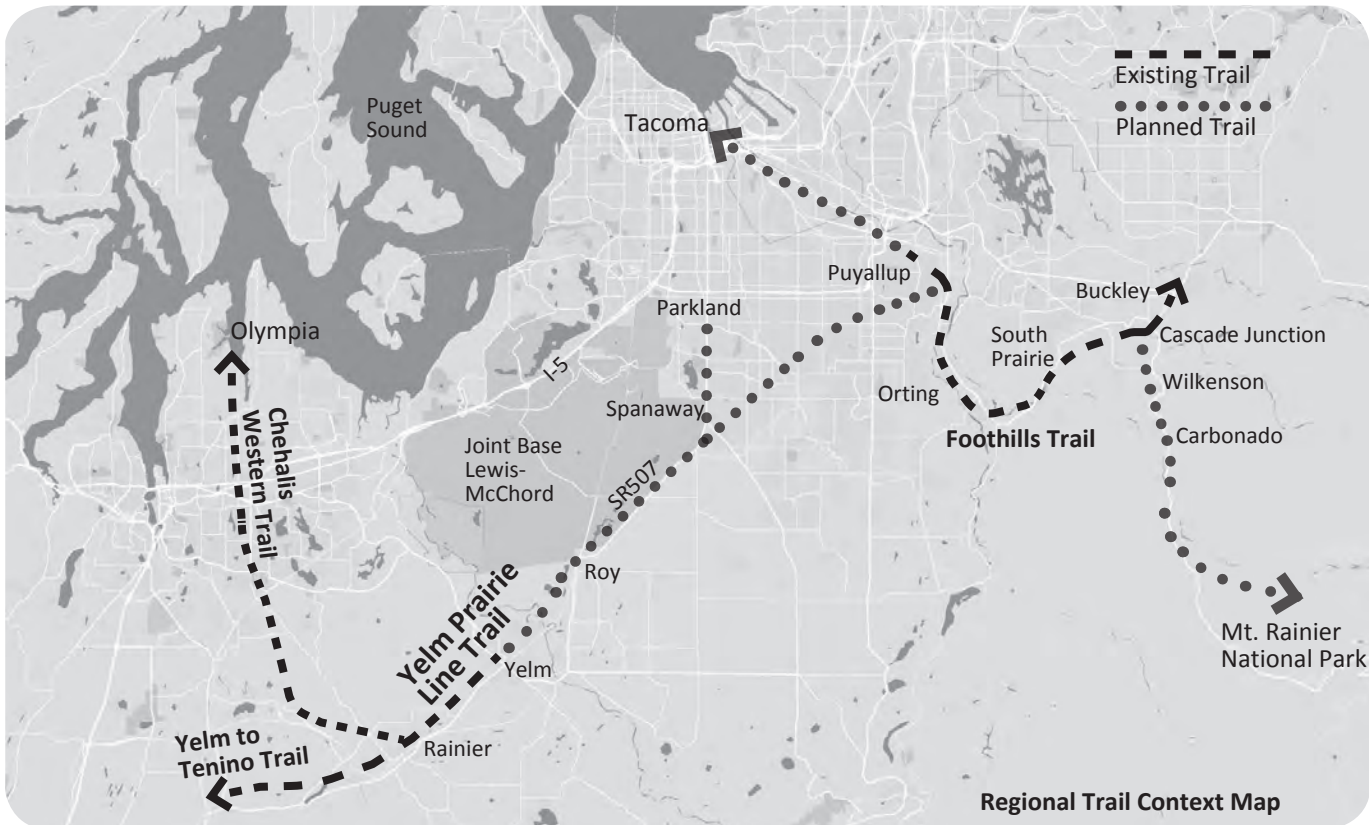
Backcountry Horsemen of Washington – Nisqually Chapter
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 Capital Bicycling Club
 Cascade Bicycle Club
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 Nisqually River Council
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 Travel Tacoma Mt. Rainer Tourism & Sports
 Woodland Trail Greenway Association



REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

YELM, ROY, AND BEYOND

Enhanced trail connectivity throughout the region serves to spur economic development, and increased recreational and alternative transportation options will benefit local safety, health and environmental factors. The Yelm Prairie Line Trail is a valuable link toward connecting the Thurston County and Pierce County trail networks. Heading south, the Yelm Prairie Line Trail provides connectivity to the Yelm Tenino Trail (14 mi) which intersects with the Chehalis Western Trail (22 mi), ultimately providing access to Thurston County's 57+ miles of trails. In the near term, the Yelm Prairie Line Trail aims to achieve regional trail connectivity through Parkland and Spanaway, while also identifying its future long-term connection to the Foothills Trail - a critical component towards the vision for a cross-state trail by connecting the Palouse to Cascades Trail and the Willapa Hills Trail.



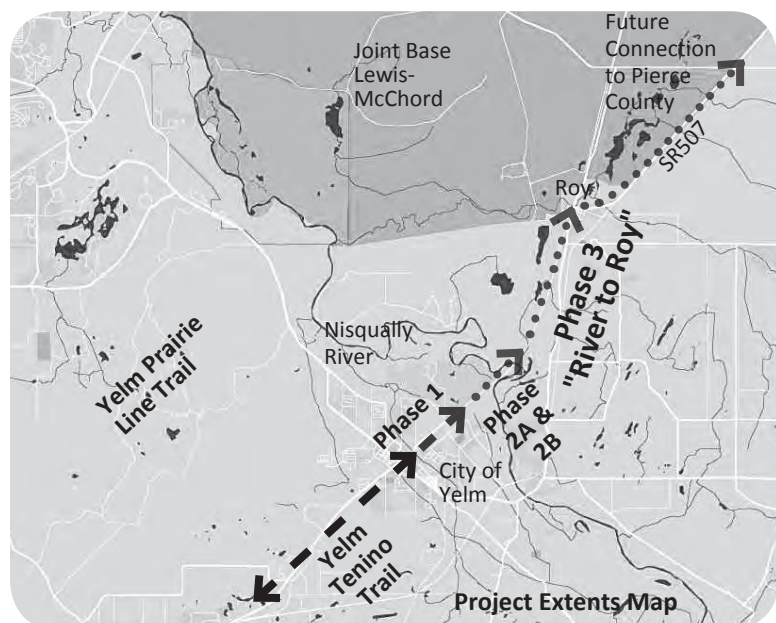
The Yelm Prairie Line Trail is following a phased development approach as indicated in the lower right graphic:

Phase 1 (Completed) - Begins at 1st Street and Railroad Road SE and extends to roughly 91st Ave. This phase was completed several years ago as rail-with-trail.

Phase 2A (Under Construction) - Extends the trail from the terminus of Phase 1 across the Centralia Canal to the Nisqually River.

Phase 2B (Funded) - Crosses the Nisqually River into Pierce County utilizing the existing Prairie Line Railroad Bridge.

Phase 3 "River to Roy" (Project Focus) - Extends and completes the YPLT creating new trail access opportunities in the heart of downtown Roy.





PART III

TRAIL PLANNING

URBAN ENVIRONMENT
“RIVER TO ROY” CORRIDOR
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP
SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
CULTURAL RESOURCES

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

DOWNTOWN ROY

The Prairie Line Railroad runs through the center of downtown, between SR507/McNaught Road and Warren Street. The entire one-block width through the center of Roy's downtown, from Higgins Greig Road to Water Street, is abandoned railroad with adjacent undeveloped parcels. There is no active use of the railroad corridor south of Muck Creek. In fact, the railroad tracks at Higgins Greig Road are paved over and several sections of the track further south are damaged or missing. Roy's downtown effectively ends at Water Street and its northern city limits end just north of Muck Creek.

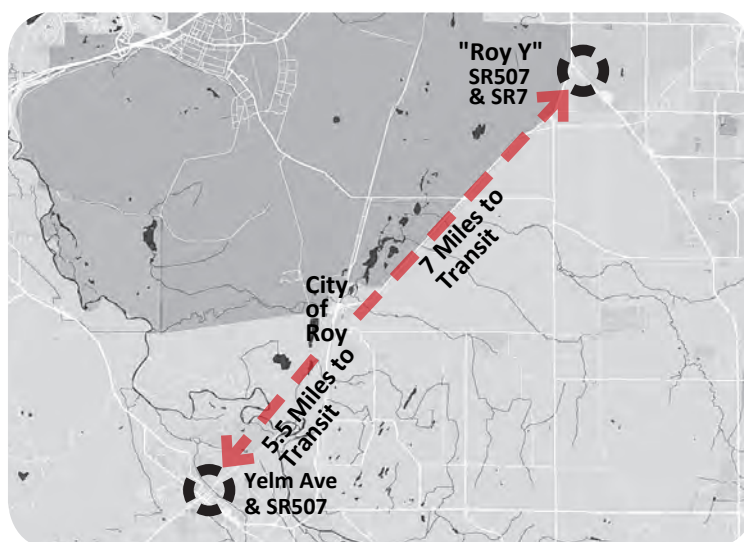


TRANSIT

If the YPLT is completed to Roy, transit-dependent people will have improved access to Intercity Transit (Thurston County's transit system) which has stops along SR507/Yelm Ave at the southern end of the trail in Yelm (approx 5.5 miles). The City of Roy is outside of Pierce Transit's service area. The closest Pierce Transit service to Roy is at the SR7/SR507 intersection, also known as the "Roy Y". The distance between the "Roy Y" and downtown Roy is approximately 7 miles to the north.

SCHOOL ROUTE

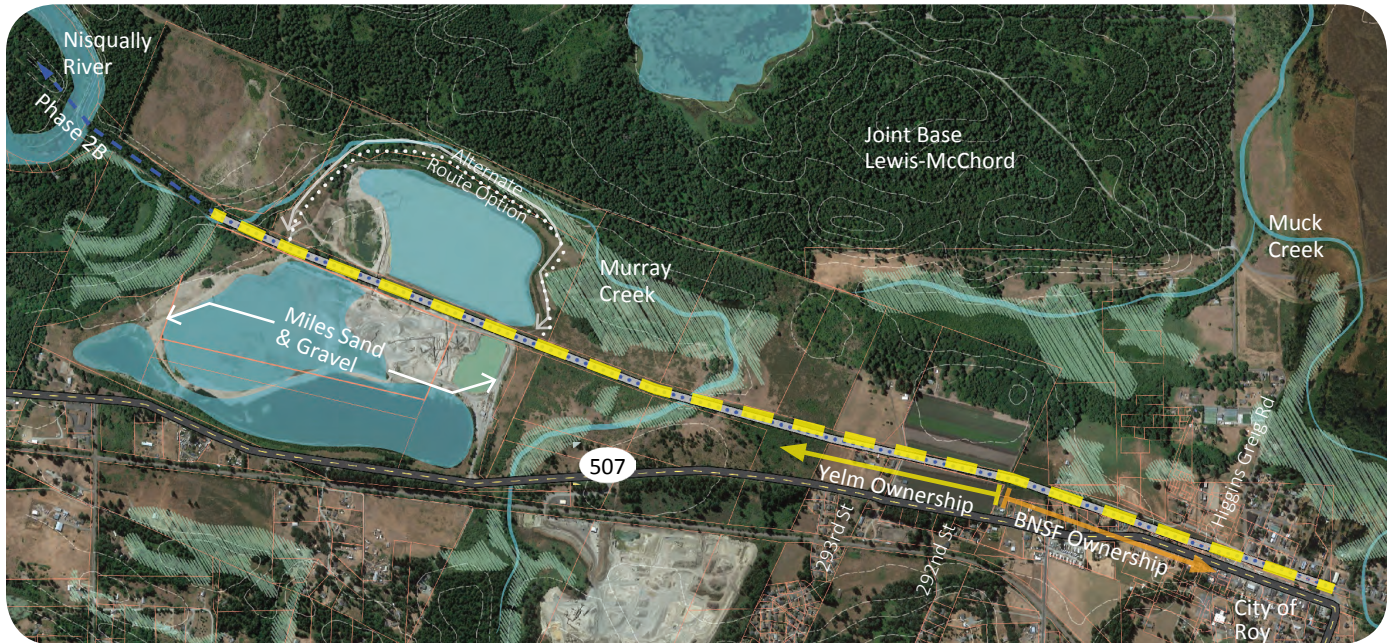
A school walking route serving the Roy elementary School passes over the train tracks and SR507 highlighting the need for safe access routes to and from the trail.



"RIVER TO ROY" CORRIDOR

OVERVIEW

As the focus of this feasibility study, the "River to Roy" segment includes a number of opportunities and constraints as the 2.6 mile corridor passes through a variety of land typologies, and across ownership lines. With the primary access point located in downtown Roy, development of the trail will benefit the rural community, improve transportation opportunities, and provide economic benefits to local businesses. Along the corridor a number of safety and environmental considerations will require further study as the trail will need to provide a number of safe street crossings, as well as stream crossings with potential habitat impacts. In addition, the trail bisects an active sand and gravel mining operation prompting safety concerns and the exploration of a potential alternative route to bypass the active operation. The context map below focuses on the "River to Roy" segment showcasing the proposed trail corridor.



Context Map of "River to Roy" Section

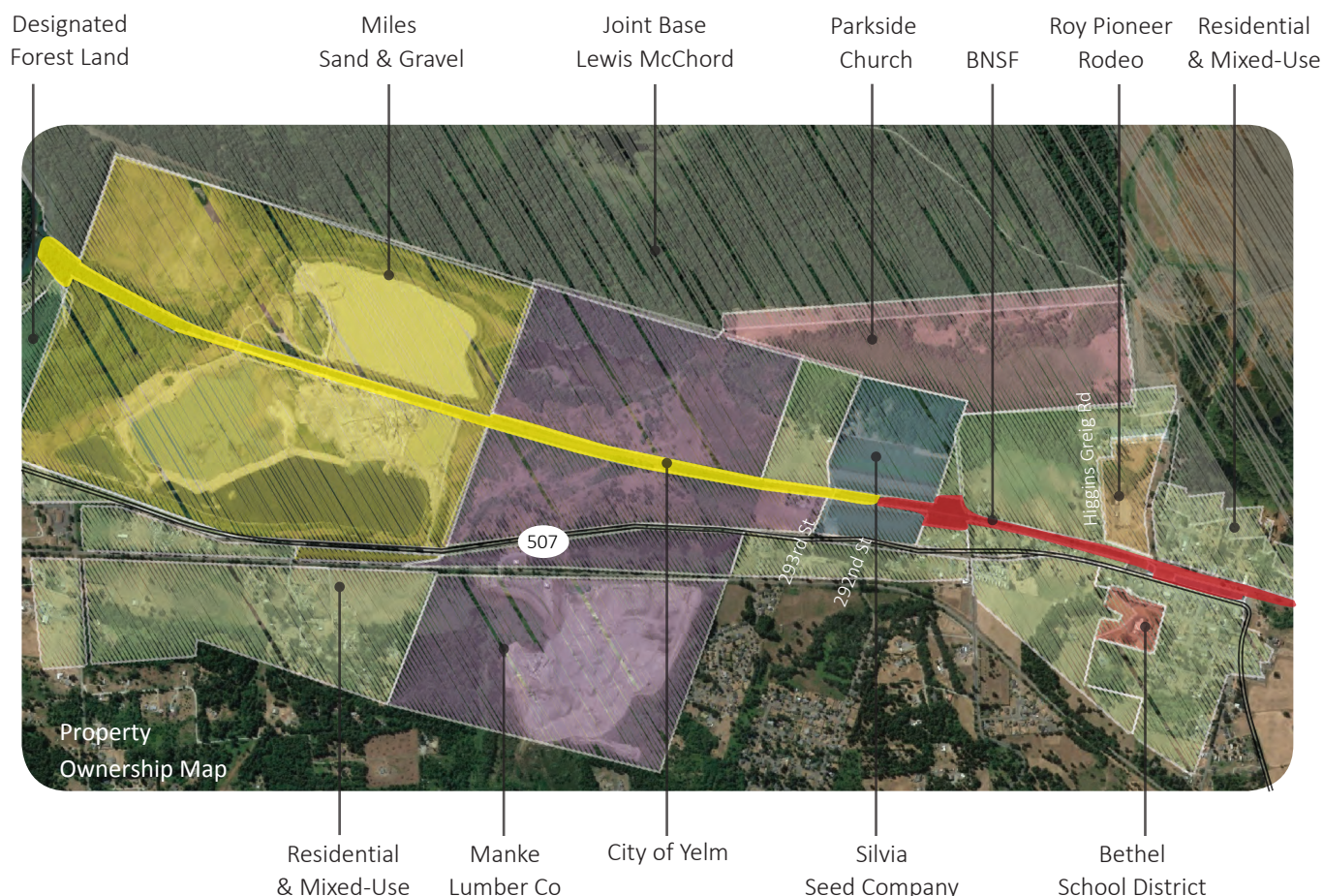


PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

RAIL CORRIDOR & ADJACENT LAND USE

The corridor traverses through flat to gently sloping terrain with straight alignment and good sight distances. To the north through downtown Roy, the corridor passes by several noticeable features including the Roy Pioneer Rodeo Grounds, old grain elevator foundations, and the Historic Roy Water Tower. The corridor extends south past a combination of residential, commercial, light industrial and agricultural land uses, along with undeveloped natural areas.

Between Roy's city limits and the Nisqually River exist a number of residential and commercial properties, with two commercial landowners accounting for about two-thirds of the lineal distance from the Nisqually River to downtown Roy — Miles Sand & Gravel and Manke Lumber. These properties are bisected by the corridor. For the majority of the distance, the area around the corridor is wide open — only parcels very near the Nisqually River are forested with limited lateral visibility. Due to the land use and development patterns in the area, there are few roads that cross the corridor.



CORRIDOR OWNERSHIP

Yelm's ownership currently includes 4.57 miles of the rail line between milepost 20.99 near Roy, WA and milepost 25.56 near Yelm, WA which has been acquired, abandoned and railbanked. The corridor varies in width from approximately 40' to 100', and crosses the Nisqually River near milepost 23.00. Yelm's ownership of the historic Prairie Line Railroad corridor falls short of Roy city limits. According to the Yelm's Quit Claim Deed associated with their purchase, the northernmost point of the rail line BNSF deeded to Yelm is at milepost 20.99 (roughly in-line with 292nd Street South). This is approximately .7 miles short of Higgins Greig Road, the first publicly accessible road in downtown Roy. BNSF still owns the rail line north of Yelm's portion which passes through downtown Roy all the way to where it joins Sound Transit's line. In addition, BNSF owns 1.8 acres of vacant lot in downtown Roy just west of SR507 from Water Street to just south of Higgins Greig Road.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

MILES SAND & GRAVEL

Miles Sand & Gravel (MSG) has an active mining operation, bisected by the railroad corridor, which has been in operation since 1988 creating a number of concerns and scenarios regarding the development of a multiuse trail. Currently, the mining operation has machinery and infrastructure which crosses the railroad corridor creating an unsafe condition for any public trail. These include an overhead sand and gravel escalator, and construction access roads that cross the corridor, as well as open gravel pits on both sides of the corridor. However, there is hope that a couple scenarios could alleviate these concerns:

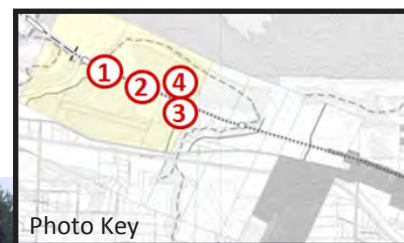
Option A

MSG has indicated that they plan to decommission their mining operation in the upcoming 2-3 years once resources become depleted, however there is no specific timeline. MSG has also indicated they are exploring alternate uses and potential property exchange or sale of the land which may impact trail planning. We also understand MSG is bonded to DNR to reclaim the property upon ending their operation which would include restoring vegetation, soil stability, and proper water conditions. This would relieve the current safety concerns by filling in the open pit, and moving machinery off-site. In this scenario, the current railroad / trail alignment could be maintained.

Option B

If the mining operation and encroachments on the trail corridor remain, an alternative route has been identified and could be explored with MSG or the future property owner. This would require purchase or exchange of MSG's property to obtain an easement that would allow for a trail alignment which would bypass any areas of concern. MSG has indicated they are open to exploring possibilities as they plan for site decommission.

Given the unknowns, there is no current recommendation regarding the trail alignment at the MSG property and further exploration will be needed as more information becomes available. Overall, MSG is supportive of the trail development and is interested in discussing options.



1. Interior South Roadway



2. Overhead Sand & Gravel Escalator



3. Railroad Corridor



4. Sand & Gravel Pit

SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

Currently, the primary access point to the "River to Roy" segment is from downtown Roy near the intersection of Higgins Greig Road and Warren Street. The only other public access is where 293rd Street intersects the corridor. Neighborhoods along the Prairie Line trail are in close proximity to the trail, but lack consistent shoulders or sidewalk connections to access the trail creating public safety concerns. Street crossings include Higgins Greig Road and 293rd Street, and private road crossings include the Silva Seed, Manke, and MSG access roads.

The railroad tracks have been paved over at both the Higgins Greig Road and 293rd Street intersections, and improvements will need to be made to provide at-grade ADA accessible street crossings and to restrict unwanted motor vehicle access. The private access roads are unpaved and would require similar improvements. Throughout the trail corridor, ADA accessible grades and safe highly-visible crossings will be a priority to ensure the safety of trail users and the general public. Provisions of regulatory signage, crosswalks, speed and traffic calming elements should be provided to improve safety conditions. Stream crossings will also need to be evaluated and designed for public safety, including signage and handrails where appropriate.

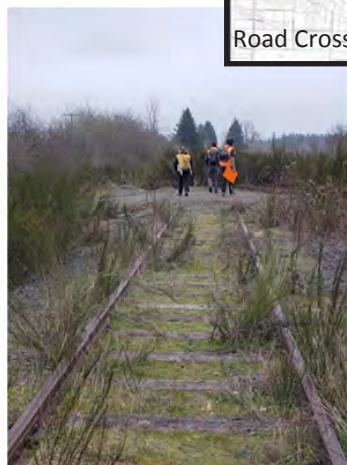
Additionally, long-term maintenance, visibility, monitoring, and provisions for emergency vehicles should all be accommodated in the design of the multiuse trail corridor.



1. Higgins Greig Road



2. 293rd Street /
Silva Seed Access Road



3. Private Access Road



4. MSG Access Road

SR507

SR507 is the only connection between Yelm and Roy for people who walk, bicycle, or drive with posted speeds from 35-50mph. Although rural areas tend to have lower populations, the lack of routes across the Nisqually River concentrates traffic on this roadway, making commute traffic particularly heavy. Currently, the route lacks consistent sidewalks and shoulder widths and due to industrial uses, is often strewn with debris. The route is also part of the Cascade Bicycle Club's Seattle to Portland ride, which normally attracts between 8,000-10,000 riders. Completion of the YPLT would provide a safe alternative to pedestrians and cyclists traveling through the area.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Our region is known for its clean air and water, lush forest areas, and beautiful physical setting. Multiuse trails provide access to forests, creeks and aquatic environments – helping people to live healthy lifestyles and connect with nature while reducing the reliance on the automobile, and lowering emissions.

The natural environment will be a high-priority throughout the design and development of the trail. As the corridor passes over Murray Creek in two locations and terminates near Muck Creek, stream classifications, ordinary high water mark delineation, buffer, and mitigation requirements will need to be evaluated wherever the corridor encounters these drainage corridors. Low lying areas along the corridor may also require wetland delineation, classification and buffer determinations. The ultimate goal will be to clearly identify these environmentally sensitive areas and to work diligently to minimize any environmental impacts that may occur due to the new multiuse trail construction. Protection of these natural resources including the conservation of critical and environmentally sensitive areas is essential to maintain a high-quality of life for our current and future residents.



1. Nisqually River
(YPLT - Phase 2B)



2. Murray Creek
Rail Bridge Crossing



3. Murray Creek
Culvert Crossings



4. Muck Creek
Rail Bridge Crossing



CULTURAL RESOURCES

Given the close proximity of the rail corridor to the Nisqually River and other tribal interests, there is some potential that there may be cultural resources of significance to consider. Additionally, an old railroad bridge and stone culvert are present at the Murray Creek crossing south of the MSG operation. Although the age and integrity of these structures remains unknown, it is important to evaluate their potential archaeological significance, as is customary. It is worth noting that archaeological findings are frequently associated with water sources, and there may be undiscovered underground resources, even though we currently have no knowledge or expectation of such findings.

During the City of Yelm's NITU request, Yelm submitted a Historic Report as required by the STB. The report concluded that the line itself no longer retained sufficient integrity, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, or association to qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, it is important to note that there is no mention of the railroad bridge or stone culvert across Murray Creek in the correspondence between the City of Yelm and the STB.

Finally, the section of the corridor that is still owned by BNSF will need to be evaluated for historical significance as part of the railbanking process. A future cultural resources evaluation should seek to ensure that potential historical and cultural resources along the rail corridor are preserved, recognizing their significance to the region's heritage.





STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

As part of the feasibility study effort, the project team has reached out to a number of stakeholders to obtain their feedback regarding the project. Stakeholders contacted include:

City of Yelm

Yelm is a key stakeholder given their ownership of the railroad corridor, and their spearheading of the development of Phase 1, 2A and 2B of the YPLT. Yelm has provided background information regarding the acquisition and rail banking process with STB. The City has also been forthright in discussing their progress on Phase 2A which is currently scheduled for completion in 2023. As it relates to the “River to Roy” phase, discussions with Yelm regarding funding, development and maintenance of this section of the YPLT will be critical to the overall success of the project.

City of Roy

As the YPLT passes directly through Roy’s downtown, the City will be instrumental to the ultimate success of this phase of the project and serves to benefit with its completion. The City of Roy has been a strong advocate for the project, and their support will continue to a key to success.

Nisqually Indian Tribe

The Nisqually Indian Tribe has a keen interest in the project, and the Miles Sand & Gravel property, and is particularly interested in partnering on interpretive signage opportunities. The Tribe has given their support to the project and will continue to be an important partner throughout the planning and design process.

ForeverGreen Trails

An instrumental YPLT advocate, ForeverGreen Trails has helped to garner support and has led fund-raising efforts for the project while staying in close contact with the project team and stakeholders to ensure a successful outcome.

Miles Sand and Gravel

An important land-owner, Miles Sand and Gravel has provided their support to the project and communications with MSG will be an key piece of the puzzle to provide access through or around their property.





PART V

TRAIL ALIGNMENT

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

PLANNING & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

USER GROUPS

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

“RIVER TO ROY” CONCEPT PLAN

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The "River to Roy" trail segment is a critical link in Pierce County's Regional Trail Plan, and in alignment with the Pierce County's Comprehensive Plan, and Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan strives to meet the following goals and objectives:

PARKS & RECREATION (PR) GOALS

PR-10

Provide a connected system of trails that link communities to parks, open spaces, public facilities, and areas of interest and provide nonmotorized transportation and recreation opportunities.

PR-11

Develop regional trail routes, crossings and trail facilities that area accessible to all.

PR-12

Incorporate design techniques that offer a variety of experiences while minimizing impacts to the natural environment and neighboring uses.

PR-13

Provide access for equestrian use in the rural areas on routes that serve public stables or other equestrian pathways and do not limit other transportation uses of the corridor.

PR-14

Develop planting standards that prohibit vegetation from negatively impacting the long term maintenance of the trail network.

PR-15

Provide facilities and trail support services to accommodate the needs of trail users.

PR-16

Provide trail maintenance that is responsive, cost effective and resourceful for the long term success of the regional trails system.

PR-17

Provide and enhance connectivity to important County and regional destinations, between multiple jurisdictions, and to neighboring counties.

PR-18

Coordinate with cities and local communities, federal agencies, tribes, park districts, user groups, and neighboring counties to develop a successful regional trail system.



PLANNING & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The following trail planning and design considerations were developed to assist in guiding the future planning and design of the "River to Roy" segment including any alternative routing that may need to occur:

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Safety

Safety of all who desire to utilize the trail corridor is of the utmost importance. Safety elements should be provided along the trail corridor including but not limited to good visibility, signage, safe crossings, safe access, activation, and periodic monitoring of the corridor. Furthermore, the corridor should be well maintained with provisions for adequate emergency access.

Accessibility

Safe access should be provided to the trail, and people dealing with disabilities should be fully accommodated throughout the trail corridor. The design of the trail and access areas will be required to meet the latest ADA regulations and grade requirements. Additionally, careful thought should be provided in the design of all elements to prevent any potential accessibility barriers, as well as ensuring that amenities serve all users.

Equity

The completed trail should be accessible and welcoming to everyone, and trail design components should reflect the diversity and culture of the local community. Engaging with and partnering with local organizations can help ensure the trail development serves the needs of underserved populations. Additionally, some may rely on the trail corridor for their transportation needs, and trail access, length, and distance to transit may be top priorities that impact their daily lives.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources help us to understand our past and bring people together to learn about our shared history. The Prairie Line Railroad was a significant railroad line in the region, and remaining infrastructure should be adequately studied to understand its archaeological significance, if any. Interpretive signage along the trail may also assist in telling the story of the land, people and the railroad.

Environmental Impact

The Nisqually River, Murray Creek, and Muck Creek are important ecological resources which support a wide range of flora and fauna, while helping to support the livelihood of those living in the region. Any trail development should take appropriate measures to minimize any environmental impact to these critical resources.

Acquisition

The acquisition of the remaining .7 miles of rail line will be necessary to extend the YPLT to downtown Roy and beyond towards meeting regional trail planning goals and needs. The ultimate cost and negotiations with BNSF will be a critical, initial step towards making this project a reality. Additionally, alternative routing at the MSG property may require added land acquisition needs, if necessary.

Cost

The development cost of the "River to Roy" segment and gathering the needed funds to allow the project to move forward is of prime consideration. Minimizing costs will be highly important throughout the planning, design and development process to promote financial support for the project. Funding, grant applications, and continuing to grow support for the project will be top priorities moving forward.

Maintenance

Maintenance considerations should be integrated into the overall planning, design and development process as sustained, long-term maintenance of the corridor will ensure that the corridor remains safe, accessible and publicly supported. Given the remote location, maintenance agreements and sharing resources should be explored to allow for adequate long-term trail maintenance.

User Experience

User experience will be a key component in continuing to garner support for the YPLT and future trail extensions towards the Foothills Trail system. Ease of use, alignment, views, safety, setting, and maintenance all impact the overall user experience. Communications with the various user groups will be a key to success as the planning and design process moves forward.

Visibility

Great consideration should be given to maintaining visibility throughout the trail corridor. Street crossings will need to provide a high-level of visibility for both trail users and vehicles to protect against potential collisions. Stream crossings will be another priority area to ensure trail users are aware of the crossing. Throughout the entirety of the corridor visibility will be vital towards allowing users, maintenance crews, and public agencies to safely monitor the trail and their surroundings.

PLANNING & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

As the "River to Roy" segment of the YPLT enters the next phases of planning, design and development there are a number of design considerations that should be accounted for below. Creating a cohesive YPLT corridor as it relates to trail widths, signage, safety markings, and trail amenities should be given the utmost consideration.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Trail Profile

The primary, paved trail should be constructed in alignment with the completed phases of the YPLT trail providing a 12 foot wide asphalt surface. To meet ADA requirements, the trail shall have a 5% maximum slope with a 2% maximum cross slope.

Soft surface trails should be located in an alignment that parallels, but is separated from the primary paved corridor. Soft surface trails should be 4 feet wide with a clearance of 2 feet on each side of the trail for a total cleared width of 8 feet to accommodate likely users such as equestrians.

Trail Surfacing

The pedestrian-bicycle trail in alignment with completed YPLT phases should be asphalt with minor changes in paving as necessary at street and bridge crossings. The equestrian portion of the trail should be constructed of natural, free draining materials.

Vegetation Clearance

Vegetation should be cleared and maintained along the full width of the trail corridor to ensure access is available to emergency and maintenance vehicles, as well as ensuring strong visibility is maintained throughout the corridor. 10' vertical clearance is recommended on trails accommodating equestrian.

Drainage

There are three drainage conditions impacting the trail to consider in order to ensure positive drainage and erosion control along the corridor:

- **Ravine / Low Trail** - In some portions of the trail corridor the trail is lower than the surrounding grades where the trail will tend to collect stormwater runoff causing potential flooding and erosion along the corridor. This condition should be alleviated with drainage swales to collect stormwater off the trail and adjacent terrain. Periodically, this solution may require small culverts to be constructed beneath the trail.

constructed on the uphill side of the trail where the trail has been cut along the side of a hill to intercept stormwater runoff before the water flows onto the trail. Drainage swales should flow into culverts that cross beneath the trail and drain into adjacent drainage areaways periodically.

- **Elevated Trail** – Where the trail is elevated above the surrounding terrain, culverts or other drainage passages will need to be provided to allow natural to flow unimpeded under or around the trail improvements.

Street Crossings

There are a number of public and private street crossings along the corridor which will need to be safely designed for public trail use. In order to reduce accessibility barriers and to provide safe crossings the ultimate design should take into consideration visibility, pavement markings, signage, intersection angle, pavement texture, use of color, and lighting as necessary.

- **Minor street crossing** – Crossings will receive minimal to light vehicular traffic. The trail approach should be cleared of any vegetation or other material which could obstruct required sight distances. Standard regulatory stop, yield, and advance warning signs will need to be installed to alert trail users of pending crossing, as well as crosswalks, striping and textured warning strips as necessary. Any installation will need to be designed to allow access to emergency and maintenance vehicles.
- **Major street crossing** – Higgins Greig Road is the largest street crossing within the corridor and may require additional safety measures based on expected traffic volumes. This could include pedestrian activated beacons or other remedies in addition to those described above for minor street crossings.

Drainage (CONT.)

- **Hillside** – In this condition, a drainage swale should be

USER GROUPS

The proposed multipurpose trail will be used by people of all ages and abilities including those who walk, run, cycle, use assistive mobility devices like wheelchairs or scooters, or ride mounts such as horses. Additionally, the trail may impact local residents, businesses, and property owners. Efforts should be made to engage these user groups as the project moves forward. Some key considerations related to user groups include:

Bicyclists

Developing strong access, visibility and connectivity throughout the trail will be of great importance for the cycling community looking to take advantage of the regional connectivity the trail seeks to provide.

Currently, SR507 serves 8,000 – 10,000 riders during the Cascade Bicycle Club's Seattle to Portland ride. Although, a once a year event, the high volume may be worthy of consideration with the design of the YPLT and any potential staging areas.

Equestrians

Given the rural location, provisions for equestrians should be considered including a separate trail running parallel to the paved multipurpose trail. Additional considerations may include providing parking for horse trailers with direct trail access. Mounting blocks and/or hitching posts should also be considered at staging areas and/or bridges where all users will share the same space.

Walkers, Joggers, and Hikers

Those utilizing the trail by foot may have a number of concerns regarding the trail development, and it will also be crucial to understand how they would like to utilize the trail to best accommodate their recreational needs.

Local Residents

Those living in the area surrounding the trail should be prioritized, included and accommodated during the trail design, and may have a variety of needs. Some residents will be utilizing the trail as their primary means of transportation where safety, visibility, route directness, and connectivity to transit will be of utmost importance.

Local Businesses

The local business community serves to benefit from the trail development which could bring enhanced economic activity and patrons to downtown Roy. Local businesses should be engaged as they may have concerns regarding the trail development, as well as ideas that would assist in promoting and supporting trail development in downtown Roy.

Disabled Users

Engaging this community is highly encouraged. As the trail will be designed to meet ADA accessibility requirements, there are a number of additional considerations to take into account to ensure the trail meets the needs of this community including but not limited to safety, trail access, barriers, and signage.

Property Owners

Property and home owners along the trail corridor have a vested interest in the future of the corridor, and may have concerns regarding safety, traffic, access, and visibility along the route. This will be a key group to engage and to keep informed throughout the trail design and development process.



FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

As the planning and design process progresses for the YPLT, thought should be given to how the completion of the corridor will benefit the surrounding community including future opportunities which could include the following:

Regional Connections

An important future regional trail connection will be the SR507 connection from Roy into Spanaway. This would provide critical connectivity to the larger Pierce County trail system. Future partnership and collaboration with WSDOT will be necessary to make this key trail connection.

Local Trail Access

SR507 is a busy and congested vehicular route that bisects Roy, Yelm and McKenna. As the planning and design process progresses, there should be consideration given to providing safe walking and bicycle routes to the YPLT. The completion of the YPLT could hopefully lead to additional walkability improvements within and around downtown Roy including safe routes to school.

The unincorporated Pierce County community of McKenna, to the south of Roy, sits at the intersection of SR507 and SR702 near the Nisqually River. Although it is in fairly close proximity to the corridor, there is no public access. If easements can be obtained to provide access to the trail, it would be a benefit to the residents of McKenna. Care should be taken that a safe crossing of SR507 can be provided where trail access is provided.

Linear Park Improvements

Other improvement within the trail corridor may include special installation of trees, landscaping, interpretive signage, benches and other park-like improvements especially where the trail goes through downtown Roy.

The development of a trailhead and/or public space in downtown Roy could compliment the trail development providing staging for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

City of Roy Comprehensive Plan - Park, Recreation and Open Space Element (Section 6-3) mentions:

"Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) ROW: Develop a centrally located town commons on land currently owned by BNSF, located between the railroad line and McNaught Street (SR507). This facility could accommodate a children's play area, farmers market, display area for artwork, a staging area for a variety of events, restrooms, a ride-share/transit park and ride, and other amenities."

Storytelling

The local community is proud of their history and small town charm. The development of the YPLT should evaluate opportunities to celebrate and showcase the area's history through potential design elements, interpretive signage, public art, and/or local artifacts.

Conceptual representation of YPLT development



RIVER TO ROY



KEY NOTES:

- ① Primary Trail Corridor
- ② Alternate Option
- ③ Nisqually River Bridge
- ④ Murray Creek Bridge North
- ⑤ Murray Creek Bridge South
- ⑥ Muck Creek Railroad Bridge

LEGEND:

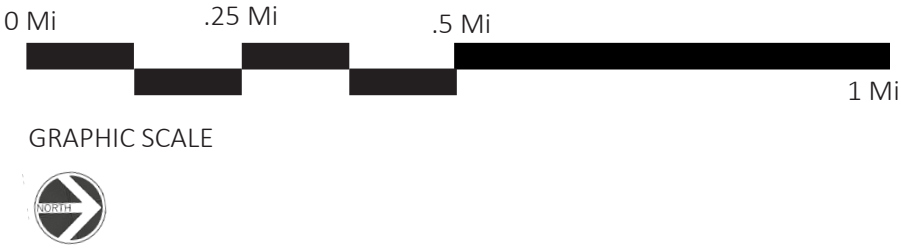
- Roy Water Tower
- Street Crossing
- Trail Access Point
- MSG Overhead Conveyor Belt
- Bridge
- Phase 2 + 2B
- Yelm Trail Ownership
- BNSF Ownership
- Wetlands

RIVER TO ROY - PRIMARY TRAIL CORRIDOR

This alignment would follow the existing YPLT corridor with the assumption the current safety concerns regarding the MSG operation are resolved in the upcoming years.

ALTERNATE OPTION

The alignment of the alternate option is conceptual requiring further study and conversations with MSG ownership.





PART VI

PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

PRIMARY TRAIL CORRIDOR
ALTERNATE OPTION
RAIL LINE ACQUISITION
EASEMENT ACQUISITION OPTION

PRIMARY TRAIL CORRIDOR

SURVEYING	\$55,000	BRIDGE CROSSING	\$500,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Staking Survey 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridge Replacement / Renovation 	
EROSION CONTROL	\$79,626	TRAIL SIGNAGE	\$29,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Fencing Construction Entrance Silt Fence & Straw Wattles 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail Safety Signage Traffic Signage General Trail Signage Interpretive Signage 	
CLEARING / DEMOLITION	\$20,628	LANDSCAPING	\$33,422
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stripping, Clearing, and Grubbing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydroseed 	
EARTHWORK	\$51,570	SUB-TOTAL	\$1,948,195
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grading 		10% MOBILIZATION	\$192,730
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT	\$234,612	10% CONTINGENCY	\$212,003
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drainage Improvements Mitigation 		10% SALES TAX	\$233,204
SOFT SURFACE TRAIL	\$62,667	30% DESIGN, TESTING, INSPECTIONS, PERMITS	\$769,573
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4' Wide Trail 			
PRIMARY TRAIL	\$626,670	PRIMARY TRAIL CORRIDOR DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SUBTOTAL	\$3,355,705
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12' Wide Asphalt Trail 			
STREET CROSSINGS	\$255,000		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADA Improvements Safety Markings Bollards 			

RAIL LINE ACQUISITION

ACQUISITION	\$1,108,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BNSF Rail Corridor (1 Mile) BNSF Lot at McNaught Street 	
SUB-TOTAL	\$1,108,000
20% CONTINGENCY	\$221,600
15% PROFESSIONAL FEES, CLOSING COSTS	\$199,440
RAIL LINE ACQUISITION SUBTOTAL	\$1,529,040

PRIMARY TRAIL CORRIDOR DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SUBTOTAL	\$3,355,705
RAIL LINE ACQUISITION SUBTOTAL	\$1,529,040
GRAND TOTAL	\$4,884,745

Note: Preliminary cost estimating is reflective of 2023 construction costs, and does not account for future inflation which is currently estimated to increase between 2% - 4% per year.

ALTERNATE OPTION

SURVEYING \$60,000

- Construction Staking
- Survey

EROSION CONTROL \$106,630

- Construction Fencing
- Construction Entrance
- Silt Fence & Straw Wattles

CLEARING / DEMOLITION \$28,628

- Stripping, Clearing, and Grubbing

EARTHWORK \$71,575

- Grading

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT \$321,912

- Drainage Improvements
- Mitigation

SOFT SURFACE TRAIL \$144,945

- 4' Wide Trail

PRIMARY TRAIL \$1,062,930

- 12' Wide Asphalt Trail

STREET CROSSINGS \$255,000

- ADA Improvements
- Safety Markings
- Bollards

EASEMENT ACQUISITION OPTION

ACQUISITION \$133,800

- MSG Easement (2.2 Acres)

SUB-TOTAL \$133,800

20% CONTINGENCY \$26,760

15% PROFESSIONAL FEES, CLOSING COSTS \$24,084

EASEMENT ACQUISITION SUBTOTAL \$184,644

BRIDGE CROSSING \$500,000

- Bridge Replacement / Renovation

TRAIL SIGNAGE \$30,500

- Trail Safety Signage
- Traffic Signage
- General Trail Signage
- Interpretive Signage

LANDSCAPING \$46,382

- Hydroseed

SUB-TOTAL \$2,580,187

10% MOBILIZATION \$258,018

10% CONTINGENCY \$283,820

10% SALES TAX \$312,202

30% DESIGN, TESTING, INSPECTIONS, PERMITS \$1,030,268

ALTERNATE OPTION DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SUBTOTAL \$4,464,498

Note: Subtotal includes construction of the primary corridor and alternate routing at MSG as necessary to provide trail access from downtown Roy to Phase 2B of the YPLT.

The easement necessary to secure and construct the alternate option has not been studied as part of this effort. The potential environmental and cultural resource implications are unknown at this time. Associated costs above what is captured in the preliminary estimate may occur as a result.

ALTERNATE OPTION DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SUBTOTAL \$4,464,498

RAIL LINE ACQUISITION SUBTOTAL \$1,529,040

EASEMENT ACQUISITION SUBTOTAL \$184,644

GRAND TOTAL \$6,178,182

Note: The alternate option will require rail line acquisition for construction of the main corridor, and easement acquisition to secure land on the MSG property as necessary for the alternate trail routing.



PART VII

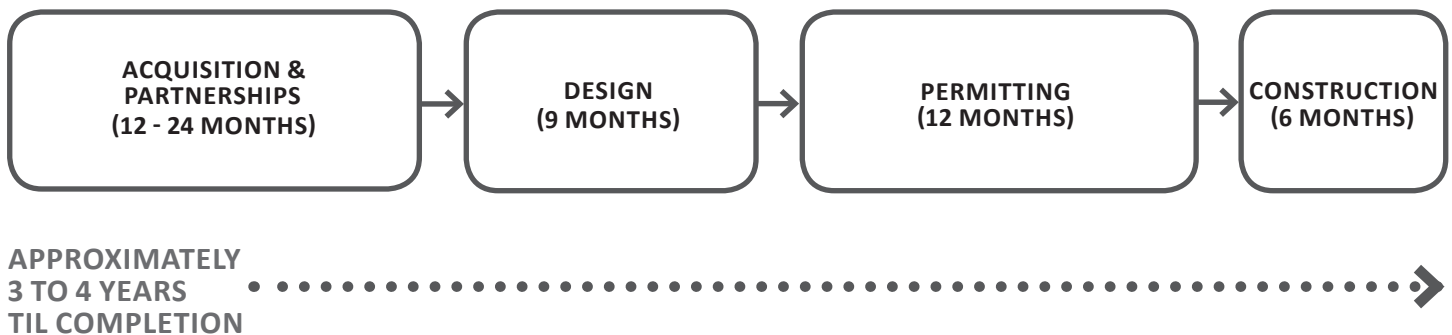
NEXT STEPS

PROJECT TIMELINE
RAILBANKING
DESIGN
PERMITTING
FUNDING

PROJECT TIMELINE

A critical requirement for the advancement of the YPLT 'River to Roy' project is the strategic pursuit of acquisitions and partnerships. The initial phase involves the acquisition of the trail corridor property. The acquisition process will require negotiations with BNSF regarding the purchase and rail banking of the corridor as needed to allow for recreational trail use. In tandem with property acquisition, cultivating robust partnerships between jurisdictions is critical. These partnerships will not only secure the necessary funding and share resources but also enrich community engagement, ensuring that the trail aligns with the diverse needs and preferences of its residents. We anticipate this initial phase to take between 12 and 24 months.

Once property acquisition, strategic partnerships, and funding are in place, the project will progress to the design, permitting, and construction phases. We anticipate the design, permitting, and construction phase to take approximately 27 months. At this early stage in the process, we estimate the entire project timeline to be between 3 and 4 years.



RAILBANKING

The remaining length of railroad line from the end of Yelm's ownership to Water Street will need to be railbanked to allow for multiuse trail development. Below is a summary of the acquisition, abandonment, and railbanking process, along with an overview of the process undertaken by the City of Yelm to railbank their portion of the line. It is recommended, the purchasing and railbanking entity research the corridor, acquisition, and railbanking procedures to fully understand their options. Due diligence should include but is not limited to land surveying, title research, and property valuation to understand any potential issues or development constraints related to the property.

ACQUISITION

AS BNSF currently owns the remainder of the line, the purchasing entity will need to conduct negotiations with BNSF to come to an agreement to purchase the corridor. The City of Roy has made attempts to contact BNSF in the past but clear communication has been a challenge. It is recommended due diligence be completed prior to starting the negotiation process.

ABANDONMENT

"Abandonment" means to cease operation on a line, or to terminate the line. A railroad line is abandoned only when the owner of the railroad right-of-way has applied to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) for abandonment authorization, and the right-of-way owner has then notified STB that it has consummated the abandonment authorization. Once completed, the railbanking process may begin.

RAILBANKING

"Railbanking" is a voluntary agreement between the right-of-way owner and trail sponsor to utilize an out of service rail corridor as a trail until the owner might need the corridor again for rail service. Railbanking may take place after the owner's notification to STB that they want to abandon the rail line. Then a request for Notice of Interim Trail Use (NITU) will be filed with STB and the owner's legal department will issue a statement of willingness to assume financial responsibility for the corridor. Upon issuance of the NITU the railroad may discontinue service, cancel tariffs, and salvage railroad materials. Finally, the owner files a consummation notice with the STB, which will officially railbank the corridor for trail use.

RAILBANKING

CITY OF YELM - RAIL LINE OWNERSHIP & RAILBANKING

Below is a summary of the acquisition, abandonment and railbanking process between the City of Yelm and the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

The following is a list of the available documentation:

- Notice of Exemption to Acquire – November 22, 2000
- Notice of Exemption to Abandon – May 5, 2020
- Request for Issuance of a Notice of Interim Trail Use (NITU) or Abandonment – June 10, 2020.
- Clarification of Request for Issuance of a Notice of Interim Trail Use (NITU) or Abandonment – June 23, 2020
- Draft Environmental Assessment – June 15, 2020
- Final Environmental Assessment – July 2, 2020
- Decision & Notice of Interim Trail Use or Abandonment – July 9, 2020

To facilitate the acquisition, abandonment, and railbanking of their portion of the railroad corridor, the City of Yelm submitted numerous notices, requests, and reports to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) as part of the railbanking process. Once the City of Yelm successfully acquired the railroad corridor, notices of abandonment were filed, and a request for the issuance of a Notice of Interim Trail Use (NITU) was made.

In June 2020, following the City of Yelm's NITU request, the STB confirmed that a NITU would be issued, designating the City of Yelm as both the owner of the line and the trail sponsor. This designation allowed the city to railbank its own line, provided it demonstrated that the property was suitable for interim trail use and assumed financial responsibility for managing and maintaining the right of way.

As part of the process, the City of Yelm was required to conduct environmental and historic assessments on the corridor to ensure there were no significant concerns regarding environmental impacts or cultural resources in connection with the abandonment and railbanking process. However, the STB did recommend certain conditions, including consulting with the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFW) to address National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements and to mitigate any potential impact on endangered species during the trail development.

Full public record of the STB board decisions and filings are available on the STB website
<https://www.stb.gov/proceedings-actions/search-stb-records/>

DESIGN

We anticipate the following professional services being needed during the design, documentation, permitting, and construction observation stages of the project.

Professional / Design Services

- Landscape Architecture
- Civil Engineering
- Structural Engineering
- Geotechnical Engineering
- Environmental Services
- Cultural Resources

Complete documentation of the “River to Roy” trail corridor along with associated impacts to surrounding grades, drainage patterns, vegetation, and environmentally sensitive areas will need to be provided per Pierce County Code requirements.

- Trail Layout, Sections & Details
- Grading & Drainage
- Geotechnical Report
- Structural Analysis & Bridge Design
- Critical Areas Delineation & Mitigation
- Cultural Resources Report

PERMITTING

PIERCE COUNTY PLANNING & LAND SERVICES

Prior to construction, the project design and documentation will need to meet the appropriate local, county, state and federal regulations. Primarily, the project will need to go through Pierce County Planning & Land Services for approval. Then the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires environmental review for projects with potential significant environmental impacts. Given the proximity of the multiuse trail to streams and wetlands, a SEPA environmental checklist will be required and issued through Pierce County Planning & Land Services.

Anticipated permits include:

- Site Development Permit
- Right-of-Way Permit
- SEPA Checklist
- Sign Permits
- Gate Permits

Upon developing the initial site plan, a pre-application meeting with Pierce County Planning & Land Services is advisable to provide clarity on the permitting process and requirements.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Under the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) is a crucial step in evaluating the potential environmental impacts of trail development. The primary objective of the EA is to determine whether the proposed trail project may have significant adverse effects on the environment. Following the assessment, if the responsible agency concludes that the project will not result in significant environmental impacts, they may issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The EA serves as a comprehensive document, typically encompassing an in-depth project overview, an analysis of potential alternatives, a description of the surrounding environment, an evaluation of anticipated environmental impacts, and a presentation of mitigation measures aimed at offsetting any adverse effects.

SECTION 404

When working in proximity to or within streams or wetlands, compliance with various permits and regulatory reviews is essential, often involving oversight by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Given the scope of the ‘River to Roy’ project, it’s conceivable that an individual Section 404 permit, which entails a comprehensive review process, may be required. However, it’s worth noting that the project might also meet the criteria for coverage under a Nationwide or Regional General Permit. These permits are typically reserved for smaller-scale activities with minimal environmental impacts and entail less rigorous scrutiny. To fully assess the potential effects on water bodies within or near the project site, the identification and assessment of wetlands and streams through delineation and evaluation may be necessary. This process aids in understanding the extent of impacts and guides the development of essential mitigation measures.

FUNDING

The YPLT is an important part of Pierce County's regional trail planning efforts. Pierce County's trail system goals involve prioritizing funding and concentrating efforts on projects that enhance regional connectivity to accommodate the needs of the growing demographics.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

County Allocations

Capital funds may be identified for projects that support growing demographics within fiscal constraints. Regional and connector trail projects are prioritized based on short-term (6 year) and long-term (10 year) capital improvement plan funding. The Pierce County Comprehensive Plan has currently identified The Yelm Prairie Line Trail Connection to Roy Partnership to receive funding of \$100,000 in 2026, and \$500,000 in 2027.

Municipal Allocations

A common source of funding would include allocations by the local municipal jurisdiction and may be identified for funding within their capital improvement program budgeting.

Bond Issues

Local revenues could be raised through successful passage of a bond. Numerous communities have passed bonds to specifically fund park and trail projects. This approach would require strong local support and dedicated local leaders to launch a successful bond campaign.

Impact Fees

In some cases, local regulations will require impact fees to be paid by developers to offset a development's impacts to the local environment and/or community. These impact fees may then be allocated for local park and trail projects.

Strategic Partnerships

As a regional trail provider, Pierce County works with partners to expand the regional trail system. Partnerships can be formed with other agencies and jurisdictions that bring financial and technical resources to assist in moving projects forward that align with the County's regional trail planning goals.

GRANTS

WA State Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) Grants:

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

Program provides funding for a broad range of land protection and outdoor recreation projects including multiuse trails to assist in meeting the needs of a growing regional population. The City of Yelm has been successful in receiving WWRP grants to assist with the development of Phase 2A which is currently moving forward.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

A federal grant via the Secretary of the Interior, managed by RCO, provides financial assistance for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas including parks, trails, and habitat areas.

Other Potential Grants:

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) Trail Grants

RTC provides grants to develop and activate local and regional trail networks prioritizing projects that help to achieve RTC's vision for equitable trail networks as essential community infrastructure.

Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

Rural Towns Centers and Corridors Funding – PSRC's Executive Board approved a grant which has funded the feasibility study for the "River to Roy" section of trail. The program provides funding for projects in smaller towns and cities within rural areas.

FUNDING

Grants (continued):

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Grants:

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Provides funding for a range of transportation projects that promote alternative modes of transportation towards improving safety, accessibility, and livability in communities across the county.

Recreation Trails Program (RTP)

This grant program sets aside funding for a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)

Provides funding to states for a variety of transportation projects including roads, bridges, transit, walking and biking infrastructure giving localities more control over how they spend federal transportation dollars to meet community needs.

US Department of Transportation Grants:

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program

Prioritizes funding for active transportation networks that connect communities, and aims at addressing disparities in bicyclist and pedestrian fatality rates.

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

RAISE allocates funding for a wide range of surface transportation projects that promote safety, accessibility, mobility, and economic redevelopment while focusing on sustainability and equity.

Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program

Supports projects that will improve and expand surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas with the goal of increasing connectivity, generating economic growth, and improving quality of life. Funds can be used for planning, construction, and right-of-way acquisition.



APPENDIX

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Pierce County

(P) Brianne Blackburn, Planner & Trails Coordinator
(P) Mason Hap, Intern

Bruce Dees & Associates

() Shawn Jensen, Principal
(P) Mike Faulkner, Project Manager

City of Yelm

(P) Cody Colt, Public Services Director
(P) Brad Chatwood, Project Manager

ForeverGreen Trails

(P) Larry Leveen, Executive Director

DISCUSSION

Project Overview

- City of Yelm has been developing adjacent phases of the Yelm-Prairie Line Trail and is currently in the design process and working towards connecting the western edge of the Nisqually River to Downtown Yelm.
- ForeverGreen Trails has a long history with the project, and helped lead initial grant writing efforts for this feasibility study. Larry has provided a Google drive with background information regarding past trail planning efforts.
- Pierce County is now taking the lead on the feasibility study of the “River to Roy” section of the trail in association with Bruce Dees & Associates (trail planning consultant).

Trail Corridor – “River to Roy”

- The Yelm-Prairie Line Trail will play an important role in connecting the Thurston County and Pierce County trail systems.
- This phase will connect south to Phase 2B being developed by the City of Yelm, and north to the Pierce County trail system once developed.
- Ownership of the railroad corridor is split between the City of Yelm and BNSF.
- The railroad corridor is within Pierce County’s jurisdiction.
- Streams cross the trail corridor in multiple areas:
 - The southern-most Murray Creek crossing adjacent to the Miles Sand & Gravel property features an old rail bridge and culvert.
 - The Murray Creek crossing at the Manke property features 2 culverts which run underneath the railroad.
 - Muck Creek crosses just beyond the northern extent of the “River to Roy” phase.
- Primary trail access is available in Downtown Roy at the BNSF property and Higgins-Greig Road crossing.
- Street crossings occur along the trail corridor in a number of locations:
 - Higgins-Greig Road – Paved public road crossing
 - Silva Seed Access Road – Private gravel and paved access road to the Silva Seed property
 - Private Access Road – Dirt access road at the Manke property and Murray Stream crossing
 - Miles Sand & Gravel Access Road – Private gravel access and operation roads cross at the north and southern ends of the property.
- Miles Sand & Gravel is currently an active sand and gravel mining operation bisected by the corridor. Mining operations are likely coming to a close in the near future which might result in a change of property ownership. Timeline is unknown.

Alternate Route

- An alternate route has been outlined as an option which would run west along Murray Creek within the Miles Sand & Gravel property extents to bypass the mining operation and open pits.

Trail Acquisition / Rail Banking Considerations

- Larry gave an overview of the rail banking process and requirement to preserve the corridor.
- Larry also discussed the Notice of Interim Trail Use (NITU) permit which is typically issued by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to allow temporary use of the corridor for non-railroad use. An STB letter of clarification for the corridor owned by the City of Yelm was suggested to clarify the use and to deter potential disputes with property owners who may want to absorb the right-of-way into their property.
- The alternate route option is located within Miles Sand & Gravel property and the associated land would need to be acquired and/or an agreement put in place to allow development and public use of a multi-use trail.

Trail Design Considerations

- The McKenna community currently does not have an access point to the corridor and is something to consider towards the southern end of the River to Roy phase.
- A trail alignment option which runs east of the Miles Sand & Gravel operation may be worth consideration.
- Route directness is an important consideration as trail users will be utilizing the corridor as a means of safe transportation.
- Cyclists utilizing the trail will require certain design considerations including avoiding any sharp turns in any alternate routing.
- Possibilities for a restroom and/or drinking water along the corridor were discussed. Pierce County typically locates such facilities and trailheads within towns based on maintenance and economic development considerations.
- Design for equestrians within this area is an important trail planning consideration and would typically include a non-paved pathway adjacent to the main trail. The equestrian pathway would ideally be located on the east side of the path.

Selection Criteria

- In review of the selection criteria, it was mentioned that defining and clarifying the categories would be helpful.
- Equity would be an important category and is relevant to those utilizing the corridor for transportation.
- Cultural Resources would be another category given the age of the railroad corridor and Murray Creek bridge.

Trail Ownership / Management Considerations

- An interlocal agreement between the City of Yelm and Pierce County will need to be developed to build and maintain the trail.
- Monitoring, maintenance and public safety along the corridor was discussed as the corridor is located in a rural area of Pierce County which will pose some challenges as a remote trail location for the County. A shared maintenance agreement was mentioned as a potential solution.
- In regards to safety, deterring vagrancy and camping along the corridor will be a topic of conversation.

Permitting

- Pierce County will be the lead permitting jurisdiction. Permitting through the City of Yelm is not anticipated. City of Roy may have some requirements and currently works with Pierce County on permitting needs.
- Federal funding would come with some design / permitting considerations in alignment with NEPA.
- Cultural resources studies along the trail corridor will be needed as part of the future trail design process.

- Critical areas exist within the railroad corridor in particularly around Murray Creek which will require delineation down the road.

Project Funding

- Potential funding / grant agencies were mentioned including Federal, PSRC, RCO, and WSDOT.
- Funding availability for multi-use trail development is anticipated to be at a high-level.
- ForeverGreen Trails can assist with reviewing potential grant and funding possibilities.

Stakeholders

- Additional and potential stakeholders were mentioned including:
 - WSDOT
 - Nisqually Tribe
 - Nisqually Land Trust
 - Miles Sand & Gravel
 - BNSF
 - Manke Lumber Co.
 - City of Roy
 - Backcounty Horseman of Washington
- Backcounty Horseman of Washington have provided donations for trail planning efforts and are donating mounting blocks at each end of the Nisqually bridge crossing.
- WSDOT is currently working on developing roundabouts in McKenna.
- A stakeholder interview with Miles Sand & Gravel will be an important conversation to understand the future transition of ownership and timeline for which that will occur.
- BNSF was also identified as an unknown and will need to be contacted via their real estate regarding their section of right-of-way. The team has not been successful in making contact with BNSF to date.

Action Items

- Bruce Dees & Associates will work on refining and further defining the selection criteria for review by the team.
- Cody to follow-up regarding contacting the Nisqually Tribe.
- Brad to provide the 30% plans for Phase 2B west of the Nisqually River for review.

Next Meetings

- Stakeholder interview with Miles Sand & Gravel TBD
- Steering Committee Meeting #2 TBD

Pierce County

(P) Brianne Blackburn, Planner & Trails Coordinator
() Mason Hap, Intern

Bruce Dees & Associates

() Shawn Jensen, Principal
(P) Mike Faulkner, Project Manager

City of Yelm

(P) Cody Colt, Public Services Director
(P) Brad Chatwood, Project Manager

ForeverGreen Trails

(P) Larry Leveen, Executive Director

DISCUSSION

Yelm – Phase 2 Update

- City of Yelm has provided their Phase 2 – 30% plans to the Steering Committee.
- Phase 2 will remove the existing rail lines and redevelop the corridor as a multi-use trail. Rail lines are scheduled to be removed in the upcoming weeks.
- City of Yelm is planning an overlook with interpretive signage and view finders at the powerline corridor to celebrate the view of Mt. Rainer. The originally planned overlook at the river has been eliminated given constructability challenges along the Nisqually River.
- Timeline for Phase 2 completion is by the end of 2023.

Acquisition

- Team discussed Yelm's (Notice of Interim Trail Use) NITU agreement with the Surface Transportation Board (STB).
- Documentation regarding the NITU agreement can be found on the STB website, and within the files provided by ForeverGreen Trails. Project team will review the available information.
- ForeverGreen Trails mentioned that a clarification letter regarding the NITU would be advantageous to clear up any potential ambiguities, and they are willing to work with the City of Yelm on this item.
- Team discussed acquisition of the remaining BNSF corridor into Downtown Roy.
 - City of Yelm is unlikely to want to obtain, own and maintain additional rail / trail corridor outside of their jurisdiction.
 - Pierce County's preference would be to work with the City of Roy towards Roy becoming the future owner of the corridor.
 - Given recent turnover at the City of Roy, communications regarding the project have fallen off, however Cody mentioned the new City Clerk – Treasurer, Michael Malek is an ex-Yelm employee who the project team can try to contact. Contact info has been provided.
 - Preferred arrangement with STB would be an NITU in order to designate the corridor solely for use as a multi-use trail.

Miles Sand & Gravel (MSG)

- The MSG gravel operation is the largest unknown impacting the trail corridor. It is unclear when MSG may conclude their operations, and/or what Nisqually Tribe's plan might be for the property. Both entities have been cautious regarding their future plans and timelines.
- As the property's future will impact the trail routing, the current strategy with the feasibility study will be to document the potential routing options along with the associated acquisition, surveying, engineering, and cost considerations.
- The team will work toward continuing communications in hopes of better understanding what the future goals might be for the property.

Trail Design

- The completed phases of the Yelm-Prairie Line Trail do not currently include an equestrian pathway. Adding an equestrian pathway to the existing and new trail segments would help support the equestrian community and their trail advocacy efforts. ForeverGreen Trails mentioned the equestrian trail is a grant requirement.
- Trail construction within areas of significant environmental disturbance would be preferred over creating new areas of disturbance on healthier lands in efforts to minimize environmental impacts.
- As the ability to select a preferred trail route may not be feasible at this time, the selection criteria will be revisited and revised accordingly based upon the unknowns.

Action Items

- Project team will follow-up with ForeverGreen Trails to discuss comments and concerns regarding the previously provided Selection Criteria.
- Pierce County will work on contacting the City of Roy, Nisqually Tribe, and MSG.
- Bruce Dees & Associates (BDA) is beginning to format and outline the Feasibility Study with the goal of reviewing a rough draft with Pierce County in the next two weeks.
- BDA will be working on developing a preliminary cost estimate for trail acquisition, design and construction. A cost comparison with Yelm's Phase 2 project could be beneficial prior to completing the study.

Next Meetings

- Steering Committee Meeting #3 TBD.

