

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the benefits? Cowlitz County is growing and county and city trails provide outdoor recreation, attract new families and businesses, support economic development and quality of life, and encourage active lifestyles. Trails can ease transportation problems, reduce air pollution, increase real estate values, promote cultural activities, and serve as an outdoor classroom. Physical activity, like walking or biking on trails, can help prevent and reduce obesity and related chronic diseases.

Where will the trail be located? The goal is to connect the Castle Rock to Lexington Loop Trail to South Cowlitz River Trail to the previously planned North Cowlitz River Trail Loop, which extends from Castle Rock to the Lexington area. The trail would continue paralleling the west side of the Cowlitz River to Gerhart Gardens Park and then continue on the east side back to Sparks Road. The trail route will be determined through a community process and partnerships.

How will it be developed? The trail will be developed through a partnership of volunteers, local organizations, and public agencies following the recommendations of the resulting trail concept plan.

Can they take my land or make me allow a trail on it? This community-based trail project looks for locations where public access can easily be guaranteed (for example, public lands and right-of-ways), where access can be achieved through various agreements or easements, or through purchase from a willing seller. The trail can only cross private land with the landowner's permission. There is no intention to use eminent domain on this community-based trail project.

Can I as a landowner be held liable if a person using a trail is injured on my land? The Washington legislature has enacted a "Recreational Use Statute" to encourage owners and managers to allow public access for recreation use on their lands. Property owners who allow public access have liability immunity protection.

How long will it take? Construction of the trail will occur over several years, depending on financial resources, barriers, and the commitment of community partners and volunteers.

What will it cost? A budget cannot be determined until the planning process is complete. Trails are often financed through state and federal grants, local government budgets, foundations, volunteer giving, and local fund raising.

Who is sponsoring the new trail? Currently the community partners for this trail project are the City of Longview, the city of Kelso, Cowlitz County, Pathways 2020, Cowlitz County Health Department, Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, Family Health Center, and the Cowlitz On The Move Health Lifestyle Coalition. Local citizen volunteers are also actively involved with the project and we encourage more to join the effort.

Who do I contact to learn more or to get involved? There are several ways to contact the planning committee:

- ✓ Contact Rich Bemm at richard.bemm@ci.longview.wa.us or 442-5408
- ✓ Go on-line to www.cowlitzonthemove.org and click on the "Contact Us" button and type in your question.
- ✓ Mail your comments and/or volunteer for the planning committee on the post card available at the meeting (you can send comments without your name if you prefer).
- ✓ Invite the planning committee to your club, church group, business association, school, or neighborhood for a presentation and update on the project.