



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks. Healthy Portland



Recreational Trails Strategy

A 20-Year Vision for Portland's Regional Trail System

June 2006

Prepared by

Portland Parks & Recreation
June 2006

Accepted by Portland City Council

June 28, 2006

Project Staff

Gregg Everhart, Senior Park Planner, Project Manager

Robin Grimwade, Senior Manager, Strategy, Finance & Business Development

Jim Sjulín, North Zone Manager, City Nature

Josh Darling, CAD Technician

Janet Bebb, Park Planning Supervisor

Gay Greger, Public Involvement Manager

Colleen Keyes, Editor

1120 SW 5th Ave., Suite 1302
Portland, OR 97204
Tel: (503) 823-7529 Fax: (503) 823-6007

www.PortlandParks.org
Commissioner Dan Saltzman
Director Zari Santner



Sustaining a healthy park and recreation system to make Portland a great place to live, work and play.

Foreword



This vision for completing our Regional Recreational Trail System reflects the environmental ethic that characterizes Portland. We are blessed with incredible natural areas, unique landmarks, and cultural resources that define our community's sense of place. In this city of walkers, bike riders, and runners – from children on tricycles to seniors with walking sticks – how we get there can be just as important as where we're going. Our regional trail system will provide over 220 miles of interconnected trails – linking us to one another, to neighboring communities, and to the special places we cherish.

Imagine continuous trails running along both sides of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers – ribbons of land that serve not only as transportation corridors, but also provide opportunities to tell the natural and cultural history of the region. With 146 miles already complete, we are well on our way to achieving this vision.

The primary goal of the *Recreational Trails Strategy* is to provide a detailed “trail map” to help finish the job. It includes strategies to complete the 40-Mile Loop and guide other regional trail acquisition and development over the next twenty years. Working with our many community partners, we have every confidence that this goal will be accomplished.

Dan Saltzman
Commissioner

Zari Santner
Director

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Vision & Benefits.....	3
Providers & Partners.....	5
Historic Background	7
Current System.....	11
Implementation Strategy.....	17
Funding Strategy	23
Selected References.....	26
Maps.....	Appendix



Leif Erikson Trail

Introduction



On July 12, 2001, the Portland City Council adopted *Parks 2020 Vision* – a plan developed through a two-year public process which lays out a long-term vision for the City’s park system. The community considered trails to be an integral part of the recreational spectrum. One *2020* objective is to create an interconnected regional and local system of trails, paths, and walks to make Portland ‘the walking city of the West.’

Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) and its partners provide many types of trails so that residents and visitors can circulate both within and between parks and natural areas. The network of park sidewalks, hiking trails, pathways, multi-use trails, and greenways connect to city sidewalks, bikeways, and transit. They serve both recreational and transportation needs, and many of the regional trails extend or connect to other trails beyond the city limits.

To date, trails have been built largely on a piecemeal basis, creating gaps within the trail network that reduce its usability. Support facilities such as trailheads, restrooms, neighborhood connections, and signage are also lacking, while some trails need redevelopment due to increased use.

Over the last two years, Portland Parks & Recreation has worked with other organizations to formulate this proposed *Recreational Trails Strategy*, the first comprehensive analysis of what is needed to build the remaining 68 miles of Portland’s portion of the projected 220-mile network of recreational regional trails.

The *Recreational Trails Strategy* acknowledges the key benefits of trails and builds on the Olmsted vision of an interconnected parks system. It documents progress towards completing the 40-Mile Loop and identifies other regional trails that are nearly or totally complete. Priorities for completing different trail segments are developed and grouped, together with estimated costs for acquisition and development. Completing the system is likely to take at least twenty years and cost over \$70 million, but under the guidance of the *Recreational Trails Strategy*, we will be able to move forward.

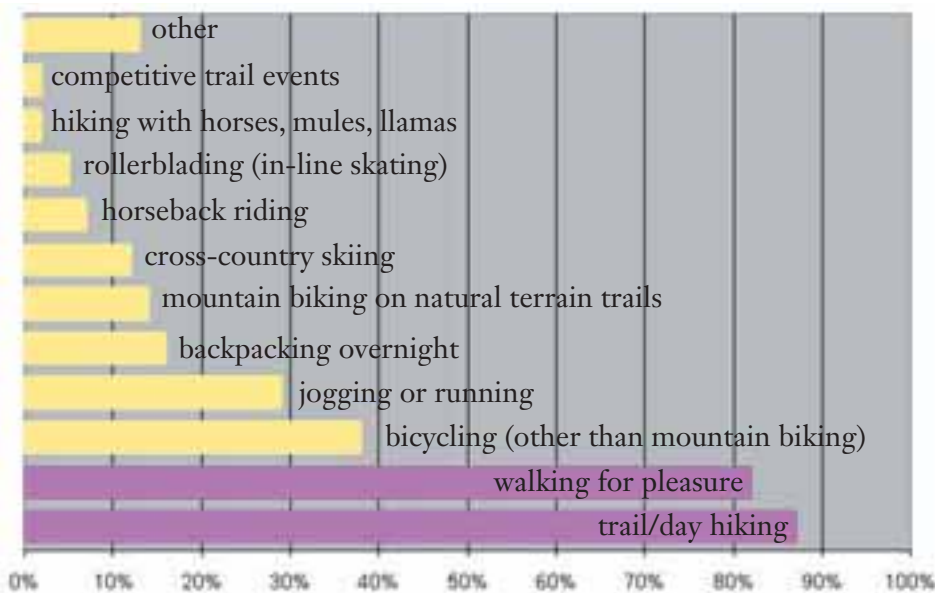
Trail Usage

A survey conducted for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) in 2002 found that running or walking for exercise and walking for pleasure are the top two outdoor recreational activities for both Oregon residents and visitors. The next two most popular activities, birdwatching and nature observation, frequently take place along trails. When OPRD conducted an additional survey in 2004 for its trail plan, *Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan*, they found that one-third of Oregonians use trails each year; walking for pleasure and trail/day hikes were ranked highest.

A survey commissioned by Portland Parks & Recreation, also in 2004, found that 77% of Portlanders used trails each year; over 50% at least monthly. 74% of the respondents were satisfied with the quality and quantity of trails – most likely due to the diverse types of trails. In addition to walking and hiking, Portland’s trails also host bicycling, mountain biking, jogging, running, and rollerblading. Cross-country skiing is possible when the weather cooperates, and equestrians can access designated trails in Forest Park and Powell Butte Nature Park, as well as designated segments of the Springwater Corridor.

Recent awareness of the health benefits of walking, running, and paddling means that the number of trail users is likely to rise, particularly as trail systems become more complete.

OREGON TRAIL USAGE



Vision & Benefits

Regional Trail Vision

220 miles of regional trails connecting people to each other and to the natural beauty of our city.

Portland Parks & Recreation is working to ensure that all Portland residents and visitors can access and enjoy this environmentally friendly mode of transportation. While some trails promote walking or cycling to school, work or errands, other trail use is purely recreational. Both are part of what we are all about: *Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland.*

Key Benefits of Trails

Trails are accessed and enjoyed by people of all ages, abilities, and incomes. Off-street trails are particularly helpful for children, families, and seniors. Experiences on our trails range from quiet, solitary walks through a dense forest, to major community fun runs and cycling events on paved pathways along rivers and creeks.

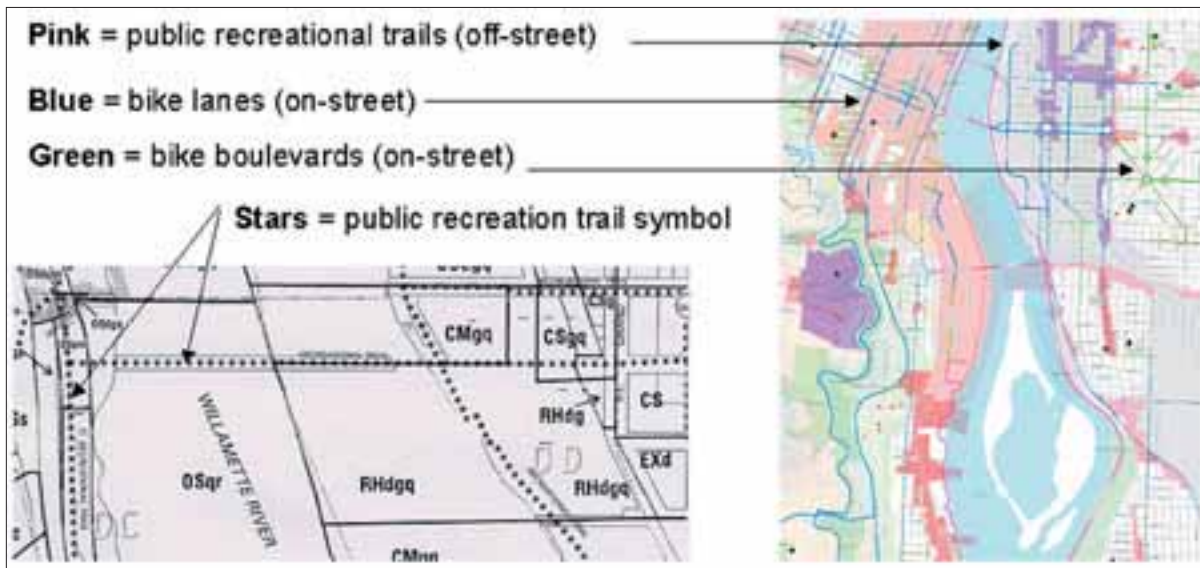
Some trails are significant commuter routes; this helps improve the health of trail users and the environment alike. Trails in our natural areas provide access for stewardship projects, and trails located along streams and former rail corridors highlight our historic heritage. Many new residents and businesses value the easy access to nature and physical activity that our trail system provides, improving livability and attracting investment to the City and its neighborhoods.



- *Children have a safe place to bicycle and skate.*
- *Seniors get needed sunshine and aerobic exercise, and meet new and old friends.*
- *Everyone enjoys the peace and tranquility of waterways and scenic vistas.*
- *Events on trails feature special places and support worthy causes.*
- *Commuters find alternatives to automobile use, improving human and environmental health.*
- *Environmental awareness is heightened with corridor stewardship projects.*
- *Trails located along railroads and streams, and trails linking parks connect us to our cultural heritage.*
- *Visitors, new residents, and new businesses are attracted to Portland and improve the local economy.*
- *Property values and resale ability are enhanced by nearby trails.*

Vision & Benefits

PUBLIC RECREATIONAL TRAILS



Terwilliger Parkway



Terwilliger Parkway bike lane



Marine Drive Trail



Vera Katz Eastbank Esplanade

Providers & Partners



Trail Facilities

Portland Parks & Recreation trails complement other facilities used as trails. Residents and visitors walk, run, roll, and ride in Portland using:

- sidewalks
- bike lanes
- bikeways and bike boulevards
- rails-with-trails
- hiking trails
- shared use trails
- TriMet buses or MAX

Trail Providers

In addition to the City of Portland – Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R), the Portland Office of Transportation (PDOT), the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), and the Water Bureau – many other agencies provide facilities used as trails. Substantial portions of trails, such as the Willamette Greenway and Columbia Slough trails, are located on private land and maintained by the landowners. In some cases, railroads allow trails to be built over or along their rail beds.

PP&R is responsible for the review and approval of public recreational trails built on private property, indicated on zoning maps by a “star” symbol. [See opposite page.] PDOT reviews improvements to street rights-of-way and has pedestrian and bike classifications in the *Transportation System Plan*. Both bureaus work together to integrate sidewalks, bike lanes, and off-street trails; they also collaborate on trail construction when funding is available.



Trail Partners

A wide variety of individuals and groups support trails in Portland. Neighborhood associations, non-profit organizations, and volunteer groups help expand the trail system by fundraising, assisting with funding applications, reviewing designs, commenting on land use applications, providing work parties, and hosting trail events.



Friends of Peninsula Crossing Trail



Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committees



Friends of Powell Butte Nature Park

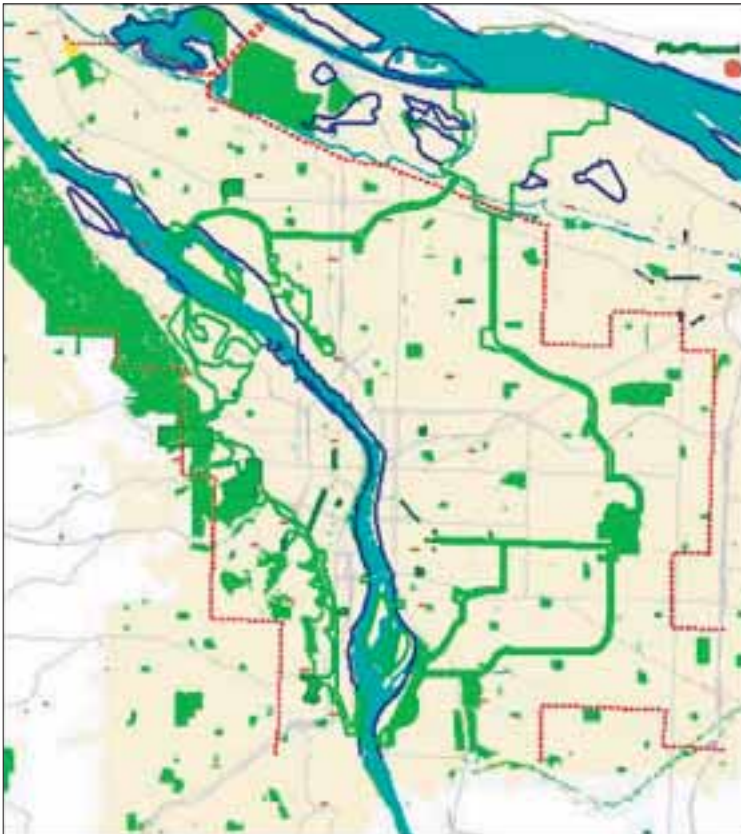


Historic Background

The Olmsted Plan

The historic basis for this trails strategy is the report commissioned by the City of Portland in 1903 from Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects in which John C. Olmsted outlined a “system of parkways, boulevards, and parks.” He identified desirable sites for parks, including islands, bluffs, buttes, and wetlands, and specified parkway and boulevard connections.

Although many of the sites were eventually secured, Terwilliger Boulevard (which he helped design) is the only substantial parkway that was created. Some fragments of boulevard (Ainsworth and Reedway Blocks, Firland and Roseway Parkways) were constructed as parts of subdivisions, but most of the Olmsted vision of interconnected parks was not implemented.



The Olmsted Plan, 1903



John Charles Olmsted



The 40-Mile Loop

In the 1980s, the Olmsted plan inspired staff and citizens to envision a trail loop connecting parks and natural areas. Featuring routes along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, Columbia Slough, and Johnson Creek, it was christened the “40-Mile Loop” for the estimated length of Olmsted’s original concept. The 1983 *40-Mile Loop Master Plan*, prepared for 40-Mile Loop Land Trust by David Evans and Associates, Inc., offers this description:

“The 40-Mile Loop connects neighborhoods to parks and activity centers through scenic and natural corridors that exist along most of the route. The loop serves as a hub from which local, regional, and state trails radiate to county, state, and federal recreation areas. It is an excellent solution for physically and psychologically connecting the grand parks and natural features with which area residents are blessed.”

However, the name is now a source of some confusion since there will actually be about 102 miles of trail once the Loop is complete.

Substantial progress has been made in completing the Loop: 70% of the trails are complete. The Loop will eventually extend out to the Sandy River, however, those jurisdictions may need regional assistance in completing the loop.

- The outer pedestrian loop is 80% complete, 62.6 miles of 77.9 planned. Within Portland 90% is done, outside Portland 24% is done.
- The outer bicycle loop is 67% complete, 40.6 miles of 59.7 planned. Within Portland 81% is done, outside Portland 7% is done.
- Portland’s “outer” loop still needs Springwater Three Bridges, Springwater Sellwood Gap, Columbia Slough Trail at Smith & Bybee Lakes, and Marine Drive Trail at Bridgeton levee, from Bridgeton levee to NE 28th, and segments off-street from NE 28th to 158th.
- Portland’s “inner” loop still needs Willamette Greenway in South Waterfront, Willamette Greenway between Burnside and St Johns Bridges, and Columbia Slough Trail from Denver to Marine Drive.

There is a need to improve name recognition and increase use of the 40-Mile Loop. The production of a new map by the 40-Mile Loop Land Trust has made it easier for users to follow the Loop, but closing the gaps in the loop and updating the signage on the trail would further enhance use and recognition.

1983 40-MILE LOOP MAP



40-MILE LOOP PROGRESS



The red line represents Marquam and Wildwood Trails in the West Hills that are open to pedestrians only. The blue line is the bicycle alternative. The purple line is a shared bike and pedestrian route.

REGIONAL TRAILS & GREENWAYS (2003)



Existing Trails = solid lines
Proposed Trails = dashed lines

Land Trails = red lines
Water Trails = blue lines
Regional Trails = green lines

Trail Hierarchy

The difference between types of trails is based on length and purpose rather than on trail width, material, and user. The term “regional” indicates that the trail qualified for inclusion on the Metropolitan Regional Trails Map. Although Metro is responsible for providing and maintaining the regional trails in the natural areas they manage, such as Smith & Bybee Wetlands, all neighboring counties and nearly every city have some regional trails to maintain and/or build.

PP&R is gathering information on all three types of trails:

- **Regional trails** connect to adjacent communities and significant natural features such as rivers and streams. A regional trail can have a 2’-wide soil surface like the 30-mile-long Wildwood Trail or 14’-wide concrete like the one-mile-long Eastbank Esplanade.
- **Community connectors** link important land uses and areas of interest, often within a neighborhood, typically using street rights-of-way. PP&R maintains relatively few of these: the sidewalks in the Park Blocks and the boardwalk in the Pearl District.
- **Local access trails** connect local features such as parks, community centers, and schools. PP&R has a substantial amount of local access trails: approximately 80 miles of paths in developed parks and nearly 60 miles of trail in natural areas.

This strategy focuses on the regional trail system and related community connectors. Additional work will be undertaken later that addresses total access trails as well as trails for user groups such as paddlers, equestrians, mountain bikers, and disabled trail users.

Regional Trails & Greenways (2003)

Portland has 21 individually named land trails and two water trails [see map on opposite page]:

Land Trails

Columbia Slough Cross-Levee
East Buttes Loop
East Buttes Power Line Corridor
Hillsdale to Lake Oswego

Current System

I-205 Corridor
I-5 Bridge Trail Crossing
I-84 Corridor
Lewis & Clark Discovery Greenway
Mt. Scott
North Willamette River Greenway
Peninsula Canal
Peninsula Crossing Bikeway
Scouter Mountain
Springwater Corridor
Sullivan's Gulch
Terwilliger Trail & Parkway
Wildwood
Willamette Blvd Bikeway
Willamette Shoreline Trolley Rail-with-Trail

Regional Trails mostly outside of, but connecting to, Portland

Bronson Creek Greenway
Beaverton Powerline

Water Trails

Columbia Slough
Lower Columbia River

The shared use of a multi-jurisdictional trail such as the Fanno Creek Greenway in Beaverton could extend trail opportunities for residents of both cities. Other proposals include extending the Willamette Greenway north of the Eastbank Esplanade and creating a trail route parallel to I-84 in Sullivan's Gulch.

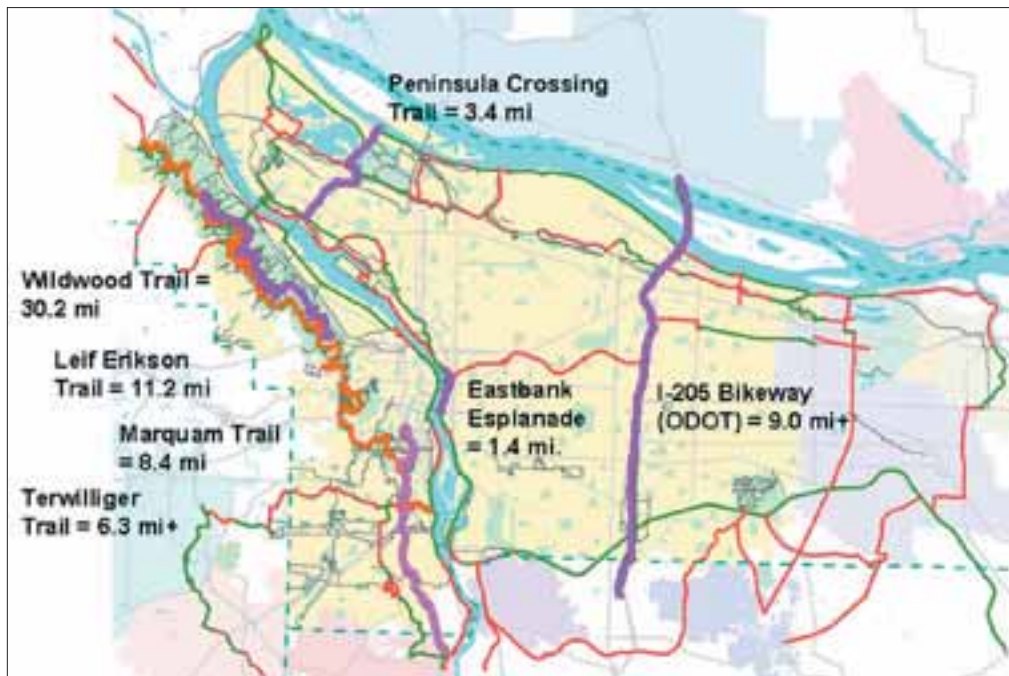
Regional Trails

Regional trails connect Portland to adjacent communities or to regionally significant rivers, streams, and natural areas. 146 miles (66%) of the proposed 220 miles of trails in or owned by Portland are complete. Closing the trail gaps on nearly complete trails would result in greater connectivity and opportunities for extensive trail trips. Longer trails connect more neighborhoods to transit, shopping, schools, and employment areas which benefits those communities as well as trail users. Most of the remaining trails are either much less complete or not yet started. Building key regional connectors to access the more complete trails may improve trail usage more immediately than building new or less complete long

trails. Also, most of the connector projects involve relatively short stretches and are less expensive.

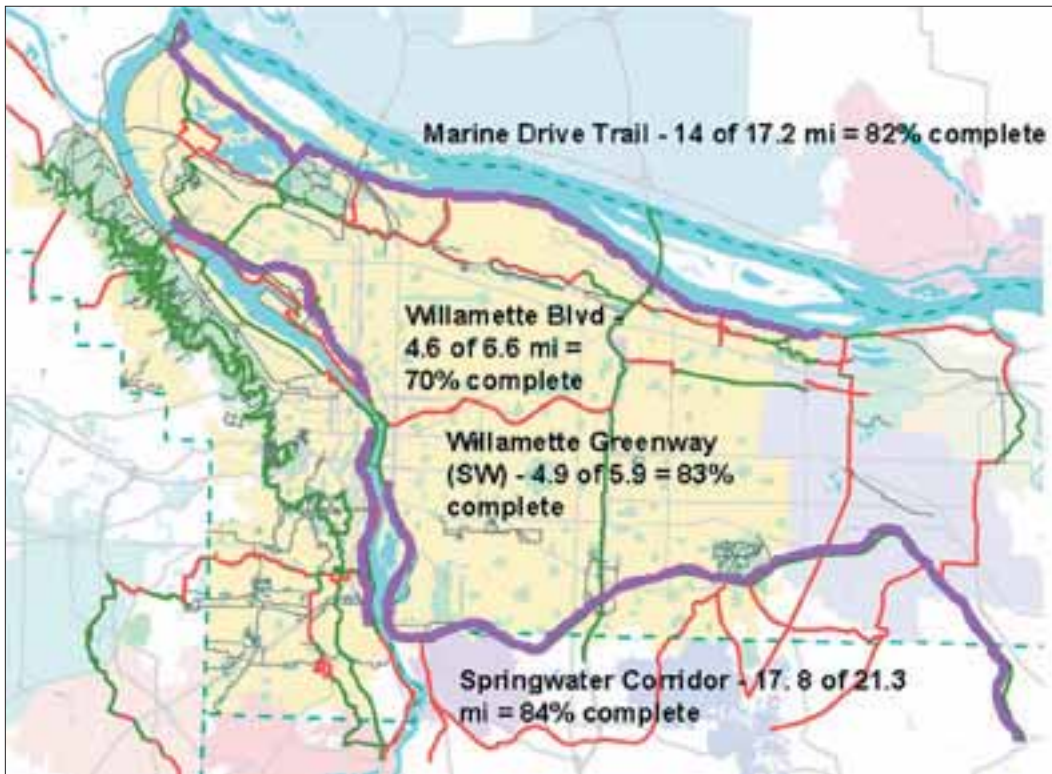


This map shows the existing (green) and proposed (red) regional trails, including trail connectors.



These trails are complete, but need upgrades.

Current System



These trails are nearly complete.



This map shows community connectors that provide access to regional trails.

Top Trail Issues

The system has been built incrementally as development occurred or funding could be secured. There are gaps, missing connections, and fewer trails and trailhead features than needed. A trails strategy will implement the trails network more effectively.

- Gaps in regional trails
- Missing connections to get to existing trails
- Shortage of trails, trail amenities, and trailheads
- Lack of funding for trail acquisition and development
- Lack of funding for maintenance and major upgrades
- Poor public information – minimal signage, maps, and outreach



Willamette Greenway gap



Columbia Slough Trail dead-end



Needs Waud Bluff connector



Poor signage for Marquam Trail

Implementation Strategy



Setting Priorities

Trail projects need to be prioritized in order to complete the regional trail network more strategically. In determining the ranking criteria, the decision was made to weigh recreational use rather than transportation function. The two uses are clearly related: a bike ride for exercise for one person is the route to work for another. Although PP&R's focus is to highlight a trail's recreational use, the bureau will collaborate with transportation staff at PDOT and Metro, as well as with bicycle commuters from the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA) and PDOT Bicycle Advisory Committee, to assess which trails are more useful for commuting.

Also, because regional trails are considered a citywide resource, serving the entire community from locations determined by natural topographic and historic features, projects were not prioritized geographically.

Trail projects were rated according to the following criteria:

- Connects long length of trail.
- Completes loop(s).
- Has outstanding scenic quality.
- Connects to park/natural area destinations.
- Serves higher number of potential users.

Once trail projects were rated, they were divided into five-year packages, each with smaller, related regional connectors. Each package represents the set of projects that would be most desirable to pursue for recreational use during that time-frame.

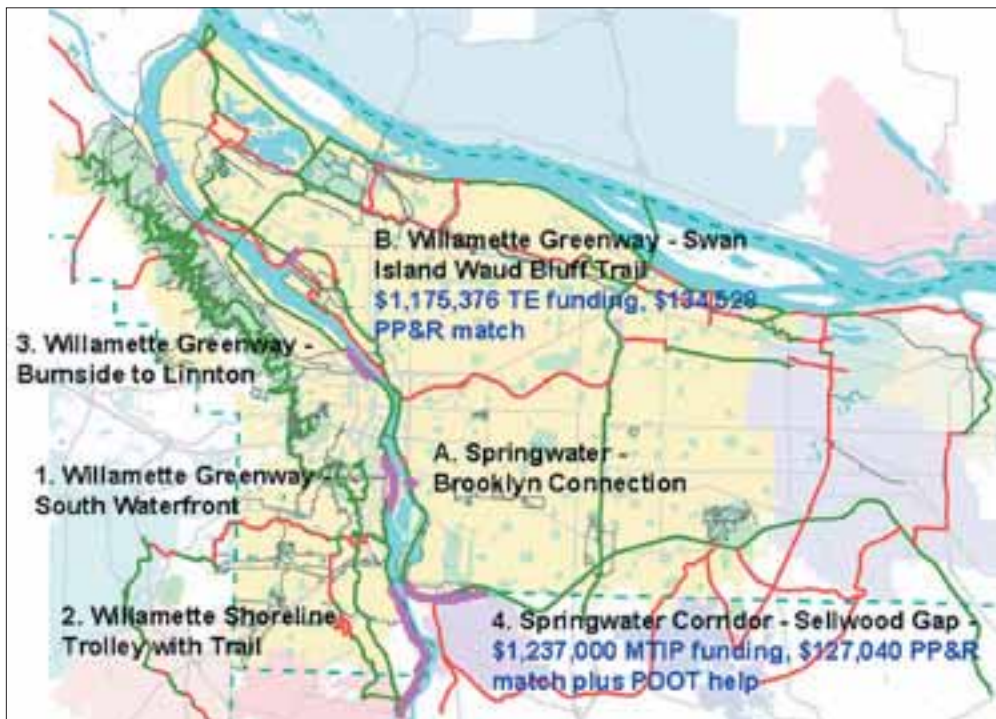
These packages and time-frames are flexible: some top priority projects are not ready to be implemented, due to transportation, easement, development, and/or funding issues, while some lower priority projects have greater public support and better options for funding which may allow them to be built first. However, securing land and/or trail easements for trails in all groups is the top priority, to be started immediately.

Implementation Strategy

REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 1 (BY 2010)

The first package includes trail projects along the Willamette River because these high-use trails have top scenic value. The Springwater projects provide access to a very long, popular trail. In 2006, two of these projects received regional Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) and state Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding: the Springwater Sellwood Gap and the Swan Island Waud Bluff Trail. Project start times were not established at the time of this report.

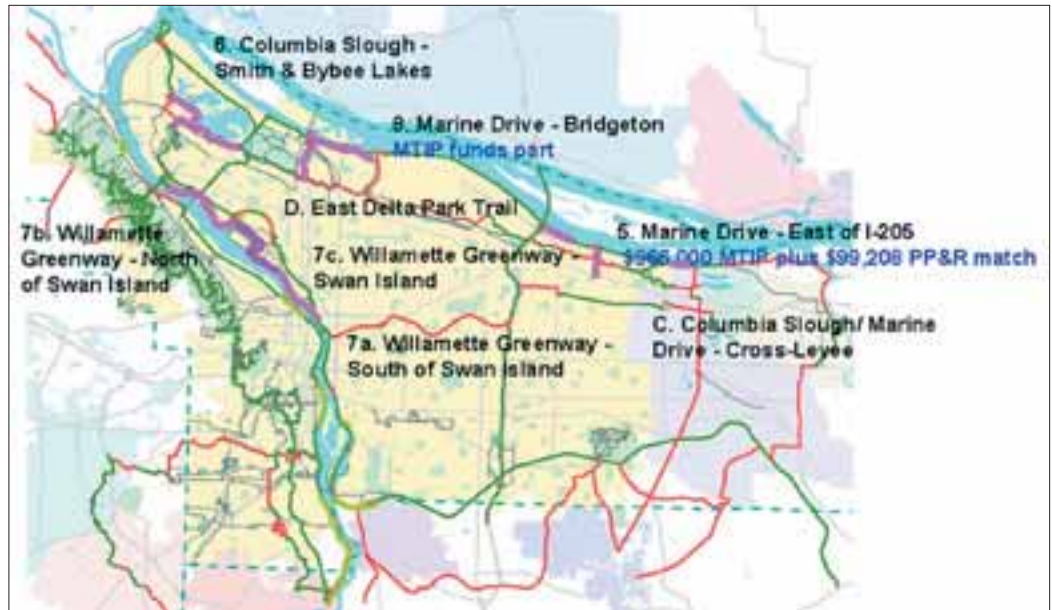
REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 1



REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 2 (BY 2015)

The second package includes projects that provide access to the Marine Drive Trail, a very long, scenic trail along the Columbia River. The proposed projects in Smith & Bybee Wetlands offer good access, scenic value, and trail loops. The Willamette Greenway projects in north Portland extend the length of the high-use, scenic Eastbank Esplanade and Springwater on the Willamette. Another project that recently received regional MTIP funding is the trail segment east of I-205 along Marine Drive. However, additional funding is needed to complete all proposed segments of the project.

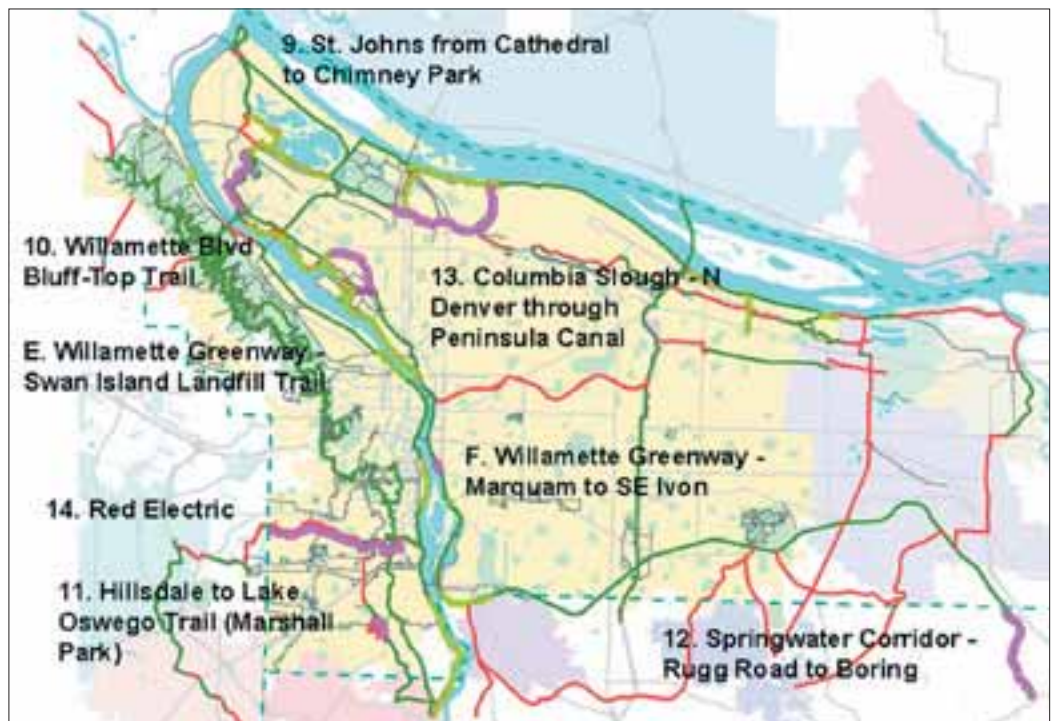
REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 2



REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 3 (BY 2020)

The third package focuses on completing gaps in existing trails. Linking disconnected segments, thereby extending the length of existing trails, improves the potential for trail loops. The Red Electric Trail project connects several north-south trails in Portland to the existing Fanno Creek Greenway in Beaverton and Tigard.

REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 3



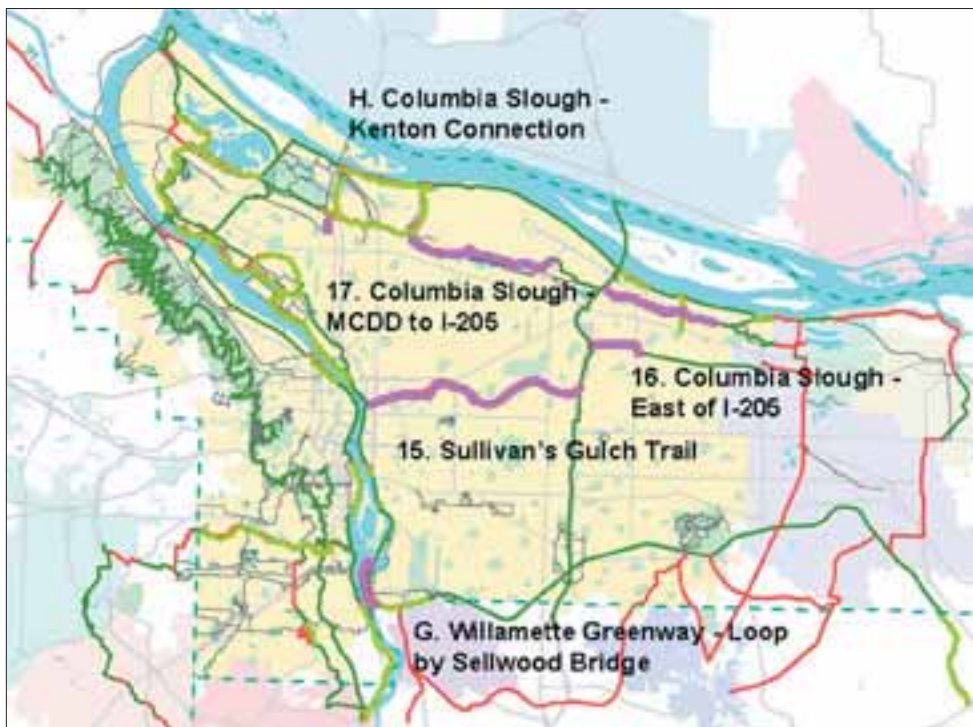
Implementation Strategy

There is interest in neighboring communities to extend the Springwater Corridor Trail beyond Portland city limits. Residents of Boring have recently approached the Clackamas County Parks Department regarding development of a trailhead site in their community. Residents further east are exploring potential routes between the Boring trailhead and Government Camp. Extending the Springwater Trail could make Portland the entry point for future eco-tourist hiking/biking routes. The Port of Portland's "Wings to Wheels" project at PDX as well as proposed MAX extensions will help attract these trail users.

REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 4 (BY 2025)

The fourth package includes projects that complete some lower-use trails that are pedestrian-only. It also includes the Sullivan's Gulch Trail project which has limited scenic and recreational value. Although it will bring off-street travel to many neighborhoods without off-street trails and is desired by potential bike commuters and neighbors, it will be both expensive and technically challenging. This part of Portland has good bike lanes and sidewalks, and given the lack of basic pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in other parts of the city, it is recommended that initial engineering studies be completed in order to clarify the potential design and cost of this trail.

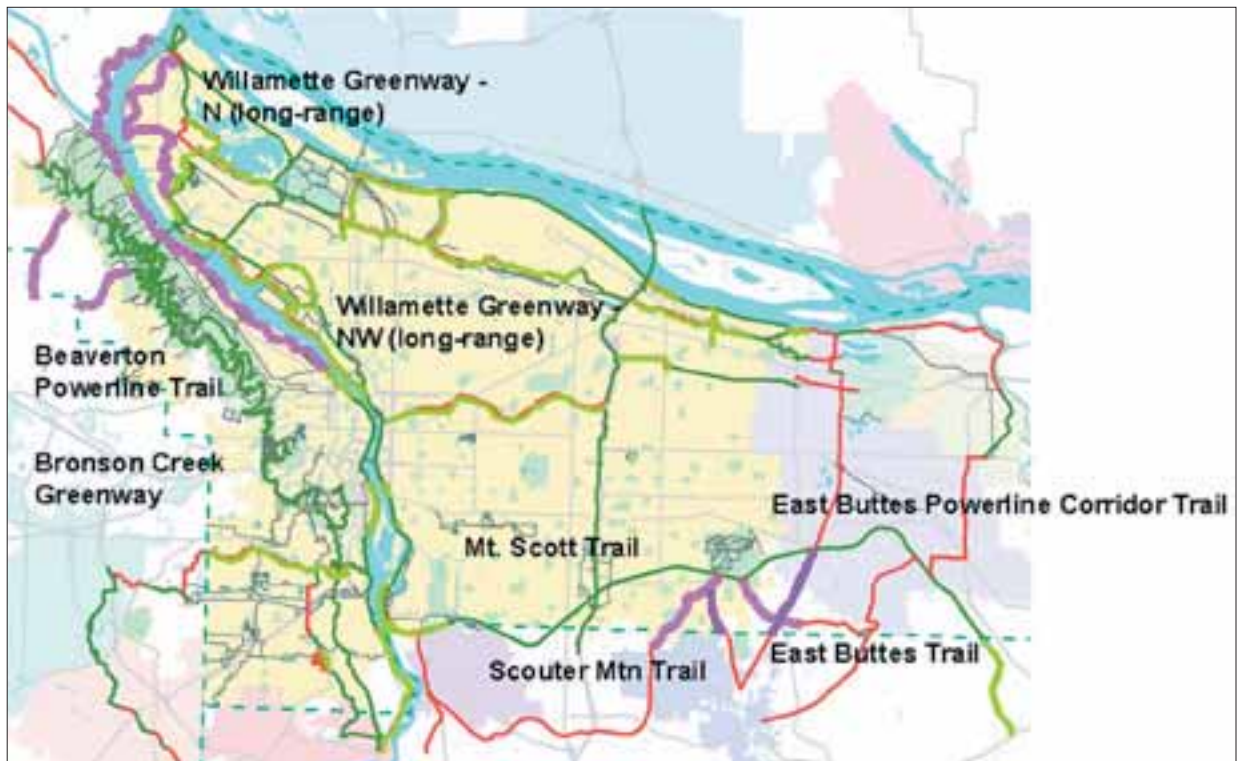
REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 4



REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 5 (2025 - ?)

The fifth package includes any delayed projects from previous packages. Additional projects are at the city's periphery and would be coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions. In the long term, if land uses have changed, developing trails closer to the Willamette River offers more scenic value. New trail ideas may also arise.

REGIONAL TRAIL PRIORITIES - 5



These are ambitious goals; the next twenty years should be devoted to finishing any projects that were delayed, implementing some connections to adjacent communities, and considering new options. Some of these projects may happen much earlier, depending on project partners and community interest.

Realizing the Vision

In order to implement this twenty-year vision, PP&R will continue to pursue funding from traditional sources. Although the grand total seems out of reach, having a strategy will help. A resident recently asked how much had been invested in the Springwater Corridor Trail. The total for both Portland and Gresham grants and matching funds amounted to \$10 million raised over 15 years. It has taken many partners, many years, and great dedication. We need to continue to be creative in developing partnerships and finding sponsors and donors. Convening a Trails Marketing and Funding Project Team could help us realize the vision.

TRADITIONAL FUNDING

- Transportation Enhancements – federal
- Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program – federal
- Recreational Trails Program – state
- Land & Water Conservation – state
- Urban Renewal Districts – local
- System Development Charge – local
- General Fund – local

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

- Sponsorships
- Partnerships
- Donors
- Special events
- Bond measures

Regional Trail Costs

The estimated costs for completing this Regional Trails Strategy are significant. But historically, PP&R has been quite successful in securing grants for major trail projects. While we hope that federal and state grants will continue to be available for trail acquisition and development, finding funding for some segments will be particularly challenging.

Strategically, it is important to focus on the acquisition component. The cost estimated for acquisition is the least precise. It is based on approximate land acquisition costs and assumes that the City would purchase the property. Procuring easements may be an alternative in some cases and could be less expensive. Some landowners may be willing to donate easements in order to avoid future costs of required trail construction when redeveloping property. Regional trails piece together multiple properties, needing dozens of easements over several miles. Securing land and/or trail easements for trails in all groups is the top priority, to be started immediately.

Since some projects will be developed by project partners, the O&M costs are limited to the trails that PP&R expects to maintain. The figures shown for operations and maintenance are very low compared with other recreation facilities. All cost estimates are preliminary and will be refined as project readiness increases. The completion of the Eastbank Esplanade at the Crescent and redevelopment of Waterfront Park will also improve regional trails.

ESTIMATED COSTS TO COMPLETE REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM

Year	Acquisition	Construction	O&M
2010	\$2,230,000	\$15,300,000	\$ 635,000
	(\$ 52,000)	(\$ 3,072,904)	
2015	\$2,540,000	\$18,000,000	\$ 135,000
		(\$ 1,065,208)	
2020	\$ 350,000	\$19,500,000	\$ 118,000
2025	\$ 746,000	\$19,500,000	\$ 280,000
Total	\$4,756,000	\$72,300,000	\$1,168,000

The figures in parentheses represent grants received in 2005 for the Springwater Sellwood Gap, Waud Bluff Trail, and Marine Drive Trail.

Funding Applications Underway

Although the Recreational Trails Strategy is in draft form, Portland Parks & Recreation is already consulting the list to nominate projects for potential funding – based on priorities, readiness, and opportunity. Listed below are project applications currently underway (the numbers identify projects, not their priority). Metro manages the selection process for Metropolitan Transportation Improvements Program (MTIP) grants and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) selects projects for Transportation Enhancement (TE) grants.

1. ODOT I-5 widening/community enhancement - Columbia Slough Trail: N. Denver to MLK (w/40-Mile Loop Land Trust) = \$0.5 million
2. TE - Columbia Slough Trail: NE MLK to Marine Drive = \$1.4 million
3. TE - Springwater Sellwood Gap shortfall = \$0.6 million
4. MTIP - Willamette Greenway: SW Gibbs to Lowell (w/PDC) = \$2 million
5. MTIP - Marine Drive Trail and bike lane gaps shortfall (w/PDOT) = \$1.4 million
6. MTIP (backup) - Marine Drive at Bridgeton Levee (w/PDC) = \$2.9 million
7. MTIP Planning Study - Sullivan's Gulch Trail = \$250,000



Selected References

Selected References

- 2020 Refinement Plan on Portland's Trails and Natural Areas*, Portland Parks and Recreation, October 2003
- Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan*, Bureau of Parks & Recreation, April 1993
- Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2003-2007*, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan*, OPRD, November 2004 draft
- Parks 2020 Vision*, Portland Parks and Recreation, July 2001
- Parks 2020 Vision Appendix*, Portland Parks and Recreation, July 2001
- Southwest Urban Trails Plan*, Portland Office of Transportation, July 2000
- System of Parkways, Boulevards and Parks for the City of Portland*, Olmsted Bros., Landscape Architects, 1903
- Transportation System Plan*, Portland Office of Transportation, October 2002

