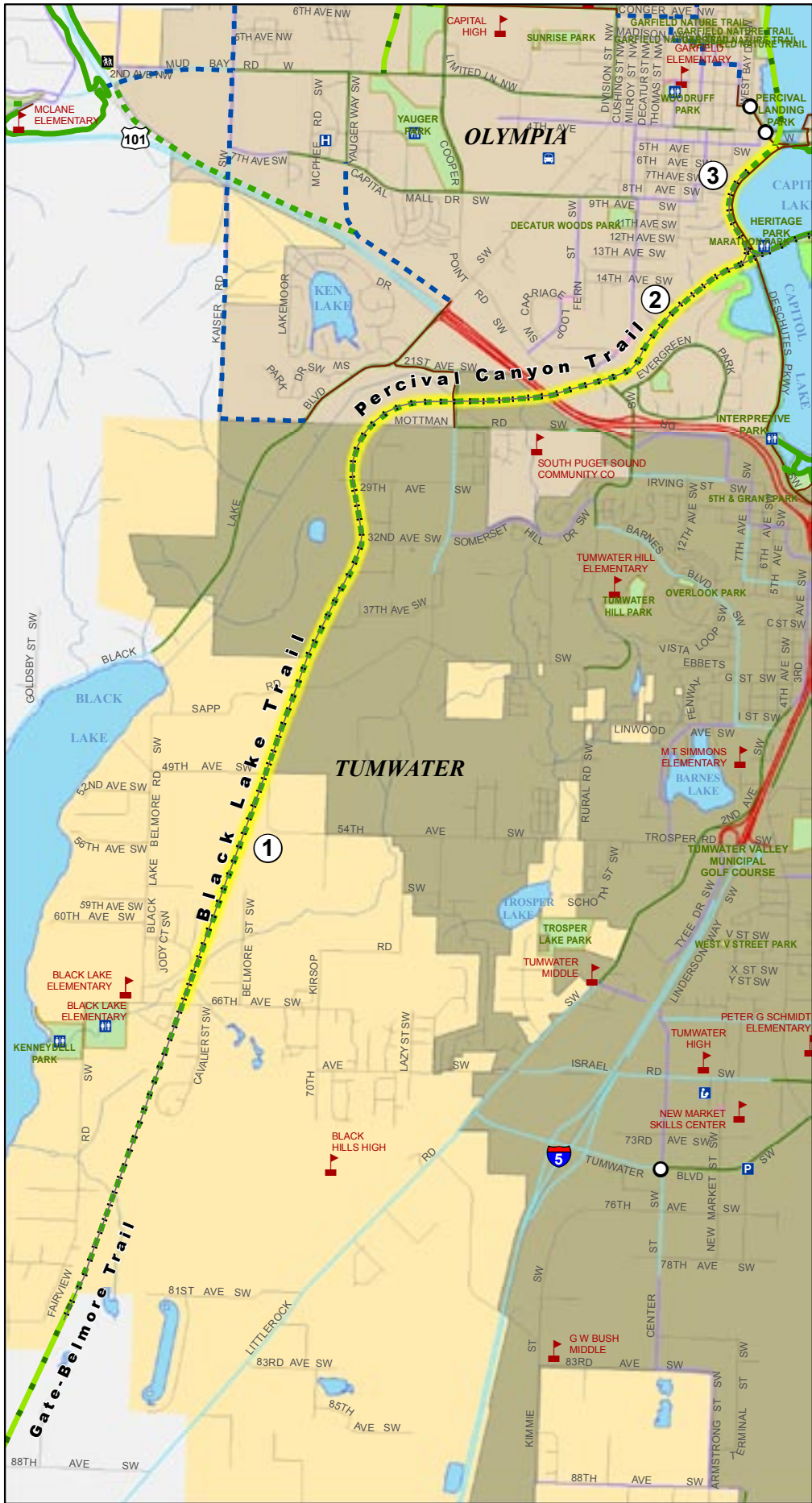


Black Lake Trail and Percival Canyon Trail

14



- Trail, Shared Use, Existing —
- Trail, Shared Use, Planned —
- Trail, Shared Use, Proposed - - -
- Route, On Street, Proposed - - -
- Featured Trail on Map —
- Existing Bike Routes**
- Bike Lane —
- Wide Shoulder —
- Commonly Used Local Roads —
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Connection —
- Bicycles Forbidden —
- Active Railroad —
- Local Streets —
- Roundabouts ○
- Schools ▲
- Bus Transit Centers ■
- Hospitals ⊠
- Libraries ⊞
- Park & Ride Lots ⊞
- Public Restrooms ⊞
- Trail Access Points ■
- Urban Growth Areas ■
- Parks, Preserves, and Open Space ■
- Unincorporated Thurston County ■

Disclaimer
 This map is for general planning purposes only. Thurston Regional Planning Council makes no representations as to the accuracy or fitness of the information for a particular purpose.



Black Lake and Percival Canyon Trails

Black Lake Trail Length: 2.7 miles

Percival Canyon Trail: 2.5 miles

Type of Facility: Shared-Use Trails, Proposed

Partners: Thurston County, City of Olympia, City of Tumwater, South Puget Sound Community College Tacoma Rail, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF), and Mottman Industrial Area industries

Description: This proposed trail corridor consists of two different trails, the Black Lake Trail and the Percival Canyon Trail. Regionally these trails are part of the greater north-south corridor that includes the undeveloped Gate-Belmore Trail owned by Thurston County. These proposed trails would provide a critical link between the Gate-Belmore Trail and Regional Trail Network. This corridor would close a gap to provide seamless non-motorized travel opportunities to destinations in western Thurston County. Development of this trail corridor is contingent on long-term demand for rail service to the Mottman industrial area.

The *2025 Regional Transportation Plan* (Thurston Regional Planning Council, 2003) stated goal for freight by rail is to “Ensure the long-term viability and continued use of existing rail lines in the region for freight and passenger rail travel.” The region’s ability to ship freight by rail remains a priority. This rail corridor is significant for its connectivity between the Mottman Industrial Area, the Port of Olympia, and the BNSF Mainline (see Map 10).

This corridor remains an active and viable rail line and BNSF currently has no intention to abandon its ROW. Tacoma Rail Capitol Division currently provides rail service to six customers in the Mottman industrial area. Tacoma Rail calls this rail corridor the “East Olympia-Belmore Line.” The East Olympia Belmore line consists of two branches:

- **East Olympia Branch** (Olympia Industrial Lead) is owned by Union Pacific and runs from the mainline junction at East Olympia near Rich Road and 83rd Avenue SW, and continues through Tumwater into downtown Olympia, just north of Olympia Avenue.
- **Olympia-Mottman Branch** is the corridor proposed for the Black Lake and Percival Canyon Trail. It is owned by BNSF and runs from downtown Olympia near the intersection of 11th Avenue and Plum Street. It continues in a tunnel under downtown Olympia, emerging near the eastern shore of Capital Lake and Heritage Park. It crosses the lake, and then continues in a west-southwesterly direction up Percival Canyon into the Mottman industrial area, and south to approximately 81st Ave SW near the south end of Black Lake.

Tacoma Rail Capitol Division reports that they ship lumber, bricks, food- and industrial- grade plastics, corn syrup, steel, and aluminum to six customers in the Mottman Industrial Area. Tacoma Rail provides scheduled service on this line on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but frequency is variable and based on shipping demands.

Cost Estimate: Not determined as this is still an active rail corridor

Connections and Destinations: South Puget Sound Community College, Tumwater neighborhoods, Mottman Industrial Area, downtown Olympia, Capitol Lake, Marathon Park, Heritage Park, Deschutes Valley Trail, West Bay Trail, Woodland Trail, Gate-Belmore Trail, Kenneydell County Park, Tumwater schools

Policy Considerations:

The *Shoreline Master Program for the Thurston Region, Section 8, Percival Creek Corridor* includes policies that currently preclude shared-use trail development and activities in Percival Canyon. Although there is no language that explicitly prohibits bicycle use, it states only a pedestrian path used for “low intensity and passive recreational facilities (viewpoints, unpaved trails, limited picnic facilities) including public- or privately-owned passive parks, wildlife refuges, or open spaces.” At such time as the City of Olympia updates its Shoreline Master Program, it will be possible to reevaluate the recreational, wellness promotion, and non-motorized transportation benefits this proposed multi-use trail would provide Olympia residents and other trail users. The prohibition of bicycle activity on this trail could limit the transportation benefits and funding opportunities that a shared-use trail would likely offer.

Conditions and Recommendations:

(Recommendations are in bold)

- ① R.W. Johnson Boulevard/21st Avenue to 66th Avenue SW - The proposed Black Lake Trail was included in the *1993 Urban Trails Plan* and the *City of Tumwater Parks and Recreation Plan*. This proposed trail stretches from Tumwater city limits to 66th Avenue SW. The preferred alignment for this trail in both plans is in the railroad ROW, should the rail corridor ever be abandoned. Development of this trail segment would be a joint effort between Tumwater and Thurston County. **The County should consider adopting the County portion of this proposed trail in its County Trails Plan.** There may be sufficient ROW to develop a shared-use trail along sections of this corridor. More research is required to review possible joint rail trail use. **The region should review the long term use of this corridor by current and potential rail customers. This will help local agencies determine the likelihood and effectiveness of this corridor for shared-use trails.**
- ② Deschutes Parkway to R.W. Johnson Boulevard/21st Avenue - The proposed Percival Canyon Trail would pass through a forested riparian greenway with steep canyon walls filled with the sound of rushing water. It is a hidden natural oasis in an otherwise suburban

environment. The Percival Canyon trail is identified as a proposed trail as part of Olympia's Open Space Network in *Olympia's Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan* (2002). This trail is ranked as the city's third highest priority trail behind the Olympia Woodland Trail and the West Bay Trail. A portion of this trail segment is within Tumwater city limits requiring joint development between the cities of Olympia and Tumwater. The railroad ROW is the preferred alignment for this proposed trail as it offers a relatively flat grade with an existing crossing over Percival Creek. This corridor is valued for its wildlife habitat and ecological properties and is considered an environmentally sensitive area. Because of the challenging hydrologic and topographical conditions, the preferred alignment for this trail corridor is along the existing railroad bed. The current configuration of the railroad tracks does not offer sufficient space to develop a continuous joint use rail with trail within the confines of this canyon. Surveying would be required to determine if a reconfiguration of the railroad track alignment would create sufficient space for a shared-use trail. The 1993 Urban Trails Plan proposed developing a narrow recreation or nature trail within city ROW as an alternative to a shared-use trail. This type of path would provide passive recreation opportunities like nature viewing, but this alternative limits this corridor's efficacy as a recreation and transportation corridor. This corridor provides vegetated cover for non-permitted camping, garbage dumping, and other illegal activities that pose potential safety and security issues. These activities may decrease if a shared-use trail is developed. Increased trail use could dissuade unlawful uses of this corridor.



A view of Percival Canyon, a potential trail corridor, as seen from Cooper Point/Auto Mall Road. Photo by Paul Brewster.

- ③ The section of proposed trail in the railroad ROW along Deschutes Parkway was referred to as the Percival Canyon-West Bay Link in the 1993 Urban Trails plan. **Should BNSF ever abandon the Olympia-Mottman Branch rail line, Olympia should consider including this segment in its development plans for the Percival Canyon Trail.** This segment would provide trail users uninterrupted mobility along the west side of the Deschutes Parkway from Percival Canyon to Budd Inlet. This segment would provide a grade separated shared-use facility not offered by the on-street facilities on Deschutes Parkway.