



Williams Utility Easement Corridor

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Williams Utility Easement Corridor

Length: 7.9 miles potential

Type of Facility: Shared-use Trail, Potential

Lead Agency: Thurston County

Partners: Thurston County, City of Tumwater, Williams Northwest Pipeline Company, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Public and Private Property Owners

Description: The Williams Utility Easement Corridor is a potential east-west trail that would lie between and connect the existing Chehalis Western Trail and the future Gate Belmore Trail. It would run roughly parallel with sections 93rd Avenue along the southern city limits of Tumwater. This potential trail corridor could provide connectivity between the Gate Belmore Trail and the regional trail network. If the potential Black Lake and Percival Canyon Trails were to ever be developed, the Williams Utility Easement Corridor could be part of a 26 mile urban core loop when combined with the Woodland, Chehalis Western, Gate Belmore, Black Lake, Percival Canyon, and Capitol Lake vicinity trails.

Connections and Destinations: Chehalis Western Trail, Gate Belmore Trail, City of Tumwater, and residential neighborhoods

Cost Estimates: No cost estimates have been developed for this conceptual corridor

Policy Considerations:

The Williams Utility Easement Corridor is conceptualized to share space with an existing 50 to 75 foot wide natural gas pipeline corridor owned by Williams Northwest. This natural gas corridor is known as the Shelton Lateral Corridor and contains two pipelines (one nine inch and one twenty inch diameter pipes) that are installed at a minimum of four feet below the ground's surface. The easement does not permit the use or grant the ROW for a public shared-use trail. Development of this trail is contingent on a lead agency and the stakeholders negotiating a public easement or buying ROW from the potentially affected property owners. This trail corridor could potentially affect nearly 90 privately owned parcels. Fifty percent of this easement is located along the parcel boundaries of the underlying properties, and a significant number of the properties currently appear undeveloped.

Because the conditions of the easement do not allow the corridor to be developed with buildings and other impervious structures, the easement could be a candidate for future trail development. A preliminary discussion with Williams Northwest staff indicates the company is open to discussing and evaluating the feasibility of a public shared-use trail. A paved trail could be developed within the pipeline corridor, as long as the trail did not lie directly over the pipelines (except where a crossing is necessary), without adversely impacting the operation of the pipelines.

The potential development of this trail will need to consider the privacy of the underlying property owners and the long-term usability of the land where a trail could divide a property in half. Concerns for public safety will also need to be weighed with public benefit. There may be public opposition to developing a shared-use trail within a natural gas pipeline utility easement because of fears of pipeline ruptures and explosions. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, less than one one-hundredth of one

percent (.01percent) of all transportation accidents in the United States are related to pipelines. Any feasibility study that explores future development of this easement for a trail will need to survey the concerns of potentially affected property owners and consider options to mitigate any potential hazards.

Conditions and Recommendations:

(Recommendations are in bold)

- ① The Williams Utility Easement Corridor trail is envisioned to intersect with the future Gate Belmore Trail. A trail access point at 88th/Gate Belmore Trail and a Trail access point at Littlerock Road should include a kiosk and wayfinding signs to alert and orient users to the trail. A marked trail crossing with traffic signs at Littlerock Road will be required.
- ② The trail would need to cross I-5. Options could include a non-motorized bridge, or a detour path that follows WSDOT ROW through the interchange intersection at Exit 99 at 93rd Avenue. Additional marked trail crossings with traffic signs at Case, Tilley, 93rd, Hart, Brooks, Springer Hills, Sheldon, and Old 99 will be required.
- ③ The trail could temporarily veer from the pipeline easement at Old 99 and follow public ROW on Rich Road in order to cross the Burlington Northern SantaFe Railway Company's "Mainline" railroad and cross the Deschutes River. The trail should reconnect with the pipeline easement alignment near 97th Lane, just east of the Deschutes River crossing.
- ④ The trail is envisioned to proceed due east and intersect with the Chehalis Western Trail just 0.6 miles north of 103rd Avenue and 0.9 miles south of the trailhead on 89th Avenue.