MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston Regional Planning Council

FROM: Paul Brewster, Senior Planner

DATE: November 26, 2019

SUBJECT: Yelm-Tenino Trail Extension Feasibility Study - Findings

PURPOSE

To brief the Council on the findings of Yelm-Tenino Trail Extension Feasibility Study.

Summary:

- Bucoda, Tenino, Thurston County, Thurston Regional Planning Council, and other stakeholders completed a federally funded Yelm-Tenino Trail Extension Feasibility Study in Summer 2019. The study is summarized in a report.
- The study evaluated several alternative alignments to extend the existing shared-use path from Tenino City Park south to Bucoda along the BNSF Railway mainline and west to Tenino’s western city limits along Old Highway 99.
- The feasibility study evaluated eight alignments and prepared planning level cost estimates.
- Staff will present the study’s process and findings and highlight next steps to the Council.
- A copy of the study’s Executive Summary is included with this memorandum.

REQUESTED ACTION

No action is requested. This agenda item is for information sharing and discussion.

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Attachment: Yelm – Tenino Trail Extension Feasibility Study Executive Summary
Executive Summary

Background
Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), on behalf of the communities of Bucoda and Tenino, commissioned a feasibility study to extend the Yelm Tenino Trail (YTT). One part of the extension would run south from Tenino City Park to Bucoda, while the other part would run from Tenino City Park to the western city limits of Tenino along Old Highway 99. TRPC hired SCJ Alliance in June 2018 to identify and evaluate alignment options.

Findings
The study evaluated four geographical reaches (GR) with a total of eight trail alignments for the extension of the YTT.

Figure A – Yelm Tenino Trail Alignments Overall Map
Tenino to Bucoda Alignments (North-South)
- GR 1 – From Yelm Tenino Trail terminus to 184th Street - 2.5 miles (13,000 lf)
- GR 2 – From 184th Street to Bucoda
  - Alternative A – Along private property east of the railroad - 1.1 miles (6,000 lf)
  - Alternative B – Along SR 507 – 1.5 miles (8,000 lf)

West Tenino Alignments (East-West)
- GR 3 – From Yelm Tenino Trail terminus to north side of Old Highway 99
  - Alternative A – 5th Avenue to Wichman Street - 0.3 miles (1,800 lf)
  - Alternative B – 6th Avenue to McClellan Street - 0.2 miles (1,000 lf)
  - Alternative C – 6th Avenue to west of the railroad tracks - 0.2 miles (1,000 lf)
  - Alternative D – Sussex Avenue to the west side of railroad tracks - 0.8 miles (4,000 lf)
- GR 4 – From the north side of the intersection of Old Highway 99 and SR 507 to west Tenino city limits -1.6 miles (8,500 lf)

The study concluded GR 2-A (to Bucoda east of the railroad tracks) and GR 3-C (to west Tenino along 6th Avenue) are the preferred alignments as the best value of the alternatives considered.

Recommendations
The preferred alignment to Bucoda starts at Yelm Tenino Trail’s terminus in front of the Tenino Depot Museum. The alignment extends the trail south to Crowder Road where it crosses into Thurston County’s jurisdiction. The trail would be standalone for this portion until it connects with Crowder Road. The trail would run parallel on the west side of the road with a five-foot vegetated barrier. The route crosses 184th Avenue at Crowder Road and continues south to Bucoda. This stretch is all on private property, so right of way is needed. The shared-use path would be standalone and would run through undeveloped terrain at grade. This path would be at grade the entire way except for two bridge-like structures: one crossing a culvert and the other crossing a stream. The path would terminate near Bucoda’s maintenance building. The concept-level project cost estimate for the trail from Tenino Depot Museum to the Town of Bucoda is approximately $4.2 million in 2019 dollars. This includes engineering, environmental, construction, right of way, and construction management.

The preferred alignment to west Tenino starts at Yelm Tenino Trail’s terminus in front of the Tenino Depot Museum. The route follows 6th Avenue west and crosses Old Highway 99 at McClellan Street SE. It then follows Old Highway 99 on the north side of the road to the SR 507 intersection. The land along 6th Avenue is undeveloped; however, industrial park development is anticipated. GR 3-B and GR 3-C are identical except for the Old Highway 99 crossing location. With high speeds and road curvature, further investigation is needed to determine the preferred crossing location. The concept-level project cost estimate for the trail from Tenino City Park to west Tenino city limits is approximately $2.23 million in 2019 dollars. This includes engineering, environmental, construction, right of way, and construction management.
Process
The study began with collecting background data and interviewing stakeholders: Thurston Regional Planning Council, Thurston County Public Works, City of Tenino, Town of Bucoda, and Washington State Department of Transportation.

The background work was followed by two workshops. During Workshop 1, participants identified possible trail alignments, established evaluation criteria, agreed upon the relative importance of criteria (weighting), and set the methodology for scoring the performance of alternatives against the criteria. During Workshop 2, participants reviewed draft results, verified the relative importance of criteria, reviewed the overall performance scores for alternatives, reviewed estimated costs for alternatives, and reviewed the value of each alternative (performance divided by cost). At the conclusion of Workshop 2, participants endorsed Geographical Reach 2-A and Geographical Reach 3-C as the preferred alignments.

Next Steps
The study recommends actions to continue developing the Yelm Tenino Trail from Tenino City Park to Bucoda and from Tenino City Park to the west Tenino city limits along Old Highway 99. Recommended actions include:

- Securing additional funding for preliminary engineering and environmental documentation
- Conducting the following additional studies:
  - Geotechnical field investigations – to better determine soil conditions
  - Biological field studies to determine the presence of Mazama Pocket Gophers
  - Retaining wall design – for the trail where right of way is limited
  - Site distance study – to determine the preferred crossing location at Old Highway 99 for Geographical Reach 3
- Develop a local mitigation bank for the local pocket gopher species
- Conduct outreach with affected property and business owners to discuss potential impacts and right of way needs

These next steps are anticipated to start as soon as funding becomes available to the City of Tenino, Town of Bucoda, or Thurston County.

This study does not prioritize the implementation of the trail segments. Each community will need to position itself for future funding. The source of funds and the selection criteria will also influence when and how projects proceed.