



# TOUCHET VALLEY TRAIL CONCEPT PLAN 2020



Prepared by Washington State University Landscape Architecture students with assistance from the Port of Columbia and National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program





# Thank You!



Anderson Perry & Associates

American Society of Landscape Architects, Washington Chapter

Columbia County

Columbia Rail

The City of Dayton

The City of Waitsburg

Local Citizens

National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Port of Columbia

Waitsburg Commercial Club

Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

Washington State Department of Transportation

Washington State Parks

Washington State University Landscape Architecture Program

University of Washington Department of Landscape Architecture

## Workshop Hosts:



ASLA  
WASHINGTON



# Table of Contents

1	<b>Introduction</b>
3	<b>Waitsburg to Huntsville (Team 1)</b>
8	<b>Dayton (Team 2)</b>
12	<b>Valley View (Team 3)</b>
16	<b>Education and Interpretation (Team 4)</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>
21	Appendix A: Community Survey Results
22	Appendix B: Community Health Profile

# The Touchet Valley Trail

## Introduction

The vision of the **Touchet Valley Trail** is to *link the communities of Dayton and Waitsburg with nearby recreation opportunities featuring local heritage, river access, and scenic landscapes while stimulating the economic and social vitality of the region.*

A trail connecting the communities of Dayton and Waitsburg has long been a dream in the region. In 2015, it was listed as a top economic development priority in the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy meeting. The trail was included in the Blue Mountain Region Trails Plan, ranked by community members across the region as one of the top priority projects in the bi-state area. The project is led by the Port of Columbia, which owns the rail corridor in which the trail will be located. A steering committee comprised of 15 stakeholders guided the development of this concept plan. Additionally, the Port of Columbia received a technical assistance grant from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program to aid in developing the concept plan and grant funding from Washington State Department of Transportation for engineering and design studies.

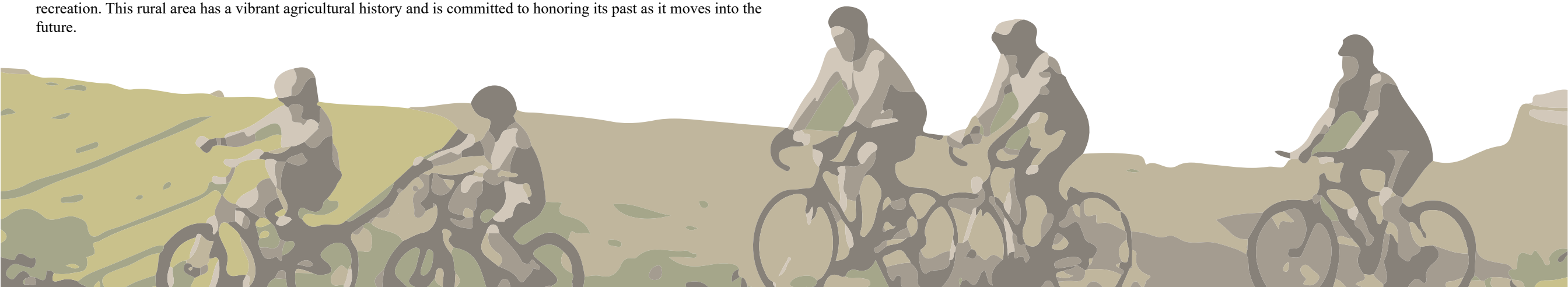
The Touchet Valley, nestled in Columbia County and northern Walla Walla County in southeast Washington, is home to just over 5,000 residents. The proposed rail-with-trail will connect two communities along the historic Lewis and Clark Trail, encouraging rural economic development, improving community health, and promoting outdoor recreation. This rural area has a vibrant agricultural history and is committed to honoring its past as it moves into the future.

### The design process

A key activity in the trail planning process was a design charrette in October 2019. A charrette is an intense, structured, visual brainstorming workshop that involves any number of people and lasts from a few hours to a few days. Through a longstanding partnership between the National Park Service and the American Society of Landscape Architects—Washington Chapter (WASLA), a two-day charrette in Dayton and Waitsburg brought together volunteers from WASLA, Washington State University's Landscape Architecture Program, University of Washington's Department of Landscape Architecture, and community members to develop design ideas for the Touchet Valley Trail. Teams of landscape architects, landscape architecture students, and community experts visited sites, engaged with stakeholders and drew concepts for trail alignment, mitigation measures, trail amenities and educational opportunities along the corridor. The design work was divided among four teams: Waitsburg, Dayton, "Valley View" and Education and Interpretation. This concept plan is structured by the team's resulting designs.

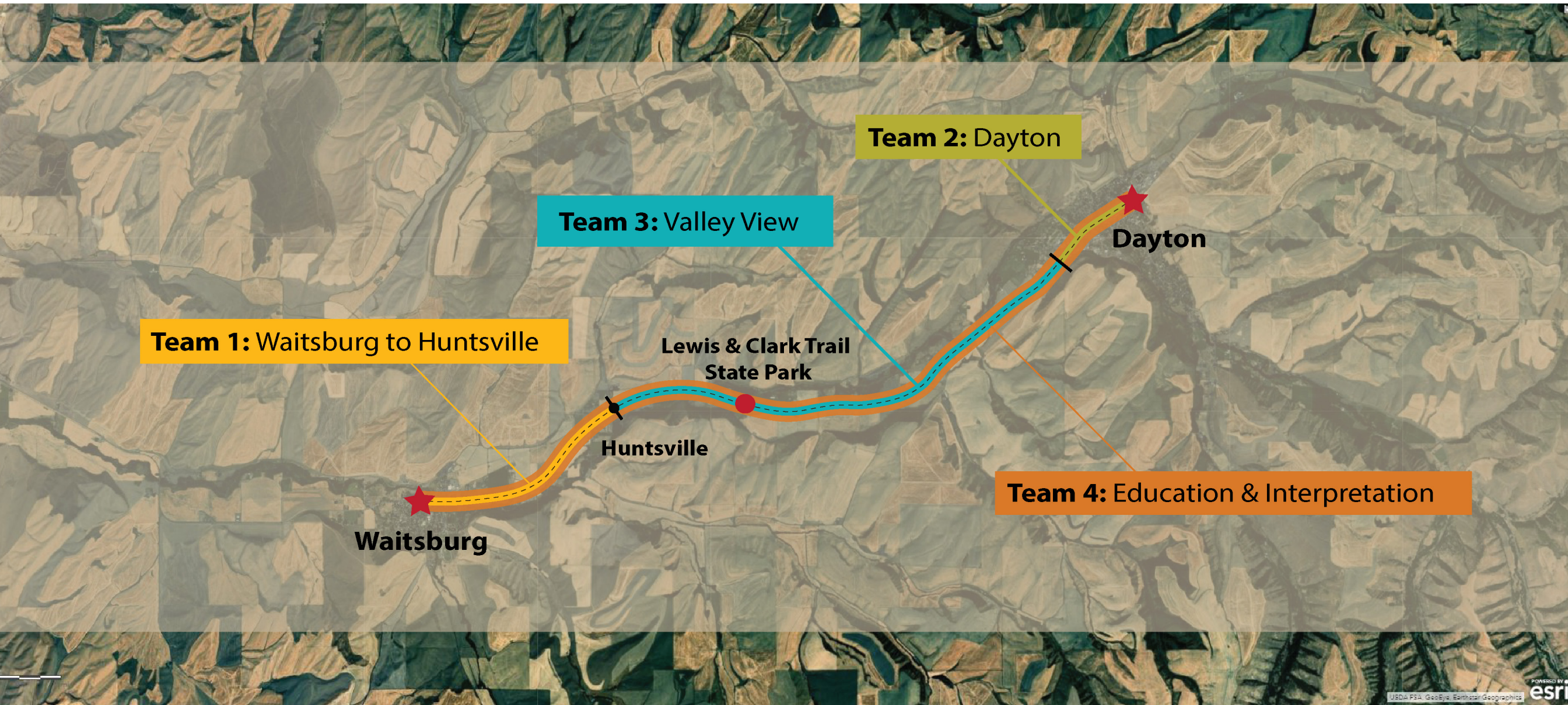
Concept plans are preliminary documents planners use to describe possible design solutions addressing project goals, opportunities and challenges. They are written using the best information available at the time, understanding that some of the concepts could get modified and adjusted as more detailed analysis, design and engineering occurs. Concept Plans are a useful starting point in planning projects, helping to promote consensus among community leaders and stakeholders by articulating goals for development and use of the property. They are also useful documents for securing grants, appropriations and assisting in other fundraising efforts.

It is with enthusiasm and pride that the Touchet Valley Trail design teams present this summary of the design charrette concepts. Our hope is that the ideas generated by gathering the talents of landscape architects, engineers, and community experts in one room for two days will lay the groundwork for the Touchet Valley Trail.





# Touchet Valley Trail Concept Design Teams





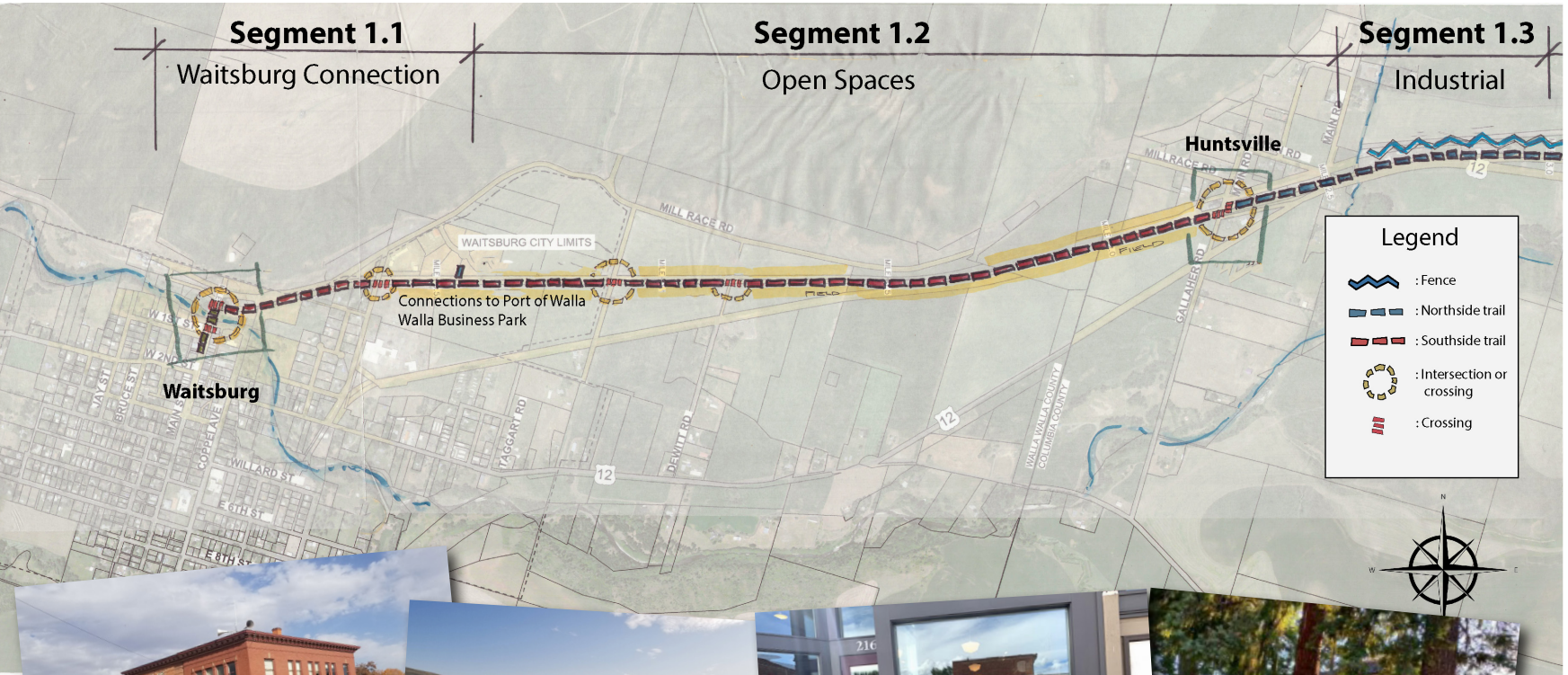


TEAM 1

Waitsburg to Huntsville

Team 1 was the dedicated design group focused on the westernmost three miles of the trail, which will span from downtown Waitsburg to the aviation grounds in Huntsville. This stretch includes a variety of opportunities and challenges and in this portion of the trail we explore both. Team 1 began by developing an overall schematic vision of the area which identifies portions or “segments.” This map can be seen to the right, and the three segments are based on the specific challenges, opportunities, and character of the different observed landscapes.

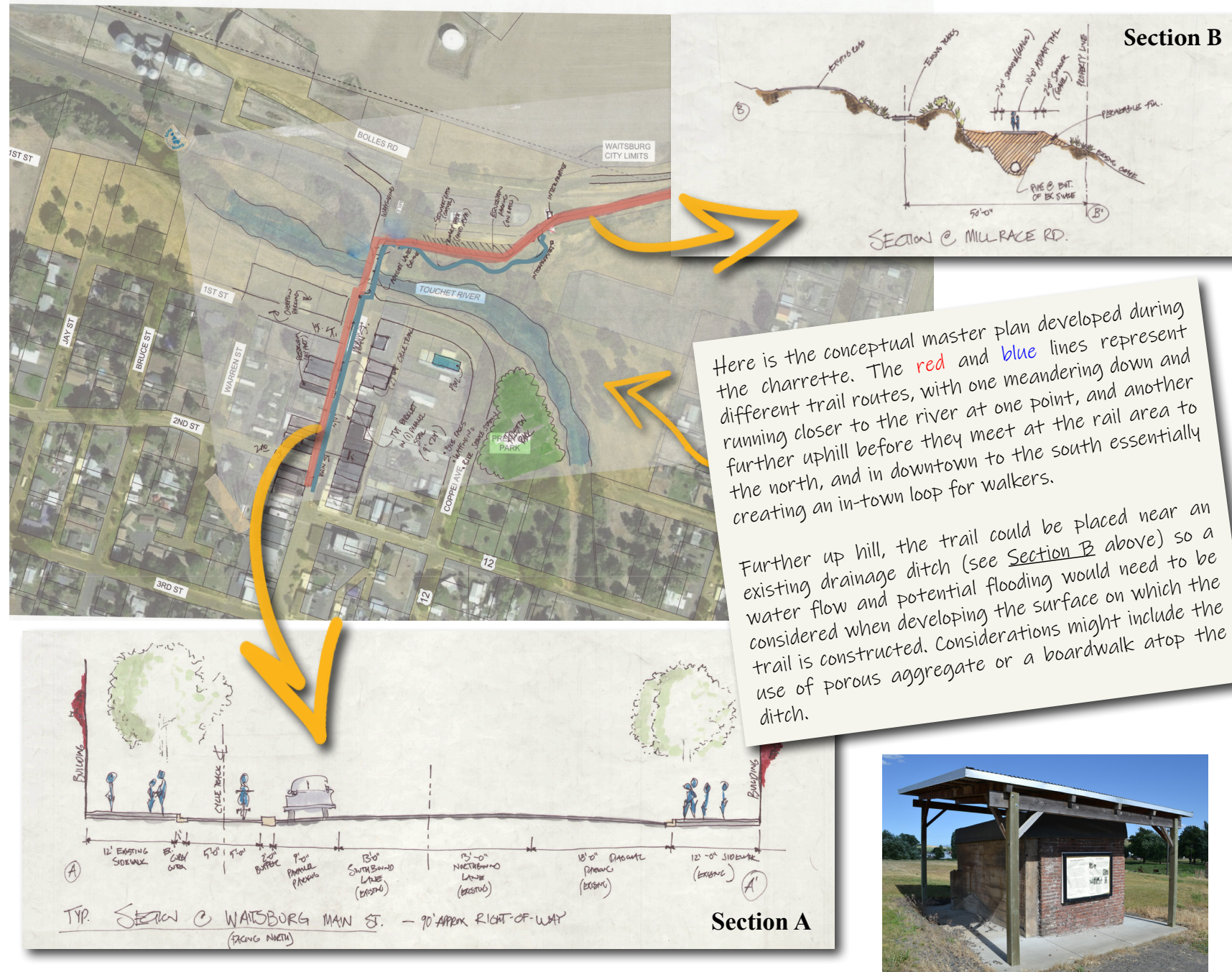
**Segment 1.1** (miles 0 - 0.5), or the Waitsburg Connection, starts in the center of Waitsburg, and proceeds to the undeveloped Port of Walla Walla owned land just north of town. The opportunities that the trail brings to this section are numerous, but the challenge of how to best utilize the trail to capitalize on these opportunities was the primary focus.



**Segment 1.2** (miles 0.5 - 2.5), or what was dubbed “Open Spaces,” consists mainly of agricultural fields, as well as the Huntsville Grain Elevator. This area contains little to no trees or shrubs, which allows for breathtaking views, but creating areas of respite from the sun and wind will be crucial.

**Segment 1.3** (miles 2.5 - 3) in the Huntsville Industrial area poses specific challenges because it requires finding ways to respect the privacy of property owners while using the limited railroad right-of-way and ensuring the safety of the trail users.





# Waitsburg

## Segment 1.1: Miles 0 - 0.5

From an economic development perspective, the proposed trailhead should begin on Main Street in Waitsburg. A trail that directly connects the downtown to the surrounding area could attract bicyclists looking for a destination where there are restaurants and places to shop. A city owned lot south of the bridge that crosses the Touchet River would become an integral arrival and departure point for the downtown area. The city already has plans for a public bathroom to be installed on the site, but with additions to the parklet, such as a bike repair station, bike racks, and way-finding elements, this area will help solidify the downtown as the official trail head. Creating such trail oriented activities will bring trail users into the core of Waitsburg, and local businesses will see direct economic growth from this connection.

The streetscape could be adapted to allow for bicycle use. Section A, to the left, illustrates a potential option in which a two-way bicycle lane is constructed on the west side of the road. Bike lanes could be on both sides of the road, also on the bridge, and would then reconnect on the far side where the trail will run through the existing public area along the north side of the Touchet River. While no additional camping or recreation activities would be added to this segment, strategically placed signage would help draw trail users to the camping area further up the river, as well as at the Waitsburg fairgrounds. The trail could then wind its way up hill to the railroad area, following the south side of the rail line for the remainder of this segment.





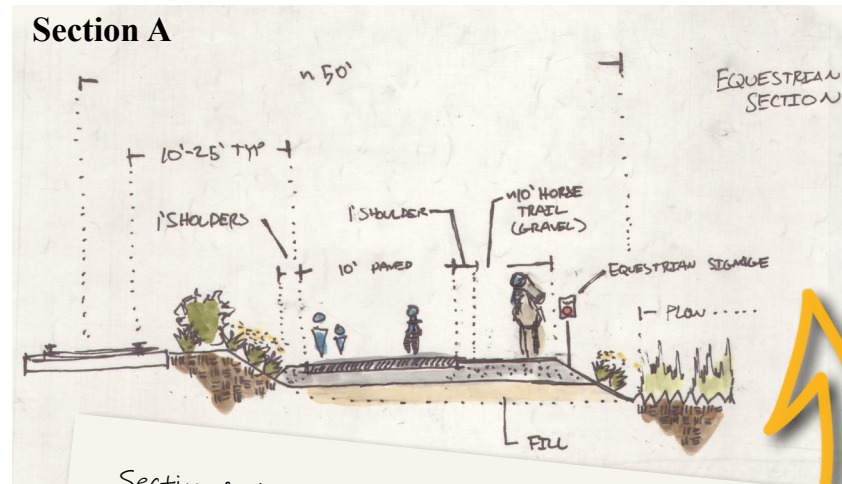
# Open Spaces

## Segment 1.2: Miles 0.5 - 2.5

The Open Spaces portion of the trail is the most open segment of the entire corridor. The goal of all improvements in this area should be to maintain that sense of openness that gives it a special sense of place. Possible improvements could include allowing access for equestrian use as well as including various types of vegetation to create a natural barrier between the trail and the road. Open shelters could provide shade in select spots and be used as interpretive sites along the trail.

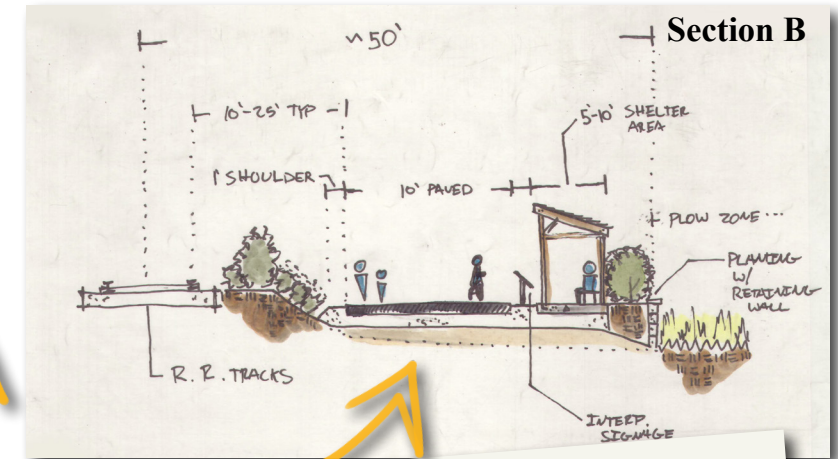
What is trail without a trailhead? Waitsburg and the park could provide a great opportunity for a trailhead that might include interpretive information and that announces the visitor's entrance to the Touchet Valley Trail.

Section A

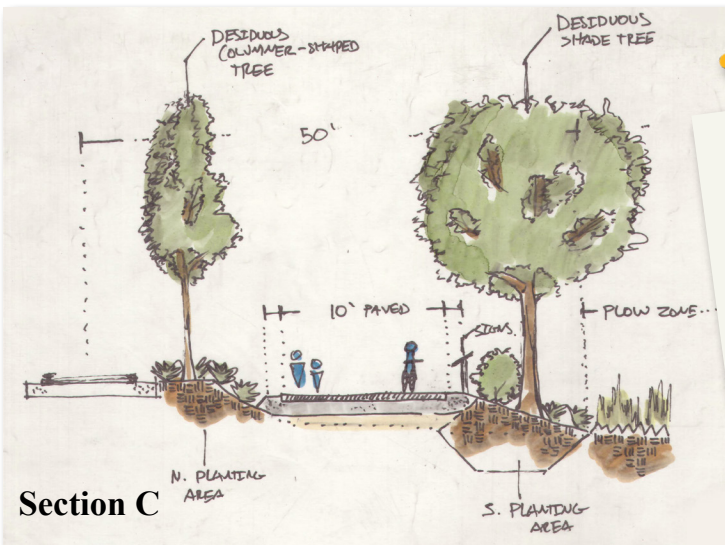


Section A shows the typical trail section if it were expanded to include an equestrian trail adjacent to the paved pedestrian trail. This profile would be similar to Section A, but an 8'-10' compacted gravel base would be laid south of the paved path where equestrians could enjoy recreational riding.

Section B



Section B shows a potential rest area with a small timber shelter on the south side of the trail. This would allow for shade in the heat of summer, or shelter from the fall and spring rains, as well as allowing for informational and educational signage opportunities. The structure would be constructed on a concrete pad with a retaining wall along the plowed area creating the possibility for a planting bed where shrubs could be planted to create a windbreak from the south.



Section C

Section C shows the forested area that could border this section of the trail. At mile 0.5 and mile 2.25 a small grove of deciduous trees could be planted, creating a respite on each end of the long stretch of relatively open trail. As an alternative, shade structures could be constructed to provide respite for trail users without the shedding and maintenance required with trees. This may be a solution to keep trail users safe and comfortable without impeding on adjacent landowners and active farmlands.



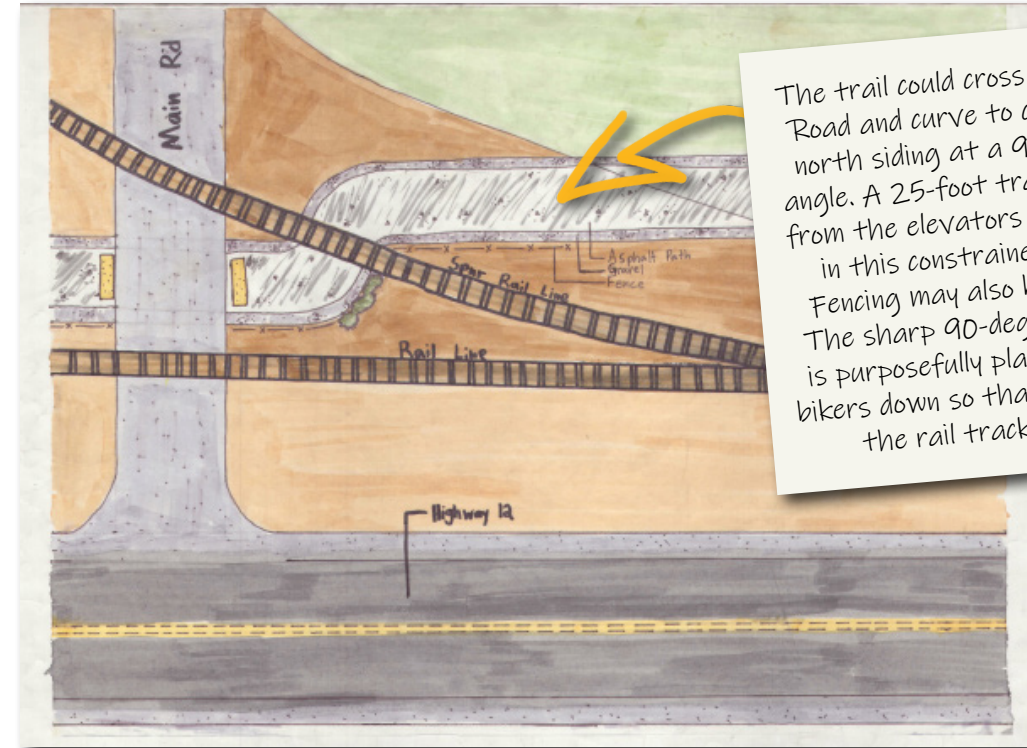
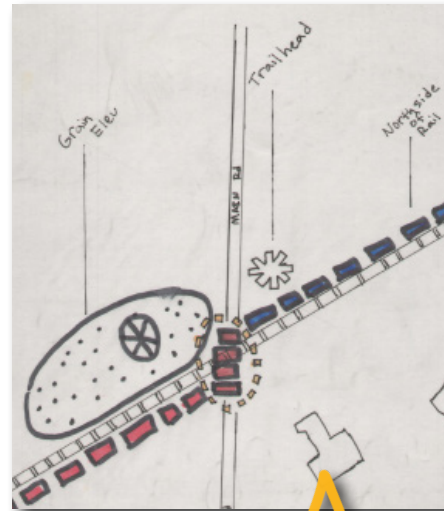


# Huntsville

## Segment 1.3: Mile 2.5 - 3.0

The Huntsville grain elevator provides an iconic last stop to the open stretch of trail. Here, the trail could pass by the south side of the elevator, on the south side of the tracks, then curve tightly to achieve a 90-degree crossing to the north side of the tracks, which would be located as close as possible to the street intersection.

This crossing could have a 90 degree curve and small radius to encourage cyclists to slow down at this intersection before crossing the road. This crossing would connect to a large open area between the main track and a spur. At the start of this open area could be a trailhead. The trailhead might feature way-finding information focused on historical and contemporary agricultural life, how the grain elevator works, farming practices and information about the agricultural economy in the region.



The trail could cross the Main Road and curve to cross the north siding at a 90-degree angle. A 25-foot trail setback from the elevators is required in this constrained space. Fencing may also be needed. The sharp 90-degrees curve is purposefully placed to slow bikers down so that they cross the rail track safely.



Similar to the Burke-Gilman Trail railroad crossing in Seattle, this railroad crossing would be at a 90 degree angle to ensure user safety.

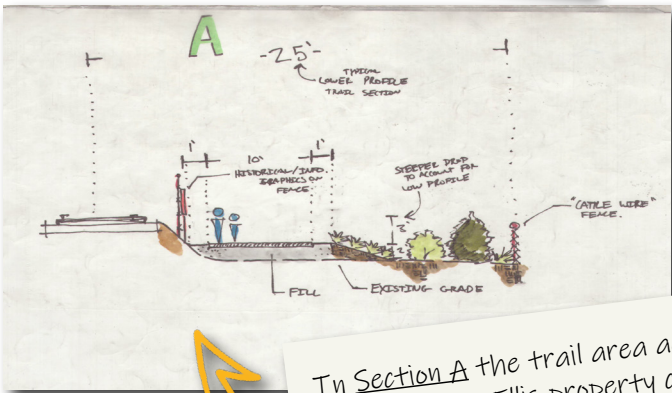




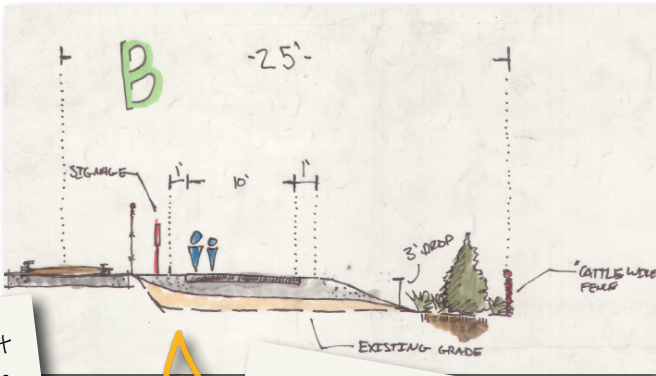


A new pedestrian and bicycle bridge could be constructed over the drainage canal. The bridge could be a basic design, but it must be located with the deck lower than the railroad bridge.

Heading east from the grain elevator the trail could continue on the north side of the track where it could pass through an open flat landscape and where there are a few crossings and a bridge over the Touchet River. After crossing the bridge, the trail could enter one of the more challenging areas. To the south, Highway 12 and a steep swale which parallels the railroad right of way create a safety concern for trail users. The north side of the tracks could offer a safer alignment making the 50-foot distance between the rails and the Wilbur Ellis chemical facility and the aviation grounds suitable for a trail. Since neither of the properties are fenced from the railroad, a fence along both property lines and the rail corridor should be installed. Planting trees on the north side of the trail in this stretch could help, but getting them established would require water and protection from deer.



In Section A the trail area adjacent to the Wilbur Ellis property could be built up halfway in elevation between the rail bed and the Wilbur Ellis property.



Section B: In Huntsville, the trail bed adjacent to the Wilbur Ellis property could be constructed at a raised elevation between the rail bed and the Wilbur Ellis property.

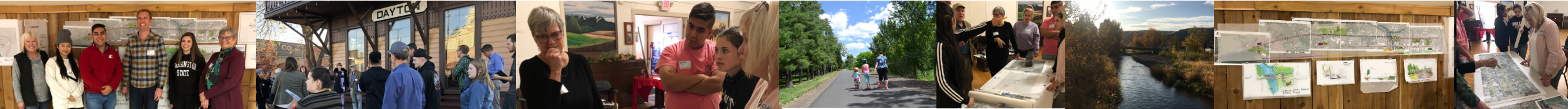


## Segment 1.3: Alternative Option

After stakeholder feedback, an alternate option for segment 1.3 was brought to consideration. In the trail's passage through Huntsville, the railroad tracks could be shifted in order to make space for the trail on the south side of the tracks, as seen in the illustration below. This option is preferred by the rail operator and eliminates the need for the trail to cross the railroad in this segment. The tracks could be shifted to the north, allowing the trail to run along the existing rail bed. This could reduce the tight passage of both the trail and the railway in this area and would require shifting approximately 1300 feet of track. This shift would increase space between the trail and the highway, creating more separation between recreational and industrial uses. The trail could then cross to the north of the tracks at the airport, east of Huntsville.







# TEAM 2

## Historic Dayton Trail

This portion of the trail hosts several ideas important to the people of Dayton and serves a purpose for the whole community. This portion of the trail runs west from the Columbia County Courthouse in Dayton to the Blue Mountain Station outside of town and is divided here into three segments: The String of Pearls, The Bridge Trail System, and The Woonerf Trail System.

This portion of the trail would include many historic sites and there are opportunities to incorporate features and themes based off the historical elements. Paving put in place by the city leads to the Train Depot, where innovative designs complement the long-standing, historical structures. This portion could also include a pedestrian crossing of the Touchet River. The proposed bridge would allow the trail to connect to downtown Dayton, diverting foot traffic on a safer and more stable river crossing. Dayton has an interest in connecting the city and extending the trail along the Touchet River, wrapping-around to the golf course and reconnecting the proposed trail further west of the Touchet River. This footpath is already established and is known to locals as the “wild side of the dike.” Unlike the rest of the trail built on the Port’s property, any extension of this trail would require permission granted by private landowners.



West of the bridge might include an additional segment, where a Western-European concept called a “woonerf” could be utilized to improve pedestrian safety in this residential district. The woonerf focuses on creating an open space where the trail and roadway are shared by both pedestrian and vehicles. This design allows an openness created by a retaining wall along rail line, making room for the city street and trail. Locals have, however, expressed concern of the trail’s proximity to the residential area. To address this design concern, the team proposed adding to the existing green hedging across from the trail head to preserve the privacy of the residences. One design objective is to bring the community closer through this proposed “Rails- with- Trails” project.

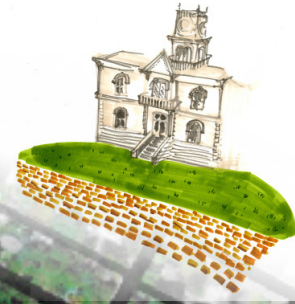




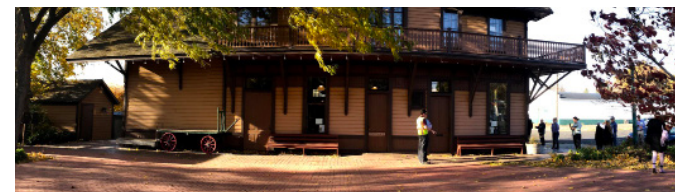
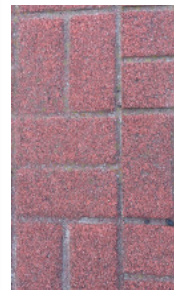
School House with Red Brick Road



Courthouse with Red Brick Road

Section: Looking east,  
trail and rail along DepotUntreated existing area between the Depot  
and the rail line

This segment of the Dayton reach can be incorporated into existing Capital Facilities Planning documents. Commercial Street, both East and West, are in dire need of improvement to paving and underground utilities. It is recommended that this be included as phase one for the City of Dayton, as the completion of this phase seems highly likely due to the existing need of this street segment.

Proposed expansion of the stamped brick concrete pattern  
would integrate the trail and historical landmarks down-  
town.

# Historical Path

## Segment 2.1: String of Pearls

Dayton's unique historical buildings are part of the city's identity and draw people to the community. The "String of Pearls," as known by locals, are the unique historic treasures along West Commercial Street. These include: the Columbia County Courthouse, the Train Depot, the Caboose Park, and the Smith Hollow Schoolhouse. These are well preserved and provide insight into the rich history of the town. One of Dayton's planning objectives is to highlight and promote historic buildings and create parklets, and Caboose Park and the train depot are examples of this revitalization.

Trail advocates and community members are hopeful that a trail will help connect these important places and historic buildings. The development of a trail is an opportunity for the community of Dayton to create new outdoor recreational connections as well as cultural connections, which will enhance the awareness of these special sites throughout the town. Tourism is an important strategy for economic growth, and a trail will help attract tourists to the area, who will stay in hotels, eat in local restaurants and enjoy the quaint shops on Main Street. The idea of integrating a trail with existing brick paving in the Depot Courtyard can be expanded. Combining "the old" with "the new" as an aesthetic is an interesting and educational way of celebrating this vintage community. It is recommended that the trail run along the south side of Commercial Street / north of the railroad.

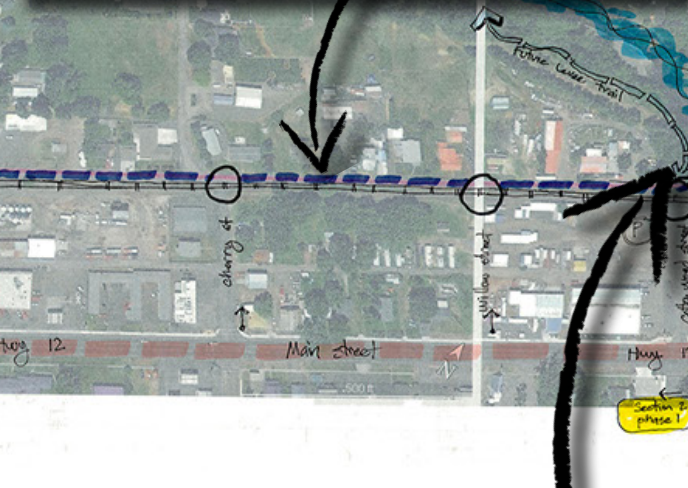
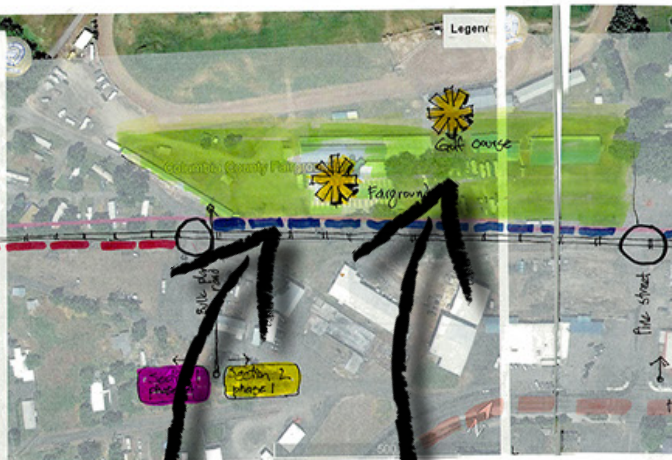
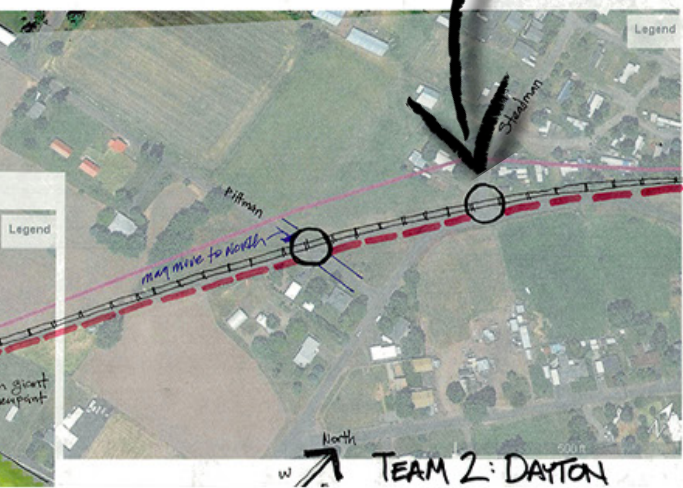
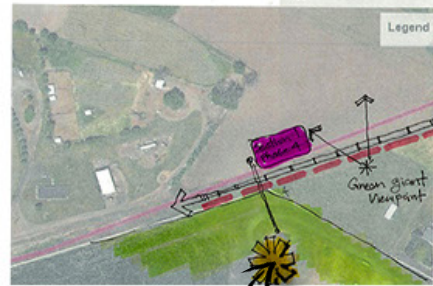
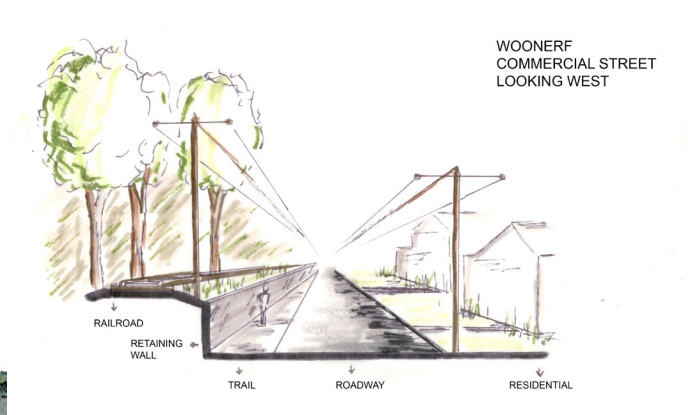
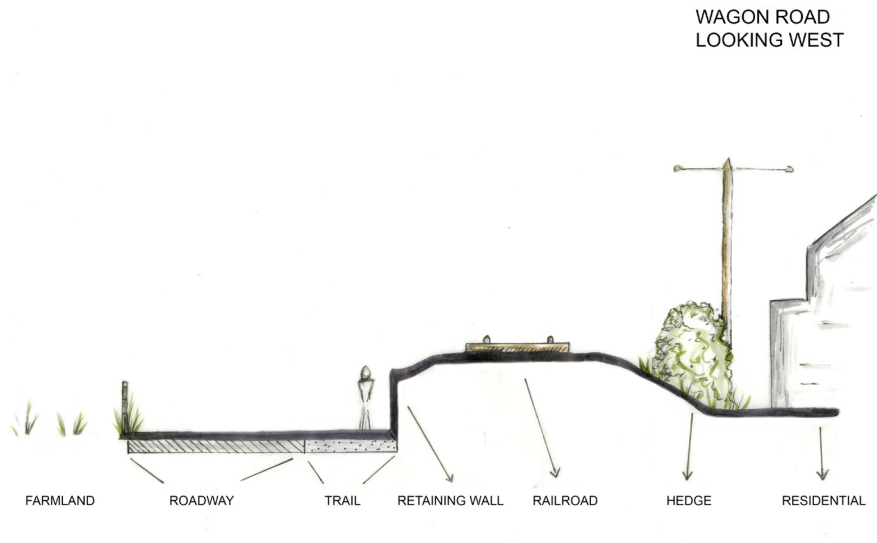


The second segment of Team 2 focused on the stretch of the trail from the pedestrian bridge along West Commercial Street. In this portion, the proposed trail would run along the north side of the railroad and the south side of Commercial Street. The woonerf is proposed as a solution to combat a wide variety of issues, including non-compatible existing land uses across the track; high need of street repaving; narrow availability of right-of-way for road expansion/width increase; and more. An additional concern is residential privacy along West Commercial Street. A feasible solution could be the implementation of permeable barriers, such as hedges, in the development of the Woonerf.

The Woonerf, as displayed, is a “shared and living road” between all users - vehicles, pedestrians, bikes, etc. It is recommended that a retaining wall be installed along the north side of the track for two reasons: to prevent further erosion of the railroad, and offer additional separation between land uses.

# Retaining Trail

## Segment 2.2: Woonerf Trail System



Blue Mountain Station

Fairgrounds

Golf Course

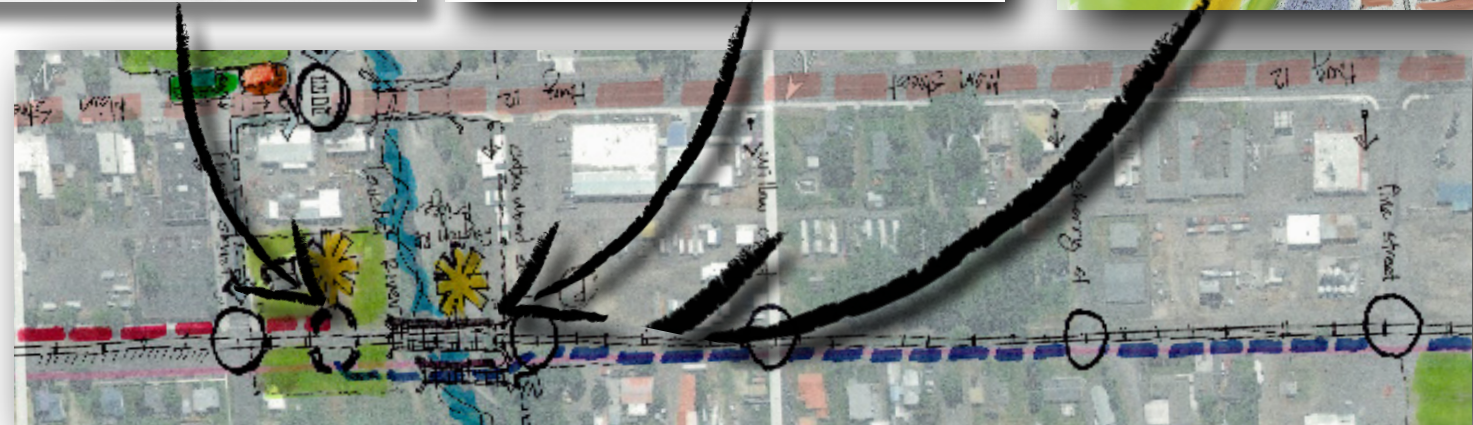
Touchet River and pedestrian bridge



# Building Bridges

## Segment 2.3: Bridge Trail System

The third and final segment of this portion focuses on the stretch of trail uniting the east and west portions of the trail that extends within the city limits of Dayton. The bridge is an essential component to the entire trail system. The team concluded that the best location to cross the Touchet River would be on the north side of the existing train bridge. The proposal includes a crossing near the Smith Hollow Schoolhouse across Commercial Street, bringing the trail from the south side of the railroad to the north side of the railroad. In addition, this would tie in potential future expansion of the trail to incorporate signage and information regarding the historic site 5202. The bridge is intended to act as a transition between the “String of Pearls” and the West Commercial woonerf.



This segment of the Dayton reach is recommended as Phase Three due to costs. There are no current planning documents that include this pedestrian access, and as such, currently has no funding availability. It is recommended that the East and West Commercial Street improvements take place first, then offer the connection with this pedestrian bridge at a later date when ample funding opportunities can be explored.



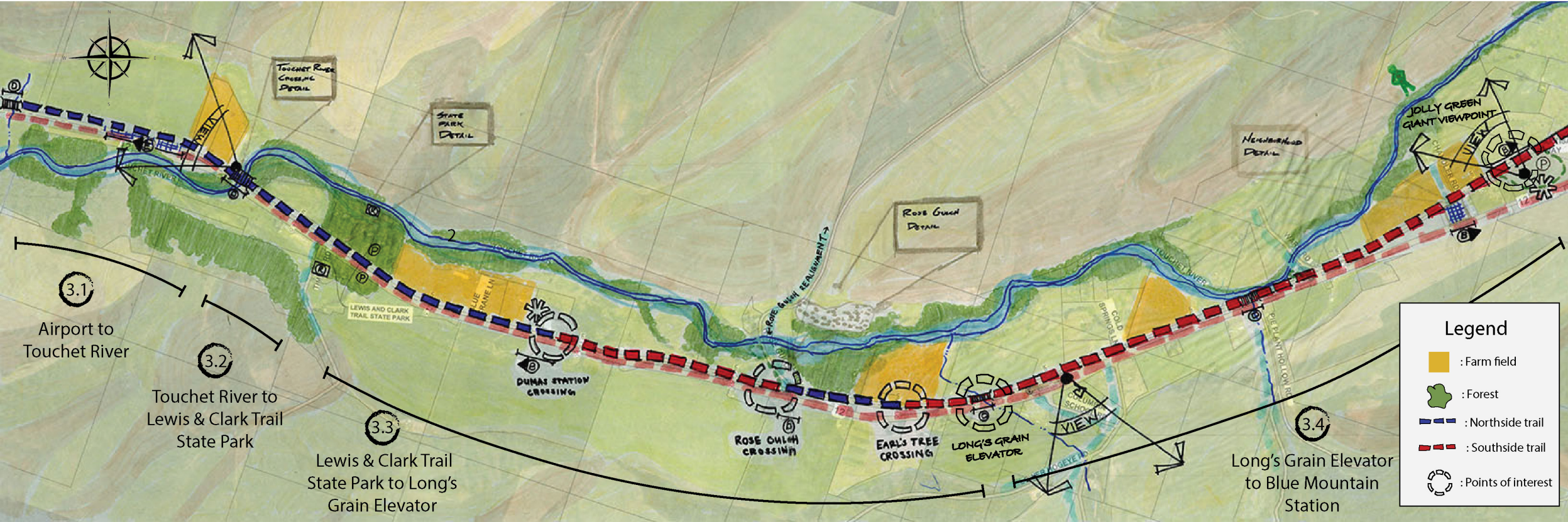


TEAM 3

Valley View

The Lewis & Clark Trail State Park Team, Team 3, was responsible for concept design of the trail from the airport near Huntsville to the City of Dayton. The main points of interest highlighted along this portion of the trail are the river bridge near Huntsville, Lewis & Clark Trail State Park, Dumas Station Winery, Rose Gulch, Chandler Road, Long’s Grain Elevator and the Jolly Green Giant viewpoint.

The team focused on placing the path on the safest and most convenient side of the tracks and avoiding disturbing the landscape. The trail design took into account the current landscape as well as opportunities for future additions. Team 3’s portion of the trail has been divided in four segments: the airport to the Touchet River, the river to Lewis & Clark State Park, the state park to Long’s Grain Elevator, and the grain elevator to Blue Mountain Station.



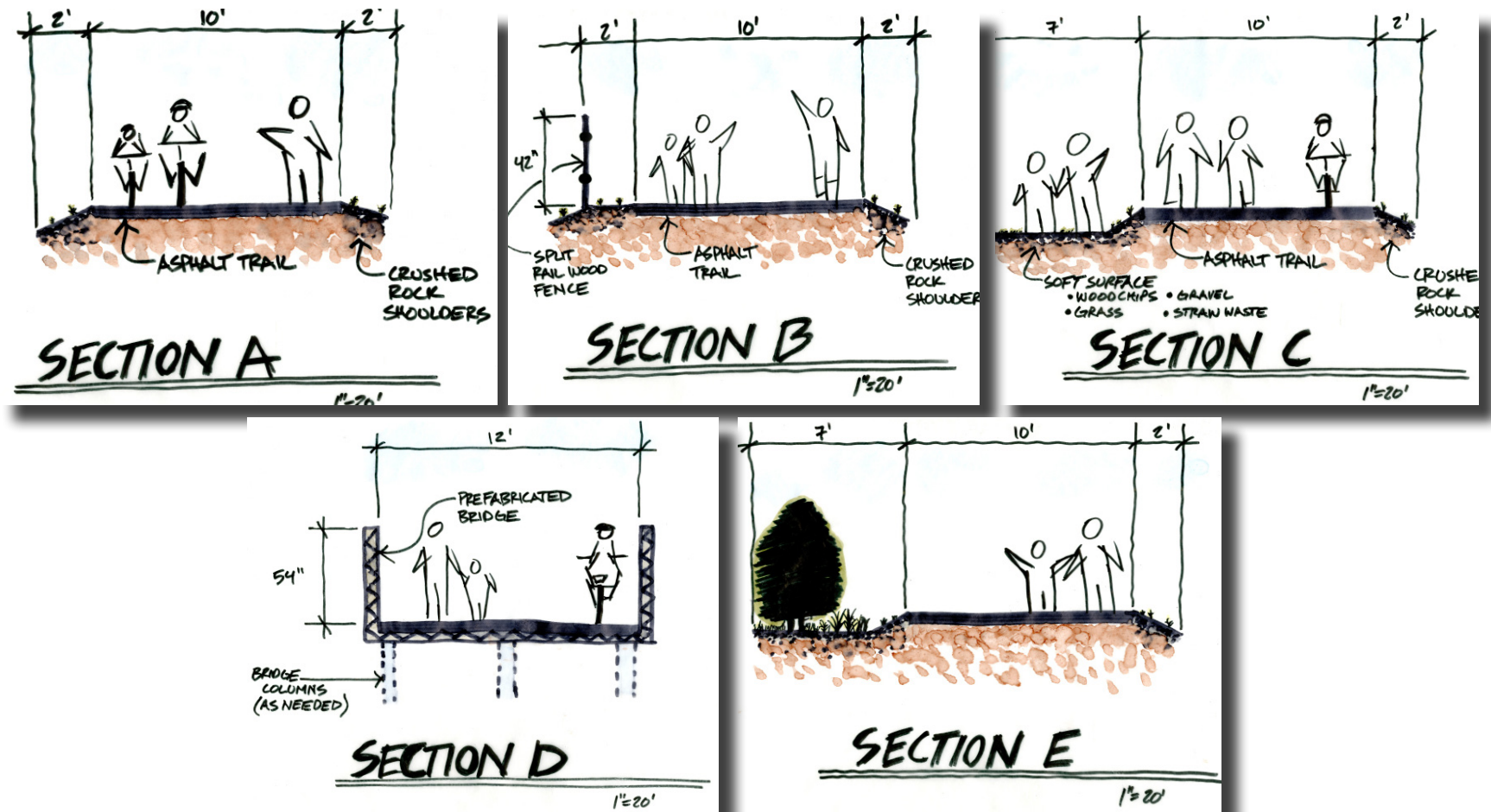


## 5 Typical Construction Types

Team 3 evaluated the observed constraints from the airport to the Jolly Green Giant, which consists of painted bricks on a hillside. The team considered which typical trail construction concepts should be applied according to each constraint. All four teams agreed that, when possible, the trail should be on the south side of the railroad tracks with carefully selected crossings at points along the trail.

Five typical trail construction solutions were developed for the Touchet River crossing, Rose Gulch/mini storage, Chandler Road/Valley View trailer park, Dumas Station, Lewis & Clark Trail State Park, and Long's Elevator. Various constraints forced the shift of the trail from the south side to the north of the tracks at two different points in this trail portion. Safety and ADA accessibility were considered during design. Typical cross-sections reflected community input in what the community would like to see incorporated in the design.

Along with the proposed typical trail types, Team 3 brainstormed future options that could benefit trail users and visitors. The first option includes enhancements to Dumas Station and the second is a highway crossing at Lewis and Clark Trail State Park to provide accessibility to both sides of the park while avoiding direct pedestrian highway crossing. Interpretive resources could also enhance the experience for trail users. Placards and interpretive panels could provide donor recognition opportunities as a way to commemorate organizations or individuals, while providing educational opportunities.



The majority of the Valley View concept design is illustrated in cross-sections 'A' and 'C.' **Section 'A'** is a typical application for a proposed pathway throughout the trail if there are no constraints. **Section 'C'** could accommodate equestrian use by incorporating a soft gravel surface beside the typical pathway design.

**Section 'B'** could be utilized when fencing is required between the trail and the railroad. This design includes the addition of a split-rail or chain-link fence to separate bicyclists and pedestrians from the rail line.

**Section 'D'** could be used when the trail crosses the river or where there is significant runoff. It utilizes prefabricated culverts, bridges and other structures engineered to code.

**Section 'E'** provides a natural barrier to be used for privacy screening or to create vegetative or ecological groupings and habitat along the trail.

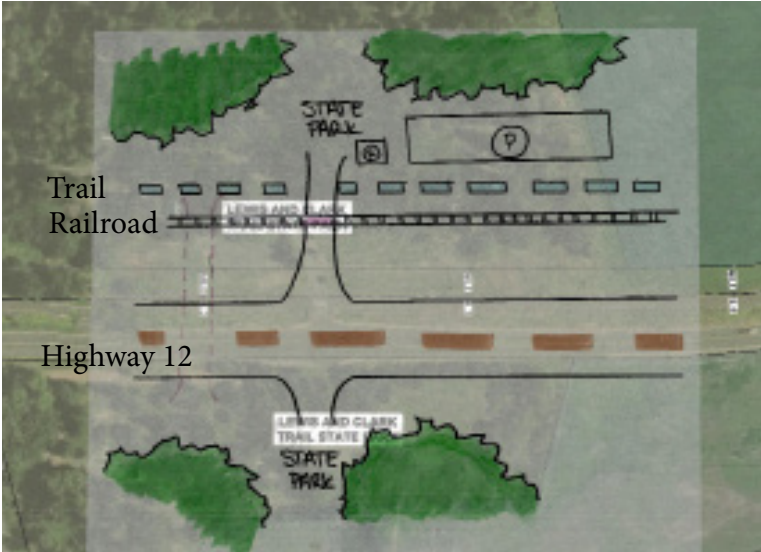


### Segment 3.1: Airport to Touchet River

The design of this segment is straight forward and follows the north side of the rail road tracks.

### Segment 3.2: Touchet River to State Park

The drawing below illustrates the proposed pedestrian boardwalk that could run parallel on the north side of the existing rail trestle across the Touchet River. This boardwalk is proposed to help preserve the marshlands present around the bridge and river by Huntsville. The boardwalk would not be connected to the railroad but separated, and it could cross the marshland about 200 yards before the railroad bridge. The trail could be on the north side of the tracks to avoid houses and private yards near the river as well as busy Highway 12.



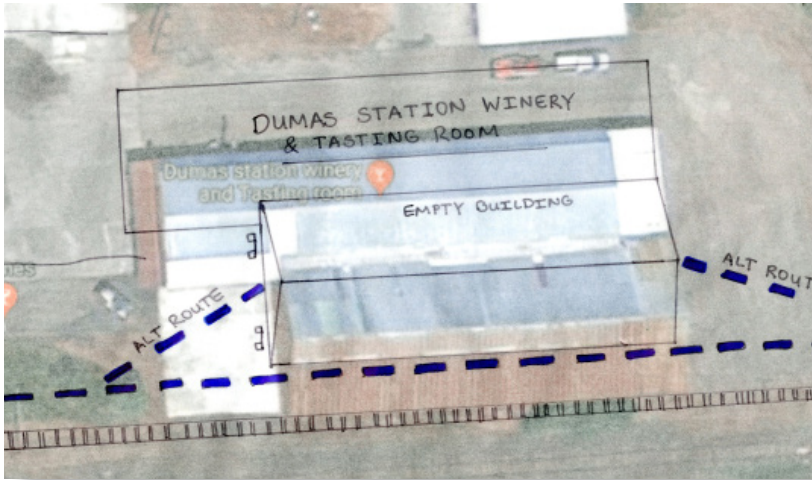
The concept drawing above is of Lewis & Clark Trail State Park. The trail could run on the north side of the tracks allowing the potential for a parking lot and restrooms which could help draw people to the trail and park. An underpass, which would greatly improve pedestrian safety, was discussed as a method to connect the trail and the camping area on the north side of the park to the day use area on the south side. Alternatives include a roundabout, flashing pedestrian crossing lights, or a sky bridge. These options may be preferable due to the high water table and potential for the river to flood the state park.



### Segment 3.3: State Park to Long's Grain Elevator

The trail could run on the north side of the tracks though this segment. The graphic below shows two ideas for the alignment of the trail at the Dumas Station Winery. Option 1 allows the trail to run parallel to the railroad line and the Dumas building. Option 2 allows the trail to run through the old Dumas apple storage building, which provides trail users with shade, shelter from wind and rain, and the opportunity to view the historic structure.

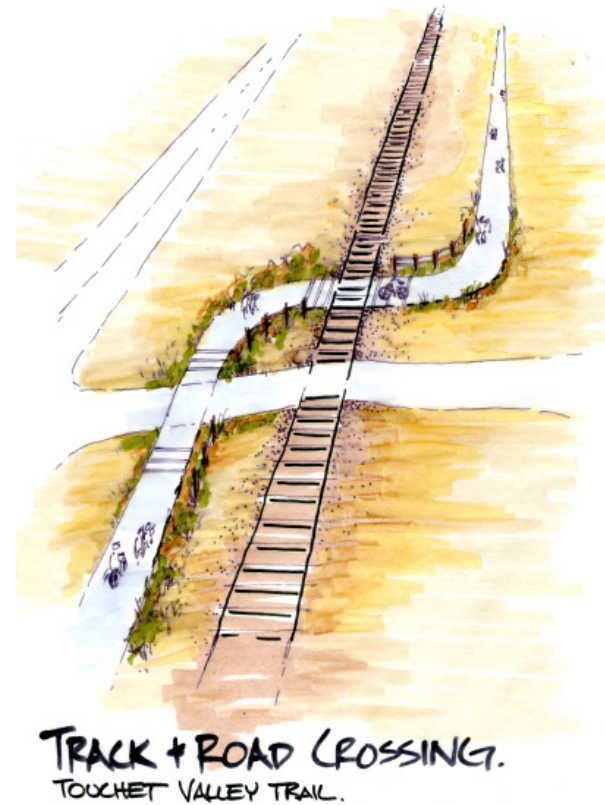
Dumas Station is an exciting opportunity for a rest area or point of interest, providing economic opportunities for Dumas Station to sell wine and cheese and for trail users and visitors to experience a renovated historic structure. This is an ideal location for an interpretive station that describes the wine and cheese industry and the history of the old warehouse which has had several changes in use as agriculture has evolved in the region. The building could also host events and “pop up” vendors.







The second instance in which a trail crossing to the north side is necessary is at Rose Gulch Road which also includes a mini storage, pictured above. A crossing to the north side of the railroad is necessary here to avoid an existing use of the right-of-way. The trail then crosses back into the south of the tracks near Earl's Tree where there is ample space to provide a safe pedestrian crossing.



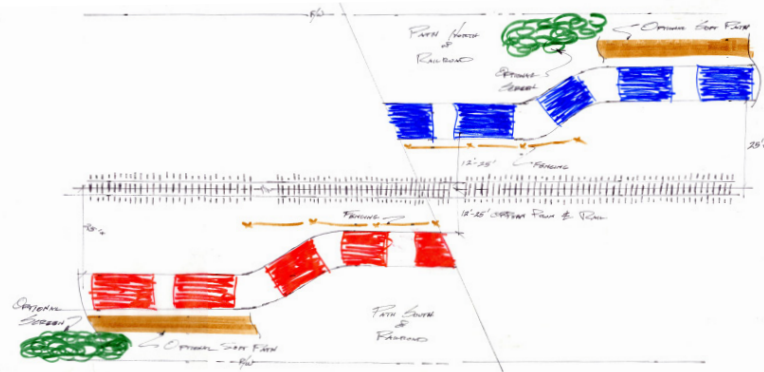
### Segment 3.4: Grain Elevator to Blue Mountain Station

Access to the Touchet River, which runs next to the railroad line, was among the most-requested trail design features. The proposed trail connects users to the state park, providing opportunity for river access. A multi-use trail, which could run alongside a central, paved trail, was also a community favorite. The trail also provides safe connectivity to the city for residents of the Valley View mobile home park.

With the addition of interpretive locations throughout, the trail will provide education and interest for trail users. The trail design emphasizes the beauty of the natural environment and showcases some of the reasons residents of Waitsburg and Dayton love living in these picturesque rural towns.

The proposed soft surface multi-use trail could merge on and off of a central trail as space allows based on constraints of crossing rivers, roads, and other difficult areas. Rose Gulch may require additional modifications due to gravel quarries and the volume of traffic around the site. There are many vehicles as well as a gravel loading/unloading facility on the highway corner at the Rose Gulch railroad crossing. Long's Elevator Siding will need to be crossed with a path between the main railroad lines and the siding, affording the opportunity for educational and interpretive signs located in this vicinity.

Owned by the Port of Columbia, Blue Mountain Station lies at the east end of Segment 4 and has the potential to provide amenities for trail users including parking, bathrooms, shopping, and future overnight camping.



### Long's Grain Elevator

This grain elevator is a prominent feature along the trail and nearby Port of Columbia owned property could allow for an interpretive station that highlights the agricultural history of the region and may also offer an opportunity to develop trail user parking that would not interfere with the use of the facility





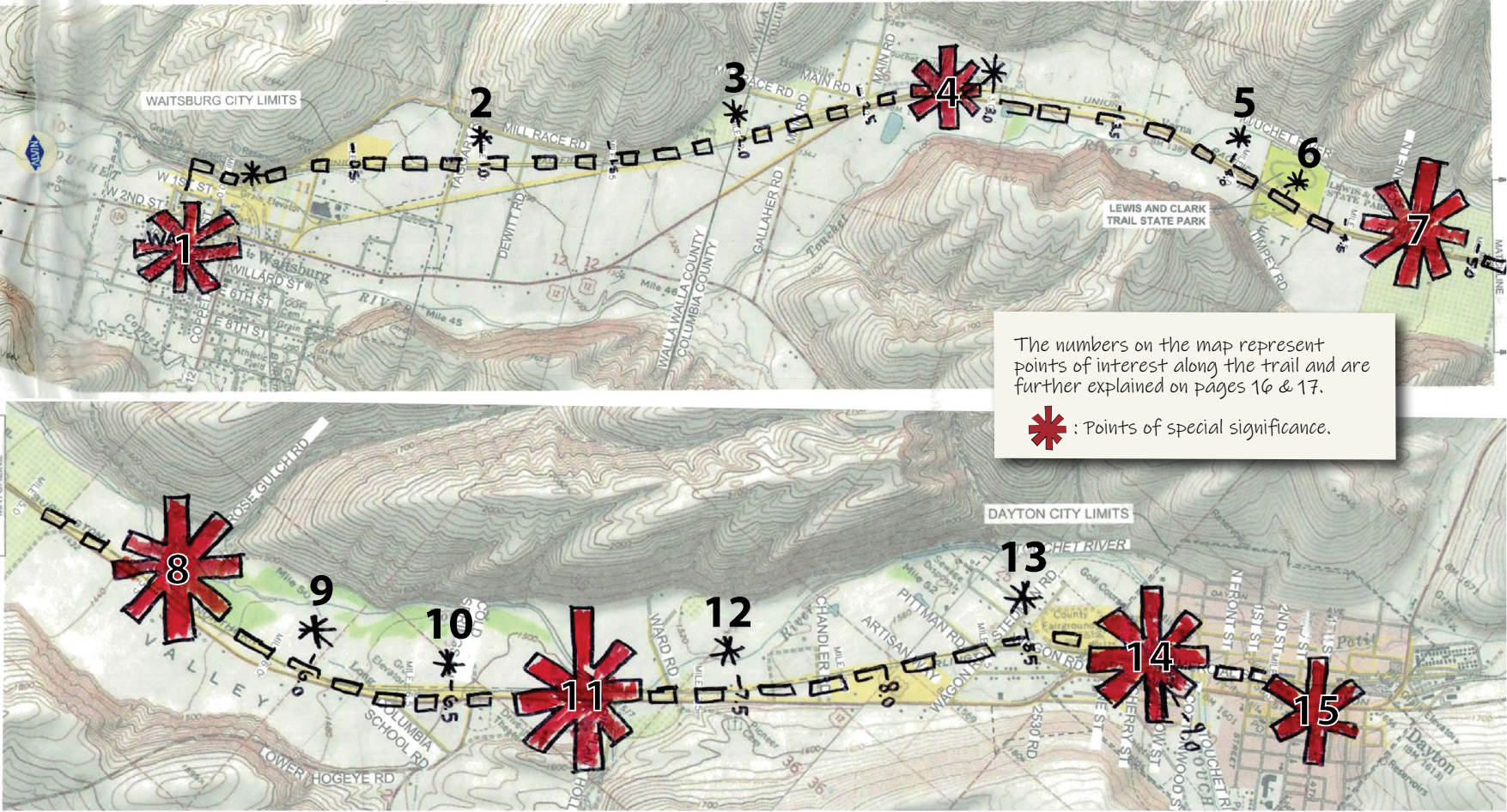
# TEAM 4

## Education & Interpretation

The Touchet Valley is historically significant to southeastern Washington State. Dayton and Waitsburg, two towns on either end of the Touchet Valley have long histories.

The Touchet Valley was carved out by the Touchet River, a 55-mile tributary of the Walla Walla River. The upper part of the Touchet Valley was once used as a traditional summer meeting place for trading and games by the local Native American tribes including the Palouse, the Nez Perce, the Walla Walla, the Umatilla, and the Cayuse tribes.

The Lewis & Clark Trail runs through the Touchet Valley. On the return from their main expedition in 1806, Lewis & Clark followed the Old Celio Falls Trail up through Walla Walla and the Touchet River. Their journey brought them to the present day locations of Dayton and Waitsburg. Because of this, a state park has been commemorated in their honor.



Dayton was established as a place for commerce around the 1860's, the town site plat was filed November 23, 1871 and the town was officially incorporated November 10, 1881. Dayton is also home to the oldest train depot in Washington, built in 1881, and the oldest working county courthouse, built in 1887.

Waitsburg is the only town in Washington State that still operates under its original territorial charter. The town was first settled in 1859, and commemorates Sylvester M. Wait who established a mill there in 1864.



# Points of Interest

Along the Touchet Valley Trail there are several points of interest, as indicated in the map on page 14. Team 4 identified the most important and significant historic places along the trail, that provide the best opportunities for highlighting interpretive themes and providing trail facilities. These are represented with the red stars on the map and the following list.



## 1. Waitsburg

Waitsburg hosts a trailhead for the Touchet Valley Trail. Although this small town does not have a single traffic light, it does have a walkable, art filled main street with welcoming businesses and adjacent historic neighborhoods. Wonderful, Walkable Waitsburg.

## 2. Agriculture and Geology

As with most of the rest of the region of southeastern Washington, this area was affected by the Missoula Floods, which formed the iconic rolling hills of the area.

## 3. Cultural History

The trail passes through land with interesting cultural history. It is also the location of an even smaller community located between Waitsburg and Dayton, named Huntsville. In 1880 Huntsville established a post office but it has since closed.



## 4. Agriculture and Livestock

Washington is ranked as number two in the United States for its diversity of crops grown. This region used to be the center for the Green Giant Company's asparagus canning operation.

## 5. Touchet River

The Touchet river is the heart of the Touchet Valley and a 55-mile tributary of the Walla Walla River. The upper Touchet was a traditional summer meeting place for trade for the Palus, Nez Perce, and Walla Walla tribes.

The river can be accessed by the public through Lewis & Clark Trail State Park, and Dayton and Waitsburg, and is known for its rainbow and steelhead fishing.

## 6. Lewis and Clark Trail State Park

One of the most historic locations of this trail is the Lewis and Clark Trail State Park. It is a beautiful, 36-acre park located on the Touchet River. This campsite offers many opportunities for classic camping fun, as well as day use!



## 7. Dumas Station Winery

Located in an old apple-packing warehouse and agricultural train station, Dumas Station Winery is one of the hidden gems of the Touchet Valley Trail.





### 8. Nez Perce Trail

The Nez Perce National Historic Trail was used by Nez Perce tribal members as a route to Wallula Gap and the Columbia River where they went for trading.

### 9. Earl the Elk's Tree

A local celebrity, Earl the Elk wanders around the Touchet River Valley, bringing joy and mischief to the area. This is the location of his tree which he frequently visits.

### 10. Long's Grain Elevator and Warehouse

This grain elevator is used in conjunction with the railroad to send grain all over the state and for grain storage.

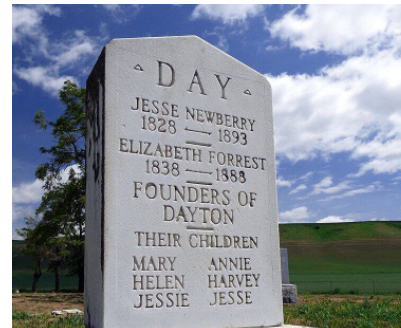


### 11. Ethnobotanical Demonstration

This location could serve as a location for gardens, natural history and geology information stations.

### 12. Pioneer Cemetery

This cemetery is the last resting place of Jesse N. Day, the person for whom the town of Dayton is named, along with many other pioneer settlers. In 2010, funds belonging to the Boldman Family were donated to the Dayton Historical Depot Society for the continued maintenance of this cemetery.



### 13. Natural History and Wildlife

This is another portion of the trail where the effects of the Missoula Floods are visible. This area is home to a riparian zone. There are some threatened species located in this section of the river, including the bull trout and steelhead fish. Again, geology and natural history information could be provided here.



### 14. The "Crossing"

Historic site 5202 marks the confluence of the Touchet River and Patit Creek. Several Native American tribes including the Palus, the Nez Perce, the Umatilla, the Cayuse, the Yakima, and the Walla Walla tribes met to trade their goods, fish and hunt. It is also the alleged site of a battle between Tribes and European traders in 1858.



### 15. Dayton

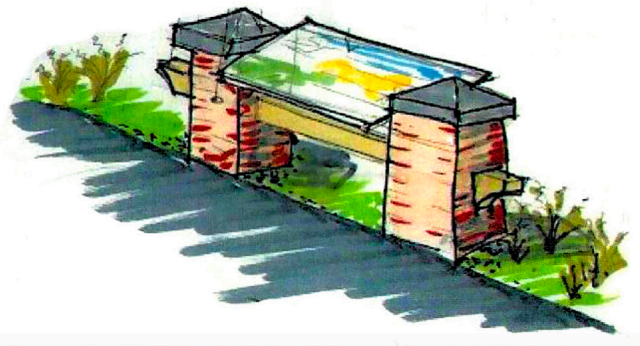
At the east end of the trail is the town of Dayton. Slightly bigger than Waitsburg, Dayton is home to the oldest train station in Washington, which has been converted into a museum. This town is also home to the oldest working county courthouse built in 1887. Both the courthouse and the train depot have been restored to their former glory.



# Trail Additions

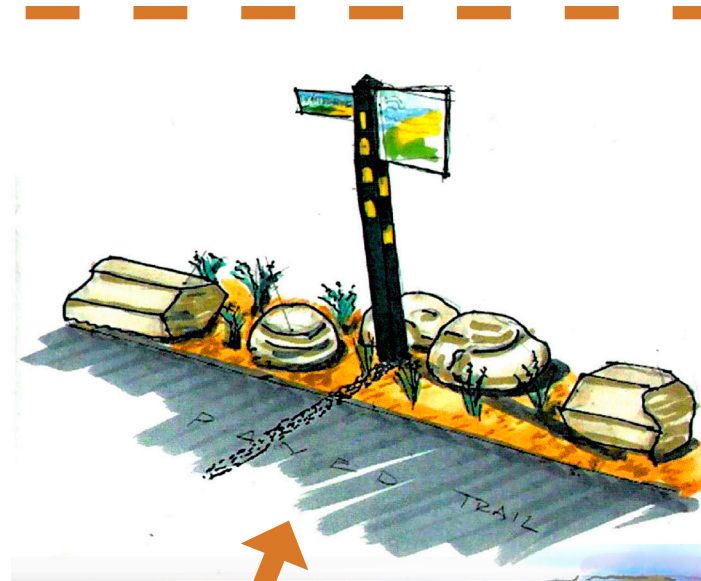
## Directional & Educational

The multiple and variety of storytelling opportunities require several ways of presenting the educational program. To accommodate the multiple stories and needs, we have created four different ways of displaying this information: 1) directional posts used frequently throughout the trail, 2) educational boards when coming across a significant landmark, 3) important crossing areas when needing to cross the highway, and 4) directional maps at the trailhead with an overview of all landmarks and site information throughout the trail.

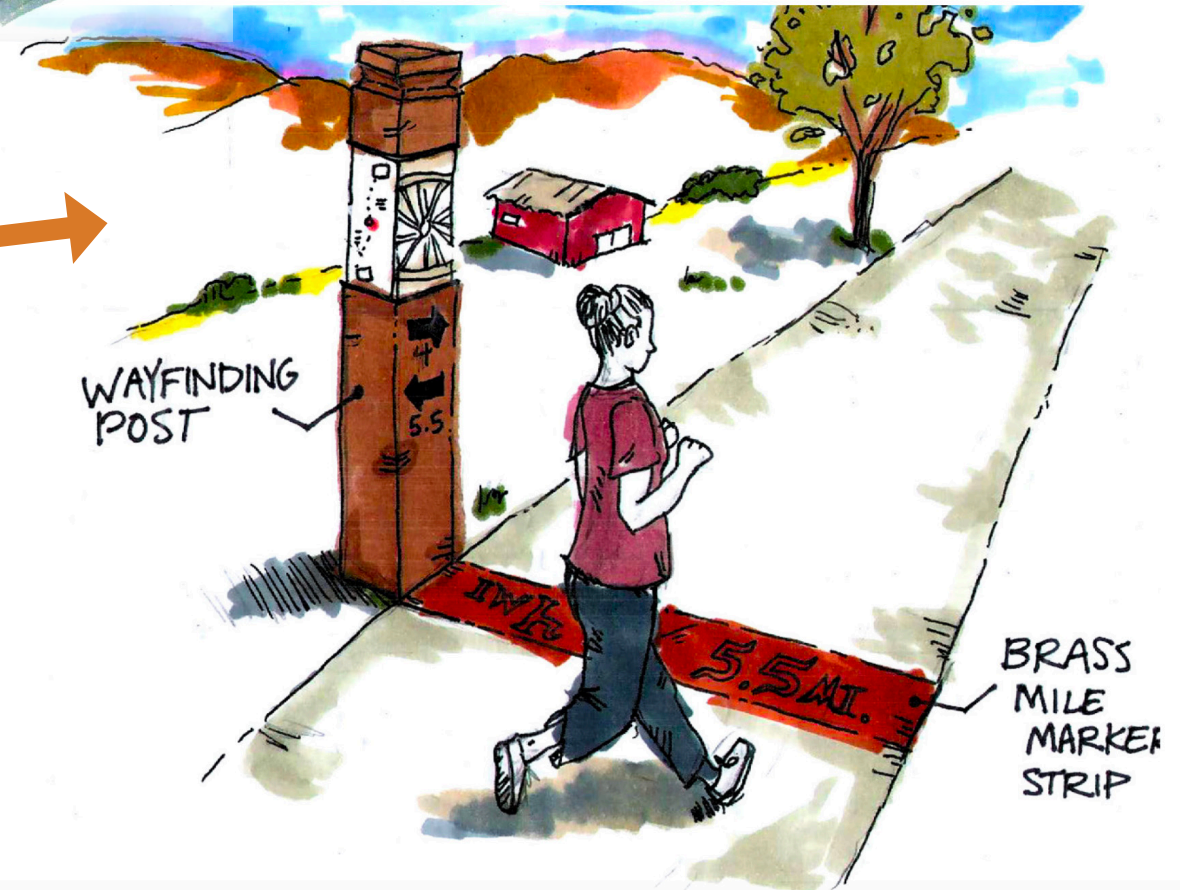


### Educational Boards

Educational boards will be along the trail at significant sites or landmarks. They will display the interpretive information about each area and trail information. These will be a great place to spend some time resting and learning about the region. Whether you're on foot or on a bike, you can take time to read about these areas and discover new information about Dayton and Waitsburg or the Blue Mountains or about local industry, farming or recreation in the Touchet Valley.



Examples of directional posts along the trail that could indicate mileage and incorporate natural features.



### Directional Posts

Posts are an effective way to give directional help, along with expanding the educational program to provide additional information about surroundings. These will be placed at strategic places along the trail. In addition to providing storytelling opportunities, these poles will offer light for all trail users. On the top half of these poles, there will be an engraved map of the trail, with a little light indicating where you are along the trail. The sketch below demonstrates directional arrows labeled with what significant areas are ahead and behind. These poles will also be used as mile markers with a brass strip running across the trail indicating the distance.

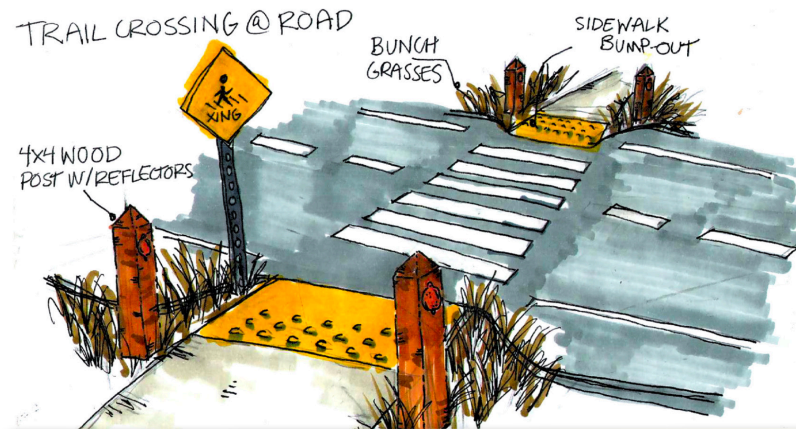


# Trail Additions

## Continued

### Directional Maps

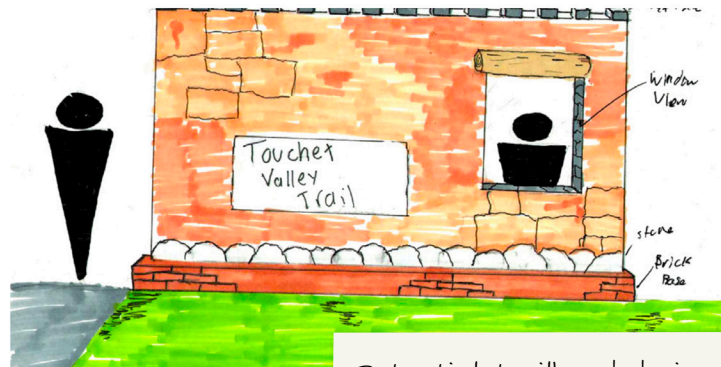
These directional maps will be at each entrance and exit throughout the trail, as well as being located at the trailheads. The signage design will have large tilted boards that are accessible and easily read by wheelchair users and children. The interpretive signs will include maps of the whole trail and information about each landmark. These signs could also be filled with community events, announcements, and anything that could be important or enjoyable for the trail users to learn about the area.



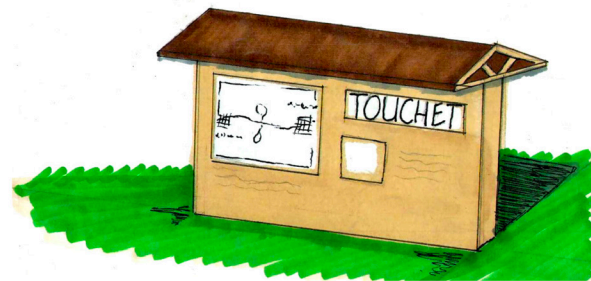
Road crossings equipped with safety markers allowing for high visibility and increasing safety.

### Crossings

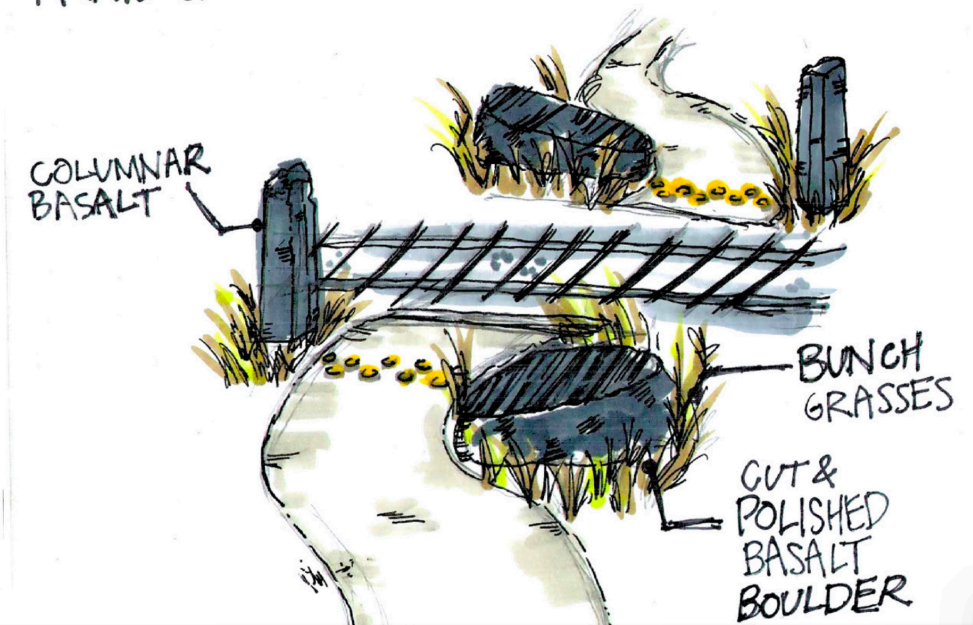
With the high concern about crossing roads, it is important to incorporate safe crossings along the trail. Care was taken to signify all crossings and to focus on trail user and driver safety. Highway crossings include signs and wood posts to announce a crossing. Each crossing is designed to slow people down and make sure that they are looking both ways. The trail crossing at the railway includes rock posts along with other small boulders to signify the crossing area.



Potential trailhead design, including directional maps and ample opportunity for educational displays.



### TRAIL CROSSING @ RAILWAY



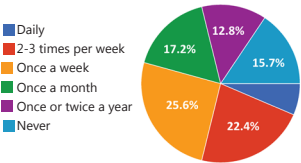
Railroad track crossings with natural rock features that punctuate the crossing for higher visibility. Track crossing is obvious and at a 90 degree angle.



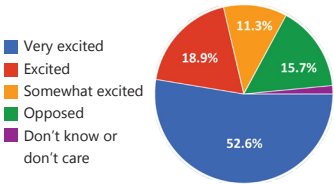
# Community Survey Results

The Port of Columbia conducted a non-scientific online community survey in Summer 2019. The purpose of the survey was to gather design input from the community. The survey received 346 responses. Of the respondents, 49% were Dayton residents, 21% were Waitsburg residents, 10.7% were residents of unincorporated Walla Walla County, and the remainder were residents of other parts of the region.

How often do you envision using the trail?

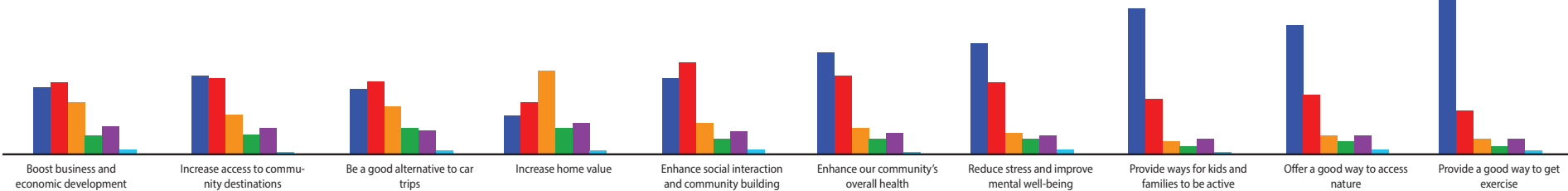


How do you feel about the Touchet Valley Trail Project?

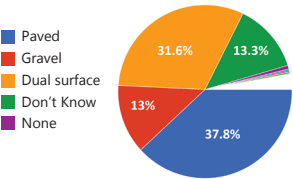


## Please rate the following statements. A trail in our area could:

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / Don't Care

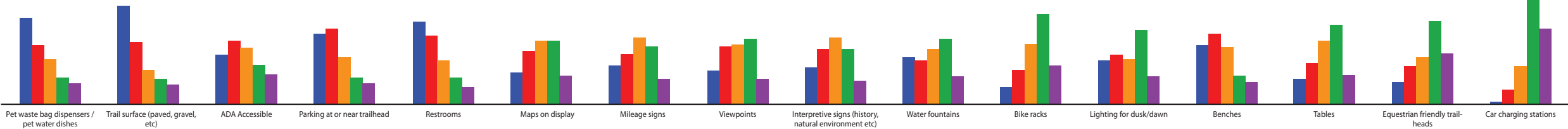


What type of trail surface do you prefer?



## How important are the following trail amenities to you?

Very Important Important Somewhat Important Not Important Don't know / Don't Care





# Community Health Profile

Developed in partnership with the Columbia Valley Health Department, the National Park Service, and the Port of Columbia

*This community health profile examines current health indicators and needs of residents living in Dayton, Waitsburg, and the surrounding region. It considers both community health and the built environment. Though explicit recognition of public health connections and goals in relation to planning efforts is not always obvious, integrating public health concepts in planning processes can best ensure the full realization of park and trail benefits.*

## Community Description

The Touchet Valley Region was first settled by Euro-Americans for its rich, fertile farmland, as well as its proximity to the Whitman Mission and the Lewis and Clark Trail. The agricultural industry and economy of the region flourished between 1880 and 1920. During this prosperous time, buildings, courthouses and other historical developments were built along the now historic main streets of the region. These main streets are now home to sites included on the National Register of Historic Places for their architectural, cultural, or historical significance. As agriculture became mechanized in the 20th century, jobs dwindled and companies consolidated businesses to more urban areas, causing the population of the Touchet Valley region to decline until the 1990’s. In the 1980’s, Dayton worked hard to diversify economy; investing in wind energy, agriculture, historical preservation, tourism and a pulp plant. The 2000’s brought the first population growth in the region since the 1930’s. The Touchet Valley Trail aims to continue in the diversification of local economies and create opportunities to help keep the communities both physically and economically healthy. The region also serves as a gateway for outdoor recreation, offering access to the Blue Mountains, Tucannon Wilderness Area and the Snake River.



## Dayton

Situated at the confluence of the Touchet River and Patit Creek, the city of Dayton has a population of 2,526 people and was once a popular gathering place for tribes from around the region. Settled in 1871, Dayton boasts a variety of amenities and tourist attractions including museums, historic buildings, a golf course, walking tours, and access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. Amongst the historical attractions that Dayton has to offer are the oldest train depot in the state and the oldest working county courthouse.

## Waitsburg

With a population of 1,217 residents, Waitsburg lies within the Touchet River Valley and along a Union Pacific Railroad rail line built in 1881 that continues to serve the city’s economy. Waitsburg was settled in 1881 and is the only city in the state of Washington that still operates under the terms of its Territorial Charter. The community boasts regional amenities including parks, a public pool, a public library, community fairgrounds, and a historical museum.

“5 minutes walking in nature improves mood, self-esteem, and relaxation. Frequent exposure to nature reduces anxiety and depression, while promoting a sense of wellbeing and fulfillment. Physical activity in a green space can reduce stress and lowers cortisol levels by 15%.”

*(Healthy Parks, Healthy People Resources, National Park Service)*

## Blue Mountain Regional Trails Plan

The Blue Mountain Regional Trails Plan was developed in 2018 to plan a community-driven and locally supported region wide network of bicycle and pedestrian routes to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, mobility options, and connectivity within the Blue Mountain Region that benefit health, mobility, quality of life and livability, and economic development and tourism. In December 2015, county officials and meeting attendees at the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) for Columbia County ranked “a recreational path between Dayton and Waitsburg” among the top three priority strategies. The Columbia County, City of Dayton, and Port of Columbia’s Cooperative Park Master Plan calls for the development of a seamless recreation map and access to waterways, state, and federal lands.

## Touchet Valley Trail

A trail connecting the rural communities of Dayton and Waitsburg has was first identified as a priority at Columbia County’s 2015 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy meeting. The 9.7 mile trail is included in the Blue Mountain Region Trails plan and is now ready for concept design and engineering in 2019. The Port has received grants from the National Park Service and WSDOT that will aid in the design of the trail. The project will be led by a steering committee who is engaging in public outreach to ensure the final trail meets the community’s needs.

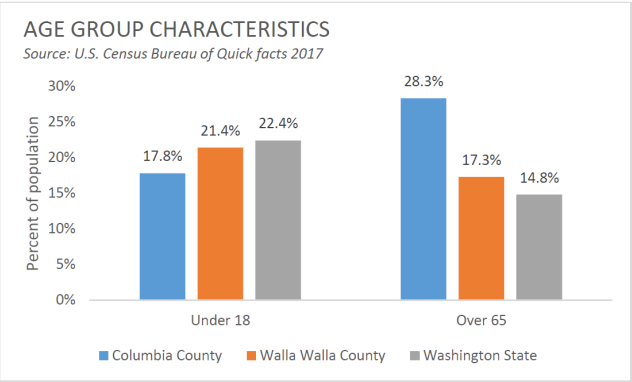




Demographics

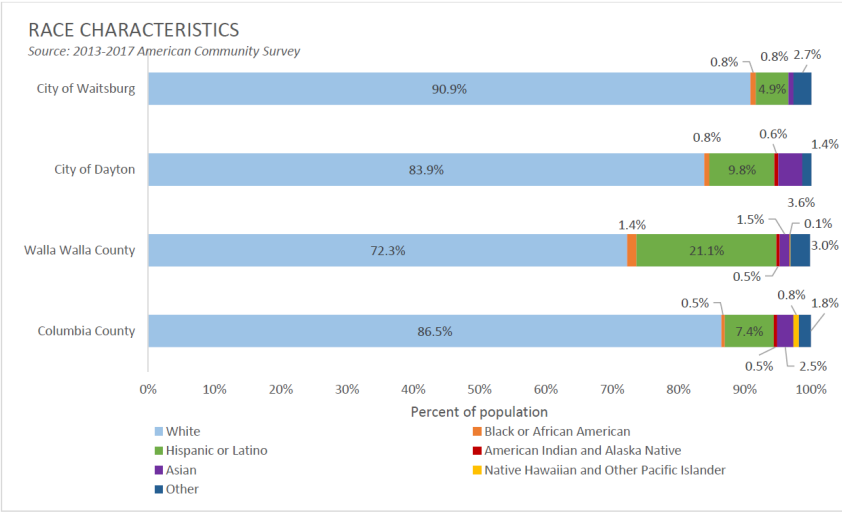
Age

Columbia County and Walla Walla County have a higher proportion of older adults aged 65 or over compared to Washington as a whole. 28.3% of Columbia County’s population is over the age of 65 compared, 17.3% of Walla Walla County’s population is over the age of 65, compared to 14.8% of Washington as a whole. Trails can provide a low impact, easy way for elders to remain active as they age.



Race

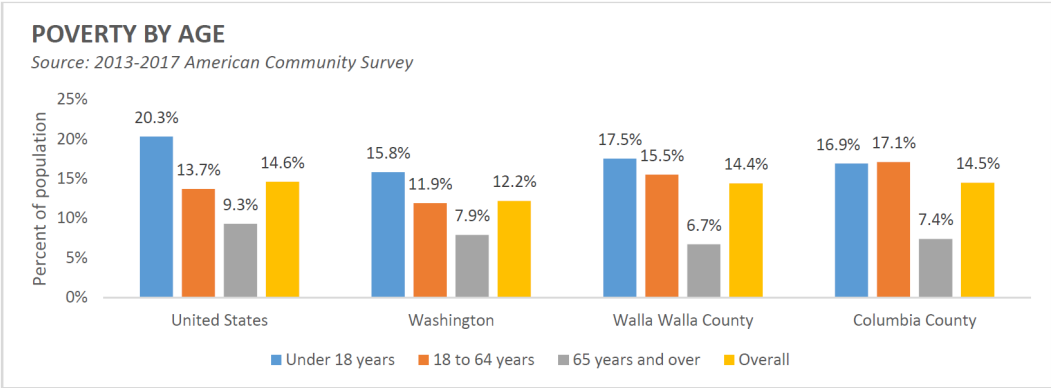
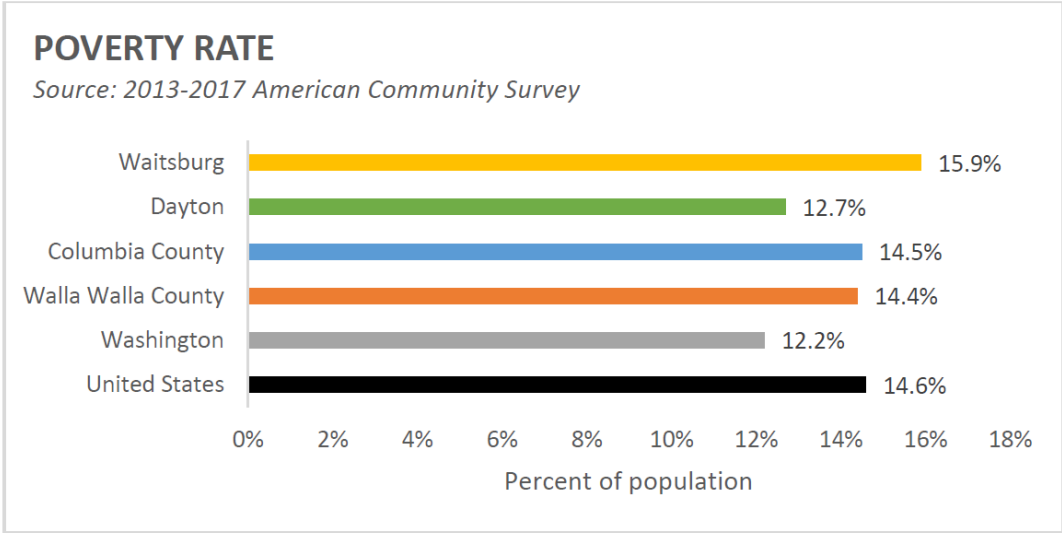
Columbia County and Walla Walla County have a higher proportion of residents who identify as White compared to Washington as a whole. Waitsburg (4.9%), Dayton (9.8%), and Columbia County (7.4%) have lower proportions of residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino compared to Walla Walla County (21.1%).



Socioeconomics

Income level is strongly linked to chronic condition prevalence and risk factors. For example, a higher proportion of those who live below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) have asthma and cancer compared to those living above the FPL. Populations living below the FPL may also have limited resources to access healthy food, transportation, and recreation.

There is a strong and consistent link between poverty and poor health outcomes both globally and within Columbia and Walla Walla Counties. Due to cultural and social barriers, the cost of healthcare, fewer education opportunities, poor living conditions, and many other factors, those living in poverty often have significantly worse health outcomes and shorter lifespans. People living in poverty often have less access to outdoor recreation.





	Washington	Columbia County	Walla Walla County
Poor or Fair Health	14%	16%	16%
Adult Obesity	27%	32%	26%
Physical Inactivity	18%	25%	20%
Diabetes Prevalence	9%	12%	10%
Access to Exercise Opportunities	89%	66%	76%
Median Household Income	\$61,400	\$45,500	\$49,800
Children in Poverty	19%	26%	21%

Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

Health Impacts

Sources: Columbia County Community Health Report 2018, Walla Walla Community Health Report 2018

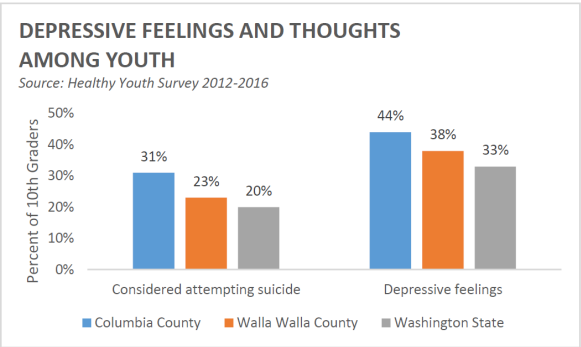
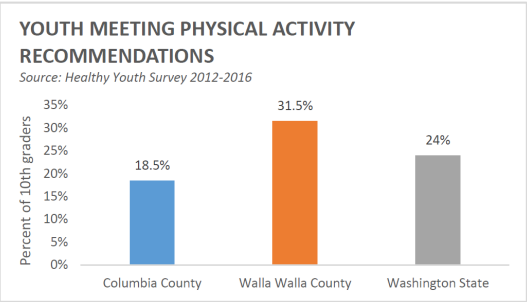
Youth

Regular physical activity can help children and adolescents improve cardiopulmonary fitness, build strong bones and muscles, control weight, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, and reduce the risk of developing health conditions such as heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. In addition, Students who are physically active tend to have better grades, school attendance, cognitive performance (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Association Between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance, 2010). In relation to physical activity, only 18.5% of 10th graders in Columbia County are meeting physical activity recommendations (60 minutes or more of physical activity per day).

“5 minutes walking in nature improves mood, self-esteem, and relaxation. Frequent exposure to nature reduces anxiety and depression, while promoting a sense of wellbeing and fulfillment. Physical activity in a green space can reduce stress and lowers cortisol levels by 15%.”

(Healthy Parks, Healthy People Resources, National Park Service)

Both Columbia and Walla Walla counties have higher rates of 10th graders considering attempting suicide (31%, 23%) and reporting depressive feelings (44% and 38%) than Washington State (20% and 33%). Outdoor recreation can decrease stress and promote youth physical, mental and social health. Trails provide close to home, low cost recreation opportunities that are widely accessible to the community.



Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health

Where we live, go to school, and work affects our overall health, as does the safety and livability of our communities, whether we are economically stable or struggling to get by, have strong social connections, and how we are treated in society. These are determinants of health and help explain why certain segments of the population experience better health outcomes than others.

Individuals Living with a Disability

Disability refers to anyone with a visual, hearing, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living difficulty. Having different abilities may limit a person’s capacity to work and provide for themselves.

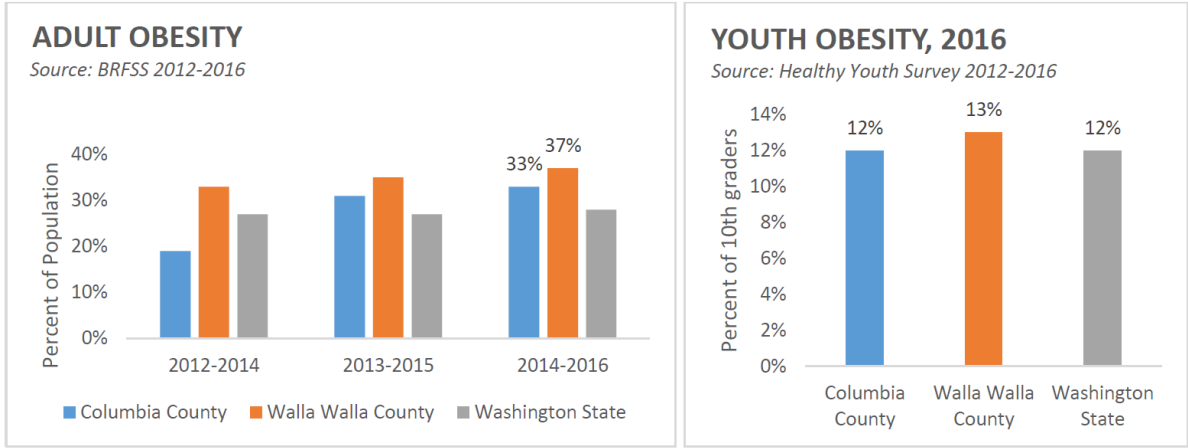
Chronic Illness

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a number calculated from an individual’s weight and height and can be used as a screening tool to distinguish if an individual’s weight might be putting them at risk for chronic health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, breathing problems, and certain cancers. 33% of adults in Columbia County and 37% of adults in Walla Walla County were obese. These obesity rates were higher than the Washington State average and has increased slightly over the past five years. Safe, walkable trails increase access to exercise. Exercise provides numerous health benefits including: reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, reducing the risk of type two diabetes, strengthening bones and muscles, improving mental health and mood, and increasing the chances of a longer life.

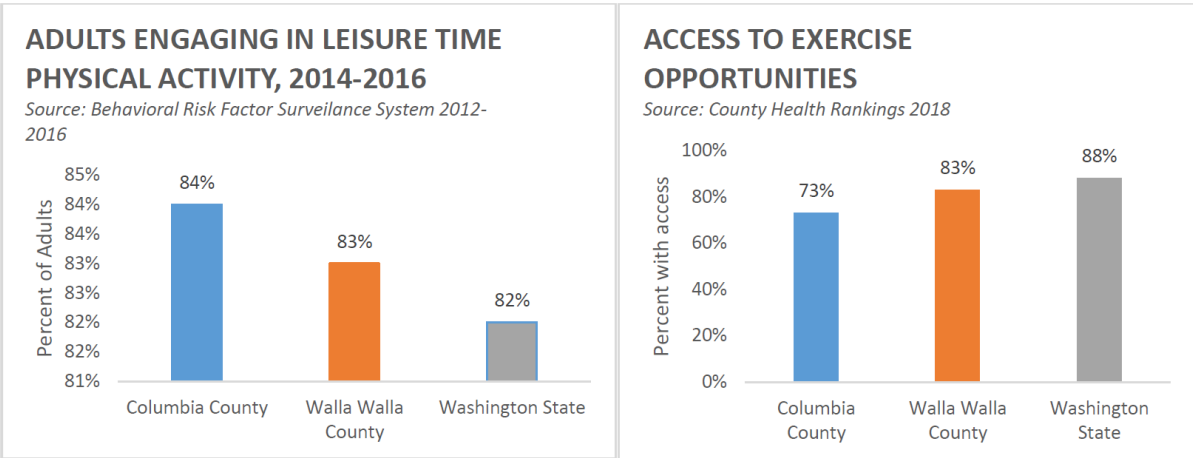
“Access to parks is a social equalizer, addressing health disparities and benefiting people’s health and wellbeing”

(Healthy Parks, Healthy People Resources, National Park Service)





84% of adults in Columbia County and 83% of adults in Walla Walla County report leisure-time physical activity which exceeded the Healthy People 2020 goal of 67%. However, exercise opportunities were accessible to only 73% of Columbia County and 83% of Walla Walla County compared to 88% of Washington State overall.

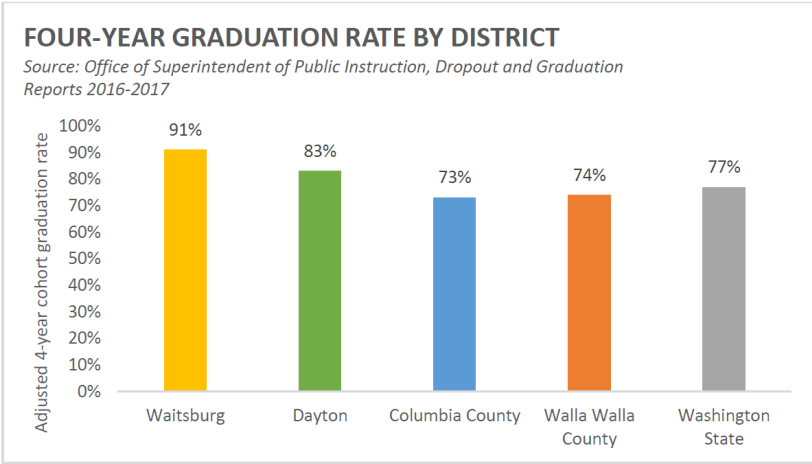


“A 30-minute visit to a park can improve heart health, circulation and lower cholesterol, blood glucose, and blood pressure. Walking in nature reduces inflammation and boosts your immune system, which decreases the risk of certain diseases and cancers. Interacting with a green space increases social interactions which can prevent diseases like dementia.”

*(Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: The challenge of making cities 'just green enough.' Landscape and Urban Planning, 2014)*

*Educational Attainment*

Although declining, four-year high school graduation rates in Dayton (83%) and Waitsburg (91%) are higher than Washington State (77%). Trails provide opportunity for safe routes to and from school. Schools provide an opportunity to leverage outdoor recreation opportunities on the trail (athletics, outdoor classroom activities etc.) Education attainment influences lifelong health and well-being. According to the Centers for Disease Control Report, Health, United States, 2011: “Highly educated persons are more likely to be employed and well-paid than the less educated. They have a higher sense of control over their health and lives and more social support...the well educated are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and avoid unhealthy ones.”



Walla Walla County Department of Community Health - Community Health Improvement Plan emphasizes Healthy Lifestyles as a community priority and the Every Body Walk! micro grant aims to increase physical activity and work towards change in Latino neighborhoods.

**Sources**

- 2013-2017 American Community Survey*
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2012-2016*
- Columbia County Community Health Report 2018*
- County Health Rankings and Roadmaps*
- Healthy Youth Survey 2012-2016*
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dropout and Graduation Reports 2016-2017*
- Washington State Department of Health Chronic Disease Profile: Columbia County*
- Walla Walla County Community Health Report 2018*



For updated information, please visit  
[www.portofcolumbia.org](http://www.portofcolumbia.org)





