



Public Participation Plan

1. Purpose

The Southwest Thurston County Trail Feasibility Study is an effort to identify potential trail routes in the southwest Thurston County area (Grand Mound, Rochester, and the Chehalis Reservation). The study will explore the feasibility of developing a shared-use path system, trailheads, associated local road improvements, road crossings, and pathways to serve the needs of the communities within the study area. The goal of this public participation plan is to:

- Promote greater awareness of and opportunities for community involvement in the trail planning process;
- Identify key destinations and community needs and values in relation to planning for a future shared use trail;
- Actively engage diverse sectors of the community in meaningful discussion; and
- Generate ideas and support for investment strategies.

2. Project Stakeholders and Roles

Project Team and Partners

Thurston County is the sponsor of this project. The project team will be made up of County and TRPC staff. TRPC will be responsible for the overall project and its management, including:

- Public engagement;
- Reporting and drafting; and
- Consultant management.

County staff will be responsible for keeping the Board of County Commissioners informed of the project's progress.

Technical Team

The technical team will be made up of transportation and community stakeholders. The technical team will help determine the feasibility and effectiveness of pathway alignments, connections, and basic design considerations. The team stakeholders will also provide general direction and advice to TRPC and the consultants throughout the planning process. Up to eight technical team meetings will be held.

Potential technical team members may include but are not limited to individuals from:

- Thurston County
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Chehalis Tribe
- Rochester School District
- Grand Mound-Rochester Chamber of Commerce
- Owner/operator of the Puget Sound & Pacific (PSAP) Railroad
- Southwest Thurston Regional Fire Authority
- Experience Olympia and Beyond
- Trail users, including equestrian community

Consultant

SCJ Alliance will serve as a consultant on this project and will be responsible for evaluating potential trail routes and developing an implementation strategy for preferred routes and connections. The consultant will also be the lead when reaching out to the owners/operators of the Puget Sound & Pacific Railroad.

The Public

The public is any and all who are interested in this project including area residents, visitors, businesses, etc. The public will provide input and feedback at public meetings, through surveys, and as part of the technical team to ensure the community's interests and needs are reflected in the project.

3. Outreach Tools and Strategy

This public participation plan recognizes the need for continuous public involvement throughout the project's life cycle. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, outreach by necessity will require flexibility to respond to changes in rules and safety regulations concerning public gatherings. The project team will use five tools to reach out to the public and stakeholders.

Postcards

At least one postcard will be mailed to community members in the Grand Mound-Rochester-Chehalis Reservation area. The postcard is intended to inform the community about the project and give them an opportunity to participate in the community survey or through other means.

Surveys

The project team anticipates conducting two surveys: a community survey and a school survey.

- **Community Survey.** TRPC will administer a community survey at the beginning of the planning process. The purpose of the community survey is to identify community priorities regarding route characteristics, important destinations to connect to the trail corridor, planning for future connections to other trails and communities, and the types of trail infrastructure to consider. The survey will be conducted online through Survey Monkey. Outreach will occur through a postcard to households within the planning area, social media, email distribution, and a press release.
- **School Survey.** A smaller subset of questions from the community survey will be administered by TRPC with the help of the Rochester School District. The purpose of the school survey is to ensure feedback from school-age students is represented in the trail planning process.

Other opportunities to use surveys for community feedback may be incorporated into public meetings or other outreach tools as appropriate. The consultant team will help TRPC identify appropriate online community engagement tools to collect feedback on proposed alignments and plan recommendations. Surveys may also be used to supplement initial community feedback to ensure representation from hard-to-reach portions of the population.

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews will be held to help identify the feasibility and effectiveness of pathway alignments, connections, and basic design considerations. Stakeholder interviews will also be used to ensure property owners directly adjacent by a potential trail alignment are able to weigh in on any proposals. Other stakeholder interviews or focus group meetings may also gather information from specific trail user groups such as cyclists, equestrians, or parents of Rochester School District students.

Online Presence

TRPC will host a webpage for the project duration where information and updates on the project will be posted. TRPC will also work with the various stakeholders and its partners to use online platforms (such as Facebook) to communicate with community members about meetings and opportunities to comment/provide feedback. The website will include an email subscription service to enable members of the public to receive email notices about project milestones. TRPC will also publish project updates on its social media platforms.

Policymaker Briefings

Up to two briefings will be provided. The project team, led by Thurston County staff, will provide policymakers updates as needed and requested. These updates are intended to inform policymakers of the project's progress and answer any questions they may have.

Public Meetings

Up to two public meetings will be held. Public meetings are intended to gather information from community members and to update the community on the project's status. Where possible and consistent with pandemic guidelines, public meetings will be held in person. Where in-person meetings are not possible, virtual meetings will be held.

Translation Services

The Rochester area has a Hispanic/Latino population where translating outreach materials into Spanish and having a translator at public meetings may be helpful in reaching out to underrepresented segments of the community. TRPC will work with partners to identify translation needs; if necessary, surveys and other outreach materials will be translated into Spanish.