Southwest Washington
Regional Transportation Council

Transportation Alternatives Program 2015 Application

Instructions

Complete application in the space provided. Applicants are limited to application form and 5 pages of attachments. Submit completed application and attachments electronically to dale.robins@rtc.wa.gov. You will receive an e-mail confirmation within one business day of submittal. If you do not receive confirmation or have questions about the application contact Dale Robins at 360-397-6067 x5212.

General Information

Project Title: Columbia River Renaissance Trail Extension & Grant Street Overlook

Project Location and Limits: Located west of Interstate-5 Bridge adjacent to the Columbia River

Project Length (miles): One-half mile

Agency: City of Vancouver

Contact Person: [redacted]

Telephone: [redacted] Email: [redacted]

Certified Acceptance Agency: City of Vancouver

Project Screening Criteria

Check all that apply.

- ☑ Project is consistent with the RTP
- ☑ Project contains at least one eligible Transportation Alternatives Category
- ☐ Project is directly related to the surface transportation system (except trails)
- ☑ Project does not supplement the construction of an existing project
- ☑ Project is open to public access

Cost Summary

Project Phase	Start Date	TAP Funds	Other Funds	Total Cost
Design	04/15/2015	$283,723		$283,723
Right of Way	07/01/2015			$0
Construction	11/01/2015	$516,277	$1,924,068	$2,440,345
Totals	n/a	$800,000	$1,924,068	$2,724,068
			Overall Match Ratio:	70.63%

Project Type

Check all that apply.

- [x] Bike/Pedestrian facilities
- [x] Safe routes for non-drivers
- [ ] Abandoned railroad corridors for trails
- [x] Turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas
- [ ] Control of outdoor advertising
- [ ] Historic preservation of transportation facilities
- [ ] Vegetation management practices
- [ ] Archaeological activities
- [ ] Environmental mitigation activity
- [ ] Recreational Trails Program
- [ ] Safe Routes to School Program

Project Information

1. Project Description:

The City of Vancouver requests funding for an extension of the Columbia River Renaissance Trail and Grant Street Overlook to form the backbone of the 7-acre Columbia Waterfront Park. The half mile trail extension will weave through the public park and link to Columbia Way on Port of Vancouver property (immediately west and under construction) to then merge with the existing trail alignment. The existing trail parallels the river from the I-5 Bridge five miles eastward to Wintler Park and welcomes over 800,000 annual users. Walkers and cyclists can enjoy river vistas and links to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and numerous public amenities throughout the heart of the city via the renowned Land Bridge.

The regional trail will have a 14 foot concrete/basalt surface, including security lighting, benches, planting walls, signage, landscaping, irrigation, and other enhancements appropriate for a dense urban environment of regional significance.

The trail widens to form Grant Street Overlook, designed with an arching terrace of basalt seating walls that frame a community gathering space and magnificent viewpoint. The overlook will also anchor Grant Street Pier, a cable-stayed design that will be constructed concurrently through separate funding. The pier will become the icon of the Vancouver waterfront, providing an illuminated 90-foot over-water cantilevered viewing platform reminiscent of a historic single-mast sailing vessel. The overlook and pier will offer a strong visual connection with expansive vistas of the living and working Columbia River and Mt. Hood.

The overall waterfront development is the city's number one ranked project with construction of Phase-1 breaking ground this fall. This multi-modal trail and overlook project, in concert with the public park, private development and Port improvements will serve as a catalyst to spark significant urban renewal to dramatically increase visitation between what will become Vancouver's front-porch and the city core. The trail and associated attractions will encourage non-motorized access and foster sustainability that will reach beyond jurisdictional boundaries. Together these improvements will turn our focus back to the Columbia River; a relationship that began with local tribes and Hudson's Bay Trading Company, and continues to support a prosperous and sustainable future for the residents of Vancouver.

Project Information

2. Describe how the project will improve the public travel experience, and travel options, including the benefit to the community:

Public access to this section of the downtown Columbia waterfront has been blocked by historic industrial use for over 100 years. The proposed project bridges the missing link in the regional trail system between the Vancouver waterfront and downtown destinations and attractions. It offers urban residents and our visitors a safe, convenient and accessible transportation alternative to experience expanded access to Vancouver's Columbia River waterfront.

This critical half-mile link facilitates continuous loops from the park connecting to numerous public services in the downtown core as well as a 3-mile loop eastward over the Land Bridge to Fort Vancouver, historic Officers Row and Esther Short Park, home of the Vancouver Farmer's Market. The overlook provides a premier community space for events and informal social gatherings. The trail also connects to the only accessible public fishing dock within the City of Vancouver being constructed at the west end of Waterfront Park.

Pedestrians and cyclists can also choose to continue along the existing 5-mile section of the trail eastward under the interstate bridge and parallel to the river to access multiple residential areas, restaurants, medical/dental, office and industrial complexes as well as Marine Park, Vancouver Water Resource Center and terminating at Wintler Park. The proposed trail extension will increase user visitation to maximize benefits realized through prior investments in the existing trail system, Land Bridge and mass transit infrastructure.

The overall waterfront redevelopment includes 32 acres and will be an economic engine for Vancouver, Clark County and the region. The combined impact of the regional trail system expansion, public park, and private residential and commercial development will result in economic growth to the entire community through increased tourism, job generation, and community pride and cohesion. The project will draw visitors from the entire Vancouver-Portland metropolitan area. Over 2,000 permanent jobs and an annual output estimated in excess of $185 million per year will be generated by the waterfront redevelopment project, with the regional trail being the lifeline.

3. Describe how the project provides a connection between modes, or improves transportation choices, or connects to land use services such as job locations, a civic center, library, grocery market, playground, retail center, medical office, school, and other. (Include modes and list of specific land uses connect within 1/2 mile of project):

Public access to the Vancouver Columbia waterfront west of I-5 has been blocked by historic industrial uses for three generations. The proposed trail extension, combined with the public park and private development will restore public access from downtown Vancouver to the waterfront and east to the existing regional trail alignment. These improvements offer safer, ADA, and non-vehicular transportation alternatives to urban residents, employees and visitors.

The proposed trail and overlook project will facilitate safe and convenient connections to The Vine, C-Tran's Bus Rapid Transit system, which is scheduled to be in operation in downtown Vancouver in 2016. The trail project also facilitates a link to the I-5 bike path that expands the service area south over the interstate bridge to the Portland metro area.

The existing regional trail alignment goes under the existing interstate bridge along the waterfront. The project affords the unique opportunity to leverage existing infrastructure by crossing the interstate at minimal expense to maximize this transportation corridor.

A half-mile radius from the proposed project area includes a variety of single and multi-family residential housing options, the full range of downtown amenities and employment opportunities such as movie theaters, restaurants, hotels, churches, retail and office buildings, and public amenities including Vancouver City Hall, historic Esther Short Park, Clark County Courthouse and Public Service Center, post office, Fort Vancouver Regional Library, Juvenile Justice Center, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and many other public resources. Also noteworthy is that Clark Community College, Hudson's Bay High School and Hough Elementary Schools are located just outside this half-mile service area.

Project Information

4. Describe how the project relates to an adopted plan such as the GMA plan, modal plan, neighborhood plan or other planning process. (Include name of Plan and attach a copy of page from plan that including project by name):

This project is the highest ranking urban development project in the City's 2014 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation & Natural Areas Plan and provides some of the most valued park amenities identified through a 2014 survey of 1,700 residents. It continues as the top priority of the Vancouver City Council and is recognized as a key component of the Vancouver City Center Vision Plan and Economic Development Plan.

Trail planning documents reference the significance of the Columbia River Renaissance Trail and restoration of the urban area connection to the Columbia River, including the Vancouver Walking & Bicycle Master Plan, which is part of Vancouver's 20-year Transportation System Plan, and the Regional Trail & Bikeway Systems Plan prepared jointly between the City of Vancouver and Clark County. These documents reflect a community vision of the trail extending eighteen miles east to the gateway of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, and approximately ten miles northwest through Frenchman's Bar Regional Park and Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge. Other documents that support the extension of the Columbia River Renaissance Trail include: 2014 City Council Strategic Direction, Shoreline Master Program, Clark County Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan, and Portland-Vancouver Bi-State Regional Trails System Plan.

Link to referenced document list and excerpts: www.cityofvancouver.us/2015tapgrant .

5. Describe to what extent the project will improve mobility for disadvantage populations, including elderly, disabled minority, and low income populations:

The Columbia River Renaissance Trail Extension and Overlook project provides a pedestrian and cycle friendly alternative to a broad spectrum of urban residents, employees and visitors. The regional trail, overlooks and all adjoining park improvements are ADA compliant, designed with an all-weather accessible walking surface providing full access opportunities to residents with all levels of ability.

The census tracks included within the project service area (Esther Short NRS) identify approximately 58.2% in low to moderate income levels (versus 47.7 citywide) with 27.7% at or below poverty level; 11% over citywide (2014 Esther Short Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Amendment). Approximately 29% of the housing units within the project service area are low income housing, including several which specifically serve elderly populations.

6. List affordable house complex and number of housing units that are within 1/2 mile of project:

Six affordable housing facilities (536 units) are located within one-half mile of the Columbia River Renaissance Trail Extension project. Four additional projects are in the planning and development stages adding 354 units. These projects offer a total of 890 units; approximately 29% of the housing units available within the census tracks encompassing the one-half mile service area.

(Data was provided by the City of Vancouver CDBG staff and Vancouver Housing Authority. Names and locations of facilities cannot be listed due to resident security protocol).

Project Information

7. Identify the safety issues addressed by project (collision data, lack of adequate safe crossing or access, lack of separated facility, high speed or volume, other):

Vancouver is a riverfront city bordering 17 miles of Columbia River shoreline, yet county-wide only two miles offer public access; the closest being Marine Park located 3 1/2 miles from downtown. Likewise, public connections between the project site and downtown have been restricted by a deep industrial history for generations.

This isolation has resulted in fragmented and indirect non-vehicular routes between the waterfront renewal area and the many community facilities and attractions available downtown. As is, the pedestrian route to the existing regional trail alignment passes through active parking lots, undeveloped lands, and busy street crossings without a defined path or way finding. The new public park and private urban development will amplify the already critical need for improved non-vehicular circulation and safety, and provides an opportunity to correct it.

The project site, a former industrial property, was deemed clean following remediation by the Department of Ecology, including archaeological, cultural review processes and consultation with local tribes. Pedestrian friendly streets have been punched through the railroad berm at Esther and Grant Streets to lay the framework for public access from downtown Vancouver from the north. The site is a clean slate to fulfill the community vision to reconnect to its urban shoreline.

8. Describe how the project addresses the safety issues identified:

Although road safety audits do not typically apply to this type of transportation improvement, the intent is satisfied in that the trail expansion will establish a safe, clearly signed and interconnected route for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorized modes of transportation for users of all abilities. The trail will replace undefined and disjointed paths to the existing trail system and major street intersections, but otherwise separated from the existing street network to minimize risks of interaction between pedestrians/cyclists and vehicular traffic and maximize safety.

When this missing link is completed, the Columbia River Renaissance Trail alone will stretch 5½ miles, and facilitate many more interconnections and loops throughout the downtown community. Sidewalk connections to historic Esther Short Park, downtown Vancouver and mass transit locations will also be reinforced.

The concrete/basalt trail surface will provide a safe, durable ADA accessible interconnected regional trail system for all types of non-motorized recreational users. Another notable benefit of this project which encourages non-motorized uses in an urban area is a direct reduction in demand and expenditures for roads and parking areas.

In addition to the trail, the Grant Street Overlook will encourage a community connection to the Columbia River, the nation's 4th largest navigable river, with a rich historical significance to this community.

Shoreline stabilization, funded through the public park development project, will protect and extend the longevity of the proposed trail improvements and maximize the investment of resources, including removal of concrete rubble and invasive species and replacement with natural stone and native plant materials.

9. Readiness:

- ☐ Design at 70% or higher
- ☐ Right of way acquisition complete or not needed
- ☐ Environmental permits approved

Please explain:

Design of the regional trail and overlook are currently at 30-50% complete. Vancouver City Council has approved funding and contracts to bring them to 100% by August 2015. Transfer of the property title from Waterfront, LLC to the City of Vancouver is scheduled for completion July 2015. The city has been granted a 25 year lease of DNR tidelands with a final approval letter pending design completion in August 2015.

Trail & Overlook Design	August 2015 – 100% Complete
Trail & Overlook Permits Submitted	Sept. 2015 – Final Approval
Trail/Overlook Construction Period	Oct. 2015 – June 2017

Project Information

10. Describe how the local community and other agencies have been involved in the planning process for the project. List any opposition to the project and how it was overcome:

Revitalization of the urban shoreline and expansion of the regional trail system have been identified in key city planning documents for decades. This project is the City of Vancouver's highest priority project for economic sustainability and an enriched quality of life for our community.

Active planning and funding efforts began in 2008, including numerous public meetings and consultations with citizen groups, stakeholders, and community and city leadership. The much anticipated waterfront development has evolved through a strong partnership between the City of Vancouver, Columbia Waterfront LLC (private partnership), Port of Vancouver, Fort Vancouver NHS, Waterfront Community Resources Team, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission.

11. Describe how the project improves public health and increase physical activity:

The overall waterfront development, with the trail and overlook being the conduit, will foster social engagement and more active lifestyle habits. Vancouver is already a popular location for regional walking and running events such as the Vancouver USA Marathon. The trail expansion and improved connectivity will further promote Vancouver as an active and vibrant community. Personal and community health benefits will be realized through regional trail system connectivity and improved mobility and destination opportunities, offering tangible long term improvements to physical and mental health, work force productivity, and a reduction in chronic disease.

A community survey conducted for the 2014 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan identified hiking and biking trails as the highest ranking park amenity in the park system. With the obesity rate nearing 30% in the state of Washington, this project offers literally 1,000-plus steps toward reducing this trend.

12. Describe how the project includes design elements that contribute to quality of life:

This project creates the lifeline and signature public space of Vancouver's largest single waterfront redevelopment project. A highly degraded and inaccessible waterfront will be transformed into a community gathering space that encourages active lifestyles, economic sustainability and an overall improved quality of life for the community. As the front porch of downtown Vancouver, the project area encourages community engagement, social venues, ethnic and cultural harmony, stronger families, community pride and social opportunities for all residents, including disabled and disadvantaged individuals and their families.

The trail extends through Columbia Waterfront Park to offer a fresh perspective of the Columbia River; providing access to viewpoints and many urban park amenities along the trail route, including open lawns and seating walls for active play, social gathering or personal respite. It also leads to the only public fishing dock in the City of Vancouver, located at the west end of the park development. Interactive displays along the trail, as well as the overall theme of the park design will highlight the aquatic, ecological and historic features of the site to foster a community legacy of stewardship.

Project Information

13. List all funding partners contributing to the project:

Funding Source	Amount
City of Vancouver - Match, Design & Construction	$674,068
Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) - Pending budget appropriation	$500,000
Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP)	$750,000

Other Information

You may use this space to provide any additional project information considered worth noting:

ECONOMIC IMPACT: The Waterfront Development will create significant new construction jobs and new business activity. A 2013 study by Johnson Economics reported the construction activities at the waterfront redevelopment area will generate over 4,580 direct jobs, paying an estimated $244 million in labor income, and contributing $318 million in value-added output. With an additional 2,600 indirect jobs generated by construction activities, the total economic impact to Clark County from construction activities would be over $927 million. Even more importantly, ongoing business activity at the completed waterfront is estimated to generate 1,364 direct jobs, contributing $64.8 million in annual labor income, and $59.6 million in value-added output to the Clark County economy. Including indirect and induced impacts, a total of 2,043 permanent jobs will result from the large urban redevelopment, with total annual output estimated to be in excess of $185.5 million per year.

TRAIL COUNTS: Average usage of the Columbia River Renaissance Trail from 2010 through 2013 was 811,002, or 2,222 average daily trips (National Bicycle & Pedestrian Documentation Methodology). Using an OFM County growth rate of 0.99% the estimated use of the trail will increase a minimum of 20% to 971,265 annual trips (includes a modest adjustment rate of 0.05% to account for increased tourism and downtown daytime user visitation that will exceed county growth estimates).

FUNDING PARTNERS:
• Washington State Department of Commerce (CERB) grant was awarded for design, permitting and construction ($985,000), and a TCSP ($750,000) grant has been secured for construction related to the regional trail. Grant funding through the Federal Lands Access Project (FLAP-$500,000) is also pending budget allocation for trail construction.
• Additional funding for Waterfront Park are being pursued through Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grants, including a Washington State Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP-$500,000) local park , and an Aquatic Lands Enhancement Act (ALEA-$500,000) grant for water access.
• Columbia Waterfront LLC ($3,000,000) and the City of Vancouver ($4,000,000) are both investing in the design and construction of the Waterfront Park, Grant Street Pier and associated infrastructure and grant match obligations.
• Washington State Capital Budget support of $2.5 Million for park improvements and shoreline stabilization pending final approval.

ENVIRONMENTAL: The Columbia River is a significant migration channel for anadromous fish and many threatened and endangered species. Shoreline stabilization to support the regional trail will involve the removal of decades of concrete rubble and invasive species with replacement with natural stone and native plant species. These improvements will not only minimize erosion and filter runoff to improve water quality and riparian habitat, but also significantly enhance the trail experience and sustainability of the train infrastructure.

Transportation Alternative Program - 2015

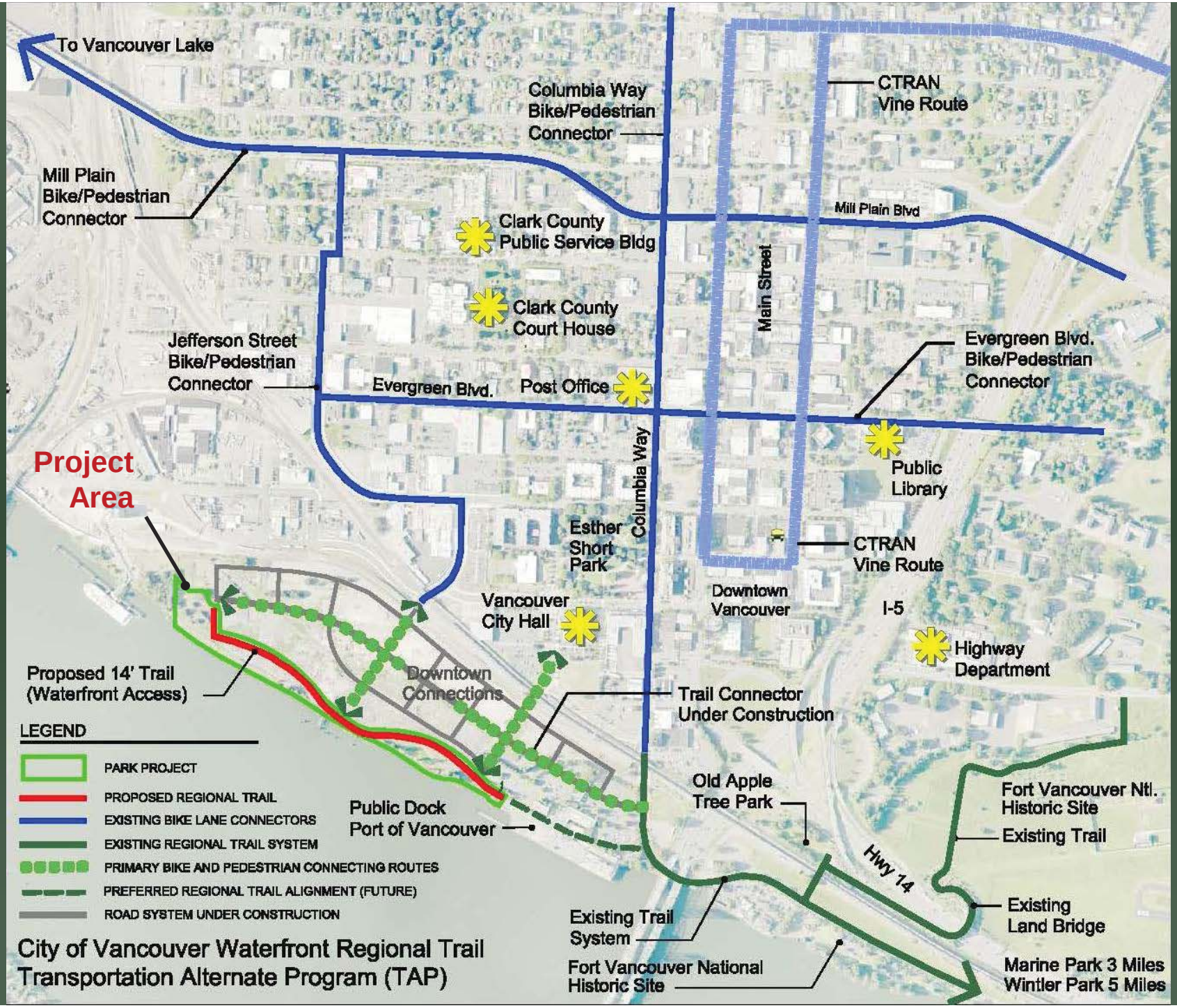
Columbia River Renaissance Trail Extension / Grant Street Overlook

City of Vancouver Parks & Recreation

Project Scope

Within the Context of the Columbia Waterfront Park Master Plan

Context Map: Interconnections with Downtown Services & Attractions



Trail & Grant Street Overlook

Fishing Dock

Trail Overlook (Esther Street terminus)

Waterfront Trail

Grant Street Pier and Overlook

User Opportunities