

Transportation Alternatives Program 2021 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 564-397-5212.

General Information

Project Title: Renaissance Trail Segment 4 - Design

Project Location and Limits: Lower River Road (SR501), Vancouver, WA 98660

Project Length (miles): 850 Linear Feet

Agency: Port of Vancouver

Contact Person: Jim Hagar

Telephone: 360-823-5313 Email: JHagar@portvanusa.com

Certified Acceptance Agency: Port 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	01/01/2022	\$210,000	\$70,000	\$280,000
Right of Way			\$0	\$0
Construction	06/01/2024		\$1,800,000	\$1,800,000
Totals	n/a	\$210,000	\$1,870,000	\$2,080,000
Overall Match Ratio:				89.90%

Project Type

Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bike/Pedestrian facilities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vegetation management practices |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe routes for non-drivers | <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned railroad corridors for trails | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental mitigation activity |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational Trails Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Control of outdoor advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe Routes to School Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic preservation of transportation facilities | |

Project Information

1. Project Description:

The Port of Vancouver (port) requests funding for engineering designs for a 12-foot wide multi-modal path at Segment 4 of the Renaissance Trail on the southern shoulder of State Route 501, also known as Lower River Road, in Vancouver, Washington. Approximately 850 feet long, design work for this segment will require innovative solutions as the challenging work area includes steep slopes, heavy vegetation, wetlands, geotechnical issues and stormwater. A clear engineering and geotechnical plan will be created to construct an environmentally sustainable path for both local and visiting pedestrians and cyclists to enjoy, while protecting the wetlands and habitat. A elevated level bridge will be designed to safeguard the wetlands while complementing the natural surroundings.

Segment 4 is one of the port's six trail segments on Lower River Road. This section of Lower River Road measures 4.5 miles with a two-lane unlimited access bituminous asphalt roadway between West 26th Avenue and Frenchman's Bar Regional Park. This roadway provides the only access to popular recreational areas such as Frenchman's Bar Regional Park and Vancouver Lake, as well as multiple large industrial businesses.

This segment is also a key link in a 50-mile continuous trail system planned to connect five cities: Washougal, Camas, Vancouver, Ridgefield and La Center, called the Lewis and Clark Regional Trail. In 2016, Clark County was awarded a grant from the National Park Service Technical Assistance Grant Program and created the Lewis and Clark Regional Trail concept, which was finalized in 2020. Attached is the map of the regional trail and location of Segment 4.

Map of Lewis and Clark Regional Trail – (Appendix A)

Project Information

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

This project will improve the public travel experience while increasing safety. Due to its current unfinished state, travelers are in a position where they must leave the marked multi-modal path and adjacent to vehicle traffic within a 3-foot shoulder. This does not allow much space for cyclists passing slow moving travelers, forcing them into the lane of traffic causing more dangerous road conditions for all parties, including vehicles and trucks. The port's Segment 4 design will include a 12-foot wide path for pedestrians and cyclists to enjoy their surroundings as they travel safely to their destinations. A portion of this segment will require a bridge over wetlands which will create a destination spot to enjoy sightseeing and nature.

Many recreational runners, walkers and cyclist utilize Lower River Road to access recreational sites that provide waterfront, fishing, picnic grounds and sports facilities. This unfunded section of the multi-use path will allow individuals and families safe travel to access these areas. Extending this safe pathway invites the entire community to enjoy the area and adds to the inventory of trails in Clark County. This segment will also create a safer and more attractive area for events such as Vancouver USA Marathon, Columbia River Triathlon & Fitness, Dragon boat races and any future events coming to Vancouver.

Ultimately, the port intends on extending this pathway to connect to the existing Frenchman's Bar pathway, which begins at the Flushing Channel (see Appendix A). This pathway will provide the public safe access to Vancouver Lake, Frenchman's Bar, Shillapoo Natural Area, and the southeastern end of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and other open natural space and residential areas.

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):

Lower River Road offers views, access to industrial sites, natural areas, and some of the region's best recreational sites: Vancouver Lake, Frenchman's Bar, Shillapoo Natural Area and the southern eastern portion of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. However, the way to get there is treacherous at the unfinished portions of the trail.

Segment 4 will provide a safe trail connection to popular regional recreational sites and provide connections to industrial sites. This area on Lower River Road is growing every year with industrial commercial tenants and will offer their workers a safe path for walking, running and biking which; in turn, will attract businesses who want to provide recreational outlets for their employees.

During peak season, recreational parking can get full and unsafe parking will occur. By supporting the community with a continuous safe path to the desirable recreational and industrial sites will encourage alternative transportation choices. Paired with access to transit services at Fourth Plain and Mill Plain, this will result in less motorized vehicle traffic.

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):

The Renaissance Trail is included in the port's 2018 Strategic Plan and the 2020 Clark County Lewis and Clark Regional Trail plan (see links below). The port has continually involved the community and many partners in the creation of the strategic plan. There were several outreach events and opportunities for the community to provide feedback and comments. The community and local bike groups are very supportive in the port's efforts to improve alternative transportation choices on Lower River Road. Clark County has involved over 70 partners in planning for the Lewis and Clark Regional Trail. This extensive trail will cover 50 miles connecting five cities: Washougal, Camas, Vancouver, Ridgefield and La Center. The 70 partnerships range from cities and ports, to private firms and neighborhood agencies throughout Clark County. Of these 50 miles, the port has approximately four miles in total, with two miles complete. Segment 4 will contribute to finishing Clark County's vision for the Lewis and Clark Regional Trail.

State Route 501, Fourth Plain and Mill Plain Boulevards are designated on RTC's Regional Transportation System as Region Highway Systems, perpetuating challenges to safe bike commuting and access to recreational areas. Separated safe multi-modal paths are essential on these heavily used transportation systems.

Link to 2020 Clark County Regional Trail Plan (Appendix B)
<https://clark.wa.gov/public-works/lewis-and-clark-regional-trail>

Link to the port's Strategic Plan – Page 15 (Appendix C)
<https://www.portvanusa.com/assets/POV-StrategicPlan-091118.pdf>

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

The project is within the Vancouver city limits and according to the RTC website, the poverty level is at 12.7%, with Clark County at 9.2% and Washington State at 9.8%. To drill down further, this portion of the Renaissance Trail is connected to the Fruit Valley neighborhood, a low-income diverse neighborhood with 86% of students attending Fruit Valley Elementary School on subsidized lunch programs, according to Vancouver School District website. A family center, which provides food, clothing, and other support services to low income families, is within the school itself to help elevate services in this neighborhood.

Currently, Segment 4 is not safe for any wheelchairs or slow-moving pedestrians or cyclists and would force one to turn around or risk being on the road with high speed traffic (45 MPH). The project design will create a safe ADA multi-modal path connection connecting to the current ADA path at Gateway Avenue, allowing travelers to continue or to popular local family destinations.

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

This segment is in between the Fruit Valley neighborhood and several of Clark County's popular recreational spots with heavy commercial industrial in the middle. This segment connects the Fruit Valley neighborhood and the west end of Fourth Plain and Mill Plain to provide safe passage to family recreational sites. Although there is no housing within a half mile of the project, there is a direct connection to some within a few miles away: McCallister Village and Open House Ministries.

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):

The project is located on a high-volume freight corridor with access to industrial, marine and recreational activities. There is an existing approximately 3-foot wide bike lane on Lower River Road that provides perceptively inadequate safety for inexperienced cyclists and pedestrians. This is extremely dangerous for groups or families traveling with strollers or young riders. Having inadequate space on the roadway for pedestrians and cyclists creates dangerous vehicle conditions as drivers avoid travelers on the shoulder. These vehicles range from passenger cars, industrial trucks, to 18-wheelers traveling 45 MPH or higher.

Additionally, Lower River Road is a flat, long stretch without stop signs, intersections, or other deterrents outside of speed limit signs to control excessive speeds. The roadway has a posted speed limit of 45 MPH and is increasingly utilized by heavy machinery, truck, and non-commercial vehicles as a result of commercial growth in the area. Traffic data from the RTC website shows in 2018 at the intersection of SR501 and Old Lower River Road 5,477 total vehicle trips were taken from west and east legs. This is an increase of approximately 2,000 trips (56%) from 2012. With continued strong industrial growth, not only in this area; but regionally as well, the vehicle trip count is only going to grow at a faster rate within the next five years, making this project essential to keep pedestrians and cyclists safe.

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

The current section of the trail is on the 3-foot shoulder on Lower River Road. Most of this section has a steep slope just few more feet from the shoulder which makes it more dangerous as there is no room to maneuver out of harm's way.

The new 12-foot wide path will provide a separate and larger passage for pedestrians and cyclists to access employment, point of business and recreations sites. Similar to the current completed path from West 26th to Gateway Avenue, signs, vegetation and striping will add to the safety benefits of the path. Stop signs and trail identification will be used to promote pedestrian/cyclist safety and vehicle/truck awareness. Bollards or other barriers to vehicles access will be installed at each approach.

The safe pathway would also separate slow-moving pedestrians and cyclists from high speed traffic along Lower River Road, greatly reducing a safety conflict between high speed vehicles, trucks and trailers. There are 3-foot shoulders on each side which does not allow much room for cars to give space between pedestrians and cyclists with passing traffic going each way.

9. Readiness:

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

Please explain:

The grant request is for design, permitting, geotechnical and environment reports for this section of the Renaissance Trail, known as Segment 4. This section is through a wetland area and will need extra attention to not only protect the natural land but design for ease of access and enjoyment for pedestrians and cyclists.

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:

The Renaissance Trail is a part of the port's 2018 Strategic Plan and Clark County's Regional Trail Plan, which has been an ongoing collaboration since conception in the 1970s. In 2016, Clark County made it a top priority in the Regional Trail and Bike-way Systems Plan. Not only does this 50-mile trail system connect to five cities, two federal natural sanctuaries, small communities, recreational sites, viewpoints, and marine activities, it will connect out to the Bi-State Regional Trail System including Oregon and Columbia River Gorge Loop Trail.

The port is doing its part by designing and constructing its four miles of the Renaissance Trail in six segments. The port communicates with the local community through Board of Commissioners meetings, social media, new releases, neighborhood associations and special interest groups. There has been no opposition to the projects, rather there is continuing interest and support to complete and provide safe connections for the public to enjoy and add to Vancouver's trail inventory.

The port has received support from many local avid bicyclist and bicyclist committees such as: Clark Communities Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Todd Bachmann, Vancouver USA Volkspotters, and Vancouver Bicycle Club.

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

This project will add another safe multi-modal segment path to the current trail system for pedestrians and bicyclists to enjoy. With more separated paths off the main road, it is safer to travel by foot or bike and many will be traveling farther. For local walkers, this section is where one might stop and turn around for safety concerns, cutting their walk or bike ride short. This section is in a wetland area and will provide a bridge over greenway to enjoy the surroundings and natural habitat.

Additionally, several other private employers reside on SR501 including Clark Public Utilities, Hickey Marine, Tidewater, Hawthorne Gardening Company, Farwest Steel, Subaru, and many others where workers enjoy a walk or bike during or after work.

Finally, it is a critical piece of pathway linking neighborhoods to highly used recreational areas. During summer months the recreational areas can be crowded with cars and leave sparse parking options. With a continuous safe path to one's destination, it will encourage alternative transportation other than cars.

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

This section of the trail goes through rough terrain wetland and will require a bridge to protect the area and keep the integrity of the natural environment. The bridge will be designed to blend in with the environment to create a sightseeing area for the natural vegetation and species. The local community, along with industrial employees, will enjoy the path with greenery and sounds of nature. In an industrial area, this will be a welcome spot to enjoy nature.

Project Information

13. List all funding partners contributing to the project:

Funding Source	Amount
Port of Vancouver	70000.00

Other Information

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

At this time the full cost of this project is not in the port's 2022 budget. Without funding, it most likely will not be added and will need to wait until next funding cycle.

For the future construction of Segment 4 the port will seek out funding from RTC and Recreation Conservation Office (RCO).

OVERVIEW MAP FOUR

VANCOUVER LAKE



Appendix B

Clark County Lewis and Clark Trail

BACKGROUND

The idea of a trail that followed the route of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark has been a topic of conversation for trail planners, history scholars and recreation enthusiasts in Clark County, Washington for many years. The first Clark County comprehensive parks and recreation plan was adopted in 1965. The National Trails System Act of 1968 spurred further conversations as the addition to U.S. Code, Volume 16, Sections 1241-1251, provided a means to establish trails in both urban and rural settings for people of varying ages, interests, skills and physical abilities. The act promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of trails while encouraging greater public access. The act also includes national historic trails that recognize original routes of travel of historic significance including past routes of exploration – such as the Lewis and Clark expedition.

The Shoreline Management Act was enacted by Legislature in 1971 and the county adopted a Shoreline Master Program in 1974. The plan includes public access, recreational use, historical and cultural elements as well as conservation and ecologically sensitive features.

The Board of Clark county Commissioners enacted the Conservation Futures program in October of 1985, instituting a conservation futures property tax levy. Per the enabling statute, RCW 84.34, conservation futures funds are dedicated to the acquisition of farm, forest, and open space lands. In 2006 the Board of County Commissioners renamed the program the Legacy Lands program. Since enactment of the conservation futures levy, the Legacy Lands program has helped acquire almost 5,000 acres of high-quality shorelines, greenways, open space, and fish and wildlife habitat. Among these are key portions of the Lewis and Clark Trail alignment.

Discussions began in 1989 to prepare for the 200 year anniversary celebration to commemorate the day that Captain George Vancouver's lieutenant, William Broughton named the area for his commander. Broughton was tasked with charting the stretches of the Columbia River between present-day Oregon and Washington. His detailed maps included landmarks such as Mt. Hood, Mt. Baker, Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Rainier. Broughton's map of the Columbia River was familiar to Lewis and Clark, and was resourceful as they navigated the region.

Due to the significance of the 200 year anniversary, the City of Vancouver worked with Kingsley, England to gain copies of historical documents that validated the International Maritime Bicentennial.

To support the commemoration, the City of Vancouver successfully applied for State Capital Development grant funds to complete a vision plan for the Columbia River Renaissance Trail. A project committee, comprised of community leaders was formed to develop a cohesive design. Key goals for the trail and the riverfront's rebirth included:

- Develop an attractive, vital and safe urban waterfront.
- Facilitate contiguous public access to and enjoyment of, the Columbia River.
- Preserve, promote and interpret the historic and environmental importance of the Columbia River Basin, a fast region of enormous geographic diversity.

Kelly Puntene, project manager and assistant to the City of Vancouver Manager at that time shares that the project vision was to *“create a vision of the Columbia River waterfront that provides public access as a part of the urban plan for Vancouver and Clark County. The final plan focused on the history, recreational value, environmental sensitivity, economic vitality and a strong sense of identity specific to Vancouver, Washington.”*

On October 31, 1992, the City of Vancouver dedicated the Capt. Vancouver monument, “Boat of Discovery; 200 years to the day that Lt. William Broughton named the area for his commander. The Bicentennial dedication asked visitors to imagine the City of Vancouver 10 years into the future, when visitors would be able to walk along 12 miles of the city's shoreline. Significant portions of the envisioned trail have been completed by both the City and the Port of Vancouver however there are still gaps between completed trails that total nearly three miles between Vancouver Lake Park and I-205 as of this date. The Discovery Historic Loop annual celebrations continued to connect residents and visitors to the rich history of the area, including Fort Vancouver, Officers Row, Esther Short Park, Pearson Air Field, and more.

Appendix C

POV 2018 Strategic Plan

IMPLEMENT THE VISION OF A DESTINATION WATERFRONT AT TERMINAL 1.

STRATEGIES

1. Build a public marketplace on the Columbia River.
2. Create a financially independent business model at Terminal 1 by securing long-term partnerships to support the operating and capital costs.
3. Support public enjoyment and tourism through activities such as river cruises and events at Terminal 1.
4. Explore partnerships in arts, culture, and history interpretation.

PURPOSE

To create an iconic destination that honors the port's birthplace, serves as a gateway to the state, creates access to the Columbia River, and promotes tourism and economic development.

PROVIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES ON PORT PROPERTIES.

STRATEGIES

1. Create a Trails and Access Plan.
2. Identify opportunities and events to increase public access on port property.
3. Seek funding opportunities to expand the Renaissance Trail as well as the portside trail system.

PURPOSE

To provide opportunities for the community to experience and connect with habitat, waterways, and other natural amenities on port property.



April 14, 2021

Dale Robins, Senior Transportation Planner
Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
Clark County Public Service Center
1300 Franklin St., 1st floor
Vancouver, WA 98660

Dear Mr. Robins,

The Vancouver Bicycle Club supports the Port of Vancouver's goal to plan, build, and extend the multi-use path along Lower River Road.

There is no designated bike lane beyond the path's current end point near Far West Steel. After that we ride the shoulder often veering into the regular travel lanes navigating around the frequent debris. Our club includes newbies, experienced riders, and some trike riders. Riding next to industrial traffic, boat traffic, or just young drivers testing their engines can feel and be threatening. Beyond our club members seeking exercise and fun, there are also people who do not drive and use bicycles or the bus line as far as it goes to commute to work out on Lower River Road. They work when it's sunny and nice, but also on dark days when it's raining. The path makes all travelers safer.

VBC also enthusiastically supports the larger Renaissance Trail and Lewis and Clark Regional Trail system linking Vancouver and the small cities of which this segment would be another part. The entire Frenchman's Bar/Vancouver Lake area is such a unique recreational opportunity. Visitors to our area can experience the river, lake, beaches, and wildlife in less than 5 miles from downtown. Not everyone lives in what often feels like a national park. We have a real gem here and people love it.

While bike riders clearly benefit from separated pathways, we are also teachers, business owners, and community members who understand that transportation safety is never just about recreational users or residents of that one area. This effort benefits our entire region.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Jan Verrinder for Board Members of the Vancouver Bicycle Club

18 April 2021

Dale Robins, Senior Transportation Planner
Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
Clark County Public Service Center
1300 Franklin St., 1st floor
Vancouver, WA 98660

Dear Mr. Robins,

I am writing in support of the Port of Vancouver's plans to design and construct the next segment (segment 4) of the multi-use path along Lower River Road (SR501). Our walking group is very pleased to see these segments being built over the past several years to help meet the needs of both cyclists and pedestrians.

Currently, the multi-use path ends just past Far West Steel along Lower River Road and cyclists and walkers must then use the established three-foot shoulder bike path on the highway. Walking or riding three-feet from fast vehicles, delivery trucks, 18-wheel trucks and refuse trucks heading to the Waste Connections materials recovery center can be challenging. The current bike path on the highway is not family-friendly and is used primarily by experienced cyclists who have the skills to navigate this busy transportation corridor. This next multi-use segment will provide another stretch of safe pathway and offers a safe alternative to walking along the shoulder of the highway.

I hope RTC will support the port in helping to fund this next phase of the pathway. It should be noted that the multi-use path is also part of the larger Renaissance Trail and Lewis and Clark Regional Trail system linking the towns of La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Camas and Washougal.

The walking and Volkswalk community is anxious to see the multi-use path finished not only for the regional amity it will provide, but for the safety it brings to our community.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Baltes
President, Vancouver USA Volkssporters
PO Box 2121
Vancouver WA 98668-2121