

DRAFT

Trail Concepts and Design

Type of Use

The Columbia County CZ Trail will be a multipurpose, non-motorized trail, designed for recreation, education, health, and transportation purposes. It will accommodate multiple uses and activities including walking, jogging, bicycling, and horseback riding. Motorized wheelchair users will be allowed as an exception to the non-motorized nature of the trail (for ‘Americans with Disability Act [ADA] accessibility purposes). Facilities supporting equestrian use will be particularly emphasized in the section of trail between Highway 30 to Vernonia which will be a more rural section of the trail. Pets on leashes will also be allowed.

Accessibility

The trail will be designed to be accessible for all users wherever possible, including people with mobility and visual impairments. All applicable laws governing the design and construction of public facilities will be followed. The benefits from providing accessible facilities are twofold: 1) it provides safer and better conditions for all users, not just those with disabilities; and, 2) it increases the possibility/opportunity for persons with disabilities to not only have access, but to do so along side their non-disabled family and friends.

Surfacing

The Crown Zellerbach Trail is being developed along an old railroad/logging road corridor that was originally engineered and constructed to support heavy trains, trucks, equipment, and machinery. It is a gravel road surface that has been hardened and compacted from years of use and will make an ideal trail surface for years to come. The gravel surface will be retained as the preferred surface for the trail from Highway 30 to Vernonia. The character of the trail through this section is rural and a gravel surface will compliment that setting.

In the Scappoose area (from Highway 30 to Chapman Landing), significant portions of the historic logging road were previously paved with asphalt. The character of the trail through this section is urban and an asphalt surface is preferred. Therefore, an asphalt surface will be retained through this section and the trail will be developed with a more urban character.

Desired Widths and Clearance

Wherever possible, the trail will be maintained at a minimum width of 12 feet. Maintaining a 12 foot width for the CZ trail will provide plenty of room for all users without the need to develop two separate pathways (i.e., one for bicyclists and one for horses). People traveling in the same direction will be able to ride or walk side by side, and people traveling in opposite directions will be able to easily and safely pass each other. Maintaining a 12 foot width will also allow Columbia County to manage the trail to allow service and/or emergency vehicles to drive along the trail when necessary for maintenance, operations, or emergency purposes. (See ‘Service/Emergency Vehicle Access’).

The standard for trimming trees, vines, and other vegetation will be to a height of at least 10 feet to achieve vertical clearance for bicyclists and equestrian users.

Service/Emergency Vehicle Access

There will be occasions when vehicle access on the trail will be necessary for maintenance, operations, and/or emergency purposes. Additionally, due to a deed condition in the purchase agreement, vehicle use will be allowed in support of timber harvesting and management operations (Columbia County will establish policies on closure of the trail during these times.) Since motorized use will otherwise be prohibited, removable vertical posts (called ‘bollards’) will be located at points where the trail intersects road corridors to restrict automobile and ATV access. Maintenance, emergency, and authorized personnel (e.g., fire, ambulance, sheriff) will have a key allowing them to remove the bollards and drive down the trail when needed.

It is also envisioned that the trail may be used in catastrophic emergency events as an alternative public road when state or county roads are blocked (e.g., floods, landslides, wildfire, etc). These types of situations have occurred in the past and this is a very real possibility. The trail will be maintained with this purpose in mind.

Stewardship

Stewardship is a goal of the Columbia County CZ Trail. The trail will be designed to avoid impacts to sensitive resource areas including wetlands, riparian areas, and cultural resources. Many design techniques exist to minimize resource impacts while still providing public access and enjoyment. One way is to install bollards or other blockades to keep unauthorized motorized vehicles off the trail. Construction techniques using native vegetation and natural materials can be used to keep people on the path near sensitive areas. Columbia County will comply with all environmental review and permitting processes that are in place to protect public interest in fundamental rights to clean air, water, a healthy environment, and the protection of a shared cultural heritage.

Linkage

Trails provide pedestrian linkage between places and destinations. The Columbia County CZ Trail will link the cities of Scappoose and Vernonia to each other and, potentially, to the following:

- Chapman Landing, Columbia River Dike, Multnomah Channel
- Scappoose Creek Greenway
- JP West Park
- Sidewalk/bike lane system in Scappoose
- Westlane Road to Scappoose RV Park
- Airport
- Chapman Fire Station – bridge
- Scaponia County Park
- Gunner’s Lake
- Coon Creek
- Camp 8

- Camp Wilkerson County Park
- Public & private lands open to public recreation use (BLM, Weyerhaeuser, etc)
- Nehalem Divide Tunnel
- Knot Street (Vernonia)
- Banks-Vernonia Trail State Park

Trailheads and Furnishings

Trailheads

Trailheads are improved areas where people can access the trail. Due to the length of the CZ Trail, there will likely be multiple trailheads developed at key locations. Exact locations have not been identified, but it is envisioned there will be three ‘primary’ and several ‘secondary’ trailheads. Primary trailheads are larger areas with ample parking, vault toilets, water, information (signs/kiosks), and other amenities. Secondary trailheads are smaller areas with limited parking, basic signage, and limited other amenities. Two of the secondary trailheads will be developed with an emphasis on supporting horseback riding (e.g., parking for vehicles pulling horse trailers, hitching posts, etc.).

Primary trailheads will be developed at locations near Scappoose and Vernonia (sites to be determined), and at Chapman Landing. The Scappoose trailhead will be located as close to Highway 30 as possible to make trail access convenient for people coming from either direction on Highway 30. The Vernonia trailhead will [share the existing Banks/Vernonia State Park trailhead?] [other location?] The Chapman Landing trailhead will be part of a project to develop Chapman Landing as a new regional park on the property donated from the Port of St. Helens. Chapman Landing will include a water connection to the Multnomah Channel of the Columbia River.

Secondary trailheads will be developed at locations along the trail (to be determined). Candidate locations include Scaponia County Park, the Chapman area, Camp 8, the summit, and somewhere near the intersection of Cater and S/V roads. The Chapman and Camp 8 trailheads will be developed with an emphasis on supporting horseback riding.

Trail Furnishings

Trail furnishings refer to facilities along the trail that enhance the trail user’s experience. A preliminary list of trail furnishing elements developed by the advisory committee include interpretive signs and wide ‘pull-out’ resting areas with benches along the trail (especially at vistas and/or other view areas).

Signage

Signs will be located primarily at trailheads. Some signs may be needed along the trail, but they will be kept to a minimum. Consideration will be given to using natural materials in their design and construction as much as possible. A sign ‘system’ will be established that includes the following elements: 1) establish and use a consistent logo to identify the trail; 2) standardize

construction materials; and 3) create a ‘family’ of sign designs that provide for consistency in appearance and flexibility in size and purpose.

Following is a list of the various purposes for which signs may need to be developed:

Trail Identifier: Identify the Columbia County CZ Trail in name and with a graphic logo. This should be posted at trailheads and other access points.

Property Boundaries: Use to mark the boundary, keep people on the trail and away from private property.

Transition Points: Directional signage to inform trail users about the location of the trail. For instance, at a ‘T’ intersection, a directional arrow may be needed to inform the user which way the trail goes.

General Information: Basic trail information will be needed at trailheads and primary trail facilities. This will include an overall trail map showing locations of trailheads, restrooms, parking, water, etc. Other information to consider includes hours of operation, accessibility information, and who to contact in emergency situations.

Trail Etiquette: General guidance about using and sharing the trail (e.g., Stay on Trail, Pets on Leash, Pack It In/Pack It Out) should be provided at trailheads and primary trail facilities.

Trail Rules and Regulations: Post rules and regulations (e.g., speed limits; illegal use of drugs, alcohol, and firearms; fireworks; prohibited vehicles; hours of operation; etc.)

Mile Markers: Mile markers will be provided to allow users to track where they are and how far they’ve gone. [is this true for the CZ trail?]

Interpretation/Education: (see Interpretation/Education chapter). [Note: this is a referral to a separate chapter that will be written at a later date written exclusively on the subject of interpretation and education. It will include ideas for interpretive themes such as historical references to the tunnel, logging history, current forest management techniques, environmental stewardship, etc.].

Fencing

Fencing may be needed in some locations for a variety of purposes (e.g., adjacent to private homes, near roads and intersections, to restrict access to sensitive areas, safety, etc). The use of fencing will be kept to a minimum and consideration will be given to using materials that will blend into the landscape.

Safety

Trail safety is a subject that will receive close attention in both the design and development of management policy for the Columbia County CZ Trail. Physical safety issues will be addressed in the following areas: grade and cross-slope; line of sight around corners; brush clearance;

directional and warning signs; at-grade crossings and intersections; guard rails; speed limits; conflict management among multiple users; and emergency vehicle access (police, fire, medical).

Bridges

There are several locations along the trail that will require installation of new pedestrian bridge crossings. These crossings will be designed to be aesthetically pleasing, environmentally sensitive, and safe.

Road & Driveway Crossings/Personal Driveway Access

Pedestrian crossings at roads and driveways will receive careful attention to assure safety for both trail users and the drivers of vehicles. Each individual crossing will be studied and designed based on the unique circumstances at each location. These will generally provide for elements such as: striped crosswalks across major roads; road signs warning of approaching pedestrian crosswalk; stop signs (for trail users); bollards and turnstiles at road and driveway crossings; reduced speed limits; flashing warning signal lights; etc.

There are several existing instances where the CZ road provides the only driveway access people have to their personal property. It is the intent of the county to grandfather these existing uses (or work out suitable alternatives acceptable to all parties involved). For trail use, each driveway access situation will be studied on a case by case basis to develop design solutions that provide for the safety of trail users while allowing the continued use of the driveway at that location.

Historic Tunnel Access

One of the biggest challenges to developing the trail is to strike a balance between the conflicting goals of opening the historic tunnel to trail users while protecting the historical integrity of this cultural resource. This issue requires a careful study that includes professional expertise in engineering and historic preservation to fully understand the issues and develop appropriate solutions. Until such a study can be done, the trail will be developed in an alternative route around the tunnel and the tunnel itself will be posted and closed to public access (for safety, liability, and historic protection purposes).