

City of Spokane

Fish Lake Trail Completion

Briefing Paper

At Issue: Completion of the Fish Lake Trail from Spokane to the Fish Lake Trailhead at an estimated cost of approximately \$6 million split equitably among local/private contributions, state and federal funding, or \$2 million from each potential source.

Background. In 1991 the City of Spokane (City) acquired approximately 10 linear miles of railroad corridor right-of-way from Government Way in west Spokane to Fish Lake, a Spokane County park south of Spokane. An initial phase of construction was completed in 1997 when the City paved approximately 3.5 miles of the trail from Scribner Road to the north. In recent years, the Fish Lake Trailhead was constructed at Fish Lake as well as the first segment of the Columbia Plateau Trail extending from the trailhead south to the City of Cheney.

Fish Lake Trail has been identified as an important link in the region's expanding trail system that once completed will connect the 37 mile long Centennial Trail with the Columbia Plateau Trail, a Washington State Parks and Recreation facility.

In 2005 a feasibility study commenced by David Evans and Associates, Inc. (DEA) to address the feasibility of constructing pedestrian bridges to cross the active rail lines in two locations in a 2.6-mile segment between the Fish Lake Trailhead and Scribner Road (Phase II). A third and final phase from Sunset Boulevard to Viewacres Lane is currently under study as well by DEA on behalf of the City (Phase III). The total cost to complete the Fish Lake Trail is estimated at approximately \$6 million.

Fish Lake Trail will provide an alternative transportation link to Cheney, even serving as a bicycle commuting corridor to Eastern Washington University. The Trail would also be a major recreation facility for walking, running, bicycling, roller blading, and equestrian use. Several neighboring housing developments have trail systems that desire to be connected to the Fish Lake Trail.

The Columbia Plateau Trail provides a connection to Pasco, Wash., and crosses the John Wayne Trail, which is a cross-state trail connecting to the Puget Sound area. The Columbia Plateau Trail is complete from the Fish Lake Trailhead to the Spokane-Lincoln County line. Washington State Parks has developed a gravel quarry on the Snake River and dedicated the funds from the sale of gravel to the completion of the Columbia Plateau Trail.

Trails improve quality of life by:

- Providing additional recreational opportunities.
- Encouraging physical fitness.
- Encouraging reduction in motorized vehicle use.

- Enhancing the beauty of urban areas.
- Preserving important historical areas.

Trails provide the following economic benefits:

- Providing jobs through trail and pathway construction and maintenance.
- Leveraging local funds through matching state, federal and private grants.
- Creating opportunities for new businesses centered around trail use.
- Providing desirable marketing traits about the Spokane and the Inland Northwest that can be used for tourism promotion and businesses relocation efforts.
- Enhancing property value located next to trails and natural areas.

In August of 2006, over 60 citizens met at the downtown Spokane library to hear findings of the Fish Lake Trail Feasibility Study by David Evans and to determine citizen's support to move the project forward. Individual citizens and organizations such as REI, Friends of the Centennial Trail and the Washington State Bicycle Alliance unanimously expressed support to seek funding to move the project forward to completion, and are organizing themselves to support the project.

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