

# Regional Trail & Bikeway Systems Plan 2006



VANCOUVER-CLARK  
**PARKS &  
Recreation**



Clark County, Washington

MacKay & Sposito, Inc. **M+S**  
ENGINEERS SURVEYORS  
PLANNERS

Proud Past, Promising Future



**Clark County, Washington**

Resolution No. 2006-04-05

A RESOLUTION adopting the Clark County Regional Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan 2006 "A Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Legacy Project" to be forwarded to the Clark County Department of Community Development, Long Range Planning for consideration as a part of the Clark County Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

WHEREAS, the Clark County Board of County Commissioners appreciates the efforts of the Bicentennial Committee of the Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery, the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department, the Public Works Department and the Vancouver-Clark Parks Advisory Commission in preparing the Clark County Regional Trail & Bikeway Systems Plan 2006, a unique comprehensive plan that highlights economic development, environmental stewardship, accessibility and social & health benefits of a pedestrian, equestrian and bikeway systems that will complement the Regional Transportation System Plan, and the Clark County Comprehensive Plan and

WHEREAS, the Clark County Commissioners know the value of walking, horseback riding, rowing and bicycling in contributing to the health and welfare of our citizens and are keenly aware that a very alarming percentage of citizens of all ages in our community are not getting adequate physical exercise; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of citizens have stepped up to the inactivity crisis and are volunteering to provide planning and program opportunities for citizens to walk, ride horseback, row, or bicycle, including the Chinook Trail Association, Vancouver Walkersports, Vancouver Bike Club, Clark County Executive Horse Council, STEPS to a Healthier Clark County Program, Discovery Walks and other members of the Southwest Washington Hospital Passport to Wellness Program; and

WHEREAS, the plan gives an overview designed to promote the funding and development of a comprehensive Clark County regional trail and bikeway systems plan; identifies high priority trail partnership projects with the Cities of Vancouver, Battle Ground, Ridgefield, Camas and Washouak; development of the Chehalis Railroad Trail and the continuation of the Salween Creek and Whipple Creek Greenway Trails, now, therefore,

BE IT ORDERED AND RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CLARK COUNTY, STATE OF WASHINGTON, that the proposed Clark County Regional Trail & Bikeway Systems Plan 2006, "A Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Legacy Project", attached hereto and maps be scheduled for formal adoption, including an advisory recommendation from the planning commission. Such plan represents an opportunity for Clark County citizens. The Board supports the proposed Trail & Bikeway Systems Plan.

ADOPTED on April 4, 2006 and executed two hundred years to the day from when Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery left present day Clark County to report to the President and Congress of the United States this 6th day of April, 2006.

Attest:

*Kevin Richards*  
Clerk to the Board

Approved as to Form Only

*Christina Hester*  
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

*Mark Roth*  
Mark Roth, Chair

*Betty Sue Morris*  
Betty Sue Morris, Commissioner

*Steve Stuart*  
Steve Stuart, Commissioner



Regional Trail and Bikeway System Plan 2006  
Resolution Adoption by the  
Clark County Board of County Commissioners  
Signed on April 6, 2006  
200 years from the day when Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery  
left present-day Clark County



## FORWARD



This document represents a collaborative effort among the Clark County Transportation Department, the Clark-Vancouver Parks and Recreation Department, the Cities of Vancouver, Ridgefield, Camas, Washougal, LaCenter and Battle Ground, individual citizens, school districts, Clark County Public Health Department, non profit organizations and neighborhood associations. Every effort has been made to present a high-quality document that portrays the hard work performed by this team. Thank you to all who participated in the development of the program. Special thanks to the following people who dedicated many long hours to prepare this plan for the citizens of Clark County:

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*\*For further updated information regarding trail development, please see Vancouver Clark Parks and Recreation's Comprehensive Plan*

**CLARK COUNTY PROFILE:**

<b>Clark County fact file from 2000 census</b>		
Population	345,238	
Population in 2005*	383,000	
Projected population in 2010*	432,479	
Percentage Male	49.6	171,330
Percentage Female	50.4	173,908
Percentage under 5	7.8	26,886
Percentage 5-14 years	16.3	56,275
Percentage 15-24 years	13	44,948
Percentage 25-44 years	30.5	106,411
Percentage 45-64 years	22.6	74,920
Percentage over 65 years	9.5	32,808
People with disability	16.1	55,601

# Regional Trail & Bikeway Systems Plan

2006

## VOLUME I

Oregon & Washington Territories

Proud Past, Promising Future



Regional Trail & Bikeway  
Systems Plan  
2006

SECTION I  
INTRODUCTION



Proud Past, Promising Future



## SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

### A) Profile



Clark County is a beautiful place. Providing opportunities to experience this beauty through activities not dulled through a car's window is a goal worth pursuing. A well developed pedestrian and bicycle trail network increases our everyday opportunities to enjoy this spectacular part of the country. Clark County's weather is reasonably mild and these facilities can be utilized almost year round.

The popularity of outdoor recreation activities, such as walking, running, cycling, paddling and horseback riding has grown, and continues to grow in our region. Our trails not only serve as interdependent transportation amenities, but they also enhance accessibility to existing community resources by

linking neighborhoods and schools to parks, waterfronts, recreational centers and other parts of our daily lives. Regional trails also extend to include water trails for paddlers such as kayakers and canoeists. Water trails allow us to explore our local rivers in much the same way as did Lewis & Clark. This is a part of our heritage.

As Clark County commemorates the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery in 2006 and the journey's legacy of nation-building, our county and its communities face important opportunities and critical challenges. At the same time, unprecedented population growth is pushing the urban and suburban landscape further into rural Clark County. And, along with this growth, obesity and other health issues related to sedentary lifestyles are not only being recognized as national problems, but Clark County is being recognized as having the state's highest obesity rate. Of great concern is the obesity rate among our children. Twenty-eight percent of eighth graders in Clark County are either overweight or at risk of overweight compared to 25% in Washington State.

Clark County has the opportunity to create a world-class walking and bicycling network. The League of American Bicyclists has awarded Vancouver a bronze-level designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community. A trails and bikeways network that interconnects our communities, open spaces and employment centers not only provides an obvious opportunity to leverage the accessibility to these areas, but it gives those of

us who drive everywhere an alternative to at least some of our average 10-daily car trips per household. But, more sobering is recognition that our children need these types of facilities in order to make any trips independent of their parents driving them.

This plan is a compass for strengthening and expanding our region's trail and bikeway systems plan. The goal is to develop a comprehensive vision through which Clark County, its leadership and its residents, can convey to the region the environmental, economic and societal values of an alternative transportation and recreational system that is based around two wheels, two feet, four legs, and out of doors, not in.

In order for this goal of a new legacy to be realized, this plan must be more than an elaborate graphic presentation and memorialized document that looks great on the shelf. It must be based in reality, be practical and be feasible. It must generate wide-based support in this community to be implemented. In a word, it must be realistic and ...build-able.

### ***B) SYSTEM VISION***

The vision for the pedestrian and bicycle trail network is "Connectivity." The system should provide enticing and safe



conversion of short car trips into desirable walking or bike trips, as well as provide opportunities for bicycle commuting of longer distances. A traditional transportation system's primary focus is mobility. A traditional Parks facilities plan's primary focus is recreational. For this to be a successful trail and bikeway systems plan, it must simultaneously be a recreational experience and be functional for mobility. Its burden is to make mobility enjoyable and attractive, while targeting to be an economic asset rather than a liability.

This system must strive to maximize the functional mobility of the network, its recreational opportunities, and the potential positive economic impact of each link. Rather than these three factors competing against one another in the visioning process, they can each be embraced to reach their maximum without compromise in one of the other two. Whether it be the entire system or just one link, it is possible to be functional, to be recreational, and to have a positive economic impact. An investment in one facility that provides alternative modes of transportation and reduces user conflicts increases property values adjacent to it, and is a positive return on investment for any public endeavor.

### ***C) PLAN OVERVIEW***

The Trail & Bikeway Systems Plan (Plan) is intended to guide the development and design of an interconnected trail and bikeway system within Clark County. This Plan updates the region's first trails plan which was adopted in 1992. This Plan uses the terms 'paths' and 'trails' interchangeably to describe shared off the road facilities designed exclusively for non-

shared off the road facilities designed exclusively for non-motorized usage. These facilities are real transportation alternatives, while in the past trails might have been perceived as solely for recreation use. There is a major difference between this plan and the plans of the past; this Plan will be recognized as a parks and a transportation document. The Plan will be a vital component of the larger Clark County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Trail & Bikeway Systems Plan identifies the need for increased bicycling and walking opportunities which are consistent with the TIP.

This Plan is an integral part of transforming the concept of a bicycle and pedestrian-friendly system into reality. The Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan recognizes that walkways and bikeways bring enormous benefits to all residents by increasing transportation choices for walking and bicycling, as well as improving environmental conditions and the overall health of our residents and our children. The Plan provides a general guideline for developing a network of bikeways and walkways; however, currently it does not establish specific project recommendations for identified paths or trails. Therefore, this Plan provides detailed, recommended improvements to the existing and proposed regional trail corridors and to the bikeway network. The intent of this Plan is not only to offer recommended trail design standards but to ensure successful implementation. *(See Section IIIA)*



Traditional shared-use paths or trails are the foundation of a comprehensive bicycling and walking system. These regional trails obviously offer numerous aesthetic and recreational opportunities for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and paddlers. But they can also provide commuter options for walking, hiking, bicycling, skating or otherwise traveling to and from our daily destinations in Clark County. Our residents desire a safe and convenient comprehensive network in order to bicycle or walk to work or schools, go for a family bicycle ride or walk to the park or library, or simply take pleasure in walking or riding to improve their families' health.

This Plan is designed to facilitate the eventual incorporation of Trail and Bikeway Systems plans for each of the cities within Clark County. Working together with the Cities of Washougal, Camas, Battle Ground, LaCenter, Ridgefield and Vancouver, the separate but coordinated plans can establish transportation linkages in a mosaic....with natural areas, parks and green spaces. Clark County's trail system is also intended to integrate with Portland's greenways, trails, bikeway and open space systems.

#### **D) PLAN GOALS**

An updated, integrated Clark County Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan 2006 will ensure that we continue to have a document that will encourage and promote the growth of a trail system serving the needs of children, community pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians and paddlers for generations to come. It will be a reference guide to ensure that regional trails are appropriately incorporated into the actively developing urban area, and that new development accommodates that vision in a logical and inclusive manner. The process of updating is a necessary function to keep pace with the many changes that have occurred in our community including preserving desirable trail opportunities through and within the rapid development. The plan will focus on existing trails, planned new trail issues, opportunities and constraints, funding sources, priorities and

*"This is the vision—to create a changed transportation system that offers not only choices among travel modes for specific trips, but more importantly presents these options so they are real choices that meet the needs of individuals and society as a whole. Making the vision a reality must begin now."*

USDOT FEDERAL  
HIGHWAY  
ADMINISTRATION,  
The National Bicycling and  
Walking Study, 1994

goals and standards. The Plan will also be useful and in some cases required, for the County when applying for funding through local, regional, state, federal and private sources.

While updating a plan is always necessary, similar goals and values stay consistent with time, such as maintaining a strong transportation system, a vibrant health and recreation network, a thriving economy, and environmental sustainability. Goals and values are the framework, the backbone, and engine for a solid, sturdy and working trails plan. For this reason, the goals and values

within this document are similar to a combination of many different plans stated within the appendix. Goals are different from specific implementation strategies. Within this document, specific recommendations and implementation and funding strategies will be provided for individual trails system improvements. The goals of the Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan are categorized under each valued element below.

**Alternative Transportation, Accessibility and Mobility Element**

- A. Provide a comprehensive trail system that will interconnect the regional trail systems and transportation systems of sidewalks and bike lanes.
- B. Provide a system that will support the development of shared-use paths within one mile of every home within the urban area.
- C. Provide a balanced, multi-modal transportation system for Clark County that supports the safe, efficient movement of people and goods.
- D. Facilitate the increased use of pedestrian transportation in Clark County by ensuring that convenient, accessible and safe pedestrian facilities are provided.
- E. Facilitate the increased use of bicycle transportation in Clark County by ensuring that convenient, accessible and safe bicycling facilities are provided
- F. Coordinate with all transportation providing agencies to ensure trails are included within their plans.
- G. Coordinate with surrounding counties and cities to create a connecting system.

**Environment and Natural Resources Element**

- A. Acquire open green space and natural corridors for trail development.
- B. Promote appropriate planning and design solutions to avoid adverse environmental impacts on sensitive areas.
- C. Coordinate the development of trail and bikeway links within Clark County and surrounding jurisdictions (Metro, Columbia River Gorge Commission, US Forest Service, Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources, adjoining counties, etc.) and become a facilitator for other provider and volunteer efforts.
- D. It is the intent for these to be in compliance with the TIP Comprehensive Plan and the Arterial Atlas.
- E. Develop an interpretive, educational program for the historic and environmentally significant sites along the trail and bikeway system.
- F. Celebrate history by recognizing accomplishments made by Lewis and Clark.
- G. Discover and appreciate the area's rich beauty.

## Economic Element

- A. Increase economic vitality of Clark County by building trails that interconnect homes and businesses.
- B. Develop and maintain a comprehensive trail and bikeway system to link with other providers.
- C. Work closely with corporate business, private developers and public agencies to incorporate trails and bikeways where feasible.
- D. Promote sensitive planning solutions and develop support services to diminish land owner concerns.

## Health and Education Element

- A. Promote sensitive planning solutions and design, develop support services such as education, enforcement and maintenance to reduce safety hazards
- B. Provide opportunities to encourage good health through physical activity on trails.
- C. Provide a system of shared-use paths within one mile of every school.

## Recreation Element

- A. Provide opportunities for walking, biking, horseback riding and running.
- B. Utilize and leverage the recreational opportunities within Clark County's open spaces and parks by connecting citizens to their homes, parks, schools, businesses and work.



- C. Provide youth with ample opportunities to recreate outside.