



City of White Salmon Office of City Hall

City of White Salmon NOTICE OF COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

WHITE SALMON BLUFF CONNECTOR TRAIL STUDY Community Open House: Information Sharing and Public Comments

Notice is hereby given that the City of White Salmon will hold a community open house regarding the White Salmon Bluff Connector Trail Study on October 10, 2024, at 5:30 – 7:30 PM. The city will meet in-person in only at the City Council Chambers at the White Salmon Fire Hall (119 NE Church White Salmon WA).

Purpose

A project team consisting of Harper Houf Peterson Righellis (HHPR) and Columbia West Engineering is working with the City of White Salmon to complete analysis to determine the trail connection from SR 14 to SR 141, creating a steep-grade connector to the large pedestrian corridor of Downtown White Salmon. The section of the looped trail will link the City of White Salmon on the bluff above the Columbia River to pedestrian opportunities along the waterfront, SR 14, the City of Bingen, and the City of Hood River. The Community Open House will provide the public an opportunity to learn more information about the study, ask the project team questions, and provide comments for additional project considerations.

Background

Currently, there are no pedestrian routes with complete sidewalks or separate pedestrian paths that connect White Salmon to the Columbia River waterfront. This connector project will provide a safe, separate pedestrian path separate from high-volume traffic routes on SR 14, SR 141, and Main St. in White Salmon. When the Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge replacement project is completed, this route will provide safe and accessible multi-modal options to be incorporated into the interstate bridge project.

Wildfire Mitigation

Another key role of the Bluff Connector Trail is to provide emergency access for wildfire mitigation along the bluff. The proposed access stairs within the bluff will be constructed with fire-resistant materials and will be designed to include wide buffers on either side of the stairs to further mitigate fire hazards along the stairs. This emergency access allows for the vital transportation of water for emergency responders to any future wildfires that may occur on the bluff. Given the steep terrain and the presence of dense vegetation, wildfire mitigation is a critical consideration for the White Salmon Bluff Connector Trail project. The project site is located on a hillside covered with wild grasses and shrubs that pose a significant fire risk during the dry season. To mitigate potential wildfire hazards, the following strategies will be considered: Vegetation management, building breaks, fire-resistant materials, emergency access, public awareness and signage, and collaboration with fire authorities.

Transportation Alternatives

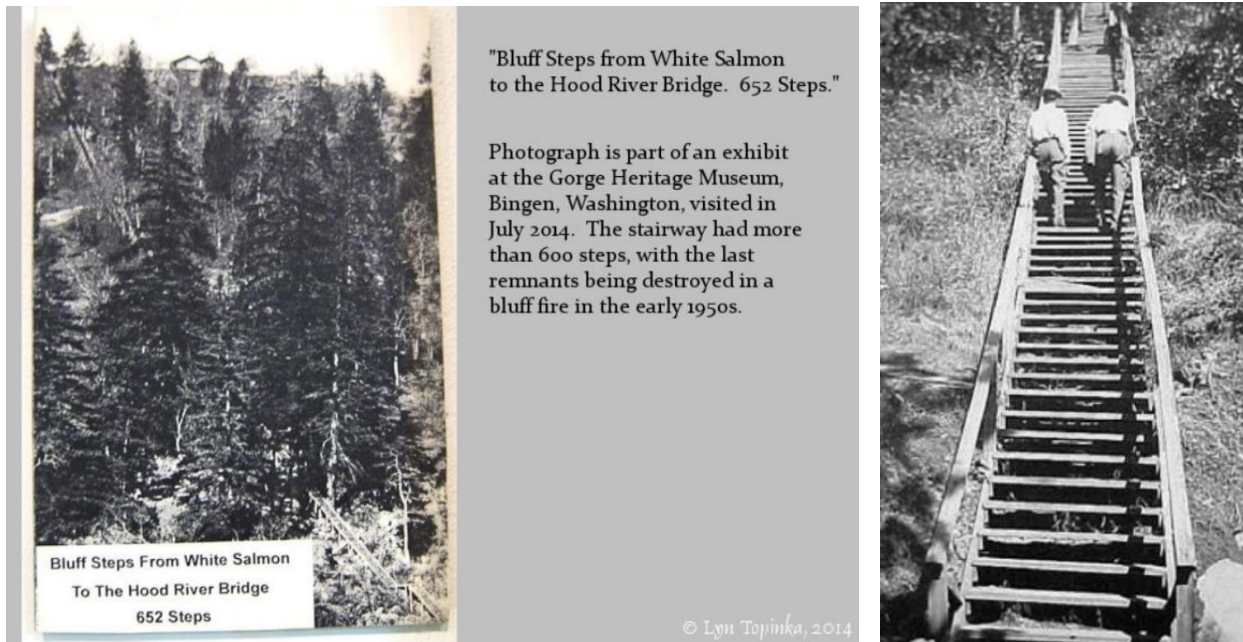
Downtown White Salmon sees an annual average daily traffic of over 3,000 cars and almost 10,000 cars at SR 14. These traffic counts create significant concerns for pedestrian safety. This project will consider safety as a critical element of design including clearly marked, safe crossings where portions of the trail cross existing roads while connecting to the Columbia River, existing Park and Ride, and future development of the Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge.

American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

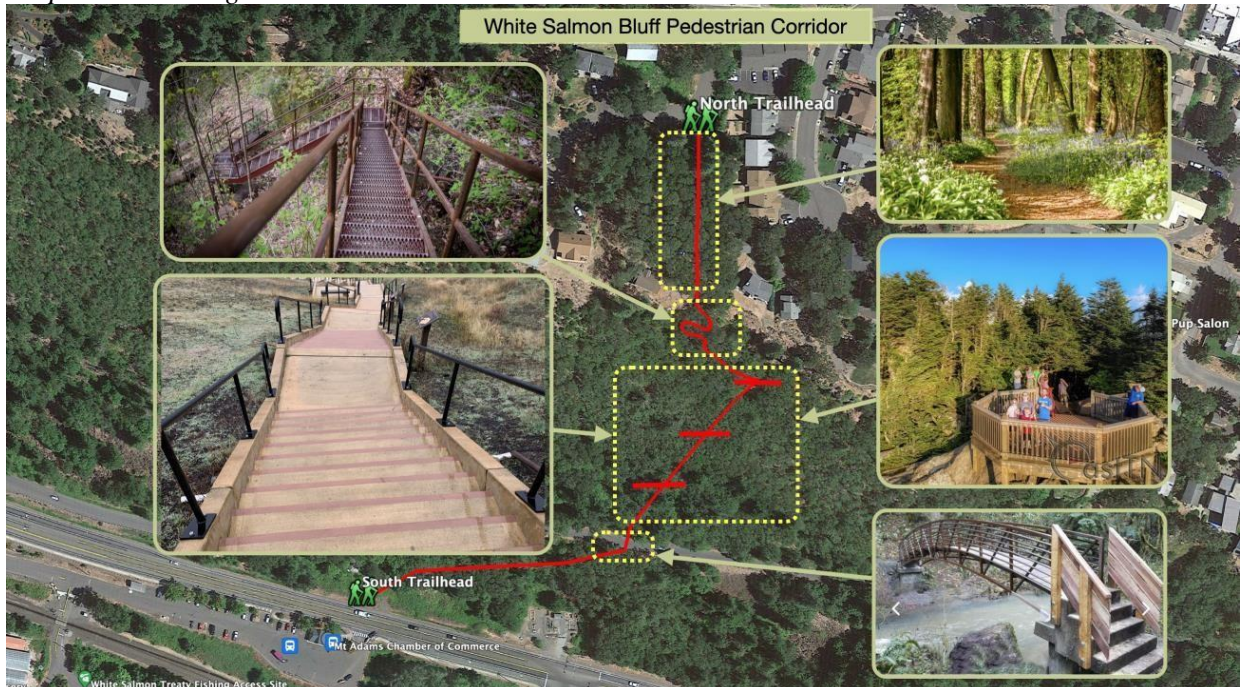
Due to the steep terrain, it is anticipated that an ADA route may likely bypass the stair section of this trail and focus on ensuring path connections eastward from the SR 14 trailhead into the City of Bingen and up to the City of White Salmon would provide for a fully ADA-accessible route.

Historic Stair Photos

From the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, a wooden stairway linked the City of Bingen and White Salmon; this segment of the loop trail will return a set of stairs to the same general location as the original stairway to bring back a historic landmark and contribute to the identity and pride of the City of White Salmon. The updated design will incorporate viewing platforms and safe pedestrian crossings at Dock Grade Road and Highway 14.



Proposed Trail Alignment



Project Approach

Existing Conditions

The approximate 0.19-mile length of the project site is on a steep, rocky hill and is immediately adjacent to private properties at various location points. The site is surrounded by wild grasses and other plant life that is common fire fuel.

Design Process

Site Investigation – The consultant team will review available information on the conditions of the project site to better understand the existing constraints. Columbia West Engineering will then perform a geotechnical investigation of the site and will produce a detailed report outlining the design parameters. HHPR will investigate critical areas including habitat and existing vegetation. Finally, HHPR will gather crucial insight through public involvement with key stakeholders both adjacent to the project site and that work within the community.

Project Design – HHPR will perform an alignment analysis to evaluate both the bluff segment where the trail will navigate through the steep hill, and where alternate ADA and bicycle routes may potentially be located as part of the pedestrian trail connection. The project design will have to consider stormwater, fire burn mitigation, landscape architectural design, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). HHPR will also be evaluating the potential construction costs.

Public Involvement Strategy

Community outreach for the project has been planned with the understanding that most or all engagement opportunities will be offered in a hybrid format with in-person and virtual options. In order to gain detailed input from stakeholders with specific knowledge or interest in the project, the project team will facilitate several stakeholder meetings that include all property owners within 500 feet of the project site. In addition to property owners, the Friends of White Salmon and other recreational hiking groups will be invited to attend the stakeholder meetings to offer further guidance to the team. A community open house is being held to invite the public to provide comments on the project and ask questions regarding the study.

Considerations

To ensure that a variety of interests and perspectives from the community are incorporated, the project team will gather input from public comments and guidance from stakeholder meetings to help better understand the existing site conditions and identify opportunities and constraints of the project site. Key project considerations for the trail study includes identifying issues that:

- Prevent wildfire mitigation;
- Affect pedestrian mobility or safety;
- Encourage access to walking as an alternative means of transportation;
- Create obstacles to a more fully developed seamless trail system;
- Involve other issues such as design compatibility; and
- Conflict with adjacent neighbors' interests.

The project team is looking for feedback from the White Salmon community to gain better understanding of the existing conditions, opportunities and constraints that may affect the trail alignment, pedestrian routes, accessibility and safety, and other features of the project.

The project webpage and virtual open house is available on the city's webpage at www.whitesalmonwa.gov from October 1, 2024, to October 31, 2024. An online comment form will be available to provide feedback regarding the White Salmon Bluff Connector Trail Study. You may also request additional information at 509-493-1133 #202 or emailing at administrator@whitesalmonwa.gov.