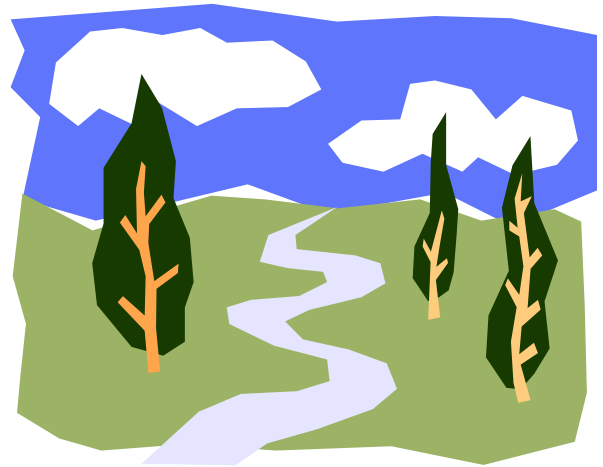


FERN RIDGE TRAIL SYSTEM

Vision & Strategies



July, 2007

City of Veneta



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I. Introduction: The Vision

Veneta is situated at the center of the Fern Ridge area, a rural community located between the Eugene metropolitan area and the Central Oregon coast. Abundant in natural resources and wildlife, the Fern Ridge area has great potential for an array of outdoor recreation opportunities. Veneta is in close proximity to Fern Ridge Reservoir and associated wetlands, which provides numerous aesthetic qualities and recreational amenities. In addition, the reservoir supplies habitat for many species of wildlife, most notably migratory bird populations. The area is also home to several local wineries and hosts the Oregon Country Fair each July. For all of these reasons and more, Veneta is increasingly becoming a popular place to live, visit, and recreate.

Like so many rural communities, Veneta is undergoing some significant cultural, demographic, and economic changes. Once dependant largely on the timber industry, Veneta is moving away from a resource based economy towards an economy that is more diverse. Despite its economic challenges, Veneta has experienced tremendous growth in recent years. The population of Veneta has increased by over 50% since 2000. This growth is the result of an influx of “newcomers” from outside the area, many of them commuting into the Eugene area for work. As Veneta still has a great deal of developable land, this growth pattern is expected to continue.

As Veneta transitions into a new economic and cultural reality, the City is confronted with the challenge of providing for the needs of its growing and increasingly diverse population. The Fern Ridge Trail System is a means of providing Veneta residents with recreational amenities and transportation options that reflect an overall improvement in quality of life. The trail system is intended to provide for diverse recreation interests, including hiking, bicycling, birding, and nature photography. It will also serve to enhance and diversify the area’s transportation network and promote alternative modes of transportation to popular destinations such as Oregon Country Fair, the Fern Ridge Reservoir, Lane County Parks, and local schools. In addition, the trails network will have the added benefit of showcasing the area’s natural resource amenities, ideally encouraging conservation and increasing visits from outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

The Fern Ridge Trail System is a long range vision. This document is a conceptual tool that provides some general insight into the need for the proposed trail system, trail siting opportunities, factors that influenced mapping and project prioritization, and funding strategies. The purpose of engaging in this preliminary planning process is to raise awareness about the vision and to create a conceptual framework that will help facilitate the development of partnerships. In addition, it will place the City of Veneta in a better position to obtain grant funding and other forms of assistance as those opportunities arise.

This visioning document represents a starting point for exploring the feasibility of the individual projects and trail segments included in the vision. Several additional steps will need to be taken prior to implementing the individual trail projects, including a much more detailed analysis of such issues as engineering, cost, funding, and environmental, social, and economic impacts. The map of proposed routes is intended to be flexible to accommodate any changes that need to be made during planning and implementation phases.

II. The Need for a Trail System: Growth and Population Trends

The Fern Ridge Area, and Veneta in particular, is experiencing unprecedented growth. The current population of the Fern Ridge Area, which includes Veneta, Elmira, Noti and Crow, is 20,839, and is expected to reach 22,724 by the year 2010¹. The population of Veneta alone, now at 4,200, has increased by 52% since 2000. In 2003 and 2004, single-family residential building permits in Veneta numbered 116 and 125, respectively. Additionally, Hayden Homes, a major developer, is currently planning a 600-home subdivision.

This recent development in Veneta was prompted by the lifting of a building moratorium in 2000. It had been enacted to allow the City to address deficiencies in its wastewater treatment system. The population increase is also due in large part to Veneta's proximity to the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area. As Eugene, too, has experienced tremendous growth, the Fern Ridge Area has become an increasingly popular bedroom community for those working in the Eugene area.

Current growth trends are expected to continue in the area. The population of Veneta is projected to grow by another 24% to 5,200 by 2025². Veneta is likely to see continued growth as the result of having a great deal of developable land, available for residential, commercial, and industrial use. It is located at the heart of the Fern Ridge area right along Highway 126, between the coast and the Eugene metro area, making it attractive to both business owners and potential home buyers.

With this growth and development comes greater demand for social and economic stability, additional infrastructure, and new and enhanced recreational amenities. The challenge for the City of Veneta is to successfully meet these growing demands in a way that is sustainable.

Transportation Needs

A primary objective of the Fern Ridge Trail System is to establish an alternative transportation network, providing bicycle and pedestrian access to a number of popular local and regional destinations including the Oregon Country Fair, Lane County Parks, the Fern Ridge Reservoir, local schools, and the Eugene metropolitan area. To the extent possible, the project seeks to establish connectivity with the existing transportation network and with other bicycle and multi-use paths that have been planned or proposed by other agencies.

¹ Rural Development Initiatives, Inc. (2006). Fern Ridge Area Strategic Plan. Prepared for the Fern Ridge Area Strategic Planning Committee, June, 2006.

² As per Resolution No. 887: A Resolution Adopting a Coordinated Population Projection for the City of Veneta. Adopted by the Veneta City Council, January 10, 2005.

One key transportation need involves improving connectivity between Veneta and the Eugene area. Vehicle traffic on Highway 126 has increased considerably in recent years, particularly as Fern Ridge area residents commute into Eugene for work in greater numbers. The increase in traffic contributes to dangerous driving conditions along this segment of the Highway.

There has been an expressed interest among some commuters as well among cyclists who regularly recreate in the Fern Ridge area in the development of new and/or vastly improved bicycle facilities between Veneta and Eugene. Currently, the stretch of Highway 126 between the two communities is terribly unsafe for bicyclists. The road is quite narrow, as are the shoulders in many places, and traffic travels at high speeds. One option is to improve on-street bicycle facilities along Highway 126. Safer options include constructing a paved multi-use path parallel to the rail line or developing on-street bicycle facilities along county roads south of Highway 126. Ideally, new routes would connect with existing bike paths in Eugene, such as the Fern Ridge Path and with planned paths, such as the Ridgeline Path extension. They should also connect with the existing bicycle touring area on county roads southeast of town and with the existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian network within Veneta's city limits.

Ultimately, the connection between Eugene and Veneta should extend out to the Oregon Country Fair, located a couple of miles west of Veneta along Highway 126. The Oregon Country Fair is an annual festival that draws 40,000-50,000 people into the Fern Ridge area each July. It is an important tradition in the area, having social, cultural, and economic benefits for the local community. During the Fair, traffic along Highway 126 is especially congested and conditions are particularly dangerous for bicyclists. Many Fair-goers from the Fern Ridge area and from the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area choose to ride to the event despite dangerous conditions. As an organization, Oregon County Fair strongly supports the idea of promoting more non-motorized transportation to their site and, like the City, would like to see the route made safer and more feasible.

There is a need to establish safe alternative transportation routes to local schools, particularly the three public schools located in Elmira, just north of Veneta. Currently, there are few safe bicycling and walking options for students attending these schools. It is particularly difficult for bicycles and pedestrians to access them from Veneta as the only current route is along Territorial Highway, which is narrow in sections and serves a large volume of traffic at high speeds.

Recreation Needs

One of the Fern Ridge area's greatest assets is its potential to provide for outdoor recreation. The Fern Ridge Reservoir and associated creeks and wetlands, county parks,

wooded areas, and wildlife create a unique aesthetic quality that is ideal for a variety of recreational activities including bicycling, hiking, canoeing, and wildlife viewing.

As the population of the Fern Ridge area increases and diversifies, demand for a wide array of outdoor recreation activities increases. According to the *Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*, a significant percentage of the population in this region participates in biking, hiking, wildlife observation, and outdoor photography. Moreover, many of these activities have increased dramatically in recent years. For example, between 1987 and 2002, day hiking, outdoor photography, and wildlife viewing increased in this region by 21%, 61%, and 254%, respectively³.

As further evidence of the need for a recreational trail system, in a recent survey administered by the City of Veneta, multi-use paths were identified by Veneta residents as the most preferred park amenity.

Though there is currently some opportunity for hiking, wildlife viewing, and outdoor photography in the general vicinity of the Fern Ridge Reservoir, opportunities are limited. Existing outdoor recreation facilities are not adequate to meet the growing demand.

In addition to creating new recreational facilities, it is important that the proposed Fern Ridge Trail System connect with existing and proposed facilities, including existing and proposed hiking paths, multi-use paths, wildlife viewing platforms, and canoe trails. Trail connectivity with the Fern Ridge Reservoir and the county parks that surround it is also important. This connectivity will help to maximize access to and use of recreational facilities.

In order to meet the greatest recreation needs, the primary focus of this vision is on enhancing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. However, some community members have expressed an interest in horseback riding. Although no equestrian trails currently appear on the map, a goal of the vision is to provide for diverse recreational interests, which may include equestrian use. As the City of Veneta proceeds through the planning process, they should continue to gauge community interest in horseback riding and look for opportunities to include equestrian trails in the vision. One such opportunity has been identified in the *Ridgeline Area Open Space Vision and Action Plan*, a regional planning document dealing with the ridgeline corridor just to the south and the west of the Eugene/Springfield area. The action plan calls for the designation of a portion of the proposed Amazon Trail extension, from Greenhill Rd toward the Fern Ridge Reservoir, as an official equestrian trail. City staff should monitor the development of this action

³ Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation. *Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*. (2003).

plan and look for opportunities to coordinate planning efforts with those of the Ridgeline Area Open Space working group. Staff should also explore options for extending proposed equestrian trails further west towards the Fern Ridge area.

Economic Needs

Like so many rural towns in western Oregon, Veneta was once largely dependant on the timber industry for its economic base. Out of necessity, the community is currently shifting towards a more diversified economy. The area's abundant natural resources present unique opportunities for the City as they begin to explore options for creating a diverse and viable economy. There is potential for outdoor recreation and ecotourism to play an important role in the Fern Ridge area's emerging economy. In recognizing this potential, and in an effort to try to capture the essence of the Fern Ridge area for marketing purposes, the Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce recently adopted the following brand: "Fern Ridge: Inspired By Nature."

There is some indication that ecotourism is already emerging as a significant economic force in the area, as evidenced by the annual Wings and Wine Festival, for example. The event attracts birders from around the region each May. The Wings and Wine Festival provides recreational opportunities while simultaneously promoting environmental education related to the ecological significance of wetlands ecosystems for migratory bird populations and other wildlife species.

According to the *Oregon Statewide Trails Plan*, recreational trails are providing economic benefits to communities across the state. The studies cited suggest that recreational trails promote recreation-related spending in host communities and attract businesses whose owners and employees view recreational trails as a significant quality of life indicator⁴.

In the long run, the City hopes that the trail system will not only stimulate the economy, but will assist with efforts to brand Veneta as a "green" community and a desirable ecotourism destination. Veneta is currently in the midst of a significant cultural, demographic, and economic transition. The hope is that a unique community identity might contribute to the development of a viable economy, making this transition go more smoothly. Thus ultimately, the trails project should help to ensure both economic and environmental sustainability for Veneta.

⁴ Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation. Statewide Trails Plan. (2004).

III. The Mapping Process

The final map of proposed routes was developed over a period of 10 months and involved a process of on-going revision and refinement. Several factors were considered during the mapping process, including local and regional trail needs, prominent attributes of the Fern Ridge area, input from land management agencies, existing and proposed recreational facilities, environmental conditions, and the desires and opinions of community members. These same factors, in addition to cost considerations, were used to prioritize projects, which are reflected in the “project type” column of table 1, included in the next chapter. None of these factors were assigned priority over the others; rather the idea was to fairly balance them to the greatest extent possible. Below, the mapping process is described in three stages: assessment of existing conditions, agency input, and community input.

Existing Conditions Assessment

The first stage of the mapping process involved gathering information about current conditions in the project area, both with regard to physical and environmental conditions and with regard to recreational facilities and transportation corridors. This was accomplished via 1)an “on-the-ground” exploration of the land, 2)the examination of road maps and recreation maps, and 3)discussions with agency personnel who are especially familiar with the area. In addition, staff spoke with agency personnel and reviewed strategic plans to become informed about planned and proposed developments and improvements that may be implemented in the future.

This stage of the process allowed staff to identify and map proposed and existing trails as well as existing wildlife viewing platforms, city and county parks, canoe trails, and other important features. Staff also identified, to some extent, where the greatest transportation and recreation needs are and where there is potential for connectivity between trails and bike routes. Finally, the “on-the-ground” assessment of the project area helped reveal some challenging physical and environmental limitations, particularly as they relate to the prevalence of wetlands and waterways in the area.

Agency Input

As nearly all of the project area falls outside of city limits, input from other agencies was an important part of the mapping and revision process. In particular, input was sought from Lane County, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), each of whom has jurisdiction over sections of the project area. Input was also sought from the City of Eugene, who has a direct interest in the Rails With Trails and Fern Ridge Bike Route projects (discussed below) and with a representative of Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) who has been involved with

several regional trail planning efforts, including the Rivers to Ridges and Ridgeline Area Open Space Visions.

Meetings with ODFW and ACOE took place early on in the process, prior to the creation of a draft map. The ACOE has jurisdictional ownership over the Fern Ridge Reservoir, its shores, and some of its adjacent land. The ODFW manages seven of the ACOE's management units on the south and east sides of the lake via a licensing agreement. Information obtained during these discussions helped guide the development of the first draft map. Staff became informed of the current and future management goals for the area and were made aware of which management areas are most appropriate for new and/or developed recreation facilities. Subsequent meeting with ACOE and ODFW allowed the agencies an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft map and prompted staff to make adjustments reflecting greater compatibility with the agencies' management goals and priorities.

Staff also had on-going correspondence with a Lane County representative throughout the mapping process, during which feedback was received on drafts of the map. The feedback assisted with the prioritization of trail projects located on County land based in part on what was learned about County goals, priorities, and constraints. At the time of this writing, Lane County was in the process of writing a new Parks Master Plan. Though Lane County is unable to commit any financial resources to trail projects at this time, County staff has agreed to include supportive language about the Fern Ridge Trail System in their Parks Plan.

Input was sought from representatives of the City of Eugene and LCOG to determine how the Fern Ridge Trail System fits within their respective strategic plans and sets of priorities. Because a primary goal of the vision is to establish connectivity between Fern Ridge and Eugene as well as other regional trails systems, it was important to involve these agencies in the visioning process and to assess their level of support. In addition to specific feedback about the proposed routes, they provided some technical and planning support.

Community Input

The City of Veneta believes it is important that the proposed trail system reflects community values and needs so that it effectively meets growing demand in the area and enhances quality of life for residents. In order to meet this goal, two forms of community input were obtained during the mapping process. First, staff met with citizen organizations at various stages in the mapping process to get feedback and receive direction. Organizations were selected either because they would be directly affected by the proposed trails or because they expressed an interest in being involved in the visioning process. Second, the City held an open house to allow community members an opportunity to learn more about the vision and offer feedback and suggestions.

As a means of soliciting specific types of community input, brief questionnaires were distributed to community members at the open house and at organizational meetings attended by City staff. Project maps and questionnaires were also made available to the public at City Hall. In all, staff collected 12 completed questionnaires. These data are included in Appendix A.

A diverse range of public comments were received in addition to those collected via the questionnaire. A complete list of comments are included in Appendix B. In general, community input was very useful for identifying which types of recreation are in greatest demand, which areas are most utilized (or would be most utilized if alternative transportation facilities existed), and what are the greatest barriers preventing residents from participating in recreational activities and/or commuting to popular destinations via alternative transportation.

Although the comments collected should not be interpreted as representing of the general population, they suggest that there is a tremendous need for recreational trails and alternative transportation corridors and that there is a high level of public support for the Fern Ridge Trail System. Only a couple of residents expressed concerns about the trail proposal. These concerns were related to the possibility of private property condemnation and the perception that the construction of new trails might divert funds from more critical projects and services.

IV. Project Descriptions

In its entirety, the Fern Ridge Trail System represents a long term vision of what could be an extensive network of paths providing for both recreational and transportation needs. In order to facilitate feasibility analyses and prioritization of specific projects, the trail system has been broken down into seven smaller parts and designated as such. Those seven projects, described below, are reflected on the map included at the end of this document. For a short list of projects and trail segments with more technical information, refer to Table 1.

Oregon Country Fair Loop

A safe alternative route to and from the Oregon Country Fair site has been identified as an important regional transportation need. During the annual three-day festival, traffic along Highway 126 (which provides the sole motorized vehicle access from the west) is severely congested. Moreover, parking at the event is limited. There is a desire among local and regional fair-goers to travel to the fair via an alternative mode of transportation, but there is currently no safe or clearly designated bicycle route.

Oregon County Fair (OCF) has expressed a desire to promote alternative transportation to the event. Early in the planning process, City staff met with OCF representatives to map out an appropriate route, which appears on the map as trail segments 1-3, labeled the *Oregon Country Fair Loop*. The project consists of bike lanes along Highway 126 and Suttle Rd, and a paved multi-use path through the west side of the Fair. Together, along with trail segment 4 (*Fern Ridge Schools Path*), these 3 segments form a loop.

The greatest advantages of the *Oregon Country Fair Loop* are that it would establish a much needed alternative transportation route from Veneta and Elmira to the Oregon Country Fair site as well as between Veneta and Elmira and that it would serve the dual purpose of transportation and recreation.

One disadvantage is that segment 1 (multi-use path through the site) may involve overcoming some environmental and/or engineering challenges as portions of the land are under water during winter months. Also, efforts would need to be made to ensure that users do not trespass onto Oregon Country Fair property east of the path. For those segments of the loop along Suttle Rd and Highway 126, the City would need to acquire right-of-way from Lane County and Oregon Dept of Transportation, respectively.

Fern Ridge Schools Connector

The primary purpose of the *Fern Ridge Schools Connector* (segment 4 on map) would be to provide an alternative transportation route from Veneta to Fern Ridge Schools located in Elmira, namely Elmira Elementary School, Fern Ridge Middle School, and Elmira High

School. Currently, there are few safe bicycle and pedestrian routes to these schools, particularly for those students living south of Highway 126 (most of Veneta's residents). The only existing direct route from Veneta to these schools is along Territorial Highway, which is not safe for either bicyclists or pedestrians.

The City of Veneta is interested in making walking and bicycling to school a safe and viable option for students. Research shows that there are a great many benefits associated with walking and biking to school, including lower occurrences of certain child diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and depression, an increase in confidence and independence among children, increased opportunities for social interaction, and decreased traffic congestion and improved air quality in the vicinity of schools⁵.

The proposed *Fern Ridge Schools Connector* is an off-road multi-use path, appropriate for a variety of non-motorized uses. It would likely be 10-ft wide and would be constructed from a combination of raised asphalt and raised boardwalk planks made from Recycled Plastic Lumber (RPL). A portion of the project area is located in city-owned wetlands, necessitating an engineering design that can withstand wet conditions, minimize ecological impacts, and elevate the path above standing water, which occurs during winter months. A raised boardwalk made of RPL may be the best option for this portion of the path for all of these reasons.

The *Fern Ridge Schools Connector* connects with the proposed bike lanes on Highway 126 and Suttle Rd to complete the east side of the *Oregon Country Fair Loop*. There is also potential for the path to connect with the existing Long Tom Hiking Path provided that the project included safe crossings to the east side of Territorial Highway.

The greatest advantage of the *Fern Ridge Schools Connector* is its potential to increase walking and bicycling to school and thus benefit school-aged children, physically and emotionally. Another advantage is its potential for connectivity with other recreation and transportation facilities. The greatest challenge associated with this project is the location of a portion of it in a wetland. This presents engineering challenges and potentially, environmental restrictions, particularly due to the presence of an endangered plant species, Bradshaw's lomatium.

Territorial Bike Route

Territorial Bike Route (segment 5) is a bike lane along Territorial Rd starting just north of Elmira and ending at Clear Lake Rd. It would create an alternative transportation corridor that would link Veneta and Elmira with residential areas further north. It could potentially serve as a safe route for school children traveling from south along Territorial to the schools in Elmira. It could also provide Fern Ridge residents bicycle access to the

⁵ Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. Safe Routes to School Guide. (2006).

Reservoir and to Lane County Parks on the north end of the lake. Currently, this stretch of Territorial is quite narrow and is lacking shoulders, making it dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians commuting along this path.

In addition to creating a much needed transportation route, this bike lane would complete an important recreational bicycle route around the northern part of the reservoir. It would connect with the Clear Lake Rd and then with Green Hill Rd., both of which have wide shoulders, and would establish connectivity with the Fern Ridge Path, which ends at Green Hill and Royal Ave.

This particular trail segment is quite valuable in terms of its potential to provide for both transportation and recreation needs. It has great potential for creating connectivity and for serving significant numbers of Fern Ridge residents. It would also serve residents of Eugene interested in recreational cycling and desiring bicycle access to the reservoir, Lane County parks, and Fern Ridge communities.

Because it involves major street improvements, engineering and construction costs of *Territorial Bike Route* would be immense. Also, because Territorial is a state highway, we would need to acquire right-of-way from Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Depending on the width of ODOT's right-of-way, land acquisition may be required.

Zumwalt Bike Route

The primary role of the *Zumwalt Bike Route* (trail segments 6-10) would be to establish an alternative transportation network providing access to the residential areas just northeast of Veneta as well as to the Reservoir and popular recreation sites such as Zumwalt Park, Jeans Park, and Fern Ridge Shores Marina. However, the route would have some recreational value as well as it would connect with existing recreation facilities and includes what could be a recreational bicycle loop. The route would include a series of on-street bicycle facilities (wide shoulders or bike lanes) along county roads just northeast of Veneta.

Perhaps this project's greatest benefit is that its central location allows for connectivity between several points of interest. It would serve to connect Veneta with county parks near the reservoir and with the *Zumwalt Recreational Path* (see below). It would also connect with the planned bicycle transportation network within Veneta city limits and with the potential *Rails With Trails Connector* (see below). An additional advantage is the ability of the route project to serve a dual purpose as a bicycle transportation corridor and a recreational bicycle loop.

Probably the biggest disadvantage associated with this project is cost. Most of the road segments included in this project are quite narrow and have drainage ditches on either

side. Extensive planning and engineering would be required to widen these roads and add bike lanes or shoulders. Additionally, depending on the width of Lane County's right-of-way on these roads, some portions of the project may require land acquisition.

An additional challenge is posed by the location of the project area north of Highway 126. In order for *Zumwalt Bike Route* to be fully accessible and serve the greatest number of residents, there needs to be a safe bicycle/pedestrian crossing of Highway 126. Veneta's Transportation System Plan identifies a bicycle/pedestrian overpass across Highway 126 at Hope Lane as a high priority project. This may ultimately be the best way of providing safe bicycle and pedestrian access to the *Zumwalt Bike Route*.

Zumwalt Recreation Path

The *Zumwalt Recreational Path*, appearing as trail segments 11-13 on the map, is made up of three short off-street multi-use trail segments running through Zumwalt and Jeans Parks on the west side of Jeans Peninsula. Access to this path would be provided via the *Zumwalt Bike Route* at either Jeans Rd. or Vista Drive. This project involves utilizing a gated off section of Vista Drive and developing an existing primitive trail system in the area. Though the path would be paved, depending on environmental conditions, portions of it may need to be built from Recycled Plastic Lumber planks as a raised boardwalk.

This project is intended to provide additional hiking, photography, and wildlife viewing opportunities. Part or all of the *Zumwalt Recreational Path* may also be a good location for interpretive/educational signage and/or wildlife viewing platforms, given its proximity to the reservoir and associated wetlands and given the diverse vegetation found in this area. The path would also connect with the proposed *Zumwalt Bike Route* to form recreational bike loops.

Zumwalt Park is managed by Lane County and the entire project area is owned by the ACOE. The designation of the Zumwalt Park management unit as a recreation area is one of the greatest advantages of this project. Additional advantages of the project are that it is small in size and, makes use of existing paths and roadways, and has the potential to provide for a mix of passive recreational uses.

The biggest disadvantage of this project likely relates to maintenance, particularly given the recent budget cuts at the county level and the possibility that Zumwalt Park could be closed to public use in the future.

Rails With Trails Connector

The *Rails With Trails Connector* (shown as segment 14 on the map) would serve the dual purpose of providing recreational opportunities for non-motorized trail users and establishing a safe alternative transportation corridor for those commuting between Eugene

and the Fern Ridge area. Currently, Veneta (as well as other Fern Ridge communities) is a bedroom community of the Eugene metropolitan area; a large number of Veneta residents commute into Eugene for work. Traffic on Highway 126 is increasingly congested as well as dangerous for both motorized and non-motorized commuters. There is currently no safe route for bicyclists along Highway 126, which is narrow and lacking sufficiently wide shoulders in many areas.

The proposed *Rails With Trails Connector* would be a 12-foot wide paved off-street multi-use path running parallel with the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP) rail line from Veneta's UGB to Eugene's UGB. The path would be located several feet from the Highway and could be on either the north or the south side of the rail line. It would necessarily be separated from the rail line with fencing and/or vegetation to help ensure safety.

The *Rails With Trails Connector* could potentially benefit a large population, including residents of Fern Ridge and the Eugene metropolitan area, both those commuting and those seeking recreational opportunities as well as bicyclists and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts visiting the area. The rails with trails vision is shared by several potential partners, including the City of Eugene, the *Rivers to Ridges* working group, the Rails To Trails Conservancy, and bicycle groups based out of Eugene.

There are a number of challenges associated with the project. First, engineering and construction costs would be high, both due to the size of the project and due to environmental factors, such as the presence of wetlands, streams, and fingers of the Fern Ridge Reservoir throughout the project area. The path would likely need to be elevated and would include several bridges where there are streams or standing water. Second, because the rail line is still active, extra measures would need to be taken to ensure the safety of trail users, which could complicate planning efforts and increase construction costs. In addition, the project plan and design would need to adequately address safety and liability concerns of the Railroad. Members of local user groups have indicated that an additional disadvantage of the path is its proximity to Highway 126, which may deter some potential users wishing to avoid traffic and noise. Given these significant challenges, the *Rails With Trails Connector* remains a long-range vision and is not likely to be implemented in the near future.

Fern Ridge Bike Route

The *Fern Ridge Bike Route* (identified as trail segments 15-23 on the map) was developed as an alternative to the *Rails With Trails Connector* because it is more feasible in the short-term. This project consists of a network of on-street bicycle facilities along county roads south of Highway 126.

The primary purpose of the *Fern Ridge Bike Route* would be to create an alternative transportation route between Veneta and Eugene. However, the project would also have recreational value as it would connect with a popular bicycle touring area further south

towards Crow. The project would extend the existing touring area and introduce new cycling opportunities. In addition, the route connects with several existing recreational areas, such as the proposed Ridgeline Trail extension, the Coyote Creek Nature Trails off of Cantrell Rd., and Perkins Peninsula Park. The proposed route also merges with the proposed bicycle network within Veneta's city limits, potentially providing access to existing and proposed recreational facilities north of town.

One of the greatest advantages of the *Fern Ridge Bike Route* is its high potential to establish connectivity within the Fern Ridge area, which is significant from both a transportation and recreation standpoint. The route has the capacity to serve a large population given its linkage between Eugene and the Fern Ridge area and with so many other transportation corridors and recreation areas.

The greatest disadvantage of the project likely relates to cost. The project area is large and includes a lot of mileage. Additionally, the project requires street improvements, which tend to be expensive. Furthermore, currently a section of Cantrell (trail segment 20) is gravel and may require paving in order for this project to be completed. Periodic seasonal flooding of sections of Cantrell Rd presents an additional challenge. These sections of the route may be inaccessible at times unless measures are taken to prevent water from entering the roadway.

Table 1: Fern Ridge Trail System Project List

Oregon Country Fair Loop: Includes segments 1-3.; bike lanes along Highway 126 and Suttle Rd., connecting with multi-use path through west side of the Oregon County Fair site and with proposed multi-use path along Territorial Rd., creating a recreational bike loop and alternative transportation route from Veneta and Elmira to the Fair.				
Segment No.	Location	Description	Project Type	Potential Partners
1	Maple Lane to Suttle Rd (through OCF site)	10-ft wide asphalt multi-use path; 3662 ft.	Medium Priority	Lane County, Oregon Country Fair
2	Along Hwy 126, Maple Lane to Veneta's west Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)	Bikeway enhancement; upgrade to 6-ft bike lane; 2.64 miles	Medium Priority	Lane County, Oregon Country Fair, ODOT
3	Suttle Rd, north entrance of the OCF site Territorial Rd.	6-ft wide bike lane; 1.36 miles	Medium Priority	Oregon Country Fair
Fern Ridge Schools Connector: Segment 4; multi-use path creating alternative transportation route from Veneta to elementary, middle, and high schools located in Elmira.				
4	Veneta north UGB to Elmira Middle School; parallel w/ west side of Territorial Hwy	10-ft wide multi-use path, paved asphalt and raised boardwalk combo; 5125 ft.	High Priority	Fern Ridge School District ODOT
Territorial Bike Route: Segment 5; bike lane along Territorial Rd, establishing connectivity between Veneta and Elmira and residential areas further north and providing bicycle and pedestrian access to Fern Ridge Reservoir and county parks along its northern shores.				
5	Along Territorial Rd, Fir Grove Ln to Clear Lake Rd	6-ft wide bike lane; 3.34 miles	Medium Priority	ODOT
Zumwalt Bike Route: Includes segments 6-10; on-street bike facilities on Jeans Rd., Ellmaker Rd., Vista Dr., and Wildwood, creating a recreational bike route and alternative transportation route to Zumwalt Park and to Reservoir.				
6	Along Wildwood Rd, east UGB to Ellmaker	4-ft shoulder bikeway; 3180 ft	Medium Priority	Lane County
7	Along Jeans Rd, Territorial Hwy to Zumwalt Park	6-ft wide bike lane; 2.29 miles	Medium Priority	Lane County
8	Along Ellmaker Rd, Wildwood to Jeans Rd	6-ft wide bike lane; 5140 ft	Medium Priority	Lane County
9	Vista Dr, Ellmaker to Zumwalt Park entrance	4-ft shoulder bikeway; 1836 ft	Medium Priority	Lane County
10	Along Jeans Rd., Zumwalt Park to Jeans Park	4-ft shoulder bikeway; 2992 ft	Medium Priority	Lane County

11	Through Zumwalt Park, Vista Dr. to Jeans Rd.	Road-to-Trail project; 3600 ft.	Medium Priority	Lane County
Zumwalt Recreational Path: Includes segments 11-13, recreational multi-use path through Zumwalt and Jeans Parks, providing access to Reservoir and to wildlife viewing opportunities				
12	Zumwalt Park/Jeans Park	10-ft wide paved multi-use path, asphalt and raised boardwalk combo; 2842 ft	Long Range	Lane County, Army Corps of Engineers
13	Just north of Jeans Park to marina	10-ft wide paved multi-use path, asphalt and raised boardwalk combo; 4415 ft loop	Long Range	Lane County, Army Corps of Engineers
Eugene to Veneta Rails-With-Trails Connector: Segment 14; multi-use path connecting Veneta with the Eugene metropolitan area; extension of the existing Fern Ridge Path				
14	Parallel to rail line, south of Veneta east UGB to Eugene west UGB at Greenhill Rd.	12-ft wide concrete multi-use path; 5.98 miles	Long Range	Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad, City of Eugene, Lane Council of Governments, ODOT, Dept. of Energy
Fern Ridge Bike Route: Includes segments 15-23; series of on-street bike facilities on county roads south of Highway 126, enhancing existing recreational bicycle touring area as well as creating an alternative transportation route between Veneta and Eugene.				
15	E. Bolton Rd., Veneta UGB to Huston Rd.	6-ft wide bike lane;	High Priority	Lane County
16	Huston Rd., Veneta UGB to Perkins Rd.	6-ft wide bike lane;	High Priority	Lane County
17	Along Perkins Rd, Territorial to Central Rd.	6-ft wide bike lane; 1.68 miles	High Priority	Lane County
18	Central Rd, Perkins Rd to Perkins Peninsula	6-ft bike lane; 1.40 miles	High Priority	Lane County
19	Cantrell Rd, Central Rd to Halderson	6-ft bike lane; 1.46 miles	High Priority	Lane County
20	Cantrell Rd., Halderson to just east of K. Nielsen Rd.	Paved roadway with bike lane or create separate bikeway; 1.42 miles ft.	High Priority	Lane County
21	Cantrell Rd, just east of K. Nielsen Rd to Oak Hill	6-ft bike lane; 5083 ft	High Priority	Lane County
22	Oak Hill, Cantrell Rd to Greenhill Rd	4-ft shoulder bikeway; 4360 ft.	High Priority	Lane County
23	Greenhill Rd, Oak Hill to Meadowlark Prairie Path parking area	6-ft bike lane; 1.05 miles	High Priority	Lane County

V. Implementation and Funding Strategies

In some ways, the most challenging aspect of implementing the Fern Ridge Trail System will be securing funding for the projects. The costs for engineering and trail construction continue to increase and the City has limited resources. The Fern Ridge Trail System will need to be implemented very gradually, one piece at a time. The projects have been prioritized in order to facilitate this process. It will be most effective to employ a variety of funding strategies in implementing each individual trail project.

Project Prioritization

A first step in preparing to implement the Fern Ridge Trail System is to prioritize projects, which serves to create implementation phases. Each of the seven trail projects have been classified as one of three project types: high priority, medium priority, and long range. High priority projects are those that the City hopes to implement within the first five years. Medium priority projects should be further prioritized after high priority projects have been implemented. Long range projects involve significant issues that need to be worked through prior to implementation. This classification system was selected to reflect consistency with Veneta's Transportation System Plan.

The project prioritization process involved evaluating each project against the following seven equally weighted criteria, using a scale from 1 to 5:

1. *Destination* (access to goods and services, schools, parks, recreation facilities etc.)
2. *Connectivity* (with trails both within and outside of the Fern Ridge area)
3. *Safety* (improved safety for bicyclists and pedestrians)
4. *Cost* (costs of planning, engineering, construction, maintenance)
5. *Potential for economic benefit*
6. *Public support*
7. *Strength of partnerships*

Potential Partners

There is a great deal of opportunity for partnerships, both with agencies and organizations having jurisdiction over the project area and with non-profit organizations having technical expertise as well as advocacy and fundraising experience. In fact, certain partnerships will be essential as most of the project area is owned or managed by entities other than the City. In situations where a project promotes the goals of multiple entities, cost-sharing arrangements can be an effective funding strategy.

Lane County

Much of the project area falls within the jurisdiction of Lane County, particularly the bike routes along county roads and the path through Zumwalt Park. Given this, Lane County's support of Fern Ridge Trail System is crucial. Lane County staff is aware of the project and were updated during the mapping process. The County has agreed to include supportive language regarding the Fern Ridge Trail System vision in their most recent Parks Master Plan, which is being drafted at the time of this writing. In addition, a few of the trail segments included in the Fern Ridge Trail System are also included in Lane County's Transportation System Plan, adopted in 2004. Specifically the bike lanes along Suttle Rd. (segment 3), Jeans Rd. (segment 7), and Perkins Rd. (segment 17) are listed in the Lane County TSP as bike/pedestrian facility projects.

Lane County has recently experienced some dramatic budget cuts, forcing them to cut back spending and re-organize goals and priorities. Though this reality may diminish the possibility of cost-sharing arrangements for the time being, opportunities may arise in the future.

Army Corps of Engineers/Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ACOE/ODFW)

A primary goal of the Fern Ridge Trail System is to provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access to the Fern Ridge Reservoir and to adjacent lands, waterways, and parks. Because these areas are co-managed by the ACOE and ODFW, it is important that these agencies remain partners in the visioning and planning process and that trail projects are compatible with their management goals. One of the projects (*Zumwalt Recreation Path*) falls within ACOE jurisdiction. The implementation of this project will require the support and direct involvement of ACOE. The City should continue to develop a partnership with both agencies to ensure that the trail projects promote their goals as well as the City's.

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)

A partnership with ODOT will be a critical part of implementing those projects along state Highways, particularly the *Territorial Bike Route* and that section of the *Oregon Country Fair Loop* along Highway 126. These trail segments would like fall partially or completely within ODOT's right-of-way. City staff should work to establish a partnership with ODOT and begin advocating for the inclusion of one or more of these trail projects in the Oregon State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). In addition, there are several grant programs administered by ODOT that could serve as potential funding sources.

City of Eugene

Another goal of the Fern Ridge Trail System is to establish greater connectivity between Eugene and Veneta, for both recreation and transportation purposes. The City of Eugene strongly supports this part of the vision, though it is not as of yet identified as an official goal in any of Eugene's strategic plans. Both the *Rails With Trails Connector* and the alternative *Fern Ridge Bike Route* fulfill this goal, and the City of Eugene should be an active partner in the implementation of either of these projects. The City of Veneta should continue to develop this partnership and work with transportation planners at City of Eugene to examine the feasibility of these projects and explore alternatives.

Lane Council of Governments (LCOG)

A partnership between City of Veneta and Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) could be very beneficial as there is overlap between the goals and planning efforts of both entities. Planners at LCOG are involved with a couple of regional trail planning efforts which connect directly with the proposed Fern Ridge Trail System, namely the *Rivers to Ridges Metropolitan Regional Parks and Open Space Study* and the *Ridgeline Open Space Vision*. The former identifies a Rails With Trails project as a potential connector between Eugene and Veneta.

Oregon Country Fair (OCF)

Representatives from the Oregon Country Fair have expressed an interest in being involved with this visioning process, especially with regard to those projects falling within or directly adjacent to their land. OCF is supportive of the idea of promoting alternative transportation to the fair site as well as efforts to create additional outdoor recreation opportunities in the area. These goals correspond well with the organization's own goal of promoting good environmental stewardship. OCF is a necessary partner for the implementation of the Oregon Country Fair Loop, but there is potential for this partnership to extend beyond this project.

Rails To Trails Conservancy (RTC)

The Rails-To-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to helping local communities transform both active and non-active rail corridors into non-motorized trails. They assist communities by providing training, leadership, and technical assistance. They are also a good resource for learning about additional trail funding opportunities. RTC is aware of the Eugene to Veneta Rails With Trails vision, and City staff have been in contact with a representative of the RTC western regional office. RTC staff are prepared to offer technical assistance to the City of Veneta and to help them forge ahead with project implementation when the time is right.

Others

In addition to these potential partners, there are various community groups that may be able to assist with project implementation in the way of providing planning assistance and technical advice, knowledge of funding resources, and advocacy. For instance, bicycle groups such as the Eugene Bicycle Coalition and Eugene GEARS may want to continue to be involved beyond the visioning stage.

Grant Opportunities

Fortunately, there are numerous grant programs available for the various stages of trail and alternative transportation projects, from planning to construction to maintenance. Grants are available through state, county, and federal government agencies and through private foundations. Given the high costs of trail construction, grants will undoubtedly need to be a major component of the financing strategies for most if not all of the trail projects.

The list below is not meant to be a comprehensive list of grant sources, but provides a feel for the types of grants that are available for recreational trails and alternative transportation projects. Please refer also to Table 2, which provides a short list of grants with more specific technical information.

It should be noted that many of the grant programs administered by state agencies actually utilize federal funds. The significance of this is that some federal requirements may be attached to the funding, including those associated with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Government Sources

Transportation and Growth Management Grant Program, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development: This program helps communities expand transportation options for residents by integrating land-use and transportation goals so that they support each other. It provides funding to local governments for integrated land-use and transportation plans, Transportation System Plans (and updates), and other projects that improve bicycle, pedestrians, and transit options. The funds can be used for planning, but not constructions. This program is funded primarily by the Federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU)

Transportation Enhancement Grant Program, Oregon Department of Transportation: The program assists communities with the implementation of various bicycle, pedestrian, and streetscape improvements that enhance the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental value of transportation systems. Though a variety of projects are funded through this program, they generally fall into one of four categories: pedestrian and bicycle

projects, historic preservation related to surface transportation, landscaping and scenic beautification, environmental mitigation (highway runoff and wildlife protection only).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program, Oregon Department of Transportation: This program provides funding to Oregon cities and counties for the design and construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. All projects must be within a public right-of-way. The program will not fund narrow bike lanes and sidewalks (5 or less feet wide), multi-use paths on a single side of the road, or traffic signals. Award decisions are made by the Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Safe Routes to School Program, Oregon Department of Transportation: The purpose of this program is to help communities identify and address barriers to children walking and bicycling safely to and from school. There are two types of grants available. One funds infrastructure (engineering) projects, such as new sidewalks, multi-use paths, and school crosswalks. The other funds non-infrastructure projects, which may include bicycle and pedestrian education programs, encouragement programs, and traffic law enforcement efforts. Though a local government agency may apply for these grants, they are required to work collaboratively with a local school or schools, the school district, and community members to develop a proposal. This program is funded primarily by SAFETEA-LU, a federal program.

Recreational Trails Grant Program, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department: This is a federally funded grant program that funds trail projects serving primarily recreational purposes. Eligible projects include the restoration and maintenance of existing trails, the development and rehabilitation of trailhead facilities, the construction of new trails, and the acquisition costs. The program does not fund feasibility studies or trail planning. Award decisions are made by the Oregon Recreational Trail Program Advisory Committee.

Local Government Grant Program, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department: This program provides funds to local government agencies having an obligation under state law to provide public recreation facilities. Land acquisition, development, and major rehabilitation projects related to public outdoor recreation areas and facilities are eligible for funding. Projects must be consistent with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and/or the recreation elements of local comprehensive plans. There are both small grants and large grants available (see Table 2 for details).

Tourism Special Projects Grant Program, Lane County: This program awards grants to organizations and businesses wanting to increase tourism and tourism-related activities in Lane County, with the intention of promoting the growth of the tourism

industry throughout the county. The program funds promotional activities as well as capital improvement projects, including the construction or rehabilitation of physical structures. It does not fund feasibility studies. There are both small grants and large grants available (see Table 2 for details).

Non-profit Organizations and Private Foundations

Oregon Country Fair Grant Programs: The local non-profit organization, Oregon Country Fair (OCF), has a long tradition of philanthropic activity that aims to benefit local communities in a variety of ways. They administer two grant programs which could potentially fund minor aspects of trail projects, particularly those projects that connect with OCF land. The *Bill Wooten Endowment Fund* provides small grants for projects in West Lane County related to arts, education, and/or environmental protection. The *Jill Heiman Vision Fund* provides small grant to projects within Lane County related to basic needs and can include capital projects, operating costs, and education.

Bike Belong Grants Program: Bikes Belong is a national coalition of bike suppliers and retailers that strives to “put more people of bicycles on the road more often.” They provide small grants to agencies and organizations for two types of projects: bicycle advocacy and bicycle facilities. Bike Belong does not fund planning or policy documents, maps, or trailheads. They generally do not fund projects in which they are the sole funder.

The Kodak American Greenways Awards Program: This grant is provided by Eastman Kodak, The Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society. It provides small grants to communities hoping to initiate planning and design of greenways. Greenways are defined as corridors of protected land along rivers, ridges, abandoned rail lines, scenic roads, and other linear features. The programs funds such things as mapping, environmental analysis, surveying, bike path planning, and design activities.

Other Forms of Assistance

In addition to grants, some government agencies and non-governmental organizations offer various forms of technical assistance to organizations wanting to plan or implement trail projects at little or no cost. Below are some examples.

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), National Park Service

This program helps non-profit organizations and government agencies achieve goals related to nature resource conservation and outdoor recreation, including trail and greenway projects. RTCA provides staff assistance in the areas of conceptual and master planning, project coordination, facilitation, and public involvement.

Application instructions can be found on-line at
http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/contactus/cu_apply.html.

Transportation and Growth Management Direct Community Assistance Program, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

This program offers no-cost assistance to local governments in Oregon with land use and transportation planning issues. There are three types of services available: Code Assistance, Outreach, and Quick Response. Communities can apply for assistance any time during the biennium cycle.

Rails-To-Trails Conservancy (RTC)

Though the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy does not provide direct financial assistance to communities, RTC staff are available to provide technical assistance and training related to all aspects of trails planning and implementation. For more information, the City can contact Ben Gettleman at the Western Regional Office at 415-397-2220 or Benjamin@railtotrails.org.

Table 2: Trail Project Grant Schedule

Name of Grant	Funder/ Administrating Agency	Deadline/Grant Cycle	Award Amount	Match Requirement	Website
Transportation and Growth Management Program	Oregon Dept of Land Conservation and Development	March 9, 2007 deadline Biennial cycle	\$80,000-\$500,000	12%	http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/grants.shtml
Transportation Enhancement Grant Program	Oregon Dept of Transportation	June 30, 2006 deadline Biennial cycle	Total of \$6.5 million per yr (for 2008-2011 cycle)	Minimum 10.27%	http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/LGS/enhancement.shtml
Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program	Oregon Dept of Transportation	Spring, 2008 (next cycle begins) Biennial cycle	Total of \$5 million per cycle	10%	http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/BIKEPED/grants1.shtml
Safe Routes to School	Oregon Dept of Transportation	July 31, 2007 deadline	Infrastructure projects: \$250,000 maximum Non-infrastructure projects: \$20,000 average	None	http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/saferoutes.shtml
Recreational Trails Grant	Oregon Parks & Recreation Dept.	October 1, 2007 deadline Annual cycle	Max: \$100,000 Average: \$50,000	20%	http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/GRANTS/trails.shtml
Local Government Grant Program	Oregon Parks & Recreation Dept	April 13, 2007 deadline Biennial cycle	Small grants: \$50,000 maximum Large grants: \$500,000 maximum	50% for cities w/ population greater than 5,000 40% for cities w/ population less than 5,000	http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/GRANTS/local.shtml .
Tourism Special Projects Grant Program	Lane County	January 31, 2008 deadline Annual cycle	Small Projects: \$2,000-\$5,000 Large Projects: \$5,001-\$10,000	Small Projects: \$500 Large Projects: 10%	http://www.lanecounty.org/parks/

Bill Wooten Endowment Fund Grant	Oregon Country Fair	January 23, 2007 deadline Annual cycle	\$2,500 maximum	None specified	http://www.oregoncountryfair.org/WhatElse/whattelse.html
Jill Heiman Vision Fund	Oregon Country Fair	February 9, 2007 Annual cycle	\$4,000-\$6,000	None specified	http://www.oregoncountryfair.org/WhatElse/whattelse.html
Bikes Belong Grant Program	Bikes Belong Coalition	2007 deadlines: February 26 May 30 August 27 November 26 Quarterly cycle	\$10,000 maximum	Not specified, however, generally, projects are not funded if Bikes Belong is the sole funder.	http://bikesbelong.org/page.cfm?PageID=157
The Kodak American Greenways Awards Program	Eastman Kodak, The Conservation Fund, and National Geographic Society	June 15, 2007 deadline Annual cycle	\$2,500 maximum	None specified	http://www.conservationsfund.org/node/245

Appendix A: Questionnaire data

How important is it that the following recreational opportunities are available in the Fern Ridge area?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Walking/hiking	20	2	1
Bicycling	17	3	2
Birding/wildlife viewing	12	9	1
Canoeing	7	13	3
Horseback Riding	3	6	13
Hunting/fishing	2	11	8
Other: Connector for bike trail			

How important is it that there is an alternative transportation route from Veneta to the following destinations?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Oregon Country Fair	13	6	2
Existing recreational facilities (hiking paths, bike routes, wildlife viewing, etc)	16	5	1
County parks	17	4	1
Fern Ridge communities (Elmira, Crow, etc)	15	11	2
Local Schools	17	4	1
Eugene metro area	12	7	3
Other: Fern Ridge Lake at Richardson Park			

How important are the following attributes of the Fern Ridge Area?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Natural resources	20	3	
Wildlife	20	3	
Rural character	19	4	
Recreation opportunities	18	4	4
Aesthetic quality	21	2	
Other: trees, public safety			

Referring to the map on the backside of this sheet, please rank the following projects with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important

<i>(this column indicates ranking for individual projects)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Oregon Country Fair Loop	1	5	5		2	1	4
Fern Ridge Schools Connector	11	3	2	2			1
Applegate Hiking Path		3			4	3	2
Zumwalt Bike Route		2	5	4	1	5	
Zumwalt Recreational Path			5	5	4	1	3
Fern Ridge Bike Path	2	1	4	5	3	3	
Rails With Trails Connector	4	5		1	2	2	4

Additional Comments:

- Two of the three respondents ranking this project 7th indicated their ranking is a reflection of the long-term nature of the project and they believe more feasible projects should be a higher priority
- We need to have a better transportation system for future generations.
- Rails With Trails is an important piece and should receive greater emphasis.
- Should focus on projects in which volunteer and community organizations can assist with implementation.
- Rails With Trails project is a good idea, but there are potential hazards to consider. There are a lot of personal injury claims associated with railroads already.
- There is a need for a bike route leading from Elmira (at Fir Grove Lane), north along Territorial to Clear lake Rd This would allow Veneta/Elmira residents to safely ride to Richardson and Kirk Parks. The swimming area north of the reservoir is very popular. People (especially kids) ride on the Highway now and it's dangerous. Also, school children and residents living north of Elmira cannot safely access their community. An eventual bike path around the lake would be great too.
- It would be nice to have a parking area at Greenhill and West 11th (south side) for those who cannot or choose not to ride the entire way from Fern Ridge into Eugene. The gravel parking lot at the old abandoned gas station might be an ideal location. A bike shed at the same location would be also be good.
- There is no need for a bike route along Suttle Road as very few people would use it. Plans to add a bike lane along Suttle Rd put private property owners at risk of loosing their land to condemnation. These property owners would like assurance that this will not happen. Furthermore, it does not make sense to build paths that might divert funds away from other critical services such as fire protection and a police force.
- I love the ideas presented. This would be a great asset to the community
- Territorial is too dangerous for bike lanes; it needs an off-street bike path
- Opposed to the Suttle Rd portion of the OCF Loop
- Funding for police, public safety, and education should be a priority over trails
- Fund current transportation first
- There are concerns regarding private property rights
- Bike path to OCF is a very poor idea and use of money

Appendix B: Community Input

Group	Comments
Oregon Country Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly support the idea of making it possible for people to bike safely to the Eugene/Springfield area to the Oregon Country Fair – best option would be to allow bicyclists to enter and park at the Maple Gate • Would be open to the idea of having a multi-use path run through the west side of OCF land, with entrances at the Maple Gate off Hwy 126 and at Bus Rd off of Suttle Rd • May be an opportunity for interpretive boardwalk/wildlife viewing at southeast corner of property, where box turtle critical habitat has been proposed. • Suggest looking into providing connectivity with Long Tom Country Trail and Fern Ridge Country Trail routes
Neighbors for Responsible Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide as many loops as possible; particularly interested in the loop from Suttle Rd to 126 through OCF • Make sure there is a safe way of getting across Hwy 126 to trails on north side • Extension of Fern Ridge Trail from Eugene is a priority; extension out to the reservoir would be ideal
Eugene Based Bicycle Groups (Eugene Bicycle Coalition/Gears)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, a lot of support for the project among cycling groups • Rails With Trails project is a great idea, offering many advantages over other routes • May be able to get support/information from Peter Defazio's office as he is a big supporter of bike transportation • Consider alternatives to Oak Hill (avoid hills) • Multi-use path along rail line would be great for commuting, but perhaps not the best for recreational purposes. • Two options for connecting Fern Ridge trail system with Eugene system: 1) Ed Cone Blvd → Crow Rd → Oak Hill → Cantrel → Central → Perkins → Houston → Milo → Erdman → Bolton → 6th or 2) Off-street path north of 126 from Eugene to Veneta, approaching Hwy 126 only where absolutely necessary (where there is water, etc) • Provide safe crossing of Hwy 126 from the southwest end of Ed Cone Blvd • Avoid placing path within 1/8 of Hwy 126 for long distances. Users do not like the noise.

Kiwanis of Fern Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be nice if the connectivity were extended out to Noti • Take the Oregon Country Fair Loop a bit further west to Ridiculous Lane • There is a need for more places to walk, particularly with strollers
Public comment from 6-27-07 Open House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for bike lanes along Territorial Rd from Fir Grove Ln to Clear Lake Rd. This addition would allow bicycle access to Richardson Park and would allow cyclists to make a safe loop around the Reservoir • General agreement from participants that bike lanes along Territorial Rd would be beneficial • In general, county roads in the area need to be widened • There are primitive paths near the rail line where people have created them • Hunter Rd is especially dangerous • Bike paths within the City should be a priority • Safety of paths should be assured; paths through wooded areas are not safe • The Rails With Trails path is an important piece of the project; it is preferred over the Fern Ridge Bike Route because it is straight shot between Eugene and Veneta, whereas the bike route requires several more miles of riding • We should focus on what is doable in the immediate future, such as the Safe Routes to School project • The bike route along Jeans Rd is beautiful and would draw people to the area • Safety on Territorial Rd is an immense concern; off-street multi-use path may be most appropriate for safety of children • Canoe trails are important; new routes should be designated or existing ones should be promoted • Safe crossings of Highway 126 are needed • Royal Avenue and Fisher Rd are reasonable connectors to the Greenhill path, if shoulders were widened • There is potential to improve on-street bike facilities on Clear Lake Rd • Grant/funding suggestions and ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Oregon Recreational Advisory Council -Consolidated Tribes -Casino -Oregon Lottery -League of American Bicyclists -CVALCO -Partner with Willamalane -Thunderhead Alliance -Bikes Belong

Legend

- Existing Hiking Path
- Potential Hiking Path
- Existing Bike Lane
- Potential On-Street Bike Facilities
- Planned or Proposed Bike Lane
- Existing Multi-Use Path
- Potential Multi-Use Path
- Planned or Proposed Multi-Use Path
- Park
- Trail Head
- Wildlife Viewing
- School
- Wetlands
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Canoe Trail



FERN RIDGE TRAIL SYSTEM

