

**SR 28 – East Wenatchee Area Surplus Property
“Minimum Right-of-Way Requirements” – Apple Capital Loop Trail**

Narrative to Exhibit Map

Introduction

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), at the request of Senator Linda Evans Parlette (12th District), has analyzed and compiled information regarding the minimum right of way (R/W) necessary to maintain the existing Loop Trail system located within WSDOT property on the east bank of the Columbia River between the Odabastian Bridge and 9th Street in East Wenatchee. This document serves to explain and document the basic rationale, specific decisions, and future considerations related to the disposal of the WSDOT riverfront property in Douglas County while keeping the Loop Trail in public ownership.

In collaboration with Douglas County, the City of East Wenatchee, and Chelan County PUD, WSDOT has attempted to account for known current and future issues related to the surplus of portions of the WSDOT right of way along the east bank of the Columbia River as they relate to maintaining the existing trail. The resulting exhibit map and narrative is simply a starting point for a more detailed public process and should not be considered a substitute for that effort or the initiation of a WSDOT surplus property disposal project.

WSDOT considers the Loop Trail an important community asset, and any future surplus property project should be preceded by a dedicated planning effort with the full involvement of the community, local agencies and elected officials. To that end, WSDOT supports the development of a comprehensive trail master plan prior to the disposal of any existing rights of way that coincide with the location of the existing Loop Trail.

For this analysis, current state law and WSDOT procedures pertaining to the surplus of properties not required for transportation purposes were considered. It is important to clarify that although WSDOT may show a property as “surplus” on the attached exhibit map, such terminology does not assume that said property is solely for private sale and development. Properties that are purchased by or exchanged with other government agencies for equal value though the current WSDOT property disposal process are also surplus. Therefore, no option for future public ownership of any excess property is precluded by a “surplus” designation. For this analysis, any property not specifically required for WSDOT purposes or for the retention of the Loop Trail is designated as “surplus”.

Exhibit Map

General Criteria

The “Conceptual Minimum Right of Way” exhibit map was developed based on a few basic assumptions related to maintaining the current trail function in its present location while considering immediate needs identified through coordination with the local agencies (Douglas County, East Wenatchee, and Chelan PUD). The exhibit map serves to identify those areas along the riverfront where property should be retained to provide continued function of the existing Loop Trail or for other transportation purposes.

- **Existing Trail Alignment & Width:** In several areas the trail could be realigned to maximize properties available for public/private development; however, making those determinations in this effort is not realistic given the myriad of variables and stakeholders involved. Therefore, the trail alignment was assumed to remain as-is for this analysis.
- **Standard Right of Way (R/W) Width:** A 50ft R/W width (25ft each side of trail centerline) was determined to be necessary to allow for future widening and minor realignment/widening in curves to meet design standards, as well as to provide for a buffer area. Potential equestrian use could be considered within this R/W width, although a separate/parallel path would need to be build for that function and is beyond the scope of this analysis.
- **Existing/Future WSDOT Facilities:** As part of the SR 28 Sunset Highway corridor study, future stormwater treatment ponds have been identified and retained within WSDOT R/W. Required R/W for the Cascade Avenue Interchange conceptual footprint is also retained.
- **Improved Public Access Points:** The existing trail has limited public parking/access points and no restroom facilities due to the current Limited Access designation of the R/W. Planned Douglas County and City of East Wenatchee access improvements were identified and designated as retained properties.
- **Wetlands & Riparian Areas:** WSDOT will retain designated wetland areas as potential mitigation sites for future highway projects in the area. Small buffer areas were assumed to be retained as well, although wetland classifications have not been determined for all locations so actual dimensions of these properties should not be considered accurate. Riparian areas which are distinctive to the character of the trail, where surplus properties would be inaccessible, were also retained.

Site-Specific Criteria

The riverfront property, although basically undeveloped, is quite complex – therefore, the *General Criteria* assumptions require adjustment in some locations. The existing trail is stationed from south to north on the exhibit map and labeled in 500ft increments (general nomenclature: 5+75 = 575ft). Tick marks between the numbers are at 100ft intervals. This method allows for explanation of areas where site specific rationale requires additional

clarification. As the stationing ascends to the north, for discussion purposes a “RT” (right) designation means to the east of trail centerline and “LT” (left) means to the west.

Specific criteria/considerations will be described starting at the southerly end of the project and proceed to the north, as follows (not all locations require discussion):

- **South of 13th Street (0+00 to 39+00 LT/RT):** No surplus is anticipated as steep fill slopes and the proximity of the river eliminate any realistic use of the property for other uses (public or private).
- **15th Street Extended (50+00 to 52+00 RT):** City/County has indicated plans to provide trail access and parking at this location.
- **WSDOT Proposed Stormwater Pond 1 (54+00 to 73+50 RT):** Future stormwater pond location for treatment of the expanded Sunset Highway 5-lane configuration.
- **19th Street & Transportation/Land Services (74+50 to 83+00 LT/RT):** Improved/expanded access and public facilities at existing Douglas County property; potential for vehicle access across the trail to public/private development on riverfront.
- **Riparian Area (80+00 to 93+00 LT):** Riparian area between the trail and river has very limited development value and is within the flood plain; area also provides habitat and/or wetland enhancement opportunities for WSDOT to offset impacts for future highway projects.
- **River Drive Access (104+00 to 106+00 RT):** Future neighborhood access improvement together with local road access to riverfront development and/or public park.
- **WSDOT Existing Stormwater Pond (121+00 to 137+00 RT):** Aerial photo has not been updated since the construction of this pond in 2007. Access to the pond from 27th Street is retained.
- **27th Street Vicinity (137+00 to 146+00 RT):** Expansion of the existing access location for increased parking and public facilities. The “island” parcel designated for surplus can have access from a future roadway to the stormwater pond.
- **32nd Street Vicinity (186+75 to 196+00 RT/LT):** Retain “extension” of 32nd Street for future pond access, together with future WSDOT Stormwater Pond 2.
- **35th Street Extended Public Access (204+00 to 209+00 RT):** Douglas County plans to construct formal public access and parking in conjunction with future public/private improvements to 35th Street. This access point will relieve trespass problems associated with the current limited trail access in this area.
- **Future Cascade Avenue Interchange (219+00 northward):** Existing WSDOT property to be retained until final development of future interchange.

Other Considerations

Many additional considerations should be reviewed during future efforts associated with City/County trail master planning that cannot be addressed in this analysis. Again, this effort focused on retaining existing trail function while allowing for minor operational and access improvements given identified deficiencies; current and future WSDOT project needs were also retained.

Some issues outside the scope of current WSDOT property surplus processes that will require more detailed study and consideration are discussed below.

Archeological/Cultural Resources

The area encompassed by the current WSDOT riverfront R/W is rich with cultural resources based on previous studies. WSDOT recognizes the value of these resources and sees tremendous benefits associated with keeping properties containing known sites within public ownership. However, current policy and law does not consider retention of property for the sole purpose of preserving these resources to be a “transportation purpose”. While these areas were not considered in the determination of what property to retain for the intent of this analysis, WSDOT recommends the evaluation of how these properties could potentially be “surplused”.

Planning/Zoning

As the purpose of this analysis was to determine the minimum property to be retained in public ownership in order to maintain the Loop Trail, zoning and permitting issues that may be realized in the future were not considered a determining factor and does not constitute retaining property for transportation purposes. Again, a “surplus” property does not necessitate the property leave public ownership; local agencies can acquire surplus WSDOT properties though the current WSDOT policies and state law.

Current Law & Surplus Process

It may be in the best interest of the public for certain areas designated as surplus through this analysis to remain in public ownership. While WSDOT recognizes the benefits associated with the direct transfer of properties to other state or local agencies in order to develop community projects, current law does not permit properties to be granted to other agencies for non-transportation purposes unless the Department is reimbursed at the current fair-market value for said properties. WSDOT recommends that this issue be included in the public master planning for the trail, which should involve state elected officials who may have the ability to address this situation specifically.

Summary

This analysis presents the starting point for a more detailed public master planning effort involving all local stakeholders. WSDOT supports this future effort and is committed to the continued viability of the Loop Trail as a valuable community resource.

WSDOT would appreciate any and all questions, comments, or feedback related to this analysis and is available to provide further information as requested.