

A photograph of a railway track curving through a forested landscape next to a river. The track is made of wooden ties and metal rails, and it curves from the foreground towards the background. To the right of the track is a river with white water rapids. The background is a dense forest of evergreen trees on a hillside.

# JOSEPH BRANCH RAIL-WITH-TRAIL CONCEPT PLAN

December 2015

# Acknowledgements

## Wallowa Union Railroad Authority

Mike Hayward  
Steve McClure  
Stephen Adams  
Susan Roberts  
Garrett Lowe  
Gene Hardy  
Mark Davidson  
Joe Garlitz

## Trail Concept Review Committee (TCRC)

The TCRC is composed of a broad range of interested parties who have given their time to this project through providing comments and/or attending four work sessions to review work in progress and guide the Concept Plan. The committee includes citizens and elected officials from Union and Wallowa Counties who have provided guidance to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) as well as Eastern Oregon University (EOU). The committee has met in work sessions to develop project goals, draft community questions, and disperse information. Participants of the TCRC include:

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## EOU Student Internship Advisory Committee

This group met on a biweekly to monthly basis throughout the project duration to facilitate student learning and to review student work. This group includes:  
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John Baker  
Kim Metlen  
Sara Miller  
Rocky Houston  
Stephen Clements  
Scott McConnell  
Peter Maille  
Randy Jones  
Stephen Adams

## Key Stakeholder Interviewers

These volunteers conducted 26 community member interviews:  
Sara Miller  
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Ed Shaul  
Dana Kurtz  
Tim Funk  
Terry Edvalson

## Joseph Branch Trail Consortium (JBTC) Board of Directors

This group of trail advocates provided logistical and community outreach support:  
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Randy Jones, Eastern Oregon Regional Solutions Center

Many other citizens and organizations have been involved with the process of developing this Concept Plan. Hundreds of individuals attended the three sets of public meetings (9 total) held in Elgin, Enterprise, and Joseph/Wallowa, and many more participated in the public opinion survey.



OPRD staff and local volunteers mapping the rail corridor

## Funding

This Concept Plan has been made possible with generous funding from:

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Joseph Branch Rail Line traverses a canyon





# INTRODUCTION

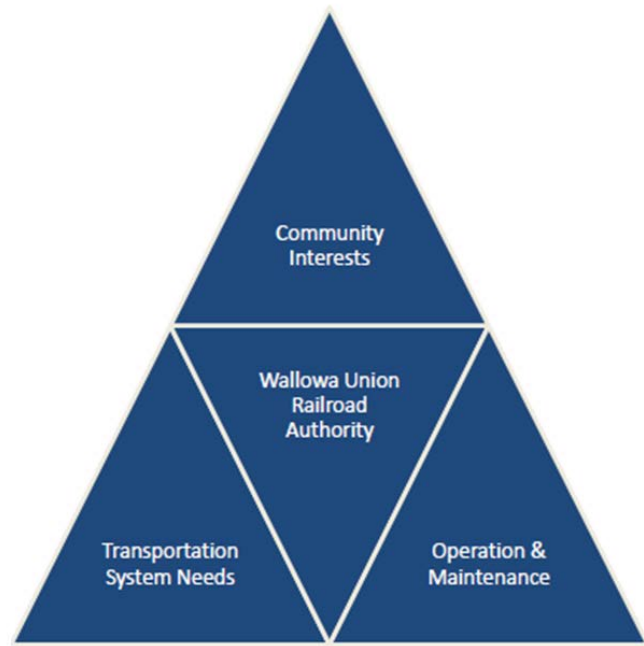


# The Vision

Since the Wallowa Union Railroad (WURR) was first constructed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been an important transportation connection between Wallowa and Union Counties in Oregon and the rest of the United States. It was used as an economic engine to support the communities in the transportation of goods and people. The same vision that created the WURR still existed when the Wallowa Union Rail Authority (WURA) acquired the line at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The WURA recognized the importance the WURR had for the local communities. This Concept Plan builds on this vision and explores the opportunity to use the corridor as a recreational trail while keeping available the option for future rail use.

The WURR, known locally, and referred to in this document as the Joseph Branch, is 63 miles long and connects Elgin in Union County to Joseph in Wallowa County. As is typical of the Northwest’s major trunk lines, the Joseph Branch follows the region’s waterways, the Grande Ronde and Wallowa Rivers. These waters flow into the Snake River, then find their way to the Pacific Ocean via the Columbia River.

Demand for longer interconnected trails is increasing, as evidenced by the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and the Oregon Non-Motorized Trail Participation and Priorities Report. The Joseph Branch provides an opportunity to create a close-to-home and relatively flat trail for the benefit of local residents and visitors.



WURA’s goal for the Joseph Branch Rail is to support community interests, transportation needs, and rail line operation and maintenance

The purpose of the Concept Plan is to provide a comprehensive summary of the research and work completed during the past 18 months to assess the feasibility of creating a 63-mile rail-with-trail along this historic track. This Concept Plan is the result of input from many sources, including but not limited to: neighbors; potential users; stakeholders; community members; elected officials; and local, state, and regional planners. This document provides a comprehensive vision for trail development, including multiple options for phasing, funding, trail types, and routing.

This document begins the collaborative and adaptive process needed to balance a variety of stakeholder needs and interests. It is an important jumping off point. If constructed, the Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail would be the first of its kind in Eastern Oregon and, as such, will require extensive community planning and collaboration.

The Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail concept has the potential to foster economic and quality of life benefits for the Northeast Region (Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties) and all of Oregon. These include, but are not limited to:

- enhanced recreational opportunities
- expanded tourism
- community development
- small business stabilization and expansion
- multidisciplinary education and career development opportunities
- connection to and potential expansion of regional arts and cultural programs

The Northeast Region is home to a number of communities with intact historic downtown centers, encompasses an iconic working landscape defined by the area’s farms and ranches, and is distinguished by magnificent mountain ranges and river valleys. The development of rail-with-trail facilities could encourage additional visitors to the region, create new opportunities for the local economy, and enhance recreation and quality of life for local residents.



View of the Wallowa Valley from the Joseph Branch Rail Line



# Planning Goals and Project Timeline

The Concept Plan was commissioned by the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA) to assess views and desires of the community and stakeholders about the potential development of a rail-with-trail in Union and Wallowa Counties. Determining whether a trail is generally desirable, and if so, what that trail should look like and how it should be developed were the goals of this study. This study is the culmination of numerous public meetings, work sessions, outreach events, and research regarding how trail development could be accomplished to meet the stated interests of residents, advocates, and opponents.

The planning process has been guided by three basic tenets set forward by the rail corridor owner, WURA. These are:

- The rails will remain in place and fully functional
- No funding for development of the trail will be provided by WURA
- The decision about whether or not to proceed with trail design and development will be made by WURA at the end of the concept planning process



A public meeting notice and two photos from the many public meetings associated with the planning process

Hundreds of people have contributed comments and improvements to this Concept Plan. These comments can be found at: [www.eou.edu/rails-with-trails](http://www.eou.edu/rails-with-trails)



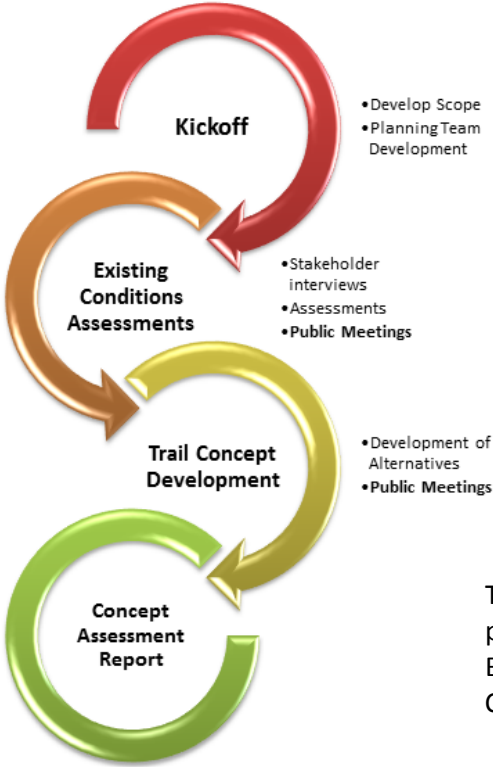
## Planning Process

As early as 2001, a trail concept was mentioned in Wallowa County planning documents and has been revisited several times over the years. In 2012, a group of rail-with-trail proponents approached WURA with a proposal to investigate the opportunity for development of a rail-with-trail along the 63-mile stretch of rail corridor from Elgin to Joseph. The proponents formalized the 501(c)(3) Joseph Branch Trail Consortium in 2014. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and Eastern Oregon University (EOU) were approached to assist in facilitating the concept planning process and to provide technical assistance to WURA and the proponent group. OPRD’s Trail Network Team staff began working with WURA and partners in 2013 and settled on a scope of work for the Feasibility Study and Concept Plan in early 2014.

A Memorandum of Understanding was developed among EOU, Eastern Oregon Regional Solutions Center (EORSC), and WURA to engage and define the roles of each agency during evaluation of the trail concept. The University of Oregon (UO) also agreed to provide additional support for the study. EORSC, OPRD, and the EOU Student Internship Advisory Committee provided assistance to a designated graduate student project manager and three undergraduate student interns. Composition of the Student Internship Advisory Committee varied for each work task, but always included an EOU faculty advisor and representation from EORSC and OPRD.

A scope of work was developed to define specific work tasks and identify the lead entity for each project element. A timeline was developed to correlate with EOU’s academic schedule and the involvement of the Student Internship Advisory Committee. The project was broken into three phases: Existing Conditions Assessment, Trail Concept Development, and the Concept Assessment Report and Review. The project kicked off in June 2014 and the first public meetings were held in December 2014.

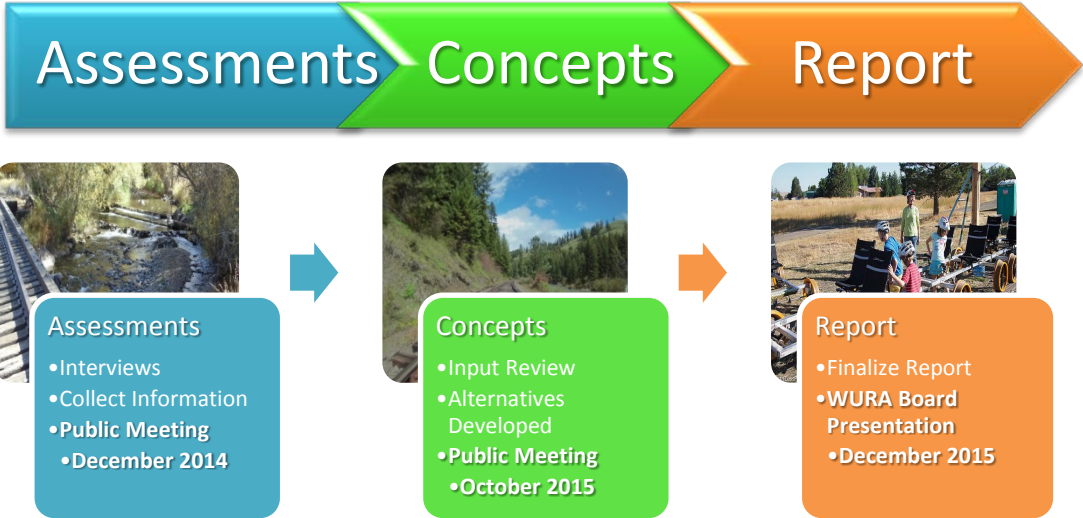
The EOU rail-with-trail website, [www.eou.edu/rails-with-trails](http://www.eou.edu/rails-with-trails), was implemented to facilitate communication among stakeholders, students, proponents, opponents, and interested parties. The website was activated in June 2014, providing easy access to all the resources gathered during the study. The website is an essential point of contact for the public and was a key component in the survey process to provide an avenue for crucial feedback and discussions with the public. The site provided event and news updates during the project. In addition to the website, outreach was conducted through face-to-face meetings, presentations, phone calls, emails, social media, newspapers, radio interviews, and fliers.



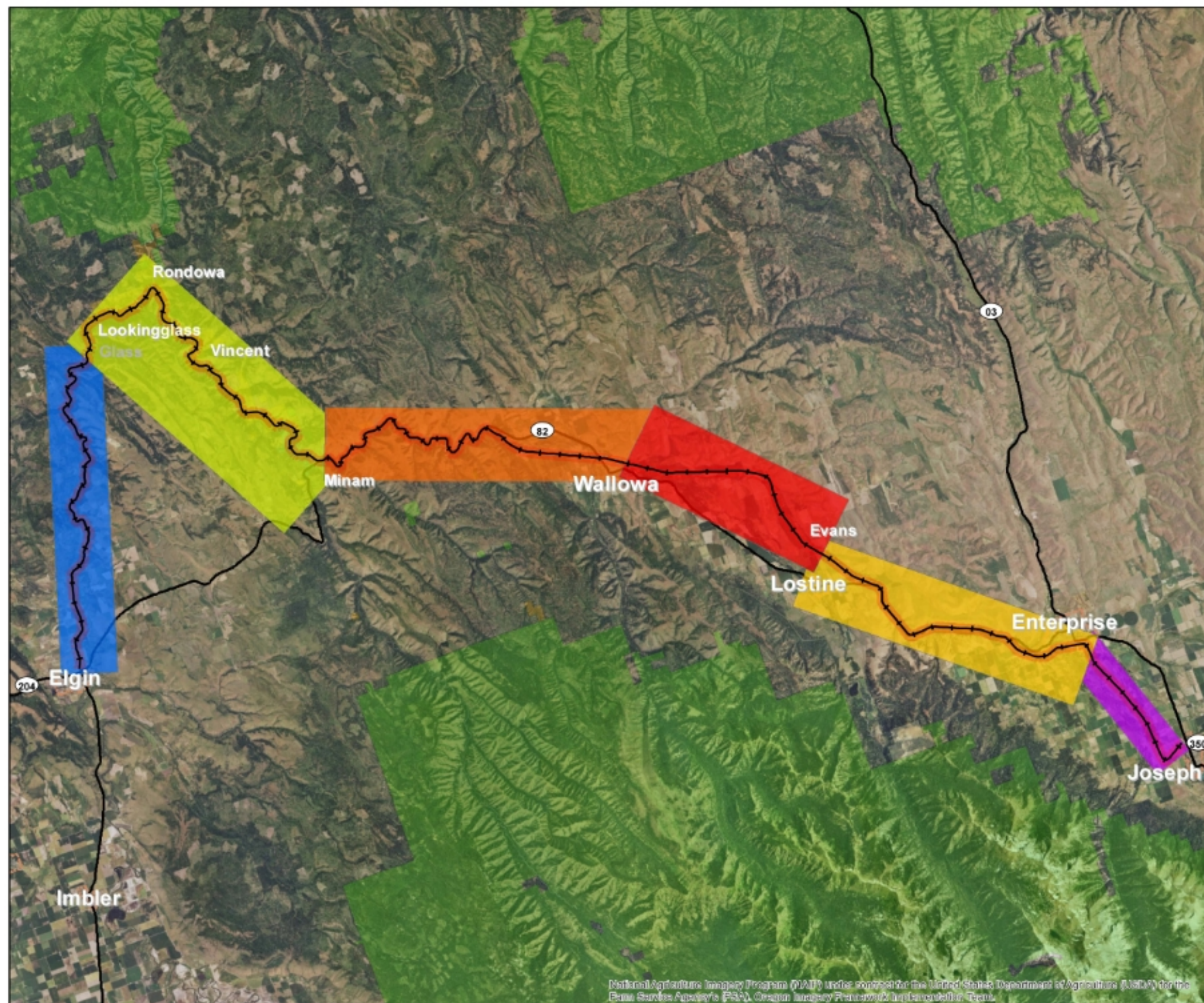
The four steps in the planning process for the Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail Concept Plan

## Project Timeline

Student Internship Advisory Committee meetings were held monthly or bimonthly, from June 2014 to December 2015. These meetings included faculty advisors and the graduate student project manager. Undergraduate internship meetings were held weekly from January 2015 to December 2015. These meetings included the three undergraduate student interns and graduate student project manager. The general schedule of report components of the Concept Plan is provided below:








## Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail Existing Conditions Assessment

### Joseph Branch Corridor

-  Rail Alignment
-  OPRD
-  BLM
-  DOE
-  USFS
-  ODFW
-  CityParks

### Planning Segments

#### Segment Name

-  Elgin to Lookingglass
-  Enterprise to Joseph
-  Lookingglass to Minam
-  Lostine to Enterprise
-  Minam to Wallowa
-  Wallowa to Lostine



0 1 2 4 Miles



# Corridor Ownership

The Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA), a public governing body composed of county commissioners and citizens from Union and Wallowa Counties, purchased the 63-mile rail line between Elgin and Joseph in 2001. The line was purchased through a state loan through Business Oregon. Federal funds supported other elements of this acquisition. In 2013, WURA retired the debt. The purchase of the line safeguarded a significant economic asset worth nearly \$10,000,000.



Train parked at the Elgin Depot

WURA seeks to keep the line connected to the national rail network and available for rail operations indefinitely. At the time of this report, WURA is debt-free and has never received local taxpayer support.

The railway is currently broken into two segments operationally. There is an active segment from Elgin to Minam, roughly 26 miles. The other segment, from Minam to Joseph, is not active and is maintained at a reduced level with the permission of the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

Railways are governed by the federal government through the STB, and WURA was established to operate the railway in accordance with STB regulations. The railway is an active rail corridor, meaning that it is part of the national rail freight network and has trains operating on the active portions of the line.

Since the formation of WURA in 2001, its policy has been to maintain both its corridor and its rails in perpetuity for all forms of economic development in Wallowa and Union Counties. It has collaborated with many entities, including excursion train operators, shippers, railbike entrepreneurs, speeder groups, and fishing and rafting groups.

WURA takes the long view when considering its fiduciary responsibility for the future of economic development in Wallowa and Union Counties. It has taken careful note of the significant impact on its host counties of unpredictable, decades-long changes in the regional economic climate.

This potential trail is only one element in WURA's broader mission as a public entity responsible for preserving its right-of-way and rail infrastructure in the entire 63-mile corridor of Wallowa Union Railroad track from Elgin to Joseph.

### Excursion Train

Since 2004, the Eagle Cap Excursion Train has operated on the rail as a result of the efforts of the non-profit Friends of the Joseph Branch. The excursion train operates from Elgin to Minam, generally from Mother’s Day to Halloween, with one trip per week on Saturdays (except for the Sunday Mother's Day train).

Members of the Friends of the Joseph Branch serve as volunteer engineers, carmen, conductors, and car hosts on excursions. They work with WURA on projects that improve the appearance and comfort of the passenger equipment owned by WURA, the depot, and boarding sites.

### Rail Bikes

The only other current regular use of the rails is the Joseph Branch Railriders’ rail bike excursions that operate between Enterprise and Joseph and from Minam to Wallowa. This operation is seasonal, from late spring to early fall.

### Rail-with-Trail

A trail in the rail right-of-way is an allowed use for active railways. There are over 164 examples nationwide where rail-with-trails exist. WURA has concluded that a potential rail-with-trail is an allowed use for this resource. All uses of the corridor must be compatible with existing and future railroad operations (including possible expansion). In addition, corridor uses must also fully meet Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Rail operating and safety requirements. The FRA and ODOT are the two agencies with regulatory authority over the rail.

If a rail-with-trail is developed, WURA would need to adopt policies on how existing rail use operations would function with a trail in the right-of-way. These policies would affect trail design, trail crossings, train operations, and other items.

### Liability

In general, an active railroad is not open for public use. A rail-with-trail requires the rail operator and the trail organization (if two different entities) to enter into an agreement that would address indemnification, liability insurance, and other requirements. These agreements establish clear responsibilities and expectations of each party.

A trail alongside an active railroad raises inherent liability concerns relating to safety. Rail-with-trail projects can increase the number of people present in the rail right-of-way and thereby increase the number of people exposed to potential for injury from railroad operations. Most states, including Oregon, have recreational immunity use statutes that limit or eliminate the liability of the property owner when they allow their property to be used for recreational purposes without charge.



View from the Eagle Cap Excursion Train

In terms of vandalism to rail facilities, this rail corridor is already used by the public. Creating a trail will provide specific identifiable locations in the corridor for people to access. An increase in trail users also means more eyes on the trail, which has been shown to reduce incidents of vandalism and increase personal safety.

In addressing concerns relating to damage to rail facilities or private property, it is important to keep in mind that the rail corridor is already being used by the public on an informal basis and without oversight.





# ASSESSMENTS



# Natural Resources

## Study Area

The study area for this project encompasses the entire 63-mile long rail corridor and an approximately 100-foot wide right-of-way. The corridor runs through forested areas, wetlands, agricultural plains, and steep canyons. The Wallowa Mountains provide a backdrop for much of the route. Natural resources are generally described below, and more detailed information can be found in Addendum A, Existing Conditions.

The Joseph Branch Corridor was divided into six segments during the assessment process. The segments were defined based on logical distinguishing features and using towns, communities, or other geographical markers. This allows the assessment to specifically address key features of each segment to facilitate conversations about planning and development. The six segments are listed in the table below.

Joseph Branch Corridor Planning Segments

Section Name	Length
Elgin to Lookingglass	13.01
Lookingglass to Minam	13.28
Minam to Wallowa	12.79
Wallowa to Lostine	8.14
Lostine to Enterprise	10.05
Enterprise to Joseph	5.75
Total Miles	63.02

## Topography

The rail line traverses a variety of topographic features. It begins in the city limits of Elgin, travels through flat farmland, enters a steep canyon defined by the Grande Ronde and Wallowa Rivers, emerges into the open grasslands of Wallowa/Lostine, and ends in the City of Joseph, with the Wallowa Mountains framing the final segment of the journey. The unique topography of each section is described below.

**Elgin to Lookingglass:** The segment begins within the city limits of Elgin. Quickly, the setting turns into actively managed agrarian landscape that is moderately flat. After two miles, the rail right-of-way transitions into a narrow, steep canyon. The defining feature is the Grande Ronde River as it flows through moderately conifer-forested slopes. Throughout the canyon are signs of actively managed lands and old roads. However, most of the segment is inaccessible to motorized vehicles.

The next portion begins at Moses Creek, with the crossing of the river by Yarrington Road, and ends with the few homes at Lookingglass Creek. The nearby Lookingglass Fish Hatchery on Lookingglass Creek cannot be seen from the rail right-of-way.

**Lookingglass to Minam:** This segment is a narrow, steep canyon. The significant parts of this segment are the Grande Ronde and Wallowa Rivers as they carve their way through large meadowed slopes on the east face of the canyon and moderately conifer-forested slopes on the west face. Throughout the canyon are signs of actively managed lands and old roads. However, most of the segment is inaccessible to motorized vehicles.

This segment has two outstanding elements in the canyon. The first is the confluence of the Grande Ronde and Wallowa Rivers, where the Grande Ronde begins its designation as a Wild and Scenic River. The second is Minam State Recreation Area, providing camping and day use on the west side of the river.

**Minam to Wallowa:** The noteworthy aspects of this segment are the Wallowa River and the Wallowa Valley. The river travels through a steep and tight canyon with heavily conifer-forested slopes to the south and a barren grassland to the north. As the rail right-of-way leaves the canyon, the majestic Wallowa Valley comes into view. The Wallowa Valley is framed by the Wallowa Mountains on the south and a gentle rise of hills to the north.

**Wallowa to Lostine:** The segment is wide open, with grassland hills and bluffs rising to the north and a large, ever-widening valley to the south, where it meets the Wallowa Mountains. The prominent features of this segment are the Wallowa River and the grasslands.

**Lostine to Enterprise:** This segment is wide open, with grassland hills and bluffs rising to the north and a large, ever-widening valley to the south, where it meets the Wallowa Mountains. The significant elements of this segment are the Wallowa River and the grasslands.

**Enterprise to Joseph:** This segment is wide open grasslands, with the Wallowa Mountains rising to the south. This segment boasts excellent views of mountains and grasslands.





# Natural Resources



View of habitat adjacent to the rail line

### Vegetation

Vegetation varies throughout the corridor and is defined by historic farmland, mature forestland, thriving riparian communities, and natural grasslands. Interagency Mapping and Assessment Project (IMAP) and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Stand Level Inventory (SLI) data were used to map the forest age class across the corridor. The dominant vegetation is described below.

**Elgin to Lookingglass, Lookingglass to Minam, and Minam to Wallowa:** Beginning in Elgin, a majority of the forest along the corridor is mature and between 40 and 100 years old. In the canyon, the west slope is forested, whereas the east slope of the canyon consists of open meadows. Dominant species include lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, subalpine fir, and ponderosa pine. Shrubland vegetation, grasslands, meadows, and riparian communities add to the botanical and habitat diversity. The area is developing a stable and natural understory of shrub and herb composition. The valley is dominated by riparian vegetation along the river and open grasslands and farmlands that are actively managed for livestock and hay.

**Wallowa to Lostine, Lostine to Enterprise, and Enterprise to Joseph:** Grasslands, meadows, and riparian communities are the primary vegetation patterns through these segments. A majority of the vegetation is actively managed for grazing and hay production.

### Rivers

A significant portion of the corridor is adjacent to or near rivers. The Grande Ronde River flows through Elgin, with headwaters in the Blue Mountains. Due to the relatively low elevation (7,700 feet) of the Blue Mountains, early snowmelt can lead to low river flows in the late summer and impact water quality.

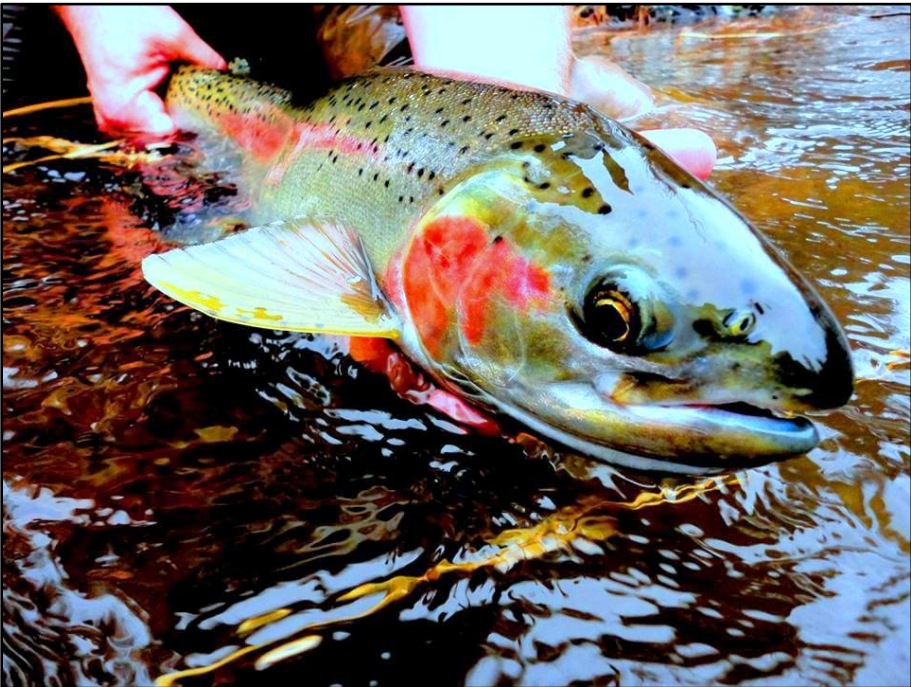
The Wallowa River drains the Wallowa Valley and a portion of the Wallowa Mountains. The river is dammed at Wallowa Lake for irrigation diversion. This river is also dependent on snowmelt and can have low flow issues associated with early snowmelt.



Wallowa River in winter

### Fisheries

The Grande Ronde River and Wallowa River support populations of spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead, bull trout, and mountain whitefish, as well as other species. The rivers provide for a sport steelhead fishery. Tribal fishing of these rivers has been utilized for everything from resident to anadromous fish.



Wenaha steelhead (Photo Credit: Kyle Bratcher)

### Wildlife

The Grande Ronde and Wallowa River areas are habitat for abundant and varied wildlife including large animals such as mule deer, elk, black bear, cougar, big horn sheep, and wolves. Migratory and song birds also inhabit the riparian corridor.



Mountain goat on hillside



# Cultural and Historic Resources

The area has a rich history of people connecting to the landscape. Numerous cultural and heritage resources reflect the history and continuing evolution of Native American culture, farming and ranching practices, recreation, arts engagement, and business development throughout the area.

Together, the cities of Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise, Joseph, and Elgin, along with county-wide resources, offer excellent opportunities to engage in heritage, arts, humanities, and tourism. These cities enhance the economy and livability of the region and provide authentic experiences for tourists.

The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) 2014 report on this area can be reviewed in Addendum B, Wallowa Valley Cultural and Heritage Resources Report. Heritage resources were measured using criteria of heritage excellence established in the All-Star Heritage Community Program of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). Historic properties were assessed using the historic survey guidelines of SHPO. Other cultural resources considered were libraries, art centers, art galleries, theaters, community centers, Century Farms and Ranches, granges, and other cultural organizations, historic tours, and farmers markets/stands.

**Historic Properties/Sites**

Twenty-eight historic properties in the five cities are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Several ranger and guard stations throughout Wallowa County, along with the Nez Perce Traditional Site and Wallowa Lake (Old Chief Joseph Gravesite and Cemetery), are listed. The Old Chief Joseph Gravesite and Cemetery is also a National Historic Landmark. Because the travel corridors and river systems have been used by peoples since time immemorial, the rail corridor has a high probability for containing archaeological resources. Oregon Travel Experience has one Heritage Tree designation in Wallowa County. The Indian Village Grove near the Nez Perce National Historic Trail is a grove of ponderosa pines with oval scars that provide evidence of the traditional spring camp of the Nez Perce. Oregon Travel Experience also has two historical markers in the Wallowa Valley, both near Wallowa Lake. One discusses the Nez Perce and the other describes the geology of the lake.

**Preservation Program**

Enterprise is the only community with an active historic preservation program. The City has a historic commission in place to promote preservation work in the community. The City and commission also promote preservation through public education projects such as interpretive panels, awards, and tours. The Wallowa Land Trust, located in Enterprise, is involved in preserving the rural nature of the Wallowa Valley.

**Museums**

The Elgin Area Historical Society Museum is in Elgin. The City of Wallowa houses the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center and the Wallowa History Center. Sunrise Iron is an antique tractor exhibit on a working farm outside of Enterprise. The Wallowa County Museum, the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center, and Wallowology, an interpretive center for natural history and geology, are located in Joseph.

**Public Education**

Each community has a historic walking tour brochure and there are two county-wide heritage tour brochures in Wallowa County. Other public education activities include interpretive panels in Elgin, Enterprise, and Joseph. The National Park Service has a Nez Perce National Historic Park public education program at Wallowa Lake State Park.

**Tourism/Chamber**

Tourism promotion and visitor information is provided by the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce, based in Enterprise, as well as by city level chambers of commerce in Elgin, Enterprise, and Joseph.

**Public or Historic Records and Photo Archives**

Elgin has local historical records and photographs housed at the Elgin Area Historical Society Museum. The Wallowa History Center in Wallowa keeps local history records and collections of family photographs. The County Courthouse in Enterprise houses extensive public records. The Wallowa County Museum and the Josephy Center for Arts and Culture in Joseph both maintain local history records and photo archives.

**Oral Histories**

The Elgin Area Historical Society Museum and the Wallowa History Center have some oral histories. The Wallowa County Museum in Joseph has a large collection of oral histories. The Josephy Center for Arts and Culture is actively collecting oral histories.

**Heritage Events**

The largest ongoing event in the Wallowa Valley is the Wallowa County Fair. Other events include the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo, the Wallowa School Reunion, Tamkaliks Celebration and Friendship Feast, Maxville Days, Hells Canyon Mule Days, and Stockgrowers Ranch Rodeo.

**Historic Cemetery Designation**

Historic cemeteries have been listed with the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries. Elgin, Wallowa, and Enterprise each have five historic cemeteries and Lostine and Joseph each have two.

**Cemetery and Genealogical Records**

Cemetery records are extensive and have been provided to the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries. Other genealogical research can be completed at the Elgin Area Historical Society Museum, Wallowa History Center, Wallowa County Museum, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Enterprise.

**Historic Theaters and Companies**

Elgin and Enterprise both have historic theaters. Wallowa has a historic theater building which has been significantly altered on the interior, and is not currently used for theater operations but has the potential for future use. Elgin has one theater company, and the Wallowa Valley Players program is based in Lostine.

**Long-term Local Business**

There are a number of well known, long-term businesses in the area, not all of which are documented here. The oldest continually operated business in the Wallowa Valley is the M. Crow & Co. store in Lostine, open over 100 years.

The Wallowa County Chieftain has been published since 1884. Wallowa Title Company and Bollman Funeral Home have been in business approximately 50 years. The lumber company and hardware store in Joseph have been in business over 50 years. Wallowa County has 18 Century Farms designated with the state program.

**Library**

The Wallowa County library based in Enterprise serves the entire county. Elgin, Wallowa, Enterprise, and Joseph have city libraries.

**Community and Arts Centers**

Elgin and Joseph have community centers, while Enterprise and Wallowa have senior centers. The Josephy Center for Arts and Culture is located in Joseph.

**Other Cultural Organizations**

Enterprise is the home to Fishtrap and the Wallowa County Music Alliance. Joseph has the Wallowa County Photo Club and the Wallowa Mountain Quilters Guild.

**Granges**

Each community has a grange facility and organization.  
Elgin - Rockwall #679  
Wallowa - Wallowa Grange #603  
Lostine - South Fork #605  
Enterprise - North End #820  
Joseph - Hurricane Creek #608, Liberty #61



# Downtown Assessment

Downtown Assessments of each community were conducted by volunteers and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) staff as recommended by the Wallowa Valley Cultural and Heritage Resources Report. The entire Downtown Assessment can be reviewed in Addendum C, Downtown Assessment Report: Elgin, Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise, & Joseph

While each community has its own identity, there are also some key themes that emerged for the region:

- History and heritage run deep and are a source of community pride.
- The downtowns in each community still serve as community gathering spaces – places for events and activities and places for community members to interact, from the Bowlby Bash in Enterprise to the Lions Holiday Parade in Elgin.
- The downtowns still have viable businesses that meet the needs of residents but also have the potential to bring in outside tourist income.
- Historic buildings add to the character of each community, although many are in need of repair or some level of restoration. In addition, some of the storefronts present a tired, outdated appearance that is a barrier to drawing in new customers.
- The area is rich with creative talent. The performing and visual arts are represented in all forms, from writers to sculpture artists, photographers to painters, actors to musicians. In addition, creativity is also reflected in the talents of many of the business owners who feature locally made food and craft items, from Wild Carrot in Enterprise, to the farm-to-table mission of the Lostine Tavern, to Dry Creek Design, an emerging new business in Wallowa that repurposes furniture and found items into new uses.
- Connection to nature, public lands at trails and campgrounds, and the sheer beauty of the area are important factors in both drawing and keeping people as residents and visitors.
- Pedestrian scale improvements are needed in most of the communities. This is especially important with the highway running through all the downtowns.
- Many of the communities have already had multiple plans/ reports/studies conducted that contain good information and recommendations. What is lacking is the organizational structure and support to move forward with implementation.

Oregon Main Street conducted preliminary Downtown Assessments for Elgin, Wallowa, Lostine, and Joseph as part of the Wallowa Union Rail-with-Trail Concept Plan process for the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority. Each of the communities was asked to form a three-to-four person group to review and complete a Downtown Assessment Survey and an Assets

and Liabilities Checklist. The communities were assisted by board members of the Joseph Branch Trail Consortium. The Oregon Main Street coordinator visited each community in mid-November of 2014. Meetings were scheduled with the stakeholder groups in Elgin, Wallowa, Enterprise, and Joseph to check in, share information about Oregon Main Street, and answer questions. The Downtown Assessments evaluated each downtown’s assets, issues, and opportunities.

The nationally recognized Main Street Four-Point Approach® to downtown revitalization was used as the basis for the Downtown Assessments for each community. These elements included organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. Each community has its own distinctive personality:



Elgin Opera House

**Elgin** has a “hometown feel” with a cluster of downtown historic buildings housing a variety of service, retail, and eating establishments. Home to the Elgin Opera House, downtown has the potential to strengthen new and existing cultural amenities.

**Wallowa** has an emerging business cluster that is appealing to both local and visitor traffic. The Pit Stop Barbecue, Little Bear Drive-in, Blonde Strawberry, and Main Street Grill are just part of a growing restaurant sector. With many buildings that maintain their historic character, downtown Wallowa has definite potential for inviting people to stop, linger, and stay.



Wallowa Storefront

**Lostine** has a quirky character reflected in the mix of businesses, from M. Crow & Co. to the Lostine Tavern to the Blue Banana. Notably, many of the businesses showcase locally made products and food items.



M. Crow & Co. in Lostine

**Enterprise**, as the County seat, has a solid mix of retail, service, and professional businesses and also serves as a medical hub. It has an outstanding collection of historic buildings and has already nominated all of the significant, eligible buildings to the National Register of Historic Places. A façade renovation program and smart phone application for historic downtown tours have helped attract recent private investment to renovate older businesses.



Enterprise Mercantile & Milling Building

**Joseph** has invested in public redevelopment efforts since the late 1990s, attracting ongoing private investment. The result is a very vibrant downtown with strong curb appeal and a pleasing pedestrian environment with a noteworthy collection of bronze sculptures. The “arts” are very much front and center. A solid business mix and low vacancy rate add to the sense of vitality. The entire city has been recognized as an Arts and Cultural District.



Downtown Joseph



# Planning Context

## Downtown Revitalization

Historic buildings in the downtowns along the rail corridor are often underutilized and sometimes vacant. In the past, the upper floors of multi-story historic buildings were sometimes utilized for apartments or visitor lodging, offices, service businesses such as dentists and doctors, or for gathering spaces such as dance/concert halls. The upper floors of many of these buildings are currently vacant or underutilized due to barriers associated with not being up to code, or because of unknowns including the potential presence of hazardous substances such as lead-based paint or materials containing asbestos. Any activity that enhances the opportunity for business creation or expansion has the potential to spur private investment including investment in the redevelopment of underutilized downtown buildings.

Examples of this can be observed in both Joseph and Enterprise. In the case of Joseph, public investment was made in the downtown streetscape with new sidewalks, landscaping, a public artwalk, lighting, seating, relocation of overhead utilities, and marketing of the town’s assets and culture. A survey of businesses six years later showed that the project had stimulated \$4,012,007 of private investment, created 78 new jobs, and retained 134 jobs. The private investment included investment by businesses located in existing buildings as well as new construction.

In Enterprise, public funds were invested in a building assessment of the historic Enterprise Mercantile & Milling building, providing valuable as-built drawings as well as information on potential hazardous substances and other information needed in order for the building to be able to be purchased by a local investor group. Since that time the 40,000 square foot multi-story building has been renovated and is fully occupied with a mix of commercial and residential tenants. Renovation has included historic façade and window restoration as well as roofing, electrical, plumbing, and other improvements. This project was also a catalyst for creation of the City of Enterprise Historic Landmarks Commission, a grant program for façade renovation, and the successful nomination of every eligible building to the National Register of Historic Places. Additional historic buildings have since been purchased by new owners who are making investments to renovate and more fully utilize the spaces, creating jobs and adding vibrancy to the downtown for residents and visitors.

A rail-with-trail could improve the quality of life of the area and provide additional recreational opportunities attractive to visitors, residents, and business owners. New opportunities for business creation or expansion would have the potential to leverage private investment including the redevelopment of underutilized downtown buildings. Public support could also be sought to help address barriers to specific downtown redevelopment opportunities identified as a result of rail-with-trail

development, including brownfield resources from the Environmental Protection Agency or the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

## Brownfield Sites

A brownfield is a property for which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the potential or actual presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. As part of the concept study, a search was conducted of the Oregon Environmental Cleanup Site Information (ECSI) database. The search found three sites along the rail corridor. Site #4771, the Minam Richfield Station, was added to the database based on a 1960 Oregon History Project photo. The site was adjacent to Highway 82 and the railroad. The highway previously was routed along the river and went under the railroad on an approach to crossing the Wallowa River. The highway was rebuilt and a substantial amount of fill was added to bring the highway up to the same level as the railroad. The Minam Richfield Station site is, therefore, covered with a substantial amount of fill dirt and is not a candidate for further assessment.

The second site is Site #4904, the Union Pacific Railroad Diesel Spill. In 1984, there was a train derailment at milepost 64.25 in which 2,500 to 3,500 gallons of diesel were released with approximately 1,205 gallons recovered during the response action. In 2007, the site was added to the ECSI database and a site screening is recommended.

The third site is Site #2790, the Enterprise Roundhouse. In 2001, a citizen complaint resulted in the site being added to the ECSI database. The complaint indicated potential groundwater contamination from a diesel release related to a former roundhouse operation located in Enterprise. While this site is located in the vicinity of the rail corridor, it is located outside the rail corridor right-of-way and separated from the rail by property owned by the Wallowa County Grain Growers.

Another brownfield consideration is related to historic building use. There are historic buildings located in the four towns which lie adjacent to the proposed rail-with-trail. The Downtown Assessment addresses historic building use/reuse as a component of the assessment process.

## Planning Documents and Resources

The development of a rail-with-trail is supported by state and local planning documents. Goal 5 Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces of Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goals & Guidelines has been integrated into this Concept Plan, and elements of this goal are discussed in detail in the sections above.

## Recreation Plans

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2013-2017 conducted surveys of Oregonians to determine the most needed recreational amenities. The top priorities identified by Oregonians through an Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) administered survey included soft surface walking trails, waterway access, playgrounds with natural materials, picnic areas, and off-street bicycle trails. Union County public recreation providers indicated community trail systems as the highest priority need for the county. Wallowa County public recreation providers indicated that soccer fields were the highest priority. Union County and Wallowa County residents listed access to waterways as the top priority and dirt/other soft surface walking trails and paths as the second most needed priority (OPRD, 2013).

## State Trails Plan

OPRD is in the process of updating its statewide trails plan. Trail planning survey data relating to non-motorized trails have been gathered and identified the need for greater trail connectivity and funding for trail maintenance and construction (OPRD, 2014).

## Transportation System Plans

The Union County Transportation System Plan was drafted in 1999 and indicates pedestrian trails and bike paths are a moderate priority mainly for commuting purposes (Union County, 1999). The Wallowa County Transportation System Plan was drafted in 2001, and conversion of the railroad to horse, hiking, and/or bike trails was addressed, but it was noted that this idea was not embraced county-wide. Numerous options (paving, dirt, completing only some segments) were discussed and it was concluded that “this project, in some form, should be included in the plan” (Wallowa County, 2001, p. 7-21).

## Land Use

A land use assessment was conducted by the University of Oregon in 2014 and included a review of planning documents and tax assessor data for Union County, Wallowa County, and incorporated communities along the rail corridor. Coordination with county and city planning departments will be required to construct portions of the trail that fall outside of the right-of-way. The land use assessment can be reviewed in Addendum D, Land Use Assessment.

## Land Classifications

The rail corridor is owned by the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority and, as such, is zoned as a transportation corridor. A trail would be an allowable use of this corridor.



# Existing Recreational Opportunities

Regional recreational opportunities are abundant and vary between the different trail sections. Opportunities in each area are discussed below.

**Elgin to Lookingglass:** This segment provides access to swimming, fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and paddling. The Eagle Cap Excursion Train is based out of the recently constructed Elgin Depot and provides a variety of seasonal excursions between Elgin and Minam.

**Lookingglass to Minam:** In this segment, the Minam State Recreation Area provides parking, day use, camping, and hiking. There is a rustic hotel and a store that provides raft rentals. This segment also provides access to swimming, fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and paddling.

**Minam to Wallowa:** There are primitively developed recreation sites along the Wallowa River located on the opposite side of the river from the rail. The sites provide parking, day use opportunities, fishing access, and access for paddlers.

**Wallowa to Lostine:** The Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center has an office and interpretive display in Wallowa, as well as a 320-acre Nez Perce Homeland project property located just northwest of town, with three miles of hiking trails on Tick Hill. There is a private RV park outside of the City of Wallowa to accommodate visitors.



Rafting opportunities abound on the Wallowa River

**Lostine to Enterprise:** The Wallowa Fish Hatchery backs up to the rail right-of-way. Marr Pond is a semi-developed natural area next to the rail right-of-way and is identified as a potential day use site; there are no camping sites in this segment.

**Enterprise to Joseph:** There are no developed facilities along the rail right-of-way. The Joseph Rodeo Grounds are across the street from the terminus of the route in Joseph. The City of Joseph is the base of operations for the Joseph Branch Railriders and also the home of Valley Bronze, which offers foundry tours. Wallowa Lake is a major destination in this area, and a connecting trail between the lake and Joseph is being planned by the Oregon Department of Transportation.

### Recreational Connections

The proposed rail-with-trail would provide connectivity between the Wallowa County communities of Joseph, Enterprise, Lostine, and Wallowa and would connect to the bikeway being constructed between Joseph and Wallowa Lake. The trail would provide a recreational connection between the Wallowa Lake and Minam parks and to Wallowa-Whitman National Forest trails and campgrounds. The trail would provide the final critical link in a Hells Canyon Scenic Byway loop that could be completed with the Joseph to Elgin trail. This is a frequently used route by local bicyclists.

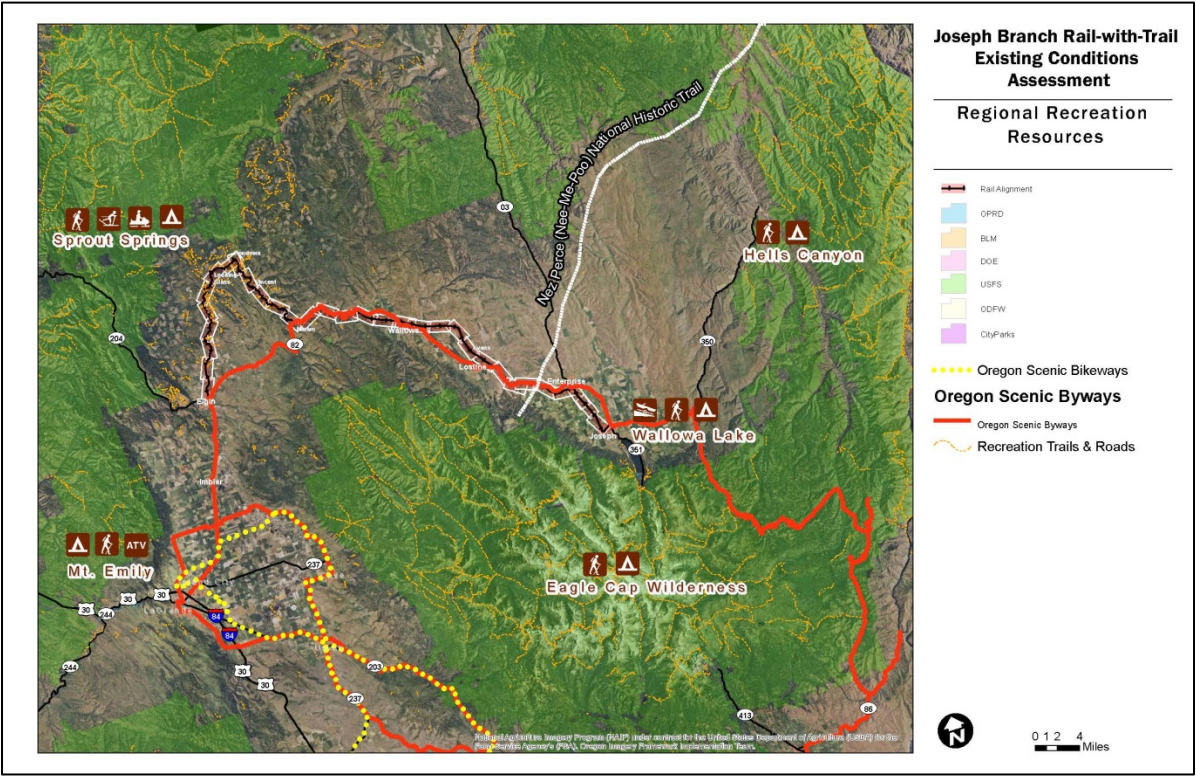
The state and county roads linking La Grande and Baker City have been designated the Grande Tour Scenic Bikeway, offering a 134-mile loop

through La Grande, Union, North Powder, and Baker City. Individuals and groups of bicyclists, in supported tour groups in increasing numbers, are riding the Hells Canyon Scenic Byway from Baker City on Highway 86 through Richland and Halfway to Forest Road 39 (Wallowa Mountain Loop Road) to Highway 350 (Little Sheep Creek Highway) to Joseph. This section of the route is being proposed as a Scenic Bikeway by Baker and Wallowa County proponents. The Hells Canyon Scenic Byway driving loop continues from Joseph to La Grande on Highway 82, passing through the communities of Enterprise, Lostine, Wallowa, Elgin, Imbler, and Island City.

The Joseph Branch Trail would also link with the over 1,000-mile long Nez Perce National Historic Trail. The revised Nez Perce Trail Plan developed in 2015 will recognize the Joseph Branch Trail between Joseph and Minam as a side trail, adding to the trail’s historical significance.

An Oregon Department of Transportation consultant is currently preparing a feasibility study for an approximately 10-mile trail to connect the Grande Ronde River Trail (partially developed) at Riverside Park in La Grande to Hilgard State Park. The trail will parallel Interstate 84 and connect to the Old West Scenic Bikeway and local bikeways and byways in Umatilla County and southeastern Washington.

Abundant existing recreational opportunities exist that would be supplemented by a rail-with-trail.





# Public Opinion Surveys

## Key Stakeholder Interviews

Understanding local concerns, goals, and plans for the region was essential to the Concept Plan. The goal of the interviews was to gauge support and identify concerns related to the concept of a rail-with-trail being built in Union and Wallowa Counties. These interviews indicated that enough interest and support were present to necessitate a wider survey of public opinion. The entire stakeholder report can be reviewed in Addendum E, Key Stakeholder Interview Report.

Between the months of July and September 2014, six volunteers conducted interviews to gather the opinions of local stakeholders who would be affected by the creation of the 63-mile trail. The interviewers were focused on evaluating the social component of the Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail project. A pool of 60 community members was identified and 26 were interviewed. Those selected for the survey were not randomly chosen from the community. Instead, the pool was chosen to ensure representation of landowners, those new to the area, longtime residents, and a variety of occupations found along the corridor. The interviewers asked the same set of questions to each interviewee. Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and generated oral histories and localized narratives of the role of growth, change, and community in Northeast Oregon.

The interview results were combined and analyzed. In the group, 14 of the 26 interviewed lived adjacent to or within 1 mile of the trail, and over half of those interviewed have lived in the region for more than 16 years. Occupations varied. Those interviewed were split evenly between women and men.

The interview showed a majority of interviewees expressed support for the trail and were cautiously optimistic. There were many concerns about logistical and social impacts from the trail and how the trail would affect those living nearest to it. The interview results reflected concerns regarding the impact the trail may have on the environment and whether building it was technically feasible in this part of the corridor.

A concern was voiced about the lack of jobs in the region, which had historically been dependent on natural resource related jobs in timber and wood products. Those jobs and businesses had historically supported the communities adjacent to the rail. This lack of jobs has created a shift in the communities' demographics as young people leave the area due to lack of employment opportunities. While many interviewed agreed that tourism was part of the answer to economic growth, it was not seen as the complete solution. Additionally, the interview identified a desire to retain the region's most valued qualities of nature, wilderness, natural resources, and agriculture.

The interview identified varied opinions of the trail. The spectrum of comments ranged from the belief that a trail would be a waste of money, to the view that such a corridor would be a synergistic asset connecting communities. The results of the stakeholder interviews indicated the need to determine the opinions and values of the greater population.

Selected quotes from the interviews are included below.

*“We need to find other ways to make our physical resources work for us. Tourism is not the total answer... however, it is critical considering the few resources we can exploit in this rural area.”*

*“By linking towns, the trail will spread out visitors, getting people away from Joseph and the lake to explore other communities.”*

*“We need more collaboration between different sectors of the community-political, tourism/business, university, hospital, and small communities all coming to the same table for larger discussions.”*

*“The trail probably won't contribute in a significant way. I see the cost of development and maintenance will out-spend any benefit to the economy.”*

*“The trail will be an asset...The trail, combined with the railroad, will be synergistic, supporting each other through increased visibility and creating new opportunities.”*

## Public and Voter Opinion Polling

### Methodology

In order to gather public opinion regarding the need for and the potential development and design of a recreational rail-with-trail, a survey was developed and administered. The information collected by the survey, along with key stakeholder interview results, have been used to determine rail-with-trail trail design alternatives, identify related public concerns and issues, and ascertain the level of support for financing and building a trail and/or trail segments. The survey was conducted from April 14 to June 17, 2015.

Dr. Don Dillman’s methods for public opinion polling (Dillman et al., 2009) were used as a guide in developing the questionnaire and its administration. The same questionnaire was used to collect information from two distinct groups.

**Group 1 (Random Voter Survey):** All registered voters in Union and Wallowa Counties living in the Elgin, Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise, and Joseph zip codes were identified from databases purchased from the Union and Wallowa County clerks. A project database of these voters was

established and 550 voters were randomly selected from the merged database. The random sample selection resulted in proportional distribution related to the population in the zip codes.

Each of the voters randomly selected to participate in the survey was sent a letter requesting their participation, a questionnaire, and a postage paid return envelope. The voter survey participant could also choose to respond online using a unique identification number assigned each voter to control access to the questionnaire. A reminder postcard was sent to each voter thanking them if they returned a completed questionnaire or encouraging them to do so. No other effort was made to increase the response rate.

One hundred forty nine surveys were returned by voter respondents with a 95 percent confidence level, plus or minus eight percent that the survey, if repeated, would result in the same responses.

Survey data were reviewed, quality checked, and summarized for this Concept Plan.

**Group 2 (General Public Survey):** An open survey to collect voluntary information from members of the public who attended project workshops, meetings, and offered comments about the trail through the project website (eou.edu/rails-with-trails) or other means, and anyone else with an interest in the trail, was advertised through various social media, the Wallowa County Chieftain, and the La Grande Observer.

Public survey respondents were encouraged to submit their opinions using the questionnaire on the web page. An opportunity to request a printed copy of the questionnaire was also offered to persons without access to the Internet. Three hundred and forty seven completed questionnaires were received from the general public.

The random voter survey sample sought input from voters who live in the counties of the projected trail. Their responses were valued since they have the highest potential to use the trail and would likely benefit the most from having the trail built, or possibly be most adversely impacted.

The general public survey provided input from anyone interested in completing the survey voluntarily. These survey respondents were not limited by location or residency, and this additional data were important to understanding the broader opinions of the community regarding the proposed trail.

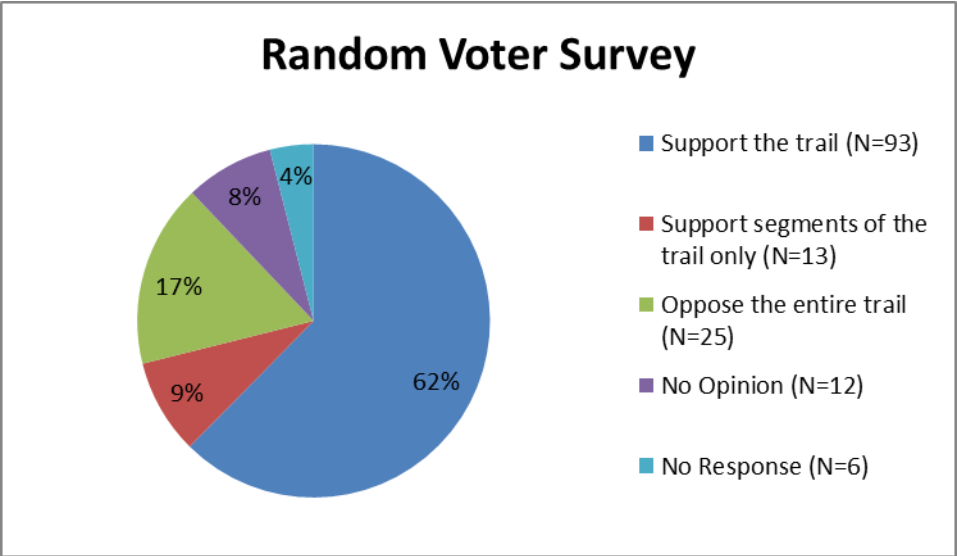


# Public Opinion Surveys

## Survey Results

### Group 1. Random Voter Survey Responses

Sixty-two percent of voter respondents support building the entire trail and an additional nine percent support building only certain trail segments. Seventeen percent of voters oppose the entire trail.

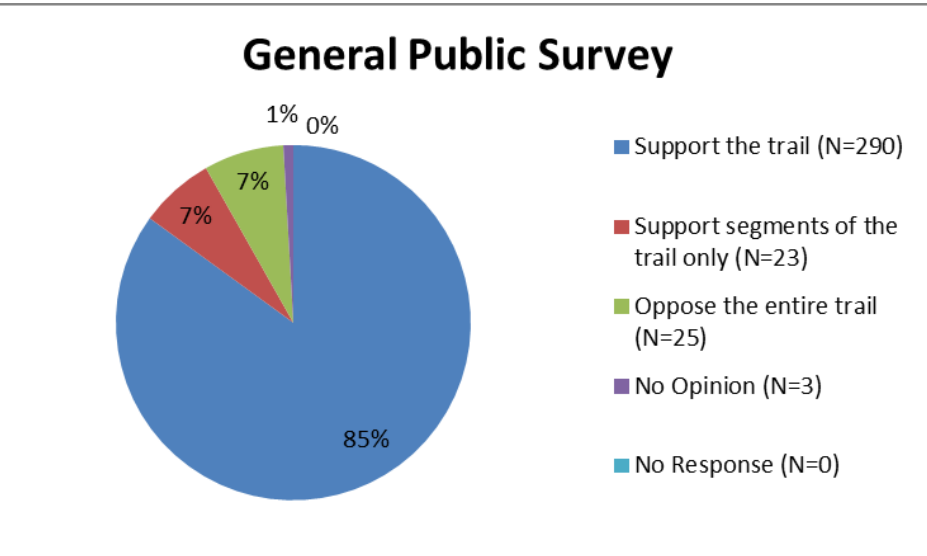


Random Voter Survey					
Respondents who oppose or support the development of a recreational trail on the Wallowa Union Railroad line between Elgin and Joseph, Oregon, and distance respondents reported the location of their property from railroad right-of-way					
Property Location	Support the trail (N=93)	Support segments of the trail only (N=13)	Oppose the entire trail (N=25)	No Opinion (N=12)	No Response (N=6)
Adjacent Residents (N=15)	20%	40%	26%	13%	0%
Less than 1 mile (N=39)	72%	13%	13%	3%	0%
1 to 2 miles (N=49)	71%	0%	25%	0%	4%
3 to 4 miles (N=13)	62%	0%	0%	8%	31%
5 to 10 miles (N=13)	69%	15%	8%	8%	0%
More than 10 miles (N=9)	56%	0%	33%	11%	0%
Distance not indicated (N = 11)	46%	0%	0%	55%	0%
Total Responses (N=149)	62%	9%	17%	8%	4%

When the survey results from random voters were separated by distance from the trail, it was noted that support for a trail was lowest in the group of adjacent residents (20 percent). Support for the trail increased to 72 percent to 69 percent for people living between 1 and 10 miles from the trail.

### Group 2. General Public Survey Responses

Eighty-five percent of general public respondents support development of the entire trail and an additional seven percent support building only certain trail segments. Seven percent of general public respondents oppose the entire trail.



General Public Survey					
Respondents who oppose or support the development of a recreational trail on the Wallowa Union Railroad line between Elgin and Joseph, Oregon, and distance respondents reported the location of their property from railroad right-of-way					
Property Location	Support the trail (N=290)	Support segments of the trail only (N=23)	Oppose the entire trail (N=25)	No Opinion (N=3)	No Response (N=0)
Adjacent Residents (N=44)	57%	21%	23%	0%	0%
Less than 1 mile (N= 43)	88%	7%	5%	0%	0%
1 to 2 miles (N= 76)	87%	8%	5%	0%	0%
3 to 4 miles (N=23)	87%	0%	13%	0%	0%
5 to 10 miles (N=29)	90%	7%	4%	0%	0%
More than 10 miles (N=110)	91%	3%	4%	3%	0%
Distance not indicated (N=16)	94%	0%	6%	0%	0%
Total Responses (N=341)	85%	7%	7%	1%	0%

When the survey results from the general public were separated by distance from the trail, it was noted that support for a trail was lowest in the group of adjacent residents (57 percent). Support for the trail increased to 88 percent to 90 percent for people living between 1 and 10 miles from the trail.

### Analysis of Support and Opposition to a Rail-with-Trail

The majority of respondents to the survey support developing the rail-with-trail or segments of the trail. There is variation in support for the trail based on the proximity of respondents’ properties to and their anticipated uses of a trail. Respondents’ proximity to the trail was self-reported. Those respondents opposed to the trail generally report they do not anticipate using the trail. Walking and biking on paved trail sections were identified, along with access to fishing spots, as the main trail uses and activities. A full range of recreational trail uses are anticipated, with 10 percent of respondents indicating they will use the Joseph to Enterprise segment of the trail for daily commuting.

For both voter and general public respondents:

- A majority support trail development and believe the trail will be beneficial for adding to and enhancing existing recreational opportunities;
- A majority identified asphalt, followed by dirt, as the preferred trail surfaces;
- Over 70 percent indicated support for developing the Joseph to Enterprise trail segment;
- 14 percent of the general public and 26 percent of random voters oppose a trail segment between Wallowa and Lostine;
- A majority believe concerns ranked as “moderate” can be resolved, while there was less certainty about the ability to resolve “serious” concerns;
- A majority identified restrooms, trash cans, adequate parking, signage (including posted trail use regulations), and pet litter bags as important amenities; and
- A majority would approve using a full range of fundraising mechanisms to construct and maintain the trail, including local taxes if approved by voters.

Survey data can be reviewed in Addendum F, Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail Public Opinion Survey Report.



# Conceptual Costs

## Assumptions

Outlined below are estimated costs for the construction of each of the six segments based on the concepts proposed in the next section of this document. These are conceptual, best judgment estimates for the cost of building the trail only, using prototypical unit costs. Due to the scale of the 63-mile rail corridor and scope of the Concept Plan, no precise cost estimate has been completed. The estimates are for design, permitting, direct construction costs, and contingency costs for the trail. The 40 percent contingency is high and reflects the conceptual design level of this concept study. Trail amenities, road crossings, culvert work, fencing, etc., are not included in these estimates. These estimates will generally rise 4 percent annually. There is the potential for costs to be reduced in places where a train can be used to bring in materials.

There are two options for segments from Minam to Enterprise. One option is re-routing the trail to county roads when possible. When on the county road, the trail would represent a shared use of a road, rather than a separate trail. This option is designated by (County Road), but does use the rail corridor when re-routing is not possible. The second option is constructing the trail entirely in the rail corridor. This option is designated by (Rail). The county road option has additional safety concerns due to users sharing roads with motorized vehicle traffic.

The total cost to build the trail ranges from approximately \$20 million if the trail is built entirely within the rail corridor and approximately \$13 million if it is built using county roads when available.

General design standards are summarized below and detailed in the Design Concepts section of this Concept Plan.

- Primitive (dirt) sections (A-1 through A-6 design standards)
- Improved (gravel) sections (B-1 through B-3 design standards)
- Sections developed on county roads (C-1 design standard)
- Developed (paved) sections (D-1 design standard)
- Bridges (Br-A and Br-B design standards)

## Typical Costs

The unit costs below were used to calculate segment estimates and can be used as a broad guide for future trail planning in order to estimate funding requirements. These costs are a summary of typical costs found for similar projects and actual costs from recent bids in the region.

Item	Unit	Cost	Notes
Primitive 3-foot Wide Trail	LF	\$5.30 - \$45.30	A-1 through A-6
Improved Trail	LF	\$10.53 - \$40.53	B-1 through B-3
Shared Use Road	LF	\$2.00	C-1
Developed Trail	LF	\$56.38	D-1
Bridge Crossing	LF	\$175.72	Br-A and Br-B
Road Crossing	EACH	\$1,220.00	
Culvert Crossing	EACH	\$880.00	
Road Sign	EACH	\$200.00	
Trailhead	EACH	\$75,000.00	
High Retaining Wall (B-3)	SF	\$40.00	
Low Retaining Wall (A-4)	SF	\$30.00	
Restoration	LF	\$15.00	

*Note: Cut, fill, clearing and grubbing, and material costs are included in linear foot (LF) trail costs.*

Segment construction costs are listed below. Full calculations are located in Addendum G, Economic Impact Assessment.

Segment	Cost	40% Contingency	20% Design Engineering	Total Cost
Elgin to Lookingglass (Rail)	\$1,599,300	\$639,700	\$319,900	\$2,558,800
Lookingglass to Minam (Rail)	\$3,168,600	\$1,267,400	\$633,700	\$5,069,700
Minam to Wallowa (Rail)	\$2,486,300	\$994,500	\$497,300	\$3,978,000
Minam to Wallowa (County Road)	\$2,113,000	\$845,200	\$422,600	\$3,380,800
Wallowa to Lostine (Rail)	\$840,500	\$336,200	\$168,100	\$1,344,800
Wallowa to Lostine (County Road)	\$98,800	\$39,500	\$19,800	\$158,100
Lostine to Enterprise (Rail)	\$3,088,500	\$1,235,400	\$617,700	\$4,941,600
Lostine to Enterprise (County Road)	\$121,300	\$48,500	\$24,300	\$194,000
Enterprise to Joseph (Rail)	\$1,147,200	\$458,900	\$229,400	\$1,835,500
<b>Total (Rail)</b>	<b>\$12,330,400</b>	<b>\$4,932,100</b>	<b>\$2,466,100</b>	<b>\$19,728,600</b>
<b>Total (County Road)</b>	<b>\$8,248,200</b>	<b>\$3,299,300</b>	<b>\$1,649,600</b>	<b>\$13,197,100</b>

*Note: Trail amenities, road crossings, culvert work, fencing, etc., are not included in this estimate.*



Economic Benefits

An Economic Impact Assessment was conducted by Eastern Oregon University student interns and advisors in 2014 to analyze the possible costs and benefits associated with building and recreational uses of the 63-mile multi-use Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail. The assessment includes economic background data and analysis of the costs and benefits of each segment of the trail when built. Also developed were potential economic and social benefits the trail could provide to each of the communities along the trail. The Trail Concept Review Committee suggested possible trail-related economic impacts at their January 20, 2015, meeting, including: improved quality of life for residents, improved public health, the use of the trail for commuting, attracting tourists, and creating economic opportunities and benefits from local use and tourism.

Constructing the trail will require a capital investment on the order of hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars. These costs will also provide direct temporary economic benefits as local construction firms would likely be contracted to build as least some parts of the trail. The workers would spend some of their wages locally and the contractors would buy construction supplies locally. The Oregon Department of Transportation estimates one temporary full-time job is created for every \$59,000 spent on a construction project. Based on this assumption and the projected costs ranging from \$13,197,100 to \$19,728,600, the trail could generate between 224 and 334 temporary construction jobs (Houston, 2014b).

According to the Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 49 percent of Union and Wallowa County residents use local walking paths and trails (OPRD, 2013). If local trail users spend a modest \$5 a day in the local economy three times a month, and the trail results in an increase in spending by these trail users of between 1 and 3 percent, they would spend an additional \$5,074 to \$25,371 annually associated with trail activities.

While actual economic benefits will depend on how local governments and businesses respond to opportunities created by the trail, the Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail could provide between \$85,495 and \$427,611 annually in additional tourist dollars spent in the communities along the proposed trail as explained below. Travel Oregon commissioned reports estimate jobs generated from visitor spending range from \$56,000 to more than \$85,000 per job (Runyan, 2013). Using the conservative amount of \$85,000 tourism spending per job created, the trail could result in between one and five new permanent full-time equivalent jobs (Houston, 2014b).

In order to estimate the potential economic benefits of tourist dollars to Union and Wallowa County communities along the trail, the number of visitors to the eight-county Travel Oregon Eastern Region was allocated by each county’s percent of the region’s total hotel/motel tax receipts. Unfortunately tourist data are not available from the state at the community level in rural Oregon. Because hotel, motel, and other guest

housing data are limited and Lostine does not have a hotel, it was decided to allocate the number of existing county visitors by city, using the ratio of restaurants in each city compared to the total number of restaurants in the corresponding county. Restaurants are assumed to be filling a demand that is partly tourism based. For example, if there are 10 restaurants in a county and five in a city, that city would be given a ratio of 50 percent (0.5); therefore, it is assumed the city gets 50 percent of the county’s existing visitors.

Forty-six percent of trips to Eastern Oregon listed outdoor recreation as the main purpose of travel according to a Longwood Travel 2013 report. It was assumed 46 percent of visitors to the trail corridor communities would

engage in outdoor recreation and each visitor would spend \$89 a day (Runyan, 2013). It was assumed that each overnight visitor would spend only one night.

Three cases were modeled: a trail bringing a 1 percent increase, a 3 percent increase, and a 5 percent increase in visitor spending. This range is generally accepted by economists as a method to show a low, medium, and high range of impacts. Results of the estimated annual visitor benefits are shown below. The entire report can be reviewed in Addendum G, Economic Impact Assessment.

Annual Visitor Benefits						
	Union County	Wallowa County				Region
	Elgin	Wallowa	Lostine	Enterprise	Joseph	
County Visitors (#)	179,419	180,987	180,987	180,987	180,987	360,406
City Restaurants (#)	7	5	2	14	18	46
County Restaurants (#)	45	39	39	39	39	84
Ratio City/County Restaurants	0.16	0.13	0.05	0.36	0.46	--
Existing Visitors to City (County Visitors x Restaurant Ratio)	27,910	23,203	9,281	64,970	83,532	--
Recreation Visitors Ratio	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46
Average Amount Spent (Per Visitor Per Day)	89	89	89	89	89	89
Total Spent by Visitors	\$1,142,620	\$949,950	\$379,980	\$2,659,859	\$3,419,819	\$8,552,228
Trail Brings 1 Percent Increase	\$11,426	\$9,499	\$3,800	\$26,599	\$34,198	\$85,522
Trail Brings 3 Percent Increase	\$34,279	\$28,498	\$11,399	\$79,796	\$102,595	\$256,567
Trail Brings 5 Percent Increase	\$57,131	\$47,497	\$18,999	\$132,993	\$170,991	\$427,611





# SEGMENT CONCEPTS



# Segment Concepts

The six segments of the Joseph Branch Corridor were defined based on logical destinations using towns, communities, or other geographical markers.

An Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) team completed an existing conditions assessment for each of the segments. The objectives were to collect:

- Physical assets of the railway
- Physical environment conditions along the railway
- Adjacent land uses along the railway
- Existing assets for recreation and tourism support

The information was gathered through site visits, data collected from other sources, and feedback from public meetings.

### Assessment Methodology

The assessment methodology used several tools to collect data. Those tools included:

- Global Positioning System (GPS) - A Trimble GPS unit was used to collect data points and lines.
- Measurements - The team took measurements at constrained sites.
- Photos - Photos of rail assets and of the corridor were taken.
- Filming/Time Lapse Photos - Film or time lapse photos were taken to allow the assessment team to review specific sites remotely during the data review and plan preparation period.

The majority of the data was collected in April 2014 by a team of OPRD staff and volunteers. The assessment team primarily used rail bikes to collect a majority of this data. Additional trips were made to reassess specific sites.

The data collected were transferred into a geo-database to assist with geographic information system mapping. The data taken from multiple sources allowed different layers to be created. These layers were used to create the Atlas maps and assist with the assessment process. This complete report is available as Addendum A, Existing Conditions.

Constraints to trail development were identified for each segment. Constraints were defined as locations where modifications to a standard design or special considerations will need to be made. This includes bridge crossings, culverts, and width of the corridor.



OPRD staff collecting GPS points on a bridge

### Catalyst Projects

Using assessment data, catalyst projects were developed for each segment. These projects represent trail elements that are limited in scope and would be beneficial first steps in segment development. Each catalyst project is designed to be a stand-alone recreational opportunity, but also a part of the cohesive segment concept plan.



Elgin to Lookingglass Segment



Conceptual rendering of a potential trail design located along the Grande Ronde River



# Elgin to Lookingglass Segment

### Introduction

This segment is characterized as a gateway segment. It is the closest segment to Interstate 84 and has a developed city and services that could support future development. The City of Elgin has numerous services including parking, gas, restaurants, a welcome center, restrooms, grocery stores, services (automotive and other), and lodging opportunities. The Eagle Cap Excursion Train operates from the multimodal transportation hub facility in Elgin, providing existing restrooms, water, and a parking facility for trail users.

The trail begins within the city limits of Elgin. The Lookingglass portion begins near Moses Creek, with the crossing of the river by Yarrington Road, and ends with the few homes situated at Lookingglass Creek. The nearby Lookingglass Fish Hatchery on Lookingglass Creek cannot be seen from the rail right-of-way. Quickly the setting turns into an actively managed agrarian landscape that is moderately flat. After two miles, the rail right-of-way transitions into a narrow, steep canyon. The defining feature is the Grande Ronde River as it flows through moderately conifer forested slopes. Throughout the canyon, there are signs of actively managed lands and old roads. However, most of the segment is inaccessible to motorized vehicles.

Elgin to Lookingglass Segment				
Segment Length	Constrained	Bridges	Culverts	Road Crossings
13.01 miles	6.22 miles	6 (304.6 linear feet)	71	7

### Constraints

A topography constraint is defined as having less than 10 feet of fairly flat land on either side of the rails. A general guideline for rail-with-trail is to place the trail 8.5 to 9.5 feet from the center of the rails. The constraints include uphill topography, riparian vegetation zones, ordinary high water lines, 100-year floodplain and floodway lines, and other structural or landform constraints. The topography of this section is the largest constraint, and nearly 48 percent of the segment is potentially constrained.

### Opportunities

The City of Elgin provides numerous opportunities for recreational users to stage a potential trip. The existing rail station could serve as the trailhead for the rail-with-trail. Overnight parking could be accommodated at several potential locations near the trailhead.

Once the rail right-of-way enters the canyon, there are numerous opportunities for vistas and views. The segment could accommodate

equestrians, bicyclists, and hikers. The topography may limit the width of the trail, creating a more primitive trail experience.

This segment also provides access to swimming, fishing, wildlife viewing, and paddling. Given the high percentage of private property along the segment, hunting is not identified as a potential experience for the public.

### Trail Development Concepts

The topography and actively running excursion train define this segment’s proposed trail development. The trail development concept is to begin from Elgin with an improved trail 5 feet in width for the first 1.5 miles. This will accommodate the higher use level from local users and provide a roughly 5K race training opportunity.

The trail would transition to a 3-foot wide primitive trail as it enters the canyon. The trail would be placed on the river side of the railway for most of the segment. However, the trail would need to be moved to the hillside

in some locations due to constraints. Constraints will require alternative trail development for about 3 miles of the segment. These alternatives include constructing the trail by cutting out the trail from the hillside or building the trail on a retaining wall or similar structure.

### Trail Development Alternatives

No alternative trail concepts are being proposed for this segment. When construction planning is conducted, the proposed development concepts will need to be reviewed and evaluated. This higher level of investigation may identify new development proposals.

### Catalyst Projects

- Develop 0.5 mile from Depot in Elgin
- Develop trailhead kiosk/amenities at Depot
- Develop trail out 2.5 miles to the entrance of the canyon





## Lookingglass to Minam Segment



Conceptual rendering of a potential trail design located along the Wallowa River looking upriver to the south



# Lookingglass to Minam Segment

### Introduction

This segment is characterized as a recreation segment because it has the most public lands adjacent to the rail right-of-way. It has an existing state park and active paddle and fishing industries operating in the segment. In addition, the Eagle Cap Excursion Train operates through this segment.

The segment is a narrow, steep canyon. The defining features are the Grande Ronde and Wallowa Rivers as they carve their way through large meadowed slopes on the east face and moderately conifer-forested slopes on the west face. Through the canyon are signs of actively managed lands and old roads. However, most of the segment is inaccessible to motorized vehicles.

This segment has two defining features in the canyon. The first is the confluence of the Grande Ronde and Wallowa Rivers at Rondowa. The Grande Ronde begins its designation as a Wild and Scenic River north of and downstream from this location. The second is the Minam State Recreation Area, which provides camping and day use on the west side of the river.

The community of Minam has an established store/motel that provides parking, restrooms, and general area information. The community is a key starting point for Wild and Scenic Wallowa and Grande Ronde River rafting trips.

Lookingglass to Minam Segment				
Segment Length	Constrained	Bridges	Culverts	Road Crossings
13.28 miles	5.24 miles	4 (452.2 linear feet)	58	4

### Constraints

A topography constraint is defined as having less than 10 feet of fairly flat land on either side of the rails. A general guideline for rail-with-trail is to place the trail 8.5 to 9.5 feet from the center of the rails. The constraints include uphill topography, riparian vegetation zones, ordinary high water lines, 100-year floodplain and floodway lines, and other structural or landform constraints. The topography of this segment is the largest constraint, as over 39 percent of the segment is potentially constrained.

### Opportunities

The rail right-of-way at Minam could provide a trailhead opportunity. Most of the adjacent land along the rail right-of-way is publicly owned. The rail right-of-way provides a siding of roughly 0.5 mile in length. Public ownership includes the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Department of Energy. The

BLM properties will need to be reviewed to determine what uses the existing management plans have identified and if day use or camping is permitted. The OPRD property is already developed. Three sites have been identified, primarily for day use along the rail right-of-way. One site has been identified for primitive camping. This segment also provides access to swimming, fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and paddling.

Once the rail right-of-way enters the canyon, there are numerous opportunities for vistas and views. This segment could accommodate equestrians, bicyclists, and hikers. This segment could potentially connect to equestrian trails at Minam State Park if a river crossing is included in the project design. The topography may limit the width of the trail, creating a more primitive trail experience. In addition, the almost complete public ownership provides upland trail opportunities or alternative trail alignments.

### Trail Development Concepts

The topography and actively running excursion train define this segment’s trail development. The trail is proposed to be a 3-foot wide primitive trail through this segment. A segment at Minam would be constructed as an improved trail for about 0.5 mile to accommodate the additional use from Highway 82.

The trail would be placed on the river side of the railway for most of the segment. However, the trail would need to be moved to the hillside due to constraints in places. Constraints will require alternative trail development for about 4 miles of the segment. These alternatives include constructing the trail by cutting out the trail from the hillside or building the trail on a retaining wall or similar structure.

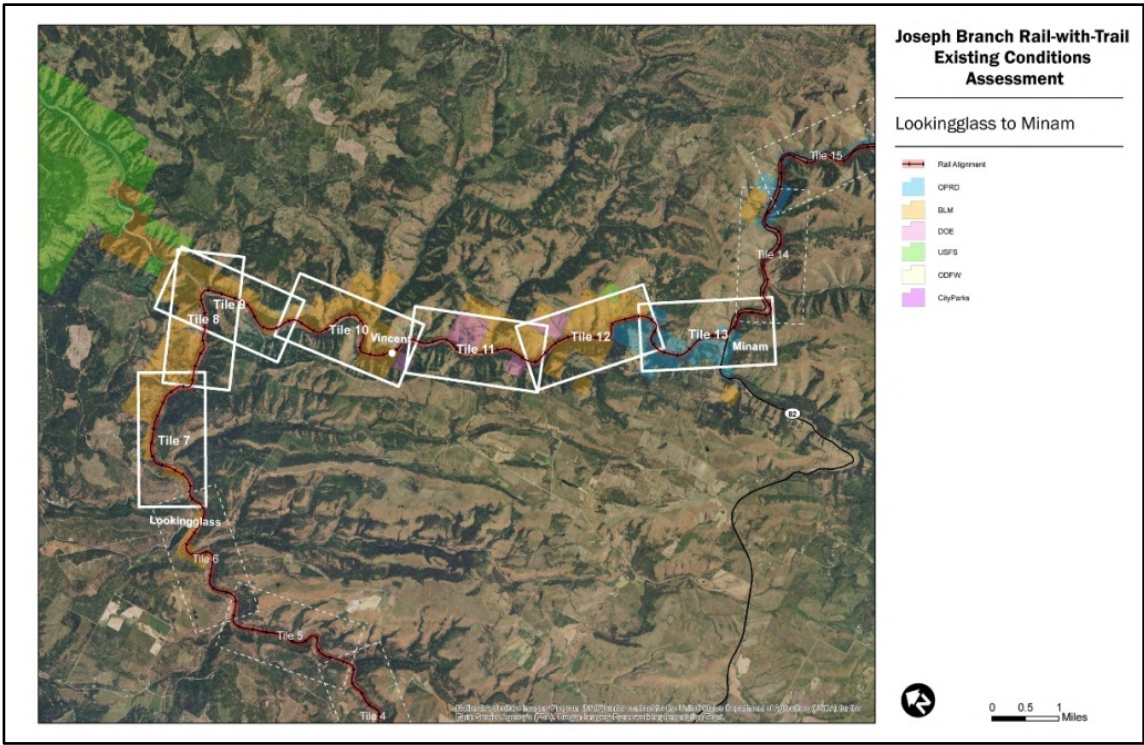
### Trail Development Alternatives

No alternative alignments are being proposed for this segment. When construction planning is conducted, the proposed development concepts will need to be reviewed and evaluated. This higher level of investigation may identify new development proposals.

It is important to note that there is significant BLM ownership in this section. Several old roads that are currently being used as recreational trails lead onto or from BLM property. The roads run to the top of the eastside of the canyon and go from Rondowa to Minam. Further exploration of these routes should be considered.

### Catalyst Projects

- Enhance the BLM equestrian trailhead at Lookingglass with a vault toilet and kiosk
- Develop the trailhead at Minam and develop a 0.5-mile trail on either side of Highway 82
- Develop a trail to the confluence of the Minam and Wallowa Rivers





## Minam to Wallowa Segment



Conceptual rendering of a potential trail design located along the Wallowa River looking upriver to the south



# Minam to Wallowa Segment

### Introduction

This segment is characterized by the Wallowa River canyon and gateway to the Wallowa Valley. It begins in a tight canyon that is shared with Highway 82, the Wallowa River, and the Minam State Recreation Area properties. When the rail right-of-way breaks free of the canyon, it separates from the highway and bisects the agricultural landscape to the City of Wallowa.

The defining features are the Wallowa River and the lower Wallowa Valley. The river carves its way through a steep and tight canyon with heavily conifer-forested slopes on the south and grassland on the north. As the rail right-of-way leaves the canyon, it opens onto Wallowa Valley. The Wallowa Valley is framed by the Wallowa Mountains to the south and a gentle rise of hills to the north.

The City of Wallowa has numerous services including parking, gas, restaurants, restrooms, grocery stores, services (automotive and other), and lodging opportunities.

Minam to Wallowa Segment				
Segment Length	Constrained	Bridges	Culverts	Road Crossings
12.79 miles	2.55 miles	4 (430.31 linear feet)	35	15

### Constraints

A topography constraint is defined as having less than 10 feet of fairly flat land on either side of the rails. A general guideline for rail-with-trail is to place the trail 8.5 to 9.5 feet from the center of the rails. The constraints include uphill topography, riparian vegetation zones, ordinary high water lines, 100-year floodplain and floodway lines, and other structural or landform constraints.

The topography of this segment is the largest constraint. The roughly 8 miles that are in the Wallowa River canyon provide the topographically constrained area for this segment. Over 20 percent of the segment is potentially constrained.

### Opportunities

The rail right-of-way in the City of Wallowa provides ample space for a trailhead. Through the canyon, there are numerous opportunities for vistas and views. This segment could accommodate equestrians, bicyclists, and hikers and provide connections to the Bear Creek trailhead. The topography will be a trail design opportunity. This segment also provides access to swimming, fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and paddling.

In this segment there is the possibility to incorporate access to the Nez Perce Homeland property from the City of Wallowa via a bridge adjacent to the railroad right-of-way. The Homeland property represents a potential developed trailhead with parking, restrooms, and other facilities.

### Trail Development Concepts

This segment is divided into two clear sections: canyon and valley. The canyon begins at Minam and is constrained by the Wallowa River and canyon walls. This portion of proposed trail is to be a primitive trail for about 6.75 miles. About 2 miles is very constrained and it is proposed to have a trail-in-rail development strategy to reduce costs and environmental impacts.

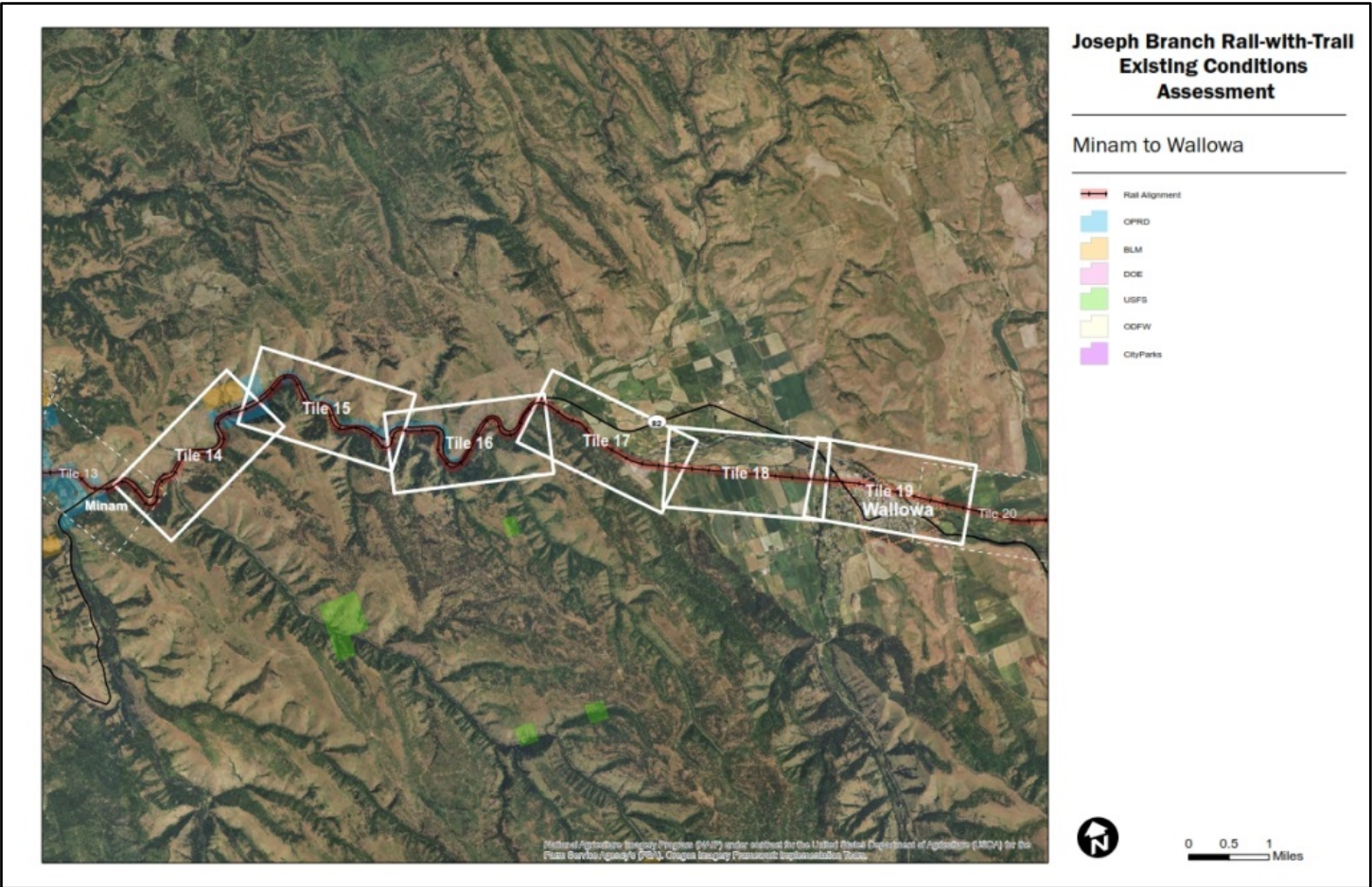
The valley section would be a primitive trail until it reaches Whiskey Creek Road. The rail right-of-way provides sufficient space to allow an improved trail to be developed from here to the crossing of Highway 82 in Wallowa, about 6 miles. From Highway 82 to the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center, the trail is proposed to be a developed/paved trail. This will allow local users to make connections to key recreational sites and accommodate higher use levels.

### Trail Development Alternatives

The use of low-traffic county and city roads has been identified as a potential alternative for about 6.2 miles of this segment. This alternative would utilize shared-use roads and is identified as (County Road) in the cost estimate. Additional signage would be placed on these roads to alert vehicles of bike and pedestrian use, consistent with the Oregon Department of Transportation’s Bike/Ped Designs. Within city limits, the addition of sharrows (shared lane bicycle markings) on the road could be used to assist in alerting drivers of the promoted bike and pedestrian use. The shared-use road option has additional safety concerns due to users sharing roads with motorized vehicle traffic.

### Catalyst Projects

- In Wallowa, develop the trail from the historic train stop to the Nez Perce Homeland property and to Highway 82
- In Wallowa, develop a trailhead at the historic train stop





## Wallowa to Lostine Segment



Conceptual rendering of a potential trail design located near Wallowa



# Wallowa to Lostine Segment

### Introduction

This segment is characterized as a working landscape segment. The majority of the segment follows the Wallowa River and traverses working ranches and farms between the communities of Wallowa and Lostine.

The segment is wide open, with low grassland hills, bluffs rising to the north, and a large, ever-widening valley to the south where the valley meets the Wallowa Mountains. The defining features of the segment are the Wallowa River and the farm and ranch lands.

The City of Lostine has an established coffee shop and a farm-to-table restaurant and tavern. A new Bed & Breakfast is being developed adjacent to the rail, and there are several on-farm lodging options located near the rail corridor. Parking is available in Lostine, but the rail right-of-way is approximately 1.5 miles north of Lostine.

Wallowa to Lostine Segment				
Segment Length	Constrained	Bridges	Culverts	Road Crossings
8.14 miles	0.11 miles	12 (806 linear feet)	26	16

### Constraints

A topography constraint is defined as having less than 10 feet of fairly flat land on either side of the rails. A general guideline for rail-with-trail is to place the trail 8.5 to 9.5 feet from the center of the rails. The constraints include uphill topography, riparian vegetation zones, ordinary high water lines, 100-year floodplain and floodway lines, and other structural or landform constraints.

The topography in this segment is a minor constraint. Approximately 1.4 percent of the segment is potentially constrained, generally due to being near the river or other drainage features.

### Opportunities

The rail right-of-way at School Flat Road provides a potential opportunity for a trailhead.

This segment could accommodate equestrians, bicyclists, and hikers. The segment also provides access to fishing and views of actively managed rangelands and ranches. This segment could provide a connection to the existing Lostine River trailheads.

### Trail Development Concepts

This segment is proposed to be an improved trail for about 7.25 miles. The rail right-of-way provides sufficient space to allow an improved trail to be developed.

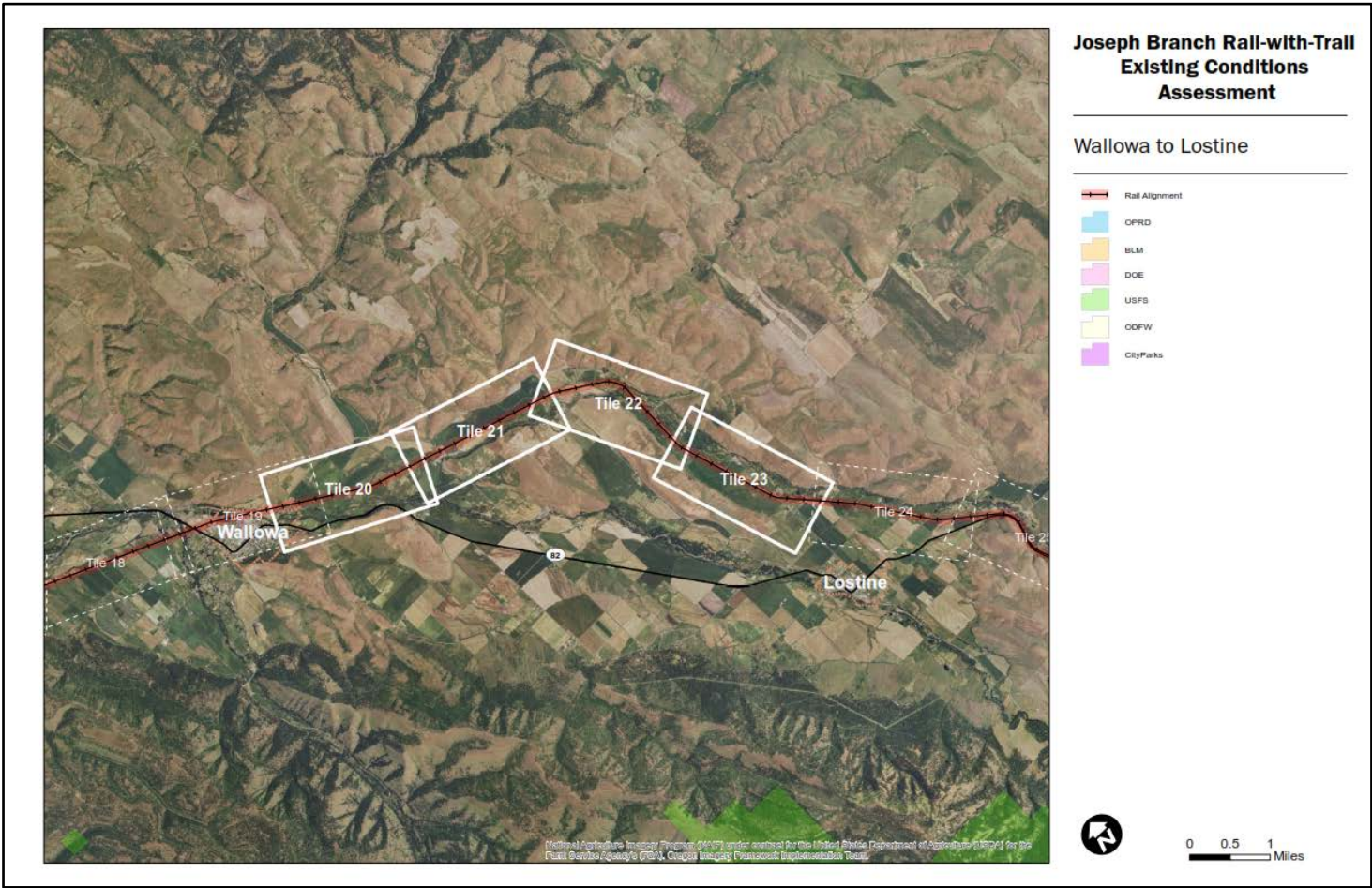
### Trail Development Alternatives

The use of low-traffic county and city roads has been identified as an alternative. When on a county road, the trail would represent a shared use of a road, rather than a separate trail. This option is designated by (County Road) in the cost estimate, but does use the rail corridor when re-routing is not possible. The alternative is 9.4 miles long, which is about 2.5 miles longer than the development concept that requires the trail to be entirely located in the rail corridor. Additional signage would be placed on these roads to alert vehicles of bike and pedestrian use, consistent with the Oregon Department of Transportation’s Bike/Ped Designs. Within city limits, the addition of sharrows on the road could be used to assist in alerting drivers of the promoted bike and pedestrian use. The County Road

option was preferred by many participants in the Wallowa public meetings for this segment, particularly from Whiskey Creek Road to Wade Gulch. The shared-use road option has additional safety concerns due to users sharing roads with motorized vehicle traffic. This segment would also create a link into Lostine from the rail right-of-way.

### Catalyst Projects

- Develop shared use road(s)
- Develop signage/kiosk in Lostine and at the School Flat Road site in the former community of Evans.





## Lostine to Enterprise Segment



Conceptual rendering of a potential trail design utilizing the shared county road concept



# Lostine to Enterprise Segment

### Introduction

This segment is characterized as a working landscape segment. The majority of the segment follows the Wallowa River and traverses working ranches and farms between the communities of Lostine and Enterprise.

The segment is wide open, with low grassland foothills rising to the north and a large, every widening valley to the south where the valley meets the Wallowa Mountains. The defining features of the segment are the Wallowa River and the farm and ranch lands.

The City of Enterprise is the county seat and has numerous services including parking, gas, restaurants, a welcome center, restrooms, grocery stores, services (automotive and other), and lodging opportunities.

Lostine to Enterprise Segment				
Segment Length	Constrained	Bridges	Culverts	Road Crossings
10.05 miles	1.6 miles	8 (583 linear feet)	9	23

### Constraints

A topography constraint is defined as having less than 10 feet of fairly flat land on either side of the rails. A general guideline for rail-with-trail is to place the trail 8.5 to 9.5 feet from the center of the rails. The constraints include uphill topography, riparian vegetation zones, ordinary high water lines, 100-year floodplain and floodway lines, and other structural or landform constraints.

The topography in this segment is a moderate constraint. Approximately 16 percent of the segment is potentially constrained, generally due to being near the river or other drainage features.

### Opportunities

Most of the adjacent land along the rail right-of-way is privately owned. The Marr Pond site is identified as a potential day use site; there are no camping sites in this segment. The Marr Pond site also provides a potential opportunity for a trailhead.

### Trail Development Concepts

This segment is proposed to be an improved trail for about 10 miles. The rail right-of-way provides sufficient space to allow an improved trail to be developed. The Wallowa River provides some locations where the improved trail will require additional construction measures to build up the trail. About 0.4 mile of the trail is proposed to be a developed/paved trail in Enterprise.

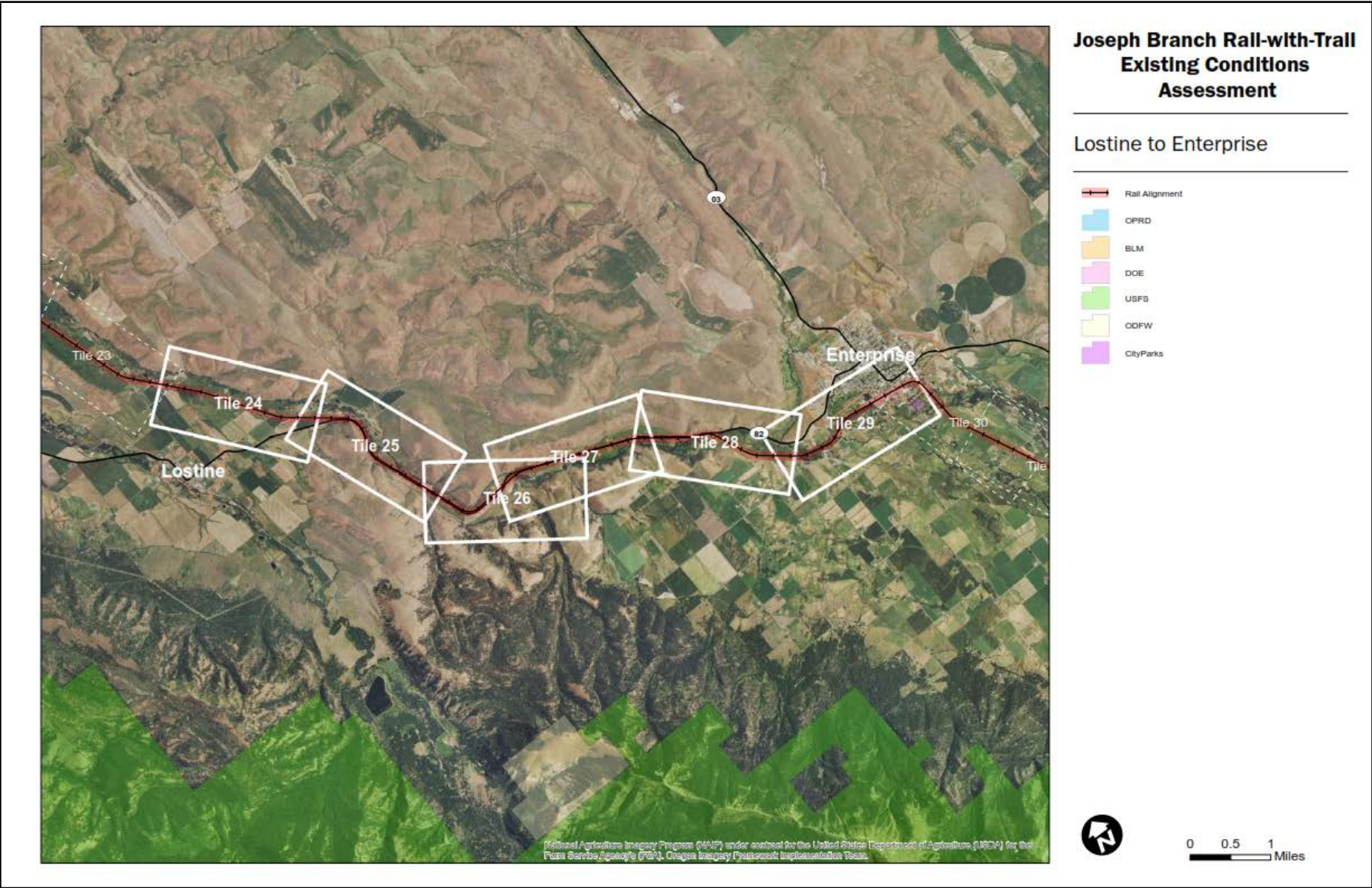
### Trail Development Alternatives

The use of low-traffic county and city roads has been identified as an alternative. This option is designated by (County Road) in the cost estimate, but does use the rail corridor when re-routing is not possible. The alternative is 11.5 miles long, which is about 1.5 miles longer than the development concept that requires the trail to be entirely located in the rail corridor. A large portion of the county road along this route is primitive in nature and would require additional investigation to determine if the road is in good enough condition as is or if it will require improvements.

Additional signage would be placed on these roads to alert vehicles of bike and pedestrian use, consistent with the Oregon Department of Transportation’s Bike/Ped Designs. Within city limits, the addition of sharrows on the road could be used to assist in alerting drivers of the promoted bike and pedestrian use. The shared-use road option has additional safety concerns due to users sharing roads with motorized vehicle traffic.

### Catalyst Projects

- Develop a trail from the Marr Pond site to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife fish hatchery (Enterprise)
- Develop a trailhead at the Marr Pond site (Enterprise)
- Develop a trailhead at the fish hatchery





Enterprise to Joseph Segment



Conceptual rendering of a potential developed trail design for areas near population centers



# Enterprise to Joseph Segment

This segment is characterized as a working landscape segment. The majority of the segment traverses working ranches and farms between the communities of Enterprise and Joseph.

The segment consists of wide open farmlands, with the Wallowa Mountains rising to the south. The defining features of this segment are the Wallowa Mountains and the farm and ranch lands.

The City of Joseph has numerous services including parking, gas, restaurants, a welcome center, restrooms, grocery stores, services (automotive and other), and lodging opportunities.

Enterprise to Joseph Segment				
Segment Length	Constrained	Bridges	Culverts	Road Crossings
5.75 miles	0.42 miles	10 (470.84 linear feet)	13	14

### Constraints

A topography constraint is defined as having less than 10 feet of fairly flat land on either side of the rails. A general guideline for rail-with-trail is to place the trail 8.5 to 9.5 feet from the center of the rails. The constraints include uphill topography, riparian vegetation zones, ordinary high water lines, 100-year floodplain and floodway lines, and other structural or landform constraints.

The topography in this segment is a minor constraint. Approximately 7 percent of the segment is potentially constrained, generally due to being near the river or other drainage features.

### Opportunities

The terminus of the rail line in Joseph has ample space for a trailhead. The segment could accommodate equestrians, bicyclists, and hikers. This segment also provides views of actively managed timber lands, the Wallowa Mountains, rangelands, and ranches. A bike and pedestrian trail from Joseph to Wallowa Lake is currently being developed and could easily connect to this segment.

### Trail Development Concepts

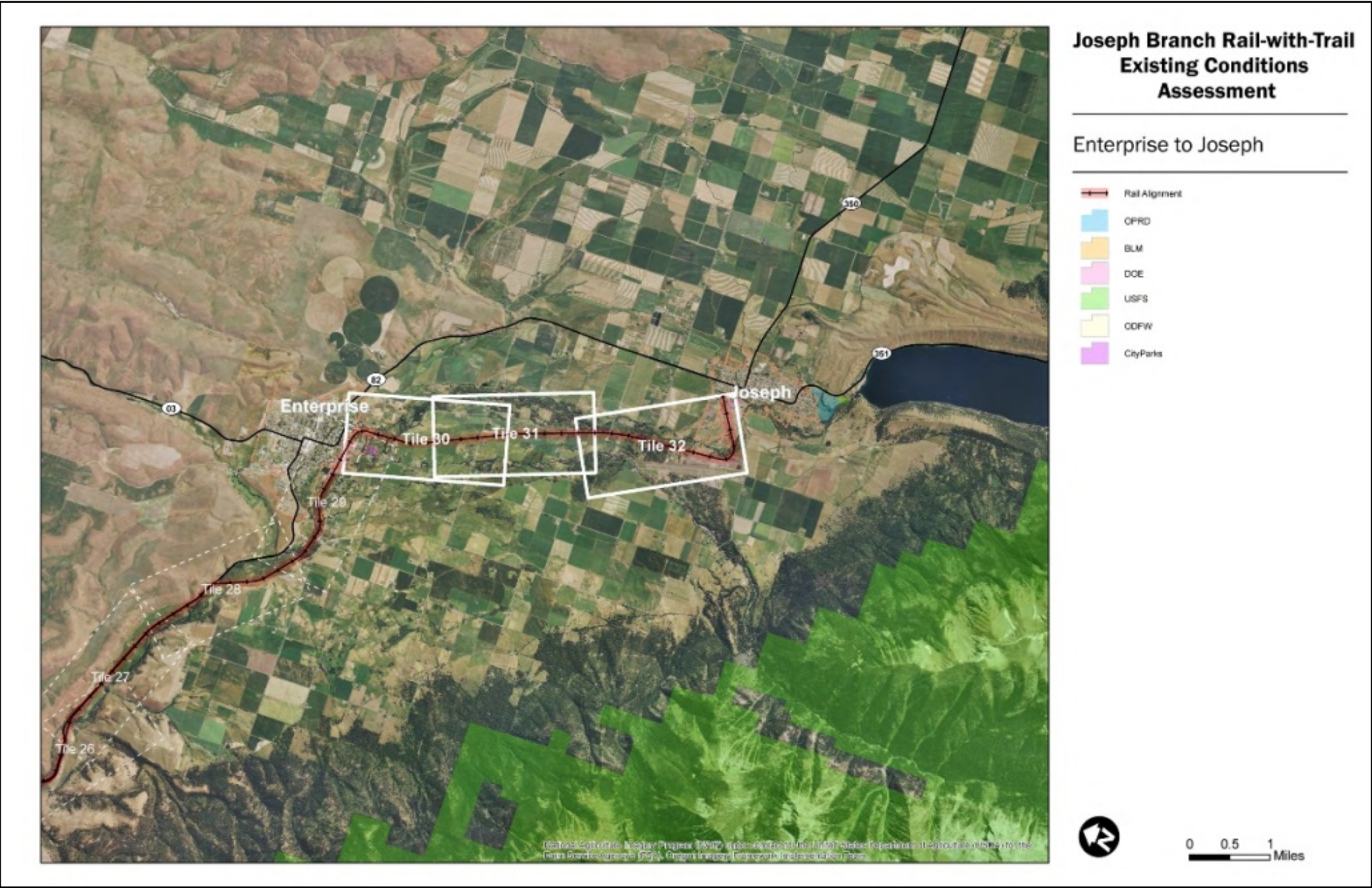
This segment is proposed to be an improved trail for about 3.7 miles. The rail right-of-way provides sufficient space to allow an improved trail to be developed. About 1.5 miles of the trail are proposed to be a developed/ paved trail in Enterprise and Joseph.

### Development Alternatives

No alternative alignments are being proposed for this segment. When construction planning is conducted, the proposed development concepts will need to be reviewed and evaluated. This higher level of investigation may identify new development proposals.

### Catalyst Projects

- Develop a trail from Enterprise to Joseph
- Develop a trailhead at the end of the trail corridor at Joseph

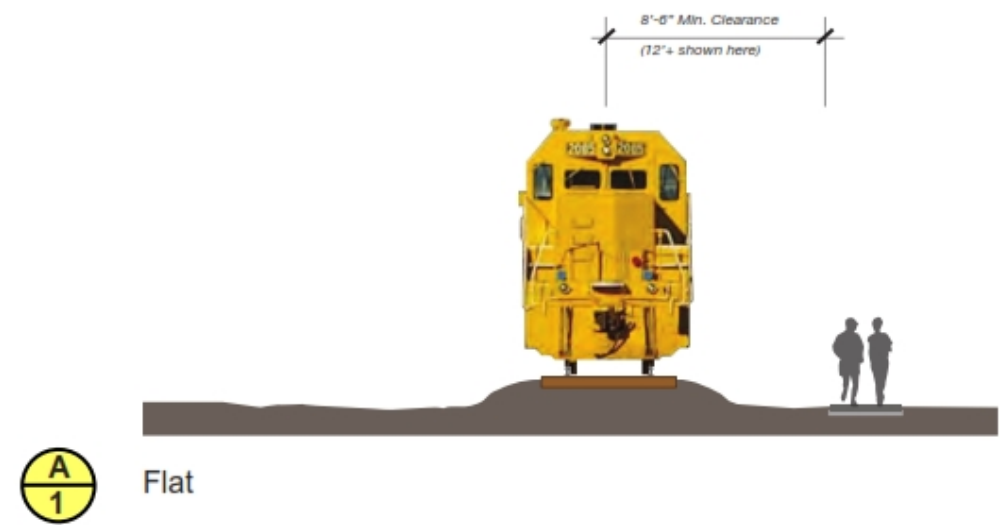




# Design Concepts

The following design concepts have been identified as most technically and politically feasible for different sections of the trail. These design concepts are not inclusive of all options, including potentially developing a trail next to the road, but are intended to provide the reader a vision of how the trail could be constructed. This document does not rule out options not conceived of to date.

## Active Rail-With-Trail Primitive



## Joseph Branch Rail-Trail

Typical Sections  
*Sections do not relate to specific locations within the Corridor*

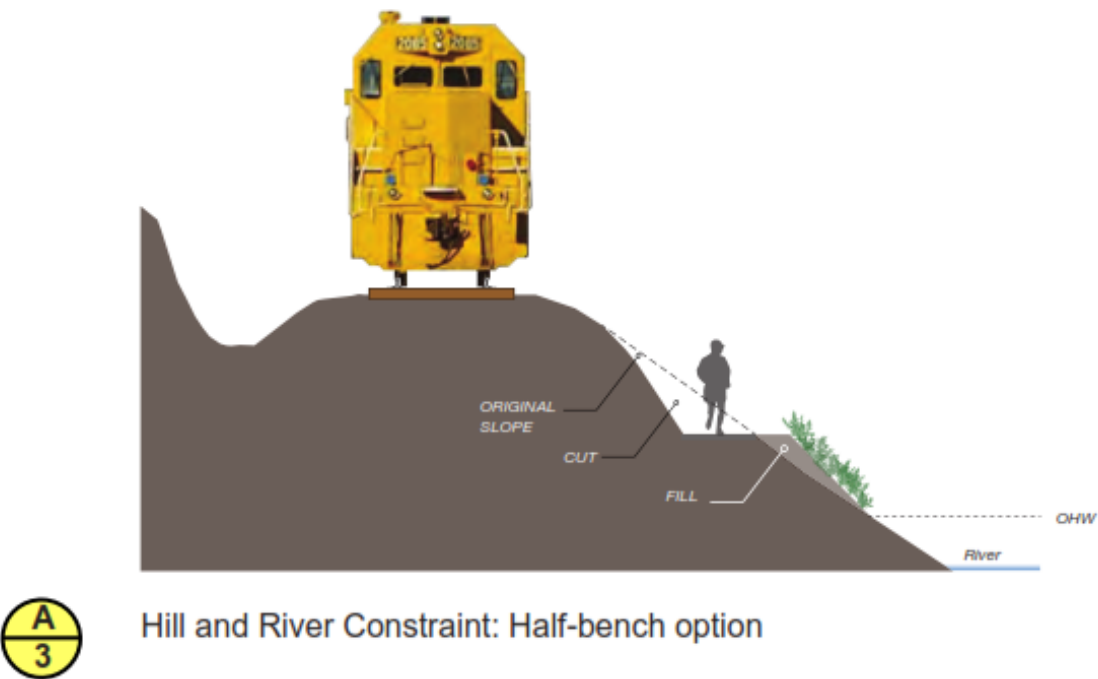
**A-1:** Primitive, 3-foot wide dirt surface trail located in an unconstrained area on a flat surface adjacent to the active rail line.

**A-2:** Primitive, 3-foot wide dirt surface trail, in sections constrained by the river. Trail is relocated to the opposite side of rail, which requires rail crossing.

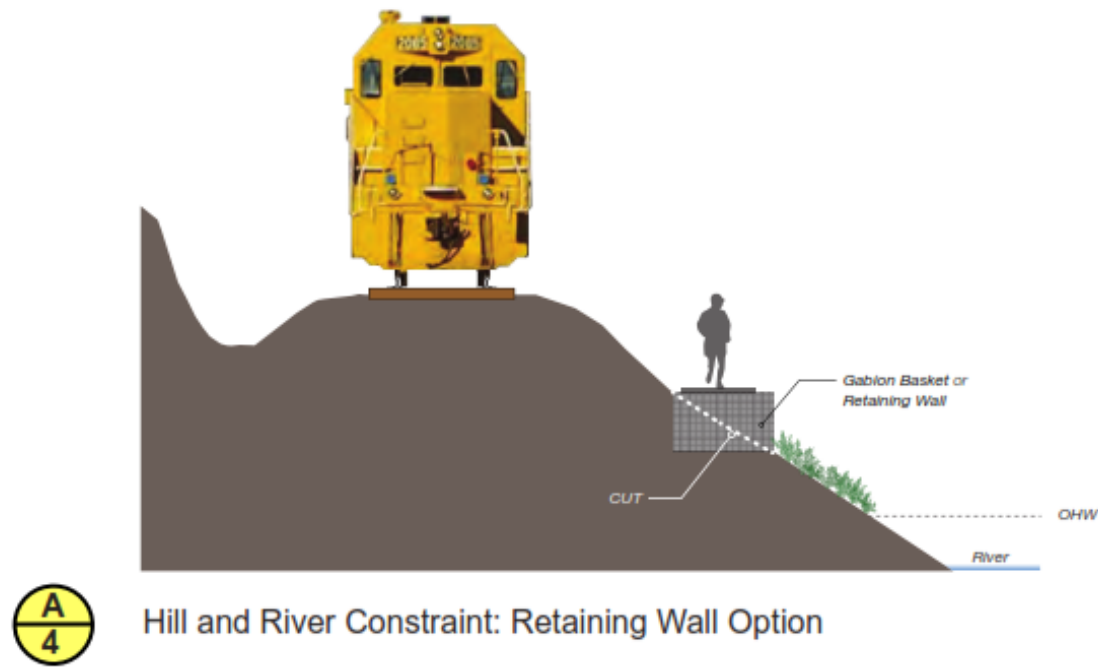


# Design Concepts

## Active Rail-With-Trail *Primitive*



Hill and River Constraint: Half-bench option



Hill and River Constraint: Retaining Wall Option

## Joseph Branch Rail-Trail

### Typical Sections

*Sections do not relate to specific locations within the Corridor*

**A-3:** Primitive, 3-foot wide dirt surface trail, in areas with both a hill and river constraint. The half-bench option places the trail between the rail and the river. Part of the land will be cut out to accommodate this type of trail.

**A-4:** Primitive, 3-foot wide dirt surface trail, in areas with both a hill and river constraint. The retaining wall option utilizes a gabion basket or retaining wall that is inserted as a block so that there is a flat platform for the trail.



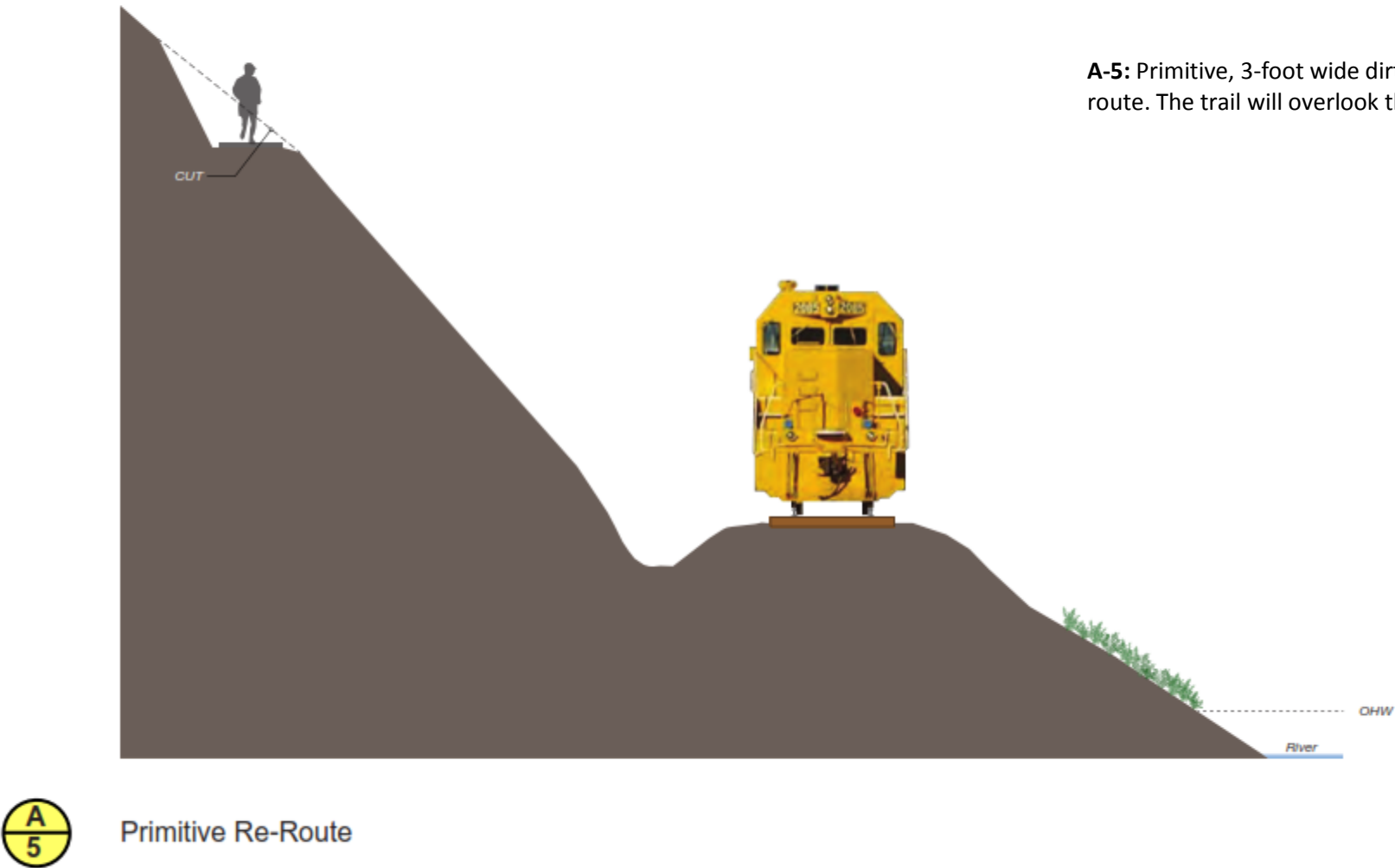
# Design Concepts

Active Rail-With-Trail  
*Primitive*

## Joseph Branch Rail-Trail

Typical Sections

*Sections do not relate to specific locations within the Corridor*



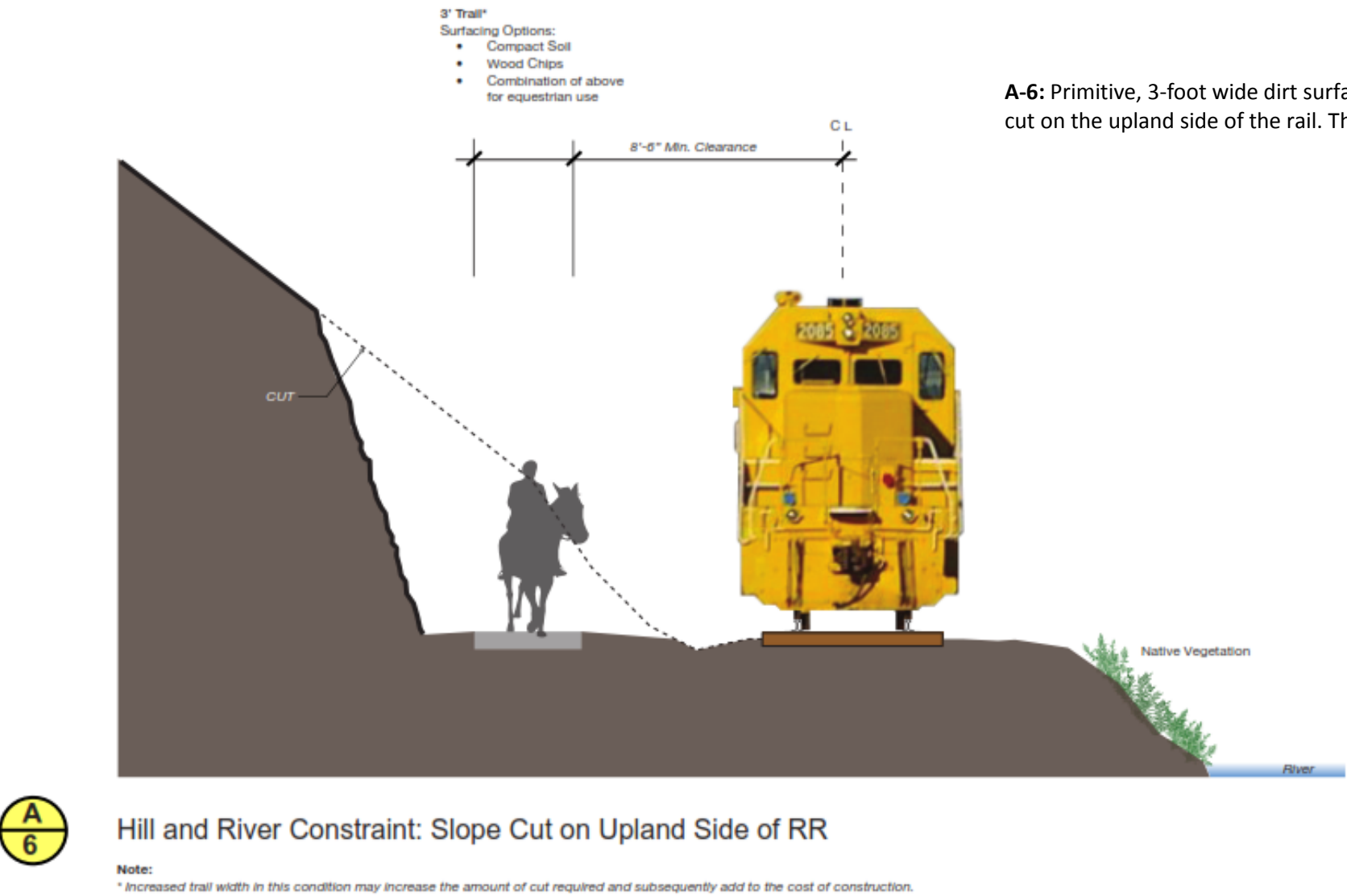


Design Concepts

Active Rail-With-Trail  
*Primitive*

Joseph Branch Rail-Trail

Typical Sections  
*Sections do not relate to specific locations within the Corridor*

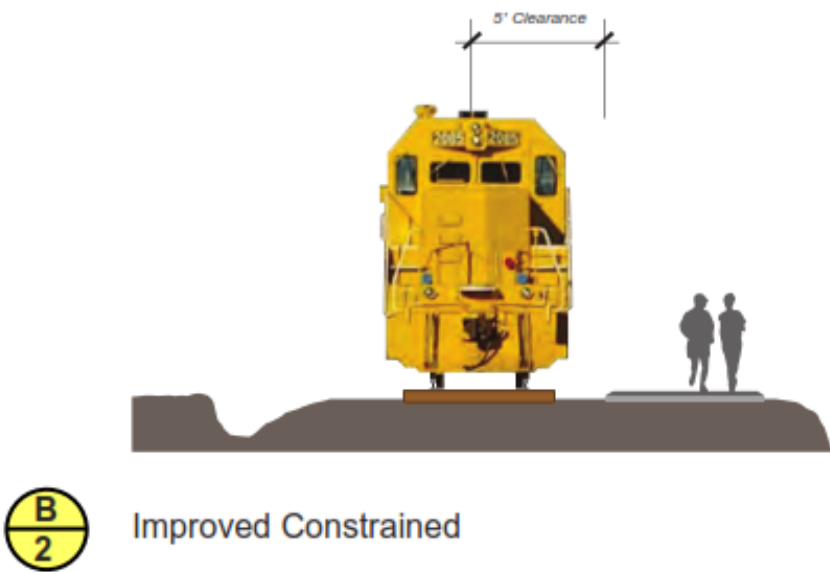
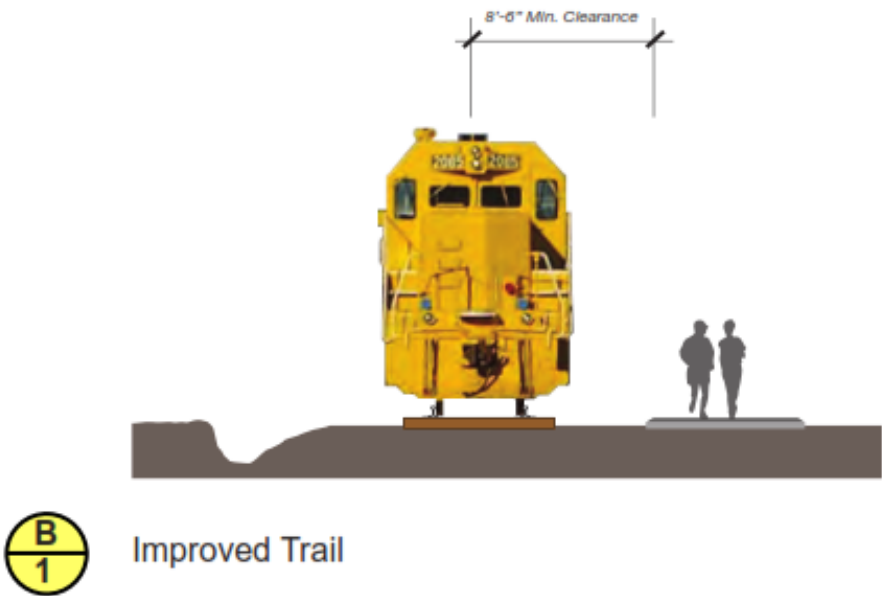


A-6: Primitive, 3-foot wide dirt surface trail in areas constrained by the hill and river. The slope is cut on the upland side of the rail. The hill is cut out and a trail is built in the new flat area.



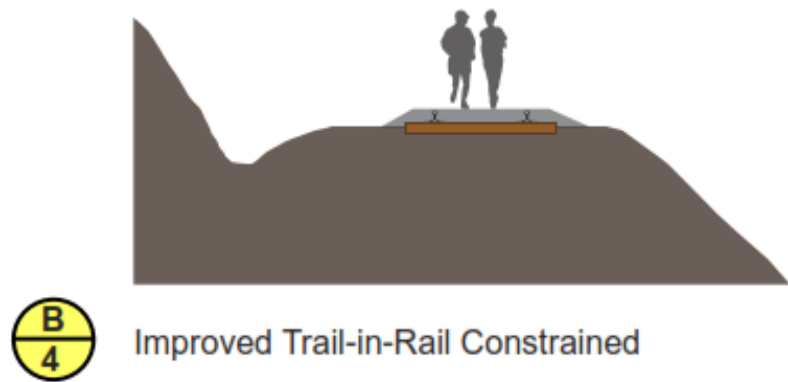
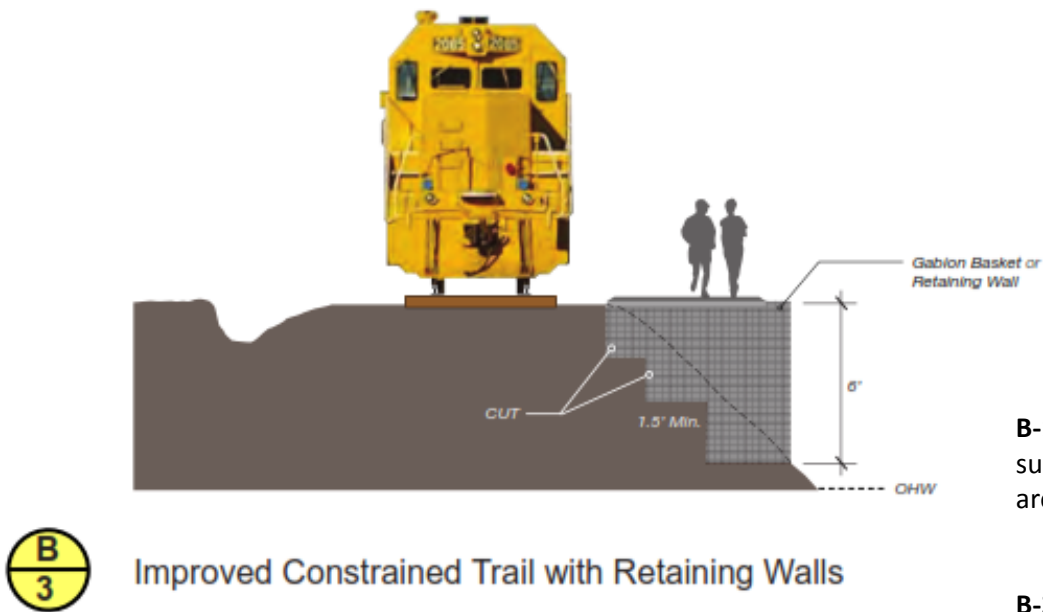
# Design Concepts

## Non-Active Canyon Improved



## Joseph Branch Rail-Trail Typical Sections

*Sections do not relate to specific locations within the Corridor*



**B-1:** Improved, 5-foot wide compacted gravel surface trail, constructed in the non-active canyon area.

**B-2:** Improved, 5-foot wide compacted gravel surface trail, constructed in a constrained area, closer (5 feet) to the rail.

**B-3:** Improved, 5-foot wide compacted gravel surface trail constructed in a constrained area and requiring a retaining wall. The trail will be supported by a gabion basket or a retaining wall.

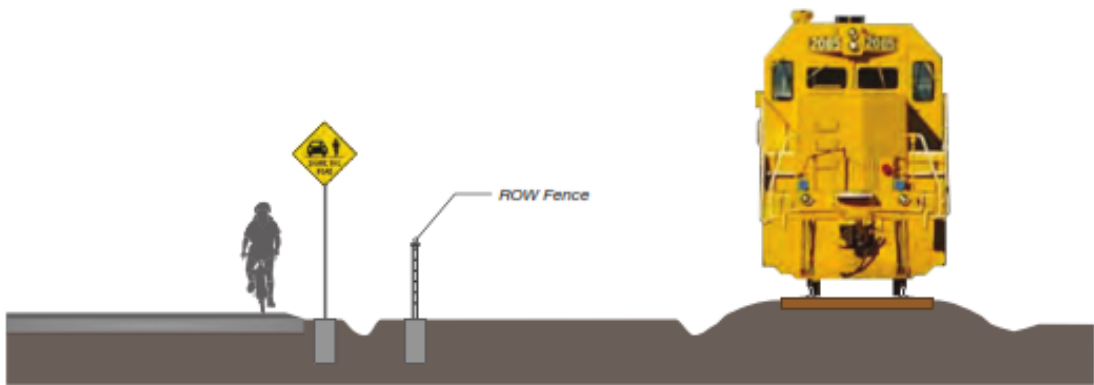
**B-4:** Improved, 5-foot wide compacted gravel surface trail constructed within the rail when significant constraints are an issue. This design concept is not used in the Atlas, but is retained as an option in the Concept Plan.



Joseph Branch Rail-Trail

Typical Sections

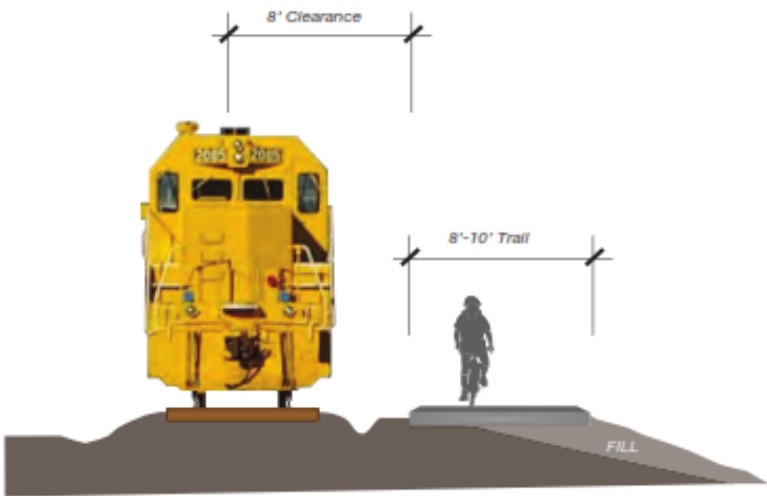
Sections do not relate to specific locations within the Corridor



**C-1:** Shared-Use Road. The trail users will share the road with cars. This design may limit users due to potential safety concerns.



Shared-Use Road



**D-1:** Developed trail consists of a 10-foot paved surface.



Developed Trail

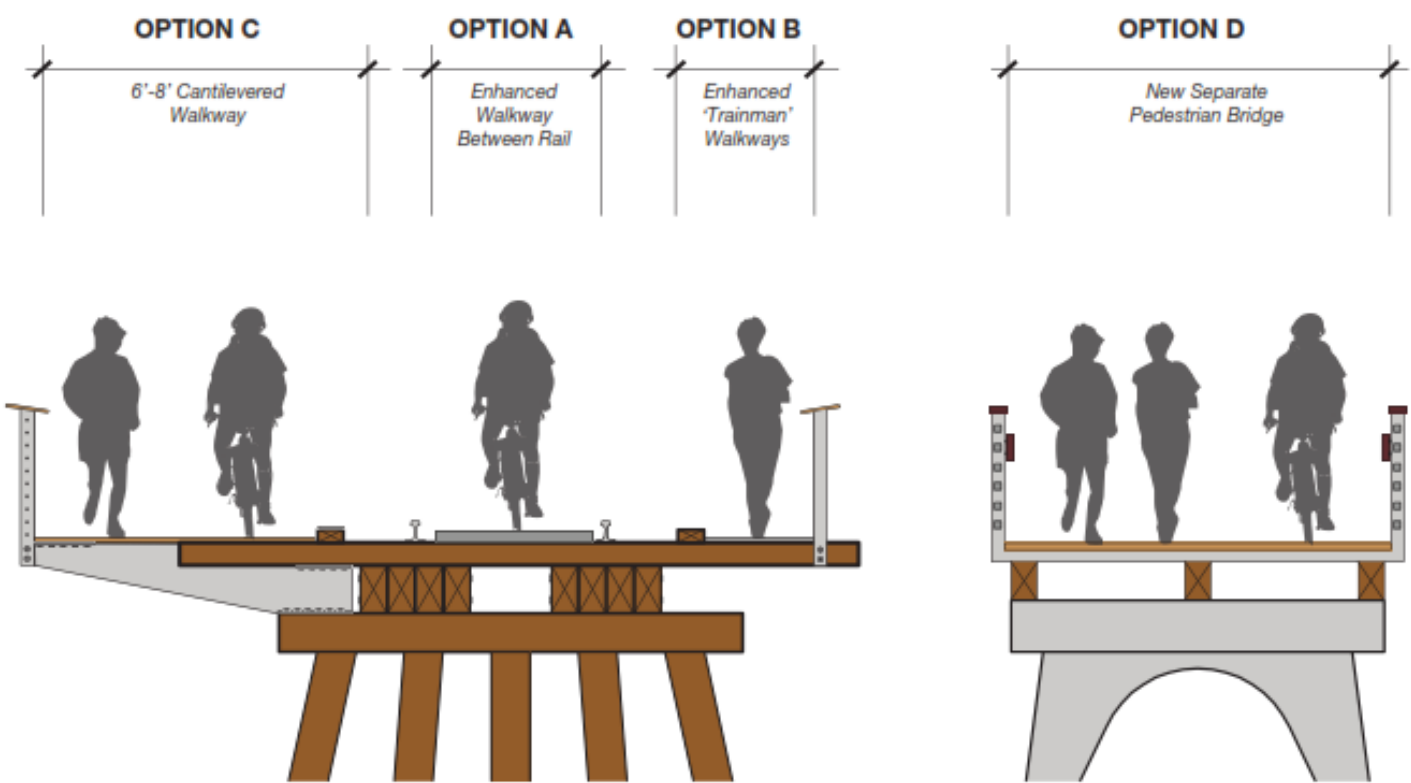


# Design Concepts

## Trail Bridges

### Joseph Branch Rail-Trail

Typical Sections: Trail Bridges  
*Sections do not relate to specific locations within the Corridor*



**Option A:** Enhanced walkway between the rail. Trail users will utilize the inside of the rail.

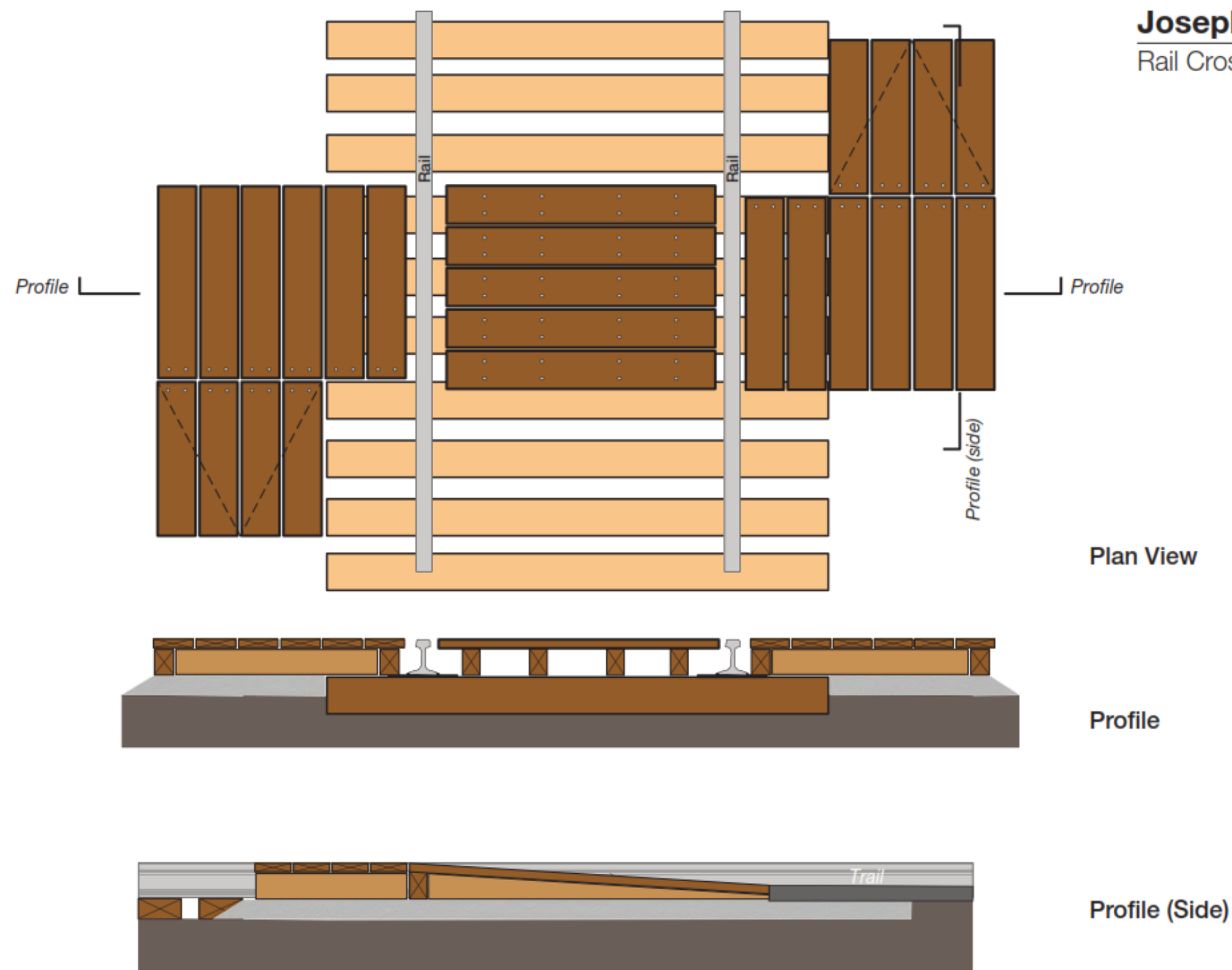
**Option B:** Enhanced ‘trainman’ walkways. A small walkway will be built beside the rail.

**Option C:** 6- to 8-foot cantilevered walkway. A larger walkway will be built beside the rail. This design concept is not used in the Atlas, but is retained as an option in the Concept Plan.

**Option D:** New separate pedestrian bridge. A completely separate bridge will be built alongside the rail bridge. This design concept is not used in the Atlas, but is retained as an option in the Concept Plan.



Design Concepts



**Joseph Branch Rail-Trail**  
Rail Crossing At Grade





# NEXT STEPS



# Review and Implementation

## Next Steps

This Concept Plan has assessed the economic, technical, and political feasibility of developing a rail-with-trail along the historic Joseph Branch Rail Line to determine whether a trail is generally desirable and, if so, what that trail should look like and how it should be developed. No factors have been identified to indicate that a rail-with-trail would not be feasible. Economically, the trail could bring jobs to the area during construction and, after completely built, it could potentially provide quality of life benefits to local users and increase tourism in the area. The conceptual segment designs indicate that developing a rail-with-trail is technically feasible if funding is obtained. The polling of voters shows that a statistical majority of Union and Wallowa County voters support construction of a trail.

## Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA) Review

The next step is for the WURA to determine whether or not to proceed to the design phase of trail development. This would include determining a method of governance to provide for fundraising, construction, operations, and maintenance of the rail-with-trail.

## Implementation

If this Concept Plan is approved by the WURA, the recommended phasing of the segments based on public support, connectivity, and feasibility/cost is:

- 1. Enterprise to Joseph
- 2. Elgin to Lookingglass
- 3. Lookingglass to Minam
- 4. Minam to Wallowa
- 5. Lostine to Enterprise
- 6. Wallowa to Lostine

The Enterprise to Joseph segment could also be connected to the proposed path from Joseph to Wallowa Lake. Catalyst projects and sections located near populated areas are considered priority items for development beyond the sequencing strategy for all of the segments.

Construction work would require numerous permits. These approvals may include:

- Removal-Fill permits or a General Authorization Permit from the Oregon Department of State Lands and/or a 404 Permit or General Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These are required for work on navigable waterways or in jurisdictional wetlands.
- All in-stream work would be required to occur during the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in-water work window.

- An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan may be required for construction activities that could put sediment into a waterway.
- A re-vegetation and planting plan would be required for areas of disturbance.
- Any new culverts would have to meet ODFW fish passage criteria.
- Wild and Scenic waterways require authorization by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for activities within 1/4 mile of the banks.
- If the National Wetlands Inventory Map indicates the presence of wetlands in the project area, a wetland delineation is likely to be required. If permanent impacts to wetlands cannot be avoided, a mitigation plan will be needed.
- If an impervious trail surface is chosen, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System 1200-C Construction Permit may be required from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.
- Consultation to fulfill Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act will be required for this project if a federal nexus is triggered through work in waterways or use of federal funds. A Biological Assessment will likely be required to result in a Biological Opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- County land use permits may be required.
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approval may be needed in areas where BLM is the landowner.
- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) permits may be required for road crossings and in locations where ODOT is the landowner.
- Trail segments have different constraints due to topography. In some areas the trail will be next to the rail and in other areas hillside cuts may be required to build the trail. Cultural resource work may need to occur in the footprint of the proposed development. In those portions of the project where hillside cutting or retaining walls will need to be installed, archaeological testing may need to occur.





# Funding

## Funding

The funding of trails can be challenging. Increased interest in trails as transportation alternatives and for recreation has increased competition for limited funds. Nonetheless, federal, state, and local government funding mechanisms—as well as grants, partnerships, and other creative funding methods—are available.

Local government agencies and nonprofit organizations are generally eligible to compete for federal, state, and foundation support to fund trail planning, construction, enhancement, and maintenance projects. Most often trail development and maintenance financing are the result of collaborative efforts by community organizations (memberships, solicited donors, fundraising events) and local government project partners applying for foundation grants and grants from state and federal government sources.

Fundraising to pay capital and operating costs will require a significant effort by the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA) or an organization charged by the WURA Board of Directors with responsibility for developing and managing the trail through a management agreement, lease agreement, or contract.

## Federal Transportation Funding

Two likely sources of competitive federal grants administered by State of Oregon agencies are the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and the Oregon Federal Lands Access Program. Matching funds are required to leverage the federal funds (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 2015).

## Recreational Trails Program

The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides funds to Oregon to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail use through the RTP.

## Oregon Federal Lands Access Program

FHWA funds projects that provide safe and adequate transportation access to and through federal lands for visitors, recreationists, and resource users. Eligible projects are capital improvement, enhancement, surface preservation, transit, planning, and research. Capital improvement proposals typically range from \$500,000 to \$10,000,000. Planning proposals typically range from \$100,000 to \$500,000.

## Transportation Alternatives

This program is the largest federal source for trail funding. While transportation alternatives projects are federally funded, the funds are administered in Oregon by the Department of Transportation (ODOT).

Federal funds are not limited to transportation and include recreation, environmental, brownfield, and community development programs.

The **Land and Water Conservation Fund** 50/50 matching grant program is administered by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) in cooperation with the National Park Service. Program funds are intended for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas; trails are one priority of this program.

The **Economic Development Administration** of the U.S. Department of Commerce Public Works program has an Economic Adjustment Assistance grant program. The investment program provides funding to distressed communities to support the implementation of regional economic development strategies designed to create jobs, encourage economic development, and strengthen America's ability to compete in the global marketplace. Private investment is required to leverage these federal funds.

## State Funding

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has a potential interest in the Joseph Branch Trail’s development. The agency’s staff has discussed the possibility of trail funding to improve access to the Wallowa and Grande Ronde Rivers. ODOT and OPRD also have interest in the project and are potential funding sources.

## Local Government Funding

The most common sources of funding at the city and county level include allocations from park and recreation departments or a line item in a consolidated capital improvement program budget. Rarely will new taxes be levied to exclusively support active transportation projects. One example is the City of Pendleton, which levied a five-cent-per-gallon limited-duration gasoline tax to match federal funds to pay for the railroad overpass near the Pendleton Roundup grounds.

## In-Kind Contributions and Volunteer Time

As with the Concept Plan, in-kind contributions of Eastern Oregon University faculty time and student time could constitute a portion of design time. Additionally, volunteers from the Joseph Branch Trail Consortium are anticipated to continue to be a large source of support for design work.

## Foundation and Private Grants

Many foundations and companies provide grants for trail and greenway projects, open space preservation, community development, and community health.



Fishing access sites are located along the rail corridor



# Operation

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department provided a general approximation of annual maintenance costs per mile of \$500 to \$5,250. The cost is largely dependent on the trail standard, either primitive or paved. Additionally, the way in which the work is accomplished, either by paid staff or volunteers, will also have a large effect on the cost. There are additional long-term maintenance costs if the trail is paved. It would have to be repaved on an average of every 15 years, depending on the usage (Houston, 2014a).

Below are general cost assumptions by design standard:

- Primitive (dirt) sections (A-1 through A-6 design standards) and sections developed on county roads (C-1 design standard) would be the least expensive to maintain (\$500 per mile per year).
- Improved (gravel) sections (B-1 through B-4 design standards) would have moderately higher maintenance costs than primitive sections (\$1,000 per mile per year).
- Developed (paved) sections (D-1 design standard) and Bridges (Br-A and Br-B design standards) would have the highest cost to maintain (\$5,250 per mile per year).

There are two options for segments from Minam to Enterprise. One option is re-routing the trail to county roads when possible. This option is designated by (County Road) below, but does use the rail corridor when re-routing is not possible. The second option is constructing the trail in the rail corridor. This option is designated by (Rail).

### Conceptual Annual Maintenance Costs

Segment	Cost per year
Elgin to Lookingglass (Rail)	\$6,778
Lookingglass to Minam (Rail)	\$9,987
Minam to Wallowa (Rail)	\$13,976
Minam to Wallowa (County Road)	\$6,784
Wallowa to Lostine (Rail)	\$9,722
Wallowa to Lostine (County Road)	\$936
Lostine to Enterprise (Rail)	\$16,366
Lostine to Enterprise (County Road)	\$1,148
Enterprise to Joseph (Rail)	\$14,535
<b>Total (Rail)</b>	<b>\$71,365</b>
<b>Total (County Road)</b>	<b>\$40,169</b>

Maintenance costs can be paid for in a variety of ways, from grants to parking fees to foundations. A member organization of “Friends of the Trail” could also potentially collect fees to support trail operations.

Operation of the trail would likely fall to a “Friends of the Trail” group and funding for operation could be obtained through endowments, donations, and/or sponsoring running, equestrian, cycling, and train ride events. The Wallowa Union Railroad Authority would remain in the structure of operation as an oversight regulator, as would the Federal Railroad Administration.

Operation of the trail could also be administered by an existing non-profit organization or an organization formed to manage the trail.



Riding horseback along the rail corridor



# Governance

Governance and implementation of the rail-with-trail activities will be within the framework of the Federal Railroad Administration, Bureau of Land Management, Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA), and cities, counties, statutes, and administrative rules.

The WURA Board of Directors, if they decide development of the Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail is in the public interest, will need to determine if the Board will take on the task of acquiring financial resources to construct, manage, and maintain the trail or if they will enter into an agreement with other organizations to fulfill those responsibilities. In either case, a project manager will need to be identified to be responsible for recruiting or creating an organization to manage the Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail Development Initiative.

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s *Tool Box* webpage states, “Next to ownership, maintenance and management are the most critical issues to be addressed when preparing for trail development. The following questions must be answered regardless of whether the trail is going to be owned publicly or privately:

- Who will manage the trail or greenway?
- How will funds for maintenance be secured for future years?
- How will the safety of trail users be ensured every hour of every day, throughout the year?

“Long-term trail success depends on sustainable management, maintenance and funding plans...” (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 2015).

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s August 2002 study, *Rails-with-Trails: Lessons Learned, Literature Review, Current Practices, Conclusions*, reports most railroads enter into contracts with trail proponent organizations or agencies to finance, develop, and manage trails. In most cases, the railroad retains property control through easements and license agreements (USDOT, 2002).

The effort undertaken to prepare the Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail Concept Plan (identified as an Assessment of the Wallowa Union Trail Concept in the original Memorandum of Understanding) demonstrates there is significant community stakeholder and government agency support for undertaking tasks associated with development of a trail. If the WURA Board of Directors determines the best option to construct a trail is to hire an independent organization whose sole mission is trail development and management, the Board should invite proposals to determine which organization (or organizations working collaboratively) has an interest in and capacity to secure the necessary funding, oversee construction, and manage and maintain the Joseph Branch Trail, either in its entirety or by trail segment. In this scenario, WURA and the

organization(s) selected to undertake the task would negotiate a long-term trail development and management agreement.

The groups would also organize a Trail Advisory Committee with representatives from Union and Wallowa Counties’ public works, recreation, and public safety departments; communities along the right-of-way; and stakeholder organizations that would have involvement in the trail. The Trail Advisory Committee's immediate task would be to approve and communicate the details of agreed-upon fundraising and trail development action plans to the entities they represent. They would also be asked to carry out specific tasks detailed in the implementation and operational plans that are within the purview of their organizations' and stakeholder groups' responsibilities.

The assistance of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Trail Programs Unit, Recreation Grants, and Community Programs Division staff members should be sought to help form and work with a Trail Advisory Committee. The Committee would be charged with helping solve problems related to the physical challenge of trail development and developing trail maintenance plans.

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has identified successful Hall of Fame trails and the basic governance structures in leading and managing the trail system. The types of governance structures identified by the Conservancy can be summarized as:

- a. **A Unit of Government Plus a Friends Group.** A state, county, city, or special district working with a Friends Group.
- b. **A Coalition of Stakeholders.** Some sort of collaboration, working together in a partnership, to build, manage, and support the trail system.

The Conservancy identified a third category in reviewing websites of trails not part of the Hall of Fame award: a nonprofit corporation with primary responsibility for owning and/or managing and supporting the trail system, often working with a variety of governments. An example is the Weiser trail in southern Idaho.

The most prevalent governance system is a government agency working with a Friends Group, which in many ways could also be defined as collaboration (National Policy Consensus Center, 2015).

WURA’s Board of Directors should consider the conclusion of the Salmonberry Trail Coalition’s exploration of governance and implementation options. The Coalition concluded no single entity could manage the Salmonberry Trail. They determined that establishing a new

collaborative, multi-jurisdictional agency was needed. They named the new agency the Salmonberry Trail Intergovernmental Agency. A Board of Directors and ex officio membership was established. The Board of Directors includes an economic development agency, a county recreation department, and an Oregon Parks and Recreation Department representative. The Board has ex officio members including county government, a visitors association, Cycle Oregon, legislators, and the Regional Solutions Director.

The Salmonberry Trail Intergovernmental Agency’s purpose is to plan the development and maintenance of the trail. The Agency identified governance phases and the issues that needed to be managed in each implementation phase. These phases included:

**1. Planning Phase**  
The planning phase focused on the initial formation and decision making elements for the corridor. The coalition prioritized development activities along the entire corridor; prioritized funding opportunities; developed signage, branding, and programming directions for the corridor; and served as the conduit for communication with funding partners.

**2. Development Phase**  
The development phase focused on project work being completed. The coalition worked with members to track development projects, phasing of projects, and strategic development to ensure additive value of all projects and to reduce redundancy or conflicting development initiatives. Additionally, the coalition looked for potential funding sources and ensured a strategic alignment between resources and projects.

**3. Operation Phase**  
As the corridor has developed, operation of the corridor has been a larger focus of the coalition’s efforts. Prior to development, the coalition identified what the operation and maintenance needs would be, who would be maintaining and operating the corridor or segments, how to prioritize annual maintenance and future heavy maintenance needs, and what funding responsibilities or options would be needed to operate the corridor (Walker Macy, 2014).

A similar governance structure could be considered for the Joseph Branch.



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Addendum List

Addendum A, Existing Conditions

Addendum B, Wallowa Valley Cultural and Heritage Resources Report

Addendum C, Downtown Assessment Report: Elgin, Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise, & Joseph

Addendum D, Land Use Assessment

Addendum E, Key Stakeholder Interview Report

Addendum F, Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail Public Opinion Survey Report

Addendum G, Economic Impact Assessment

All Addendums are available at <https://www.eou.edu/rails-with-trails/reports/>

**Atlas**

The accompanying Atlas for this Concept Plan is the source for most information and detail about the existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints. Each page or tile in this Atlas is of the same scale and should be printed on 11x17 paper in full color. Each tile overlaps previous and following tiles and a light frame shows the extents of these overlaps on each page. The key maps at the beginning of each segment show the orientation of the tiles; north is not always the top of each tile page.

Each tile page is based on an aerial photo, with key information added such as nearby roads, public lands, and streams. The rail right-of-way is drawn in a red line on the overview maps. Mileposts are noted (reflecting the distance from Elgin). Road crossings are noted, as well as all bridges, trestles, and key views.

The development proposals for each portion of the corridor are noted in brown circles with letters corresponding to the design concepts visually depicted in this Concept Plan.

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