

Green to Cedar Rivers Trail

North Segment

Community Meeting

April 27, 2017

Summary

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Introduction

In 2013, King County voters approved the 2014-2019 King County Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy by more than 70 percent, demonstrating strong support for developing and expanding the Regional Trails System, a key element of the levy. Based upon the support of the cities of Maple Valley, Black Diamond, and Covington, developing the north segment of the Green to Cedar Rivers Trail was prioritized as one of the regional trail projects supported by levy funds.

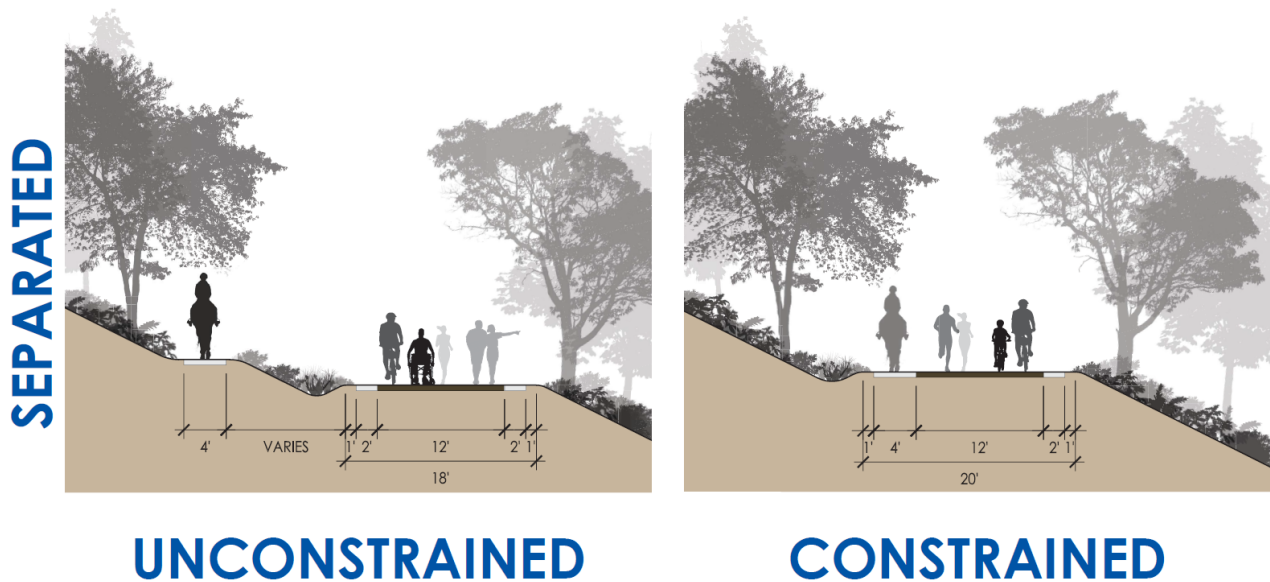
The north segment of Green to Cedar Rivers Trail is three miles long and runs from the Cedar River Trail to SE Kent Kangley Road in Maple Valley. The current trail is a 10-foot-wide soft-surface trail that is accompanied by a narrower side trail in sections of the corridor. The project will upgrade the trail to King County Regional Trail Standards, which include a 12-foot-wide paved trail. The paved trail will increase access for all ages and abilities, improve safety and accommodate future growth.

Meeting Purpose

After conducting a public meeting in January 2017 to kick off the design process for the trail, the design team prepared two options for the north segment of the trail. The options are:

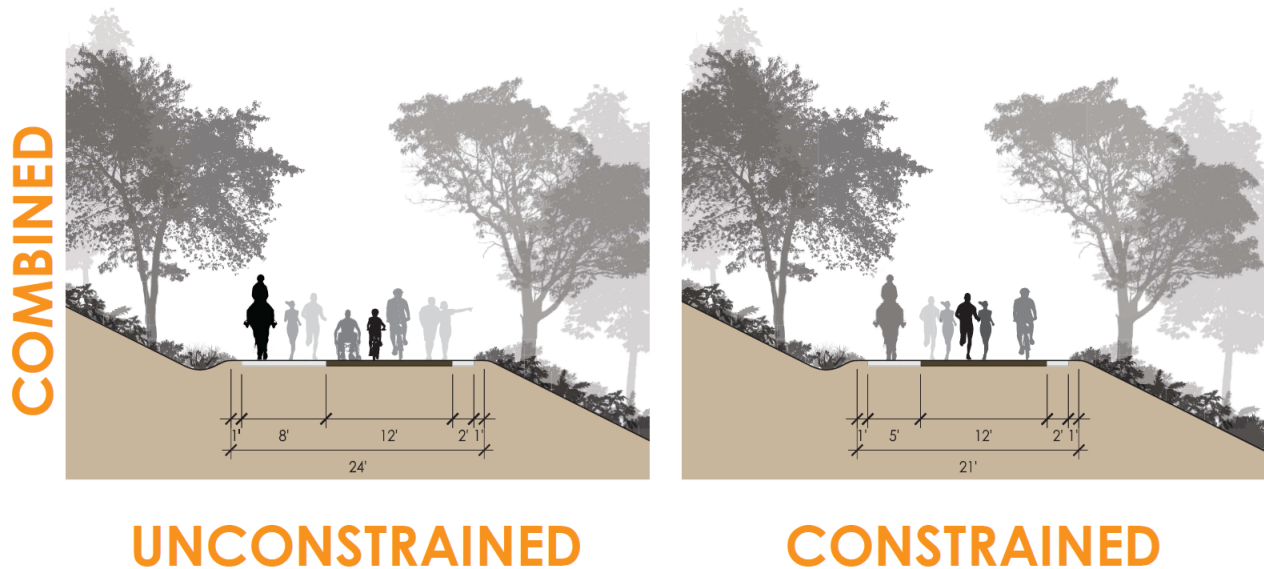
Option 1 (Separated)

A 12-foot-wide paved trail with 2-foot-wide soft-surface shoulders on either side of the paved trail. It also includes a four-foot-wide soft-surface accessory trail that is separated from the paved trail where possible.



Option 2 (Combined)

A 12-foot-wide paved trail with a 5- to 8-foot-wide soft-surface trail on one side of the paved trail and a 2-foot-wide soft-surface shoulder on the other side.



On April 27, 2017, King County hosted a community meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Shadow Lake Elementary School in Maple Valley. The purpose of this meeting was to:

- **Provide information** about the Green to Cedar Rivers Trail North Project and the options being considered for the trail's design
- **Provide** opportunities for attendees to weigh in on the two options
- **Answer** questions about the project and regional trails

This summary describes the nature of this community meeting, how it was promoted, and feedback received from the community.

Promotion

A variety of methods were used to inform the public and spread the word about the community meeting:

- **Postcard:** A postcard with information about the community meeting was sent to all addresses within 500 feet of the trail (approximately 800 addresses)
- **Website:** Event information was posted on the project website
- **Social Media:** King County promoted the community meeting using Facebook, Twitter and its Blog
- **Email:** Community meeting notification was sent via email to approximately 1,100 people
- **Trail Signage:** Signs with information about the community meeting were posted at several locations along the trail

Meeting Format

Approximately 50 people attended the community meeting on April 27. Participants were greeted at a sign-in table and were encouraged to pick up a project fact sheet and a comment form. The community meeting consisted of the following elements:

- **Presentation - Project Background:** A presentation that provided an overview of the regional trails system and the history of the Green to Cedar Rivers Trail planning process.
- **Presentation – Project Description:** A presentation that provided descriptions of the two options, and an overview of site conditions and option comparisons
- **Q&A:** A question and answer period
- **Open House:** An open house, with multiple opportunities to ask questions and provide input

Participant Feedback

Participants were provided with a number of ways to provide their feedback, including writing on flip charts, writing on roll plots of the options, talking with County staff and design team members, and writing on comment forms.

Comment Forms

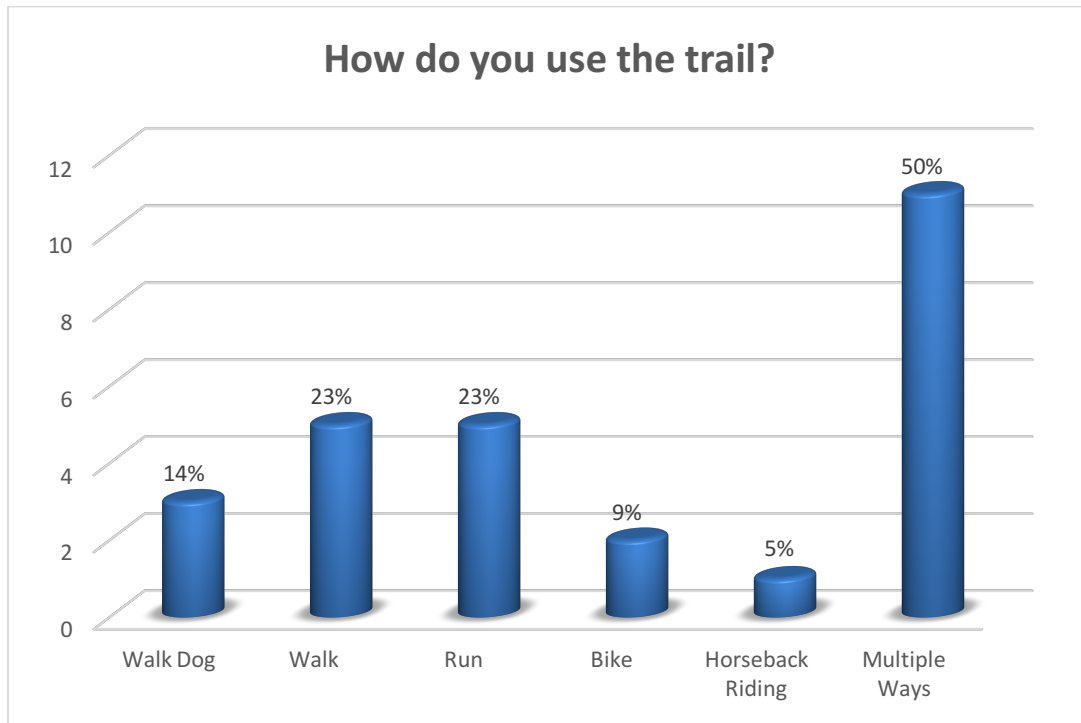
Comment forms were provided at the meeting to give the community an opportunity to provide their feedback. The comment form, provide in Appendix A, included a number of questions to focus participant input. By asking these questions, the project team aimed to:

- Understand how the public uses the north segment of the trail and how often
- Understand which option the community prefers and why
- Gain insight regarding what is important to community members during the design process

Following are the community responses to questions on the comment forms.

How do you use the north segment of the Green to Cedar Rivers Trail (walk, run, bicycle, horseback ride, etc.)?

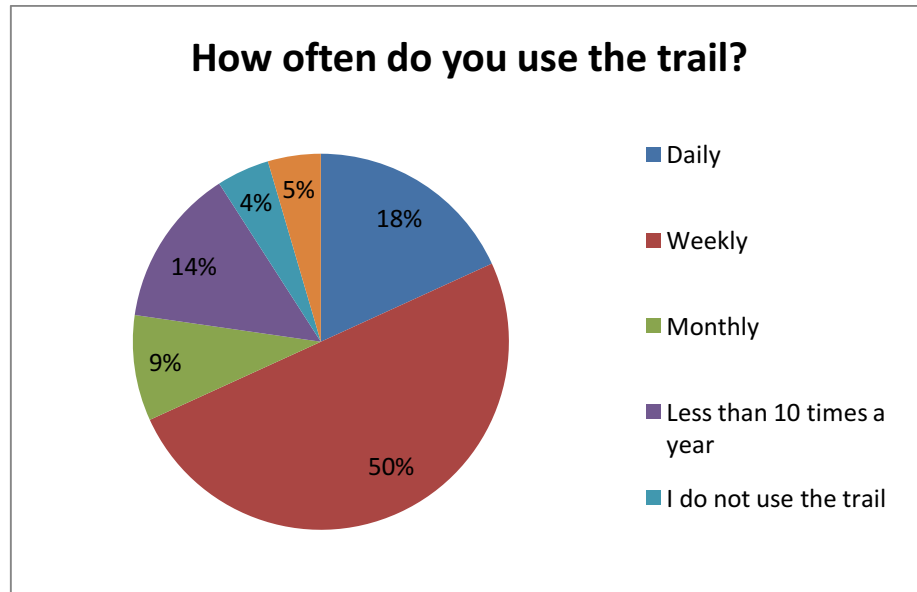
Half of all respondents reported they use the trail in two or more ways (e.g., for dog walking, biking, horseback riding, etc.). Percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents could select multiple ways that they use the trail.



Number of respondents: 22

How often do you use the trail?

More than two-thirds of respondents (68%) said they used the trail once a week or more. The remainder reported they use the trail less than weekly.



Number of respondents: 22

What is the most important thing we should consider when selecting an option for the trail and why is that important to you?

- Keeping the trail NATURAL-NO PAVING
- Width of the unpaved section
- A smooth, well maintained trail is inviting for all level of abilities, the young and elderly. Making it easy, achieves the goal of encouraging a healthy lifestyle.
- How the citizens living here use the trail. Bike users rarely use bells and horns. They just zoom through with no regard for others. That will increase with 12' of pavement.
- No pavement – leave as is. If anything extend it to Black Diamond
- Do not pave the trail. Our local community does not want the paving.
- Cost benefit analysis in spending any money to upgrade trail. Right now trail is good for all users except for bikes with skinny tires.
- The width and surface- Width: for multiple people and uses – safe!! Surface: to allow all ages young and old to utilize it – both paved and soft.
- Don't pave and ruin the trail!
- Soft trail – better on elderly joints. If I can still walk on trail
- Safety at street crossings is extremely important
- Minimize accidents and maximize the available space for groups and equipment

- Use by the most people. This trail is a thoroughfare that will eventually connect Black Diamond with Kenmore.
- Signs to “feature” off the trail (food/restroom/school etc.)
- Limit exposure to homes or businesses. Limit light and noise pollution.
- The voices of Maple Valley because we are the heaviest users
- No pavement for any option
- Listen to the community surrounding the trail, who have been using and enjoying it as is for decades and who will have to live with whatever changes you make to it.
- It is a nice rural gravel trail. NOT paved.
- Both options address a variety of desires and needs of the community. Can’t see how either option wouldn’t please everyone.
- Ability of small kids to use the trail, get outside and want to be physically active. Seniors and persons with disabilities to use.

What is your favorite characteristic of Option 1 (separated)?

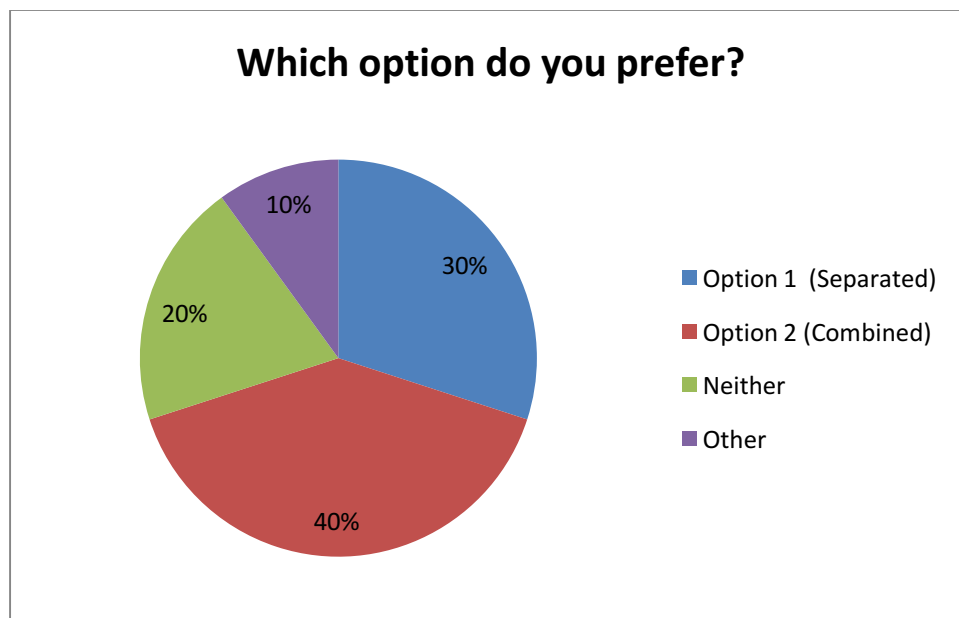
- Separation
- Bikes could be separated!
- Greater separation
- Soft section
- More open space
- It gives a dedicated soft surface
- It’s pretty
- Gives space between horses and riders (so we don’t spook the horses)
- Separate pathway to avoid slow wheeled vehicle and pavement
- Horse only trail
- More space, however get rid of present
- More natural look
- Nothing
- Horse trail separate- Our experience on the trail indicates horse riders DO NOT clean up horse droppings
- It’s separated (where possible).

What is your favorite characteristic of Option 2 (combined)?

- Width of the unpaved section
- Not my favorite because it compresses user
- The total width seems wider
- Soft section
- That it allows more room for people utilizing both soft and hard surfaces
- Most soft surface
- Wider soft trail
- Its functioning for many uses many people and passing find it's more stable year round.
- Wider unobstructed view of trail. Easier to move from hard surface to soft surface to back.
- Does preserve something that is not paved
- Prefer option 1.
- More space for the gravel area. Easier to pass and also walk together in a group
- This option would address multiple needs too.
- Provides most soft surface and provides for all users

Please identify which option you prefer and why.

40% of respondents said that they prefer Option 2 (Combined) while almost a third (30%) stated they prefer Option 1 (Separated), and 20% said they preferred neither option.



Number of respondents: 20

Meeting attendees cited a number of reasons for why they preferred each option. The five people who gave a reason for why they preferred Option 1 all said that they liked the separated nature of the design. The seven people who gave a reason for why they preferred Option 2 provided a number of explanations, including that it: accommodates all kinds of users; has a wider soft-surface trail; and enables users to easily pass one another.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?

There was a mix of support for and opposition to paving of the trail, as reflected by the verbatim comments below.

- Listen to the people who live here. People who use this trail daily- Not weekend users. People who use the trail daily- walkers, runners, families- All use the trail at a slow pace. Paving will increase speeds on the trail and not be safe for small children and dogs.
- Sad that human behavior is the problem and not the design of the path. We as a society need to be considerate of their fellow citizens.
- ADA does not demand 12' of pavement. Walkers using the soft surface would need to walk single file. Not going to happen. You just wasted all of our time!
- Don't Pave
- The levy did not specify paving of the trail.
- Prefer to keep as is and use money for something else like buying church property or new Black Diamond mountain bike trails. Paving trail will bring high speed biking to an area that is more slow-paced.
- Thank you for all your great work!
- Please consider those that are not here – children and moms – along w/elderly who need consistency of surface and those with disabilities!!!
- I appreciate your number of meetings of courtesy with which you manage your meetings with local trail users. Thank you.
- Keep the big picture view. County wide not just opinion of Maple Valley walkers who want to keep the trail for their private use.
- Please pave the trail. Keep up the good work – A+
- Stop paving the world.
- Less paved portion, make an exemption
- As community members – we would like you to listen and make an exception: A regional trail without pavement!
- Would be nice to have a little signage regarding the trail's railroad history, even if it's very brief
- You obviously didn't listen to the public at the 1st meeting. Save money and develop the south end.
- I think if the people of Maple Valley voted, the majority would want a paved trail. You are only hearing from those against it. They don't speak for us. Please pave the trail!

General Questions and Comments

Participants asked a variety of questions and made a variety of comments during the question and answer session portion of the meeting:

- We have accesses from our stormwater treatment facility in the SE corner of our subdivision. One is a formal access point; the other was created by kids as a shortcut. I propose eliminating the latter.
- Will there be any community input?
- The lake level has risen over the years because of the big housing development
- I would like to see the 228th connection stay
- Improve the connection from the Lake Wilderness Lodge.
- Public input was not heard
- Is the trail King County Property?
- Why not reduce the width?
- Will this project happen whether community wants it or not?
- Why are most photos with bicycles?
- Is the 12-foot width required by law?
- Who maintains the path?
- Are street crossings a part of this project?
- Is there flexibility to change the width?
- Why are you paving the trail?
- In what month will construction begin in 2018?
- How many miles of trail are there?
- Is the trail receiving federal funding?
- Who makes the final decision, and when will it be made?
- Are there gravel surfaces that meet ADA requirements?
- Will the project cover the Black Diamond (288th) crossing?
- Has Maple Valley City Council taken a position regarding the project?
- Who made the decision to pave the trail?
- How are you ensuring the hillside does not degrade?

Open House Comments

Attendees made a number of verbal comments to King County and design team staff during the open house portion of the public meeting. The following section summarizes those comments, and a more complete record is provided in Appendix B.

- General support for developing the trail, for a number of reasons, including safety, making it easier for bicycle riding and making it more accessible to all users.
- Opposition to paving the trail for reasons including local preference and concern about high bicycle speeds.

- Roughly equal support for Option 1 and Option 2. Those who preferred Option 1 said they did so because it is better for equestrians and it separates bicyclists from pedestrians. Those who preferred Option 2 said they did so because it has a wider soft surface trail and it would be easier for users to pass one another.
- There were a number of questions and comments about specific design elements including access points, stormwater management and the retaining wall. There was interest in ensuring neighborhood access is provided and in providing input to the retaining wall design.

Feedback Highlights

The following highlights the feedback from the comment forms completed by meeting participants and comments made during the open house portion of the public meeting.

- A majority (50%) of those who filled out the comment form said they use the trail in more than one way.
- A majority of those who filled out the comment form said they were regular users of the trail, with half saying they used the trail weekly and 18% saying they used the trail daily.
- While there was vocal opposition to paving the trail during the question and answer period, a total of 70% of those who filled out the comment form voiced a preference for one of the options. 40% of respondents said they preferred Option 2 (Combined).
- The primary reasons identified by attendees for preferring Option 2 were that it: had a wider soft-surface section than Option 1; benefitted a wider range of users; and would make it easier for different users to pass one another on the trail and to transfer from one surface to another. Of the 30% of respondents who said they supported Option 1, the primary reasons cited were that it provided a dedicated soft-surface trail and that it would separate non-compatible uses
- Those who voiced opposition to paving the trail cited concerns about the increased speed it could result in and about the impacts to the rural setting of the trail. Some called for King County to consider exemptions to the regional trail guidelines for trail width.

Appendix A: Comment Form

COMMENT FORM

Green to Cedar Rivers Trail
NORTH SEGMENT
Community Meeting

April 27, 2017

Please leave this form with a King County Parks staff person or put it in the box at the information table before leaving.

How do you use the north segment of the Green to Cedar Rivers Trail (walk, run, bicycle, horseback ride, etc.)?

How often do you use the trail?

What is the most important thing we should consider when selecting an option for the trail and why is that important to you?

What is your favorite characteristic of Option 1 (separated)?

What is your favorite characteristic of Option 2 (combined)?

Please identify which option you prefer and why.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us (feel free to use the back of this form)?

You can also share your input using our online open house (April 28 – May 8): bit.ly/g2ctraildesigns

Yes, sign me up to receive G2C Trail project updates:

Email address or cell phone (include area code)

Thank you for participating!



Appendix B: Verbal Comments

- I am interested in what some of the symbols on the plan represent, and in what we produce for design options for the south segment around the bridge area.
- I am particularly interested in how the construction would be phased.
- After learning that the noise would be within the hours permitted by the City, I am more receptive to the project. I am leaning toward the separated option.
- I am interested mainly in the grading and the separated option.
- I am happy that something is getting done.
- I strongly oppose paving the trail
- I am interested in Option 2
- I have many positive things to say about both options, and I think the trail will be wonderful when it is complete.
- Which of the connections between neighborhoods and the new trail (shown on the map in red) would be accessible?
- Will the stairs from the trail down to the trails at the Arboretum be rebuilt?
- I live on the east side of the trail, north of the Arboretum. How close will the trail be to our house? The beginning of the separated trail should be moved onto the Arboretum property.
- The separated trail is better for equestrians, and we prefer that option.
- Bicyclists go too fast and we are unable to hear the cyclists coming up behind us. We would like to have a surface that would hold up to horseback use.
- A soft surface makes the trail much more family-friendly. This is one of the few trails we feel can take our kids out to learn to ride a bike without getting run over by other cyclists.
- We want to see the improvements move ahead. Either option is fine. It is important to pave it and fix the slide area.
- I prefer that it is not paved. The option that has the wider soft surface is better.
- Everything stated in the presentation is not true, and the design team and the County are not trustworthy. Nobody will ever use the trail to go from the school to home. It was a mistake to narrow the trail down at the slide area, and instead thought a higher wall was better regardless of what it looked like to those on the trail or across the lake.
- I am intrigued by all aspects required for trail design and I am interested in knowing more, and look forward to the next meeting.
- I am concerned about the slide area and want to know if there will be any community input to the wall design.
- I am wondering about how the project team is managing the stormwater considering the lake level has risen over the years because of the big housing development.
- We prefer the Combined option.
- I like to run the trail and end my run at 228th and would like to see this connection stay.

- I live near 224th Ave SE, and we use the trail regularly for walking. We do not object to paving the trail. My neighborhood has two access points from the stormwater treatment tract in the SE corner of the subdivision. One is a formal access and the other was created by kids as a shortcut. I propose eliminating the latter.
- I live near 236th Place SE near SE Kent Kangley Road and I am opposed to pavement.
- We are avid bicyclists and regular users of this trail; we have an elaborate loop that we ride regularly and Green to Cedar is part of that loop. Ultimately, we prefer the pavement and support the project.
- We are opposed to paving the trail and feel that public input was not heard. How was the decision to pave the trail made?
- We support developing the trail.
- I work for Bellevue Parks, support developing the trail and want information on organizing a trail event on the regional trails.
- We are very concerned about local traffic and unsafe walking situation on local roads. We support developing the trail.
- I am a cyclist in the area supporting development of trail.
- I am a Councilmember from Covington and a trail user, and I support development of the trail.
- I support Option 2 Combined. This should work well for Tahoma Cross-Country team. Horse riders believe that Option 1 separated might increase conflict between horses and other users because it is harder for them to step out of the way.
- I prefer Option 1.
- There is an established connection through the drainage tract at the pedestrian connection at Lake Wilderness Estates, which I would like to stay. There is a second connection close by, made by mountain bikers, which I think should be removed.
- I would like an empty conduit placed in a trench for future use. Also I feel the trail is too expensive and needs to be value engineered.