

contours

As Washington State Department of Transportation plans for the future of the short-line railroad network, Pullman Civic Trust is excited and encouraged by their recommendation to railbank the sections between Pullman and Colfax and the branch from the Idaho State line, through Pullman and out to Fallon (see map on next page).

To determine how much local support exists for preserving this rail corridor for the future, Pullman Civic Trust launched a paper and on-line petition.

In only three weeks of petitioning, more than 1200 people signed PCT's petition to support preservation of the rail line and oppose abandonment. Their reasons were varied. One signer captured the historical significance of this rail line and the role it could play in connecting citizens to the landscape saying *"This kind of preservation of nature in a historical context is life-affirming and healthy for the community."* Another said *"Railways once joined our agricultural area to the commercial world but now those same pathways ... [can] connect our region via tourism and environmental awareness."* Yet another commented *"I grew up in the area. Rail lines have been historically important. As technology changes, and public transportation advances, these old lines will become more important to remain physically connected to the larger metropolitan areas."* Many petition signers felt strongly about preserving the line for the future saying *"Railbanking keeps options for future generations. And this has potential for bike tourism and the resulting economic activity."* Or, more concisely, *"We must preserve these right-of-way railroad situations. Once these are gone, it will be years if ever to get them back!"*

Converting the rail line to an interim trail could be an economic engine for our region. Many petition signers pointed out that the 50-mile trail created by linking Colfax to the Chipman and Latah trails would be a tourist draw. One testimonial states *"As a bicycle tourist this is exactly the kind of trail that brings me to the area ..."*

If you have not done so already, we invite you to sign our petition either online at **change.org** (search for Pullman Civic Trust and it pops up) or via paper petitions located at several local businesses, or you can contact your nearest Board Member.

Preserving Public Corridors



"You must be the
change you wish to
see in the world."

- Mohandas Gandhi

President's Column

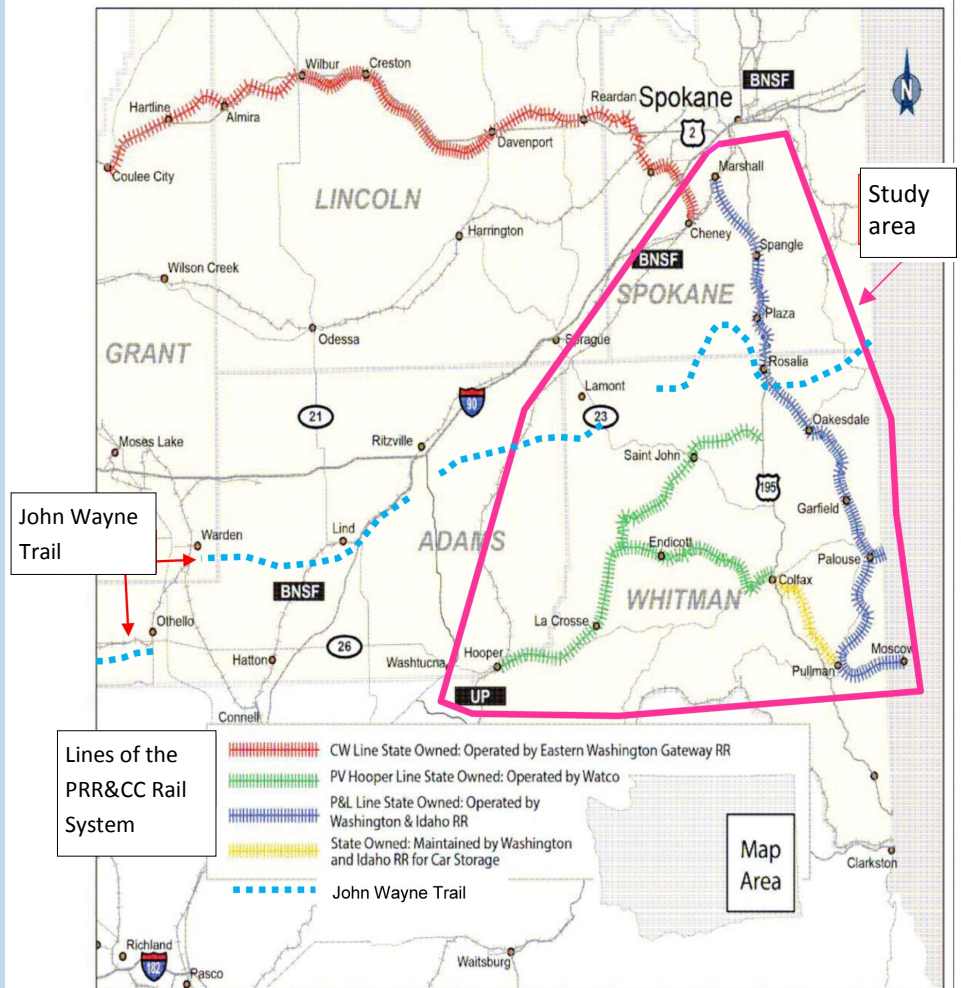
By Lisa Carloye

When I read in the Colfax Gazette that, on February 5th, the Port of Whitman Commissioners voted to officially advocate for abandonment of the rail line between Colfax and Pullman and against railbanking it, I was astounded. WSDOT purchased this line in 2004 with taxpayer money to save it from abandonment. Thanks to the wisdom of the state, this route currently belongs to all of us. It should continue to belong to all of us and not become splintered into privately owned parcels. Pullman Civic Trust firmly believes that maintaining public ownership of this rail corridor serves the broader interests of present and future citizens of Whitman County.

If railbanked, this line would be available for our future transportation needs. In the interim, it could be turned into a trail. Wouldn't it be great to have a 50-mile linear trail right here on the Palouse? Many people organize vacations around trail rides – a phenomenon that has energized the economy of Harrison, ID when the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes was created. The economic value of enticing people who come for WSU events to stay an extra day or two for outdoor recreation could be significant. Organizers of cycling events could ride to Albion and Colfax and spend money there as they do now when riding thru Moscow. Let's keep those Washington dollars in Washington. With WSU's Green Bike initiative, more students are looking for bicycle friendly recreational opportunities that will involve spending at the destination.

Our county commissioners cited the cost of building and maintaining a trail as a primary reason for their vote to abandon

The Three Branches of the Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad



The Palouse River and Coulee City rail system is the longest short-line freight rail system in Washington State, at 297 miles in length. The PCC rail system consists of three branches, as shown above. The State of Washington spent \$27.7 million of taxpayer funds to buy these lines plus millions in improvements and maintenance since 2004.

WSDOT Draft PCC Rail System Strategic Plan for Public Review

Below is an excerpt:

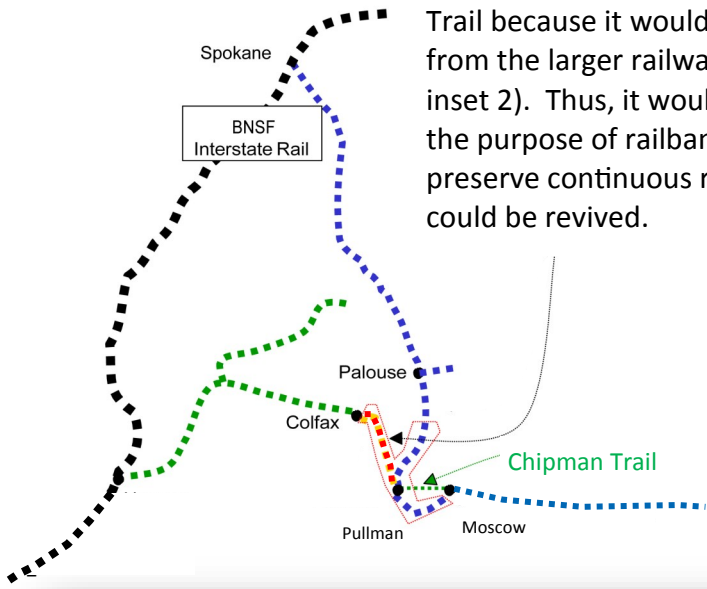
"The Palouse River and Coulee City rail system is owned by Washington State, managed by WSDOT, and operated by private industry. The PCC rail system connects Eastern Washington to the larger freight transportation system and to global gateways enabling access to international markets, an economic benefit for our state. A single freight train can replace several hundred trucks, benefitting Washington State by reduced wear and tear on local roadways and highways, improved transportation safety, and reduced air pollution.

The purpose of this plan is to outline the vision and goals for the PCC rail system and to communicate what policies and projects are needed to achieve the goals. The plan is focused around three key system goals: safe operations, efficient operations, and economic development. . . .

To enhance operational efficiencies, WSDOT will work with partners to improve terms to future operating leases, encourage operators to pursue minimum railcar orders, ensure access to major railroads and river terminals, and strategically consider railbanking. . . . "

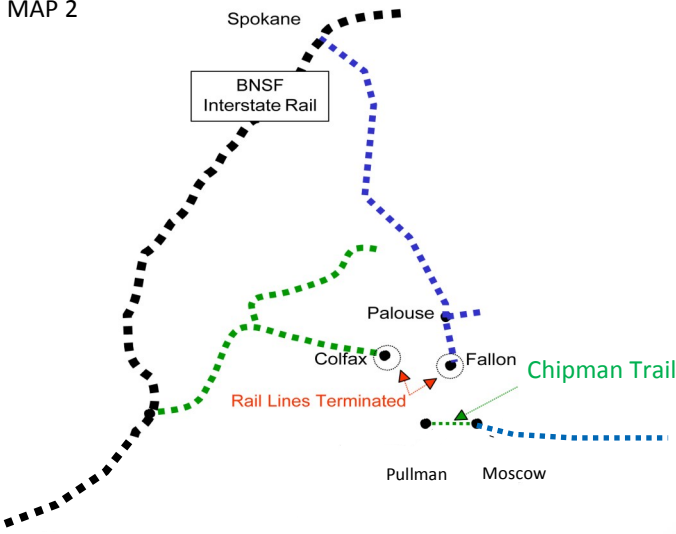
To review the full Draft Strategic Plan, go to <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/freight/pccplan>

MAP 1



The Port of Whitman Commissioners are advocating the abandonment of the rail lines between Pullman and Colfax allowing the land to become privately owned (see map inset 1). This could threaten the railbanked status of the Chipman Trail because it would become severed from the larger railway system (see map inset 2). Thus, it would no longer fulfill the purpose of railbanking, which is to preserve continuous rail networks that could be revived.

MAP 2



Bike Racks in the Downtown

New bike racks are being installed downtown by the City Public Works Department. This is the of efforts by the Pullman Chamber of Commerce, Pullman Parks Department and Pullman Civic Trust.



*“WSDOT will consider railbanking as recommended in the Washington State Rail Plan. . . It will be up to local interests to lead any efforts at evaluating, planning and acquiring the right-of-way in accordance with state laws.”
(PRCC System Strategic Plan)*

ADOPT-A-STREAM

Over 100 volunteers gathered for the Adopt-a-Stream Cleanup in Pullman on April 11th. PCT members enjoyed the satisfaction of making our riverbanks cleaner and the fellowship found in a good environmental project. PCEI of Moscow contracted with the City of Pullman Stormwater Services to organize the event.



Gwen Pentecost, John Anderson, Mary Carloye, Don Heil, Karl Boehmke

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Washington State Department of Transportation

Gladish Community Center, Donna Gwinn & Sandee Powell

j&h Printing, Fred & Fran Devlin

Pullman Chamber of Commerce

*Pullman Civic Trust
Proposed Slate of Board Members and Officers 2015-2016, for election at the Annual Meeting*

- Lisa Carloye, *President*
- Karl Boehmke, *Vice President*
- Mary Carloye, *Secretary*
- John Anderson, *Treasurer*
- Bobbie Ryder, *Newsletter Design*
- Don Heil
- Karen Johnston
- Grant Morton
- Steve Austin
- Rich Wesson
- Cindy Zaring



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

If you dream about more trees in your city, areas for pedestrians to enjoy, cleaner rivers, a welcoming look to downtown, or paths and trails creating a walkable/bikeable community, we invite you to join us. Your voice can make a difference.

Pullman Civic Trust

30th YEAR Anniversary



The Year of the Selfie

The 30th Anniversary Party at the Pine Street Plaza, October 1, 2015.



ANNUAL MEETING

JOIN US for The Pullman Civic Trust Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 19th at the Gladish Community Center, Room 211 from 6-9 PM. Bring a dish to share at our annual potluck meeting and share your ideas and dreams for making Pullman a special place to live. If you have questions, contact any of the Civic Trust board members.