

# Contours

## “Staying Socially Distant” While Connecting with Community

One thing we learned over this past crazy year is that trails became one of the safest and most well-utilized places during the pandemic. For children, retirees, and people needing to connect with others in a socially distant way, trails made this possible. The Riverwalk Trail brought people to the downtown to buy coffee and food to enjoy outside while they walked, talked and exercised. Bike purchases have been out-of-sight according to B&L Bikes, with the biggest challenge getting parts. We have heard from many that there is a real need for more trails that are flat and easily traveled by all ages and abilities. The Chipman Trail provides commuter & recreational experience, but we need new trails that allow us to see the beauty of the place we call “The Palouse.” It is on these trails we saw the best examples of strong community interaction occurring while staying socially distant and safe outdoors. Being outside and walking along a river, all while in our downtown, helped settle fears and built optimism for when life gets back to business. On these trails we felt hopeful and that made our community investment in these trails all worthwhile. Thank you, Pullman, for supporting and enjoying the trail system spearheaded by Pullman Civic Trust.



“Here comes the sun  
Here comes the sun  
And I say, it’s all right.

Little darling, the  
smiles returning to the  
faces.

Little darling, it feels  
like years since it’s  
been here.

Here comes the sun  
Here comes the sun  
And I say, it’s all right.

Sun Sun Sun  
Here it comes.”

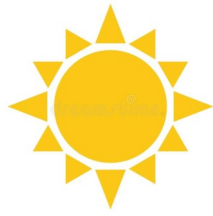
- George Harrison



## President's Column

To say pandemic times have been challenging is an understatement. Nonetheless, we in PCT flexed with the world and learned to meet over Zoom. We continued to lobby for the railbanking the Colfax-Albion-Pullman (CAP) Rail corridor. We worked with the **Palouse Regional Planning Organization (PRTPO)** on a 4-County Regional Active Transportation Plan which will be complete in December 2021. The **Downtown Design Committee** and Pullman Civic Trust partnered to promote the concept to "connect the gems" by lighting the three downtown bridges with twinkly lights. In our 2019 newsletter article, "*Imagine,*" we visualized many great things that could happen in Pullman. One nugget of an idea was ripe for implementation: lighting three bridges. Funding was secured through a USDA Economic Development grant submitted by **Jennifer Hackman**, City Economic Development Manager. PCT worked with **Ruth Younce**, City Engineering Tech on the design and lights now shine on two of the bridges. We are hoping that WSDOT will agree to adding lights on the trestle this spring. During a dark time, we were again able to be part of "*giving the gift of light*" to the Downtown Riverwalk. Take a stroll along these bridges and head to downtown Pullman. Help support small businesses that have experienced serious impacts from the global pandemic. And, of course, remember to wear a mask.

*Bobbie Ryder*



Architectural rendering of what the B&N Trestle behind the Library will look like with twinkling lights to



The Pine Street Plaza arched footbridge has new lights that helped celebrate the holiday season.

The Flat Bridge lighting behind the Sanctuary building brightens the bridge and improves safety along the Downtown Riverwalk with added pole lights from the bridge to Spring Street.



Ruth Younce, City of Pullman Engineering Tech working on the lighting design for three bridges and additional globe lights for the Downtown Riverwalk. Well done!



## What is an Active Transportation Plan?

Active Transportation means using active modes of travel such as walking, biking, or wheelchair accessibility. Almost everyone uses active transportation at some point during a trip, whether walking to a bus stop, bicycling to work, or rolling home from school. The Active Transportation Plan helps the PRTPO learn from citizens about what you would like to see in your community, be it recommendations for policy decisions or investments and improvements. The plan will consider where we are now, where we want to go, and how we are going to get there in the coming years. It coordinates with your local city and county plans. An active transportation plan provides information to funding agencies for what the community wants for multi-modal transportation. The PRTPO is working on mapping and classifying trails, sidewalks and routes in a GIS database which will provide information about safer places for people to commute and recreate in a four-county region in Eastern Washington. They anticipate that the plan will be completed in December 2021.



*Photo courtesy of Palouse Regional Transportation Organization*

## What is Railbanking?

By 1980, the 270,000-mile system of active rail lines in the United States had contracted to 141,000 miles. This was alarming to the Federal Government because they had paid to build these rail lines and they viewed this engineering feat much like they view national parks, to be conserved for future generations. In 1983 the US Congress enacted Section 8(d) of the National Trails System Act , which established “the national policy to preserve established railroad rights-of-way for future reactivation of rail service, to protect rail transportation corridors, and to encourage energy efficient transportation use.” (16 U.S.C &1247(d). This law allowed a railroad to free itself of responsibility for an unprofitable rail line by transferring it to a qualified private or public agency for interim use as a trail until such time as the line is needed again for rail service. This process is called “railbanking.” The possibility of creating trails for recreation and nonmotorized transportation on these unused railroad corridors became the solution for preserving these taxpayer assets. With their gentle grades, often following rivers and traversing scenic landscapes, rail corridors make ideal trails, turning vacant, sometimes derelict properties into linear parks, and filling an increasing public need for multi-modal transportation and outdoor recreation.

## SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City of Pullman Public Works  
City of Pullman Parks  
J & H Printing  
Pullman Chamber of Commerce  
WSU Center for Civic Engagement  
Palouse Regional Transportation  
Planning Organization

## Participate in Community:

The **Pullman Comprehensive Plan Update** is the top priority for the Planning Department for 2021. **The Comprehensive Plan will come before the Pullman Planning Commission at its February and March Regular Meetings, and will be presented to the City Council in April and May.** Although the proposed 2021 timeline is ambitious, it still allows for additional public input.

**Whitman County** is asking the public to Complete a survey to help it update the county’s comprehensive plan for the next 20 years. The survey can be found at: <https://whitmancounty.org/513/Comprehensive-Plan>



*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 where you live.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

In December a secret Santa left their mark, festively decorating a little tree at the Three Forks Wayside on Grand Avenue Greenway Trail. PCT is always delighted with creative gifts from caring individuals.

**Dear Santa, We feel the love. Thank you!**



### Organization Maintenance

It is that time of year when we are updating our mailing list. We are moving to more email communication. If you have not had time to send us your email address, it is not too late. You can email: [pullmancivictrust@gmail.com](mailto:pullmancivictrust@gmail.com).



### Membership Matters

Enclosed with this newsletter is our membership envelope. An annual individual membership of \$35 is a good investment in your community. Please consider joining us and participate in making a difference.

Thank You for joining!



### Share Your Ideas

Are you looking for a speaker for your organization or class? Pullman Civic Trust is happy to talk about projects we are involved with. Through partnerships and collaborations PCT gets things done. We are also interested in new ideas. Let us know how we can help by emailing:

[pullmancivictrust@gmail.com](mailto:pullmancivictrust@gmail.com). Check out our website and Facebook page. Like and share!