

**WHITMAN COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
April 21, 2021  
WORKSHOP  
MINUTES**

**MEMBERS:**

Chad Whetzel – Chairman  
Keith Paulson – Member  
Brian Davies – Member  
Hailey Wexler – Member  
Matt Webb – Member

Dave Gibney – Member  
Russell Jamison – Member  
Erina Hammer – Member  
Weston Kane – Member

**STAFF:**

Alan Thomson – County Planner  
Grace Di Biase – Assistant County Planner  
Mark Storey – Public Works Director / County Engineer  
Ginny Rumiser – Clerk

**BOCC:**

Art Swannack – District 1 Commissioner - Chairman  
Tom Handy – District 2 Commissioner  
Michael Largent – District 3 Commissioner

**LDC:**

Todd Hall  
Matt Covert

**Attendees:** Larry and Sherri Farr; Ken Duft; Michelle Mousel; Karen Hinnenkamp; Ron Miller; Richard and Tena Old; Todd Krause; Tom and Cheryl Kammerzell; Richard Wesson; Paul Spencer; Asa Clark; Robert Westby; Shaun Darveshi; Kathleen Lloyd; Bob Russell; Shelley Chambers-Fox and Larry Fox; Lisa Carloye; Richard Huggins; Nancy Mack Lovina Englund; Bobbie Ryder; Scott Cornelius; Tom Keogh; Lee Family; David H; Molly

Chad Whetzel – We have some unfinished business with our Comprehensive Plan, which is what most everyone came here for tonight. And I believe we have a presentation from our consultants, LDC. Before we get started with that, I would like to address a couple of things here. The ZOOM meetings are somewhat handy, but they are a little bit difficult at times. And I apologize, I can't get everybody on one screen at one time, so if you have something to say, please try to put it on the chat. Just put your name over there and we will get to you as quick as we can.

Dave Gibney – Chad, the way our current settings are, I don't believe we can chat, can we?

Chad Whetzel – Is the chat not working?

Dave Gibney – I'm sorry, I was wrong. We can't chat to individuals.

Chad Whetzel – Okay. And also, if you are putting something on the chat, please make sure the "To" is to everyone, so everybody can see it. And I will do my best to keep an eye on that. Aside from that, let's go ahead and get started with the presentation.

Alan Thomson – Okay, I'll take over here and thank you for that information. Soon we're going to introduce Todd Hall, from the consultants and have a power point show on the update for the Comprehensive Plan. That is the main thing on the agenda tonight, is to get us up to speed on where we are. And I just want to let everybody know, we're going to open this up to the public for any comments at the end of the power point presentation. And we can entertain any kind of thoughts that you have in mind. So, the overall thing that we're trying to do here is to revise our Comprehensive Plan, so that is the main vision for the County. It's the big picture vision and we don't want to get into the weeds and details of the thing, it is not really necessary for the Comprehensive Plan. But, we want to find out what the public thinks about how we want to develop the county, so if you've got any thoughts, ideas on what you hear and see tonight, please do comment. So, Todd I'll hand it over to you now.

Todd Hall – Thanks Alan. Good evening everyone. It's good to see several familiar faces. I know we've had a few meetings before with the Commissioners' and the Board, but to those of you who are new this evening, welcome. My name is Todd Hall and as Alan said, I am with LDC Incorporated. We're a consulting firm located in Woodinville, Washington, and along with me tonight is Matt Covert. He is one of our Planners at LDC and we'll be tag teaming on the presentation as we've done in the past. Also, Chairman Whetzel, if you see some chat questions, in there, since I'll be sharing my screens, it's a little bit challenging at times to see that or coordinate at the same time. So, feel free to just let me know if somebody has a question and we would be happy to answer that. But, we'll have a short presentation and then we'll open it up for discussion. But, we just wanted to give an opportunity to kind of run through a little bit about the Comp Plan, give a little bit more detail about how it's structured and laid out. And then, tell you kind of what we have done to date and then there will be some more information at the end. Just bear with me for a second and I'll share my screen with everyone. So, can everyone see that okay?

Silence from everyone.

Todd Hall – I'll take that as a yes. Slide 1: Welcome! So, welcome everybody, like I said I'm Todd Hall and Matt Covert and then the two Planning and Public Works folks that we have working with us from the County, Alan Thomson and Mark Storey. They have been instrumental in helping us out in getting this started within and collaborating

with the County. So, just to kind of start here, I'll just make a brief statement about kind of the overall part of the Comp Plan and then Matt will take over the beginning part and kind of run through some of the elements on how we've structured things. Matt and I are tag teaming on the narrative writing and then we have a couple of folks that are assisting us. Some of you may have seen Sami Adams, she is one of our Associate Planners and then we also have Eileen Mitchell, who is a Permit Tech and she has been instrumental in making all of the beautiful maps that we will be showing you tonight. She is trained in GIS and if you've seen some of the older maps from 1978 or before, to today, there has been some major steps that have been made in the 40+ years of computer mapping. So, they will look nice and colorful and hopefully be very useful to everybody.

Slide 2: Comprehensive Plan Elements. Basically, just to set the very ground stages for those of you who haven't participated before, as Alan said, the Comprehensive Plan is kind of this overview of where the County sees itself in the next 10-20 years. And it's a snapshot on a number of different elements. And these are just a few of them that Matt will go into here briefly. But, it's really to kind of get feedback from the County residents and then also coordinating with the County staff. And we provide a number of matrices and information based on various things, including Land Use; Transportation; Parks, Recreation & Trails; etc., as you see there on the screen. And so, as part of this Comprehensive Plan update, it's really just capturing the changes that have been made or that have happened over the last 40+ years since the original Comp Plan update. And that Comprehensive Plan update has been amended over the last few decades. But this is an opportunity to be able to take a closer look. Keep those things that are really important to the county that are still in play, but just go into more of a revision mode and looking at ways to capture what's important for the community members and the county staff today. So, without further ado, I'll turn things over to Matt, he can go into a little bit more detail and then I have, along with this presentation, I have the actual draft, if we need to and I can show some of those examples of the Plan, if you would like that as well. So, Matt I'll go ahead and turn things over to you.

Dave Gibney – If he is speaking, he needs to un-mute.

Todd Hall – He's just trying to work things out here, I think.

Matt Covert – Can you hear me?

Todd Hall – Yes.

Matt Covert – As Todd mentioned, thanks for the introduction Todd. Slide 2: Comprehensive Plan Elements. This is an effort to examine a broad range of issues that affect where people live, work, and enjoy quality of life in Whitman County. So, as such it's got a number of topic areas and those are represented here on this list of elements or chapters in the Comprehensive Plan. The ones that are highlighted in black, as opposed to gray, are the ones that we have done the most writing on, so those are the ones that we will kind of focus on tonight. But, every single one of these

elements is going to have several key features in common and are going to be structured the same so that there is a very clear flow from describing this aspect of the county, describing past trends and future projections and then a set of statements about goals for where the county wants to end up and specific actionable policies that are designed to get you there over the next 10-20 years.

Slide 3: Comprehensive Plan Progress. As I mentioned, every single one of these chapters is going to have a purpose statement that says this is where the county sees itself in the next 20 years, but we want to keep this broad aspect of our lives or change this broad aspect in a way that something is done in the county. And then proceed from there with the discussion of what the current state of affairs is, what has changed over the past 20, or in this case, 40 years. How are things expected to change in the next 20 years and how is this issue going to evolve? If its land use how is where people live and use their land for commercial or industrial purposes or agricultural purposes, going to change over the next 20 years and how can we, broadly speaking, we as a community, make choices about our policies and our laws that can help get us there. And so, every one of those chapters goes from purpose to introduction to the findings, which is basically, what I said, looking backward and looking forward. And then we go onto layout a series of goals, which are sort of broad statements of purpose of where we want to be and then a set of specific policies that say the county should do this or should consider this or shall make a law to accomplish this specific task. Something that is measurable and actionable. Then these would be supported by a series of maps, charts, and diagrams showing the state of affairs and, in some cases, the map of existing, for example, the existing transportation system and then the planned improvements of the transportation system. So a series of maps that can help lock this snapshot in time into place and provide a glimpse into the future of where the county wants to be.

So all comprehensive plans are pretty long, drawn out processes, as they should be, because you're talking about setting priorities for the next 20 years. But, basically what we've done is, we've worked closely with county staff, we've had a survey, we've done a lot of writing and reaching out to stake holder groups, to having meetings with the Planning Commission. So, we've written portions of a number of these chapters, including the introduction to the Plan itself, the Land Use chapter, the Transportation, Economic Development and public facilities and utilities, to name a few. So, I'll just start with a broad overview of where we're at.

So, you'll see on the right here, just an updated map of the cities in the county. So the county boundaries, the major roads connecting the cities, some of the river features and then the cities themselves, the incorporated communities in that pink color. This is just one of the many maps that we have created and as Todd mentioned, we would be happy to throw the draft plan up on the screen to share, if folks are interested. We then proceed into Land Use, which is in many ways the core element of the Comprehensive Plan. How do we envision using land in a bunch of different ways in the future? So, to look at existing population of land use, how many people live here, how many households, where do they live and how do they use their land? So, agriculture is

obviously the dominant land use in Whitman County, but there are other uses as well. There are commercial and industrial uses, you know, those that support agriculture and otherwise. There are rural residential uses, there is urban-residential in the larger communities, and there's residential at the urban fringe in the cluster area near Pullman, which is obviously very important. And of course there is Pullman itself, which has its own Comprehensive Plan and part of this effort is going to involve coordinating with the City of Pullman to make sure that those issues that affect county and city residents are coordinated closely. And then, how is land use in the industrial and commercial capacity? Where are the Port facilities? Where are grain elevators and quarries and all sorts of other uses that are important venues within Whitman County? The second part of the Land Use chapter is, a look at future development, in terms of what population growth is telling us about how many people might live here and future uses. And that is where some of the goals and policies really come into plan. This is where we get to look back at the last 40 years and say what is going to be big topics of discussion in the next 20 years? Those topics include the future of the cluster zoning in the Pullman area, siting renewable energy facilities, commercial development along the Pullman-Moscow corridor, and commercial uses in the agricultural zone. These are important issues that have to do with the way we use land that are going to have to be addressed in an actionable fashion in the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Slide 4: Comprehensive Plan Progress. We've also done some work in the Transportation element of the Plan. So, that is not just mapping existing facilities, although that is very important. But, as you can see here, this is just one of our many maps that we will be producing for this element. So, it's a look at existing conditions, but that is also incorporating planned locations for future transportation investments. So, what is in the Capital Facility Plan? What are levels of service telling us about where future changes to the road network might be needed? Where are the roads that are accessible year round? I know that is a large concern for economic development in the county. What are the environmental impacts of the transportation system? How can we develop elements of the transportation system that service motorized and non-motorized travel? The transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document for the transportation improvement plan, which is how the county plans out its investments in the transportation system. So, specifics of budgeting and cost sharing, elements like that, over the next 6 years.

We've also done some work in the Economic Development chapter. How does Whitman County enhance and grow its economic strengths? The long term job and business growth in the sectors where it's expected or where the County wants to expand opportunities. A big part of this one is economic development partnerships with the Port, Palouse Knowledge Corridor, Economic Development Authority, City of Pullman, and Washington State University. Economic development partnerships are key, especially when you have a rural county that has some manufacturing, industrial, and agricultural interests that connect to the broader world. How do we grow those opportunities?

Those are a couple examples. If folks are interested in seeing more of our work on the other elements; the Transportation element, the Economic Development element, or the Public Facilities element, we can certainly put that up on the screen.

Slide 5 and Slide 6: Comprehensive Plan Elements – Framework Goals. We've also taken a stab at outlining some preliminary goals. So, these are sort of broad goals for the community, at large, that can form more specific goals and policies in the chapters themselves. These have been crafted through initial public meetings, working closely with staff and the Commissioners' and we've listed out some draft goals. (1) Preserve Rural Character; (2) Preserve and Protect Existing Natural Resources; (3) Enhance Countywide Services; (4) Support Local Business and Countywide Economic Growth; (5) Protect Environmental Quality and Respond to Climate Change; (6) Promote and Improve Mobility Options; (7) Effective Land Use Planning; (8) Ongoing Public Involvement; (9) Support Recreation and Access to Natural Areas and (10) Preserve Cultural Heritage of Whitman County. So, these are very much a work in progress that we think is a very important first step to outline, based on the survey that we've done and the public feedback that we've gotten. To outline some very broad goal statements that can be used to drill down a little further and more specifically in each of the chapters where each of these goals are relevant.

Matt Covert – Todd do you want to take over here, or do you want me to run through the survey results?

Todd Hall – No, I can go through the remainder.

Slide 7 and Slide 8: Public Survey. So, I know probably many of you may have gone through the survey that is available on the County's website. We developed that at the beginning of the process when we first started. And we have a number of general questions that we asked that go through all of these sectors or elements of the Comp Plan. And to date, since January, we have received 380 responses so far, which is just phenomenal for, let alone for a rural comp plan, but just a comp plan in general. I've done several comp plans in my career and this is just a fantastic response rate, to get that many. So, we thank you so much for taking the time to answer all these questions, because it is going to feed into some of the policies and goals and discussions we have within the chapters of the comp plan. If you're interested I can show you the webpage once we're done, where you can click on the survey. We have a comprehensive page, or the County does, has a comprehensive plan page with all the information there about past meetings that we've had, as well as, the survey there. You can take a look at that. These are just a couple of examples of some of the data sets that we have received. So the one on the left talks about the priorities that residents said Whitman County should focus on in the next 20 years. And the top one, so far, is diversity of business and jobs and the second one is for the preservation of agriculture and then natural resources. So, that is not surprising for Whitman County, but out of the number of results, these were the top three. And then the second one on the right, how long have you lived in Whitman County? And it's pretty much a dead tie here with the 20-39 and

the 40+ years cohorts. So there are multiple questions that kind of go over a variety of topics, so yeah I would definitely encourage you to take a look at those.

Slide 9: Project Timeline: So, this is just brief timeline. I've showed this, I think, a few times to the members of the Commission and Board, but for those of you who are new to the process, this is our, kind of overall, project schedule. So, you'll see there at the top on Task 1: we kicked off with a joint meeting in January. And then we've had a couple of opportunities for public outreach, as well as, the survey and the website. Further on there, we had a virtual public meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup> and of course we've had tonight's meeting. Then as Matt said, we started the data review and mapping and a little bit ago and we're continuing to do that actually. Then drafting the narratives, Matt and I are the main writers for the narratives. We're also taking a look at what goals and policies that are currently in the Comp Plan that we can keep that are still relevant today. So, we're talking with Alan and Mark and their staff on which ones we want to make sure that we're capturing and rolling over into this and we're not forgetting about, because those are still important to keep. Then of course, based on the conversations that we have with you and the public over the course of the summer, we'll tailor some potential new ones that we can include as well. The next stage of this draft narrative is to come over for a couple of in-person meetings. Locations will be determined, we'll be figuring that out here probably sometime in May and that will be updated on the website and you'll be informed by county staff. Our hope is to have a couple of meetings in, at least a couple of locations throughout the county that is convenient. So you can kind of see and discuss in person. I really enjoy those in-person events. I know it's been challenging with COVID, but hopefully we're able to do that here in the next few weeks. And then, kind of rolling over into the second phase of the project, we're going to be just taking a brief look at the zoning code, Title 19, of the Whitman County Code and seeing how we can possibly make some amendments or suggested amendments for the County staff to take a look at, that need to be changed based on the findings and updates that we're doing in the Comp Plan. And then once we get into the fall, we'll be refining that Comp Plan and doing a SEPA Checklist. SEPA is the State Environmental Protection Act and as part of the Comp Plan update we just need to review the plan to see if there are any major environmental impacts. Typically for projects like these, it's not a big deal, we'll just do a brief report with them and then we'll send that off to the Department of Commerce, which is the agency that looks at, I'm sorry, it's actually The Department of Ecology that looks at the SEPA Checklist. Lastly, getting it to the latter part of the fall, before the holidays, is getting the public hearings in front of the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners' for adoption.

That is what we have for tonight and as I said, if any of you are interested to see a little bit more of the Plan and some maps, we would be happy to show that, otherwise we're happy to take any questions. And then the link is provided there on the screen right now, but it's pretty easy to find if you're familiar with the County's website. But, the best way that I have told people, is to Google "Whitman County Comprehensive Plan" and that will pretty much take you right there. And that will have all the information ready to take a look at. So that is what we have for right now. Alan, I'll kind of turn it over to you and I'll take any questions on how you want us to proceed.

Alan Thomson – Yeah, we can open it up to just general questions. Staff and the Commissioners' have been looking at the Plan so far. And we're getting together some comments and we've noticed some things and we can talk about that, not necessarily tonight. Is there anybody in the public that have any questions about what we're doing and why we're doing it and where we're trying to go? Let's just try and open that up for right now, see if there is anybody that wants to ask any questions to us.

Dave Gibney – Alan my hand is raised.

Alan Thomson – Okay, go ahead.

Dave Gibney – We, in the City of Pullman, we are finishing up our Comp Plan for the City of Pullman and I know we welcome working together. We are holding special meetings for the Pullman Planning Commission on the evenings of the second Wednesday's of each month, through August, going through each chapter of our new Plan and everybody is welcome to come and comment on that. We have been doing it for a while and fortunately most of the in-person, public work got done prior to COVID. And it's an important thing, so I think, I guess I'm just repeating some of the stuff that members of my commission had, is that this is something that is going to last for quite a while so it's important that it be done well and good and covers as many bases as we can think of. And I think we've got a good start and I really appreciate that. Thanks.

**7:45 p.m.** – Hailey Wexler joined the workshop.

Shaun Darveshi – Alan, this is Shaun and I don't see a way to raise a hand here on my computer.

Alan Thomson – You can just come on in Shaun.

Shaun Darveshi – Okay, thank you. I just want to introduce myself, I work for the Palouse RTP and those maps look really good, so good job Todd and Matt. The other thing that I just wanted to mention is, our agency, The Palouse 24B, that's like the regional transportation plan for the 4 counties, so I just wanted to put that out there as a resource for you guys when you do your transportation element writing. I would also be happy to review any of that if needed. Luckily for this county, because this is not a GMA county, so you don't have to do any work with the Department of Commerce, but, I'm still available if there is anything there that I can help with.

Todd Hall – That is great Shaun.

Shaun Darveshi – And our information is on the website, if that is easier for you guys.

Alan Thomson – Shaun, I would just suggest that, keep an eye on the progress that we're making on the website. You know, we've got a whole bunch of maps out there and a whole bunch of narratives, so when we get, especially when we get to the

transportation stuff, if you see anything that you have questions about, give us a call and we would like to hear from you.

Shaun Darveshi – Yeah, I haven't really looked at it yet, but I would just say I have worked with Mark and a couple of other folks, in the past. We have some of the projects that we thought were important, so I think that could be a list that you guys could have when you look at the projects for your plan, so it could just bring some consistency on local and State.

Mark Storey – Can I just dovetail on that real quick. Shaun does have a lot of good information, especially on freight corridors and things that we've developed over the last 10-15 years. And maybe Todd and I and Shaun could just visit about what elements are appropriate, because there are a few things missing in the Plan maps right now, pertaining to the County transportation system. So, I just wanted to add that.

Todd Hall – That would be helpful. And like I said, we just started. One thing to note too is, compared to other non-GMA counties, all that means is the majority of counties and cities within the State of Washington are required to follow the Growth Management Act. Whitman County, fortunately for you, because it's less work and less requirements, you have the ability and freedom to do as much or as little as you want to and I'm on the side of adding a little bit more detail than some of your neighbors have done. And so, that is how I have approached drafting the transportation plan, but would I absolutely love to work with anybody to help enhance that element to fit your needs, because this is going to be a plan that is going to last you guys a long time and we want to be able to capture all of those important details. So, I will definitely welcome working with you Shaun and Mark and Alan and anybody else who can provide future feedback. One thing I did notice on our slides, and it's probably something you did, too, I saw a couple of the Ports. I mentioned them, but we only have Port of Wilma listed and there are a couple others that are missing, so I just caught that one when we were showing the slides. We're just starting, so we're definitely going to refine this as we go along and we're just getting started. Thank you.

Alan Thomson – I was just going to launch into that one, Todd and Matt if you're listening, looking at the road transportation map, you've got Wilma in there, but you're missing Central Ferry and Almota.

Todd Hall – Yeah, I got it in the text, but not the map.

Alan Thomson – And then we've got a suggestion for the roads. Right now you've only got the State highways and State routes in there. We'll ask Jeff Marshall, in our Public Works Department to send you a CAD file for the major County roads.

Matt Covert – Alan, we actually have that already, we just haven't put it in a finished map for this.

Alan Thomson – Okay.

Matt Covert – And I have the Port thing as well, but didn't get it in when I was doing the power point earlier and I've got Eileen and Sami working on that, so it's on our radar.

Alan Thomson – Thanks.

Todd Hall – I see that there is a question there in the Chat.

Kathleen Lloyd – Via Chat – Is anything that makes a plan for a loop road around the outside of Pullman?

Todd Hall – I don't know if that is for Mark or Alan.

Alan Thomson – Go ahead Mark.

Mark Storey – Mr. Swannack.

Art Swannack – Do you want to say it Mark or do you want me too?

Mark Storey – Well, Art you got your microphone on faster, I'll let you do it.

Art Swannack – We were contacted by Cathy McMorris-Rogers' office last week for projects in the rural areas of the county and one of the three proposals that we submitted was to make Sand Road and Kirkendahl Road on the south end of Pullman a by-pass road that goes between Idaho and Washington, from SR 195 to SR 95 in Idaho.

Mark Storey – It's not truly a loop road, but it is a by-pass to avoid trucks and other heavy vehicles through downtown Pullman and hopefully relieve some of the traffic around Pullman as well.

Alan Thomson – Does anyone want to touch the northern by-pass? Do you want to take a stab at that one Mark?

Mark Storey – I will tell you that it is unresolved. The north by-pass, the Legislature and DOT has given up on trying to build the north by-pass and they have allowed Pullman and the County to look at options for the old DOT right-of-way that represents SR 276 around there. The City took the lead on it, because it was mostly in the City of Pullman and there has not been much progress in the 5-years that we have been looking at it. It is still on the books to be looked at in the future, but there is no real movement right now.

Alan Thomson – Somebody in the public needs to mute themselves. We're getting some feedback.

Dave Gibney – Mark, you might want to brief our new Planner on that again, because there is interest in what we can do with that right-of-way to the north of Pullman. I know

the main ring road of that area in Pullman to the east is Terre View and what was Airport Road to SR 270 and then the south by-pass. There are pieces of that that have been developed and Pullman continues to look at that, but we need to revise at least some of the preferred route because somebody gave us a park right underneath it.

Mark Storey – That is a complex issue. I have no problem visiting with the City of Pullman on that. You are currently in the throes of losing your Public Works Director, so I would probably wait until you have a new Public Works Director before getting into that.

Dave Gibney – I forgot about that. I'm going to miss Kevin.

Mark Storey – Yes, he is a great person. I will put it on my list of future things to work on.

Molly – Via Chat – Does McMorris-Rogers' have similar dollars for a Colfax by-pass?

Art Swannack – There was a question on Chat about similar dollars for a by-pass around Colfax. There are two things on this. 1, we don't know if we're going to get any dollars. The Democrat majority in the House has started a new process for member requests, so that was the process that these were submitted under. A Colfax by-pass, Mark and I have talked about that one before, and one, I don't think Colfax really wants a by-pass. 2, the other issue is, there isn't an easy route to do a by-pass and it would be pretty darn expensive to try and create anything that went around Pullman, if you're talking north/south or even going west, I don't know where you would get money for that.

Mark Storey – Yeah that is a much bigger project to contemplate.

Shaun Darveshi – I will just throw in 2-cents. I know, and Mark correct me, all that I have heard is right now they are just allowing the development to happen by the developers on the south by-pass.

Mark Storey – So the south by-pass was a route that was designed or initially designed by the City about 10-years ago to be more of a business corridor. And even the City of Pullman will admit that it does not represent a higher speed freight by-pass, it is merely a way to take some of the congestion off of Bishop Blvd. They've only built about a half mile of those 6-7 miles of the by-pass, which also has lots of huge financial issues tied to it. So, that getting finished anytime soon is just simply not going to happen.

Dave Gibney – One of the, hopefully the new goals and policies in the Plan that we are developing, I believe is going to be trying to find funding outside of development build some of the ring road and by-passes? Currently, you are correct, Pullman's policy is that roads get built by development. But, there is a recognition that, that it isn't working in some places and especially where this south by-pass has to come down over the hill and across the river.

Mark Storey – We could spend hours talking about this. The simple reality is, if you're going to only use developer dollars to develop a by-pass, then the by-pass is going to be less vehicle friendly and more business friendly. So, we would have a lot of intersections, with businesses on both sides, because nobody is going to pay for a road that they can't put a business on. So, by the way that Pullman wants to develop it, it will never be a higher speed, better by-pass for traffic.

Dave Gibney – There is a strong intent to change that as part of the Comp Plan that we are building right now.

Mark Storey – So, just so you know, the south by-pass that we are trying to create, in the county, has the endorsement of Mayor Johnson, of Pullman. He wrote a letter of support to the County Commissioners', because of his realization of all those same issues.

Art Swannack – Dave, I would ask a question on that, too. What kind of sources of funding are you thinking about or talking about? Because what I know from sitting on the freight board for the State and the State transportation budget, is that there is not going to be any money in the foreseeable future for projects just to make a road someplace. They've over booked themselves so far in debt that they can't do it.

Dave Gibney – All I really know is that we want to establish a direction of looking for places for funding besides just through development. Any further than that is still a pie in the sky.

Tom Handy – Yeah that is going to have to happen, because part of that roadway also goes through US state land and they are unlikely to be the developers of the road and just as unlikely to sell it without any serious pressure.

David H – Via Chat – Where is the noted road, US 195 – US 95 south of Pullman?

Art Swannack – So Kirkendahl Road, as I remember, is 2-miles south of the intersection of Gus Johnson (this is actually Jess Ford) Ford and Helena, and those guys are on US 195. So it would be south of that going over to Highway 95 where the light is south of Moscow next to Pape and also near where Schweitzer will build their new manufacturing plant.

Mark Storey – That is correct. So, if anyone knows where the old Staley Mansion is, that is Kirkendahl Road. It lines up almost perfectly with Sand Road and so what we have proposed was to connect the two and improve it and realign part of Kirkendahl Road and part of the Sand Road-Johnson Road intersection to be friendlier to through traffic. It would still be a two-lane county road, it wouldn't be a 4-lane highway or anything like that.

Art Swannack – But, it would be paved and much straighter.

Mark Storey – Yes, way friendlier to vehicles. Right now the Kirkendahl Road is about 2.5 miles long and it's just an old gravel road. We put about \$80,000 of drainage and maintenance into that road 2-years ago just because the trucks are beating the heck out of it lately. The truckers have all figured out this road is there and it's easier and faster than going down SR 270. So, the traffic on that road has literally tripled in the last couple of years.

Todd Hall – Mark, just for reference can you see the screen here? Where is that road in relationship to my cursor here?

Mark Storey – You're pretty close to it right in there. Look straight, there is a little town there called Busby.

Todd Hall – Yes.

Mark Storey – That is where Johnson Road, Kirkendahl Road and Sand Road all come together. That would be the realignment, so if you go straight towards 195 and straight towards Idaho, that is the alignment. I hate to bring this up, because it will just mean more traffic, before it's even a decent road, but I guess this cat is out of the bag now. So a couple of years ago, we put a couple million dollars into the Sand Road and part of that was through private donations of some of the farmers along that road, so that road is in much better shape, but it needs a structural overlay. So Sand Road doesn't need a lot of work, but Kirkendahl Road does.

Art Swannack – And we don't know whether we're actually going to get the money to do this. But, we thought it was worth submitting and seeing if we could do that, because it would make a practical south by-pass for Pullman for freight traffic and AG.

Paul Spencer – I think that combinations of roads is considerably flatter than any of the alternatives also.

Mark Storey – That is correct. And we already own most of the right-of-way. I really didn't have the intent to have this as a discussion item tonight, but it is a good conversation, all the same.

Molly – Via Chat – In the survey, many people talk about preserving rural character, what are the objective measures of that?

Alan Thomson – There is a question there from Molly about preserving rural character, what are the objective measures of that? Well, my idea of rural character would be just the way the Palouse is right now, which is pretty much un-built. It's agricultural, rolling hills and maybe we don't want to have too much development, out there. Which would maybe be a negative towards rural character. I don't know if that helps answer your question there Molly.

Todd Hall – I can chime into that Alan. The framework for goal 1, which is still in progress, but I would imagine that it's going to be at the top or one of the top priorities, is preserving rural character. What we have drafted to date and of course this isn't set in stone, but I said preserve and protect the county's rural character which includes productive agricultural lands, large open spaces, and sweeping views of the Palouse hills. This preservation of rural character shall not only include the County's scenic beauty but also the protection and sustainability of the rural way of life. Providing opportunities for employment, income and a tax base, while also limiting growth to rural activity centers near urban centers. That is kind of a broad framework goal and then under that you have additional smaller goals and policies. So hopefully that kind of paints a picture of preserving rural character.

Alan Thomson – Yeah, and to add to that, currently with the development regulations for the Agricultural District, we've got pretty restrictive development codes in there about where houses can be built and how many houses can be built. So, that has been very effective in preserving the rural character, up to this point. No building on the hilltops was conceived back in the mid 2000's, 2007 or so. Keeping houses 1,500-feet apart. So, that all added to putting development, being inconspicuous, trying not to have houses on every hilltop, so that that would preserve the rural character. So, our codes are pretty strict right now. We can't do large subdivisions of houses in the county and so the plan, hopefully, the plan is to keep the codes, the development code the same way so that we don't have massive residential developments around the county.

Brian Davies – I don't think we'll ever have massive residential developments, Alan, because we don't have the water.

Alan Thomson – That is the biggie. That is why the development codes are written the way they are, because you can't get the water.

Brandon Johnson – Via Chat – When people speak, can you please say your name for Ginny to get it on the record?

Alan Thomson – There is a request for anybody in the public to introduce yourself first before you comment. Let us know who you are for the record, and that is for the members of the public. Thanks.

Chad Whetzel – Alan I have been having some computer problems so I had to go to my phone. So, if you guys can keep track of the chats, I would appreciate it. I don't know if I've missed any or not.

Alan Thomson – I think we got caught up with that, Chad. I see all the questions and I think we have answered all of them.

Chad Whetzel – Okay good. I apologize for the issues.

Kathleen Lloyd – Via Chat – When do you expect to have Kirkendahl Road upgrade completed?

Brian Davies – I saw a question from Kathleen Lloyd about when do they expect to upgrade Kirkendahl Road. Well, there is just talk right now, isn't that correct? That this is just submitted on a wish list to Cathy McMorris-Rogers.

Mark Storey – That is correct. Don't hang your hopes or your holiday calendar on it. It's Congress putting a bunch of money out there, saying its up for grabs by local, state and federal agencies and if they are going to spend it somewhere, we're saying hey, this is a good place to spend it. If they decide to spend it here, there is still a lot of logistics between us actually planning and building it and getting it on the ground. It's a good wish list and it has some chance of getting there, but I have done lots of wish lists over a lot of years and only some of them ever get money.

Kathleen Lloyd – Via Chat – Can we have something similar for businesses as we have for residences to preserve the character?

Alan Thomson – We have another question from Mrs. Lloyd about doing the same for businesses as we do for residences to preserve the character. Anything is possible, yeah. We don't have people knocking down the doors to start business in the unincorporated areas, unless it's somewhere out in the, not even in the corridor between Moscow and Pullman, people are not running up to us and asking for that. So, it's very rare that we get businesses wanting to move out into the unincorporated area and so that in itself, because of the lack of people wanting to do so, it's preserving the character, the rural character out there. But, sometimes you have to change the zone in order for a business to be out there and that is an opportunity for the County to really look at where they are thinking of doing so and if it is an appropriate place to start a business there. And also you have to have access to a major road that is not shut down in the winter time. So there are several built in restrictions there for businesses already in the development codes.

Dave Gibney – On the other side of that particular issue, the County's revenue is currently property tax, fees, and sales tax and really the only place where that can grow is retail sales outside of the incorporated areas. So that is a balancing act that you want to be careful of too.

Larry Fox – Via Chat – Some of us are participating in this meeting with an interest in trails. I note in the Comp Plan draft, Chapter 4, is almost undone. The purpose listed in Chapter 4 appears to be to inventory. Will anything else be included in Chapter 4 regarding trails? If so, what will be included?

Erina Hammer – There were a couple questions it sounds like about the trails. Larry Fox said some of us are participating in this meeting with interest in trails. I note in the Comp Plan draft, Chapter 4 is almost undone. The purpose listed in Chapter 4 appears to be inventory. Will anything else be included in Chapter 4 regarding trails and if so

what will be included? I know that we got a public comment and it's on the website. Thank you, Alan, by the way.

Shaun Darveshi – I just wanted to mention one more thing, because somebody mentioned trails. So for Matt and Todd, we are also working on active transportation paths and we have an inventory if you want to know what plans exist.

Alan Thomson – Todd, this question is specifically looking at Chapter 4 and I don't have Chapter 4 right in front of me, so can you fill me in on what that is saying? Is that the trails and parks and recreation?

Todd Hall – Chapter 4 is the Parks one. We haven't started that one yet, but one thing I actually just started reviewing is the County's Parks and Rec Comp Plan, because there is a separate Comprehensive Plan, as I understand, that was completed a little over a decade ago. And the idea is not to duplicate the efforts that were done as part of that plan, because that is its own standalone plan, but we would want to make sure that we're capturing key points and elements that are a part of that work that was done there. As any jurisdiction, I would imagine Pullman and possibly Colfax, but Pullman especially would have their own parks plan as well. So, that is the primary objective for that one, is they would have their own plan that is then reviewed by another agency. But, as far as the Comp Plan is concerned, we're going to talk about potential options for trails and of course do an inventory of existing facilities within the county. But, we haven't started in earnest that narrative yet, that is why there is nothing there.

Alan Thomson – Yeah, so Larry, just to segue on that one, the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is the big vision and do we want to have trails and recreational areas and parks in the county. The Comp Plan is not going to get into any details about where trails could or where they are not going to be, it's just that we need to include that as an element, which we're planning on doing and if any trails were going to be developed in the future, then we would deal with it through other means at that time. If it's going to be something like the Chipman Trail, then there is a whole different process that we would have to go through in order for something like that to happen. But, that is not the detail that we're going to be looking at for the Comprehensive Plan update. Just the mere mention that we're interested in having trails and in the future they may happen or they may not happen, but we're going to mention that in the Comp Plan.

Lovina Englund – Alan, I'll just chime in here really quickly. I am the Executive Director of the Palouse Land Trust, we're a local non-governmental, non-profit organization for consigned conservation in Whitman County. And I just wanted to offer up the fact that during this regional planning process our organization recently underwent a pretty comprehensive strategic plan and a strategic conservation planning process where we mapped out a lot of the conservation values located in Whitman County. We have some pretty high level expertise on our own staff and I would just like to mention that I would be interested in informing the local land use planning processes that we might be able to contribute as a partner. So, please keep us in mind.

Alan Thomson – Sure.

Todd Hall – Lovina, I will connect you with Matt, because Matt is our writer for the land use elements. Great and thank you so much for introducing yourself, we'll definitely take you up on some of that.

Lovina Englund – Absolutely and nice to meet you Matt and Todd.

Todd Hall – And Shaun too, I think we mentioned that.

Chad Whetzel – And Dave made the comment that we need to make sure the public can put in any input that they have and yes and please do try to put it up on the chat or raise their hand and we will go ahead and call on you if you would like to speak. And we can go from there.

Alan Thomson – There are a number of people that want to talk about the potential trails and go ahead if somebody has something to add to the conversation, we are willing to listen.

Tom Keogh – Via Chat – I am confused by Alan's comment about being high level...the survey has some very specific project mentions like CAP trail?

Alan Thomson – So, we asked that question, yes, about the CAP trail. Now we wanted to get public input so that was just a specific for sure, but the Comp Plan itself is not going to be that specific. It's not going to mention the CAP trail, it's going to mention trails. And we want to develop some trails potentially. So, hopefully that clarifies that one. But, if somebody wants, if you guys want to talk about the CAP trail, now's your chance.

Tom Keogh – Via Chat – Thanks.

Mark Storey – Alan, is there going to be mention of rails to trails specifically or just trails in general?

Alan Thomson – I think trails in general. I don't think we need, Todd do you agree, we don't need to get into that kind of detail, rails to trails, right?

Todd Hall – No, I mean it's really up to the discretion of the County on how descriptive you want to be. But, like I said, I just started looking at the parks Comp Plan and there may be some more specifics regarding the overall objectives of parks, trails and open spaces, but in the Comp Plan there really is no, especially sense you're a non-GMA county, you don't have to get that granular on what specifics, which trails, rails to trails or any of that. It's just that you're exploring the options or you're supportive of trails within the county. It's kind of more of a high level discussion.

Alan Thomson – Hopefully that answers your question Tom.

Chad Whetzel – I kind of agree with what Todd's saying, is that we don't want to limit ourselves to any one thing. And trails are fine and for me personally, granted they cost the county more money, but we can find grants and that is certainly possible, but if there are trails in the county they should be under the county control. That is just kind of my personal feeling. That way we can dictate the way that they are run.

Dave Gibney – Nancy Mack has her hand raised.

Chad Whetzel – Oh, I missed that, go ahead Nancy.

Nancy Mack – I am a Pullman resident and I was very involved in the Chipman Trail when it was developed. Little did I know that this was way more than recreation, it was also conservation and economic development and transportation. So, trails are not just to be seen as recreation, I think it's an important point to link it to the economic possibilities for our county, especially the CAP trail since it does link two major cities together. And I would just like to point out that the trails are so important to the quality of life and everything in our county, that you really do need to focus, I think more specifically on trails that are going to be meaningful economically to the county. That is all that I wanted to say, thank you.

Chad Whetzel – I don't know if maybe Mark or maybe even if Nancy can answer this, is the Chipman Trail, is that owned by the county then or where did that one come about?

Nancy Mack – It was a collaboration of two cities, two counties, two states, two universities, a highway and two train tracks. So, in the end the bulk of the property was in Whitman County and so it is now a county park, a linear park. But, the funding for it and the maintenance comes from a collaboration of those other entities who have such a vested interest in it. Maybe Bobbie wants to say something about that.

Alan Thomson – So Chad, real quickly, there is a trails committee that governs the Chipman Trail. It's not the County, it's the actual committee.

Chad Whetzel – Okay.

Mark Storey – The County manages and maintains the Trail as a county park and the committee helps to guide our management of the park.

Nancy Mack – As another quick comment, there is a really good possibility for friends of a unique trail to receive public donations for this. I don't think it should be seen as just a county expense. I think that some of the costs of it can be handled by private citizens who are very enamored with the trail system. I see Lisa has a comment.

Chad Whetzel – Yes, Lisa.

Lisa Carloye – I'm also a Pullman resident and I'm with the Pullman Civic Trust. I appreciate Nancy's comments, especially with her experience with the Chipman Trail. I think there is a lot of good knowledge about how a rail/trail can come to be and can be financed. The comment that I wanted to make, somebody mentioned rail trails as maybe too specific and I wanted to disagree with that. I think that rail trails have a unique role in the big picture in thinking about the County and trails. Because it accomplishes several goals, they are both about preservation of the rail system, which I think is really important and I didn't really see it emphasized in the Comprehensive Plan, so far. But I think that the rail banking effort is a mechanism by which you can preserve the rail system as a system for the future and given all the uncertainty that is out there about transportation and given our rural and agricultural landscape, I think that is something that the Commission should think about as including it as a big picture goal in the Comprehensive Plan, to preserve the rail structure. And, as I said, the rail banking act is a unique way to do that, because you can preserve unused rail corridors for the future by turning them into a recreational and transportation networks as a trail system. So, I'm not sure if you are looking for public statements yet, but I did want to share some thoughts that we had about what we would like to see included in the Comprehensive Plan. We would like to see the inclusion of clear statements that emphasize the importance of preserving these county rail corridors for future transportation needs. So, wherever that fits I think that is a really important point that should be included. Going along with that, it would be helpful to include a policy to rail bank in active rail corridors in order to preserve them for future needs and then to articulate a commitment to develop regional trails so that they connect our communities and create a connected regional trails system. All of those are important and I think Nancy's comments echoed thinking strategically about specific trails and trail systems and looking for ways to make connections in the region. So I think I would like to see some thought about rail trails in particular, given that they serve several important purposes. Thank you.

Mark Storey – Can I just make a comment on that real quick. Lisa is correct, very specifically about the Bill Chipman Trail and any other rail corridor is a transportation corridor, not a recreational corridor. It may also be used as recreation, but they are considered transportation corridors. I'm sorry I think I just walked over Erina. I think she had her hand up, but I just wanted to dovetail on what Lisa said before I forget.

Chad Whetzel – Go ahead Erina.

Erina Hammer – This is the question I had, but I don't know if this is the right place for it, so I'm going to ask it anyway and then you can tell me to ask later if I need to. So, I was re-reading the public comment that we had from the Buckley's and then just listening to what Lisa and Nancy were saying, and it made me wonder where the land would come from and who would have clear title to the land when people put the trails together. So that was my question.

Alan Thomson – Well, that might be a really good segue to Bob Westby, who is with DOT and he is with us tonight, if you're still listening Bob.

Bob Westby – I'm here Alan. Folks, I am Bob Westby, Washington State Department of Transportation. I'm the PCC Rail manager for the DOT, based up here in Spokane and I work for the Rail Freight and Ports Office out of Olympia. So, regarding the question of ownership of the rail line, DOT acquired the entire Palouse River Coulee City Railway system through a quick claim deed. That is a very typical mechanism, by which railroads have exchanged properties for quite some time. The reason behind a quick claim deed is because historically, railroads don't have necessarily clear title, nor will any title company insure that title. So, in 2004 we acquired this system in a quick claim deed. We paid north of 20 million dollars for the entire system, so we are the owner of the system. That is certainly how we conduct ourselves, or I would like to think we do.

Alan Thomson – Bob, do you own the land?

Bob Westby – Well, Alan we have a quick claim deed and we paid for the property. That is the best answer I can give. In the active rail corridors or the segments of the active lines I think it is very apparent that, you know, there a multitudes of mechanisms by which railroads have acquired properties historically. Everything from market and sale deeds to things that people would call easements to outright purchase. And so I don't think it is as simple as saying any one segment of road and when we have annualized specifically, as some would say, the CAP. I think we have 70 different properties and probably 10 or 12 different mechanisms just within that segment. So, from the Surface Transportation Board perspective, and that is the entity that governs railroad operations, the entire PCC is still considered an active railroad and that includes the section between Colfax and Pullman. Because the Department has not taken any action to either discontinue or abandon that segment. So, it's still an active line, now we all know that no train traffic is currently using that for well over a decade. But, from the Departments perspective, we conduct ourselves as the owner. We have not taken any action to change the status of that line. Frankly because our Attorney General tells us that we don't, as a department, we don't have that authority. So we have to be directed legislatively to do something other than, if we want to remove that from active rail status. We have to be told to do that by elected officials.

Erina Hammer – So, I am very simple, the only thing that I have bought and sold is a house. That is what I understand. So, you have to go in, you have to do a title search, it has to have a clean title in order to have that transaction. That is what I understand, I am a very simple person. So, in this instance and again I don't understand, I'm not a lawyer, but is it that simple that the land would essentially have a clean title or is there confusion about it. From your perspective there is no confusion.

Bob Westby – Well, in the current status there is no confusion. If we were directed by the Legislature to abandon a segment of the railroad then there would have to be the appropriate level of title research done to determine what those next steps would be. You know, if our reversionary rights for that specific segment of the railroad, do they apply, do they apply to every parcel, so they only apply to some parcels? It would be quite extensive.

Alan Thomson – We have a couple hands up. Go ahead Bob Russell.

Bob Russell – I live in Colfax. I would just add a brief bit to what Bob Westby just said. All of the land underneath the CAP trail, right now, is at the very least a railroad easement and that is how they are able to run a railroad on it. And just in a very quick response to the suggestion in the Buckley memorandum, unless it's abandoned, unless the railroad line is abandoned, it doesn't go back to the landowners. By the way, I'm a real estate lawyer licensed to practice in both California and Washington. So, I'm just going to give you a very brief legal answer there. Unless it's actually abandoned and goes through the Surface Transportation Board process for abandonment, it will stay a rail line and so long as it's a rail line, it can also go through this process that we know as rail banking. And very simply, a rail banking is a federally authorized process, if it goes through that process it temporarily becomes a trail rather than a railroad line. It can be used as a trail until the railroad requests it back. In this case it would be WSDOT, since WSDOT owns the railroad line that is on it now. So, it's a temporary use as a trail and if the underlying landowners, if there is a piece of that, and we think, as Mr. Westby just said, we think there are many pieces of that CAP line that are just railroad easements, and that if the railroad were actually abandoned, would go back to the underlying landowners. Under this rail banking law, those landowners are entitled to compensation from the federal government only, for the difference in value of their land for having a trail on it instead of a railroad. And that is how rail banking works. So it doesn't actually cost the County any money to pay off underlying landowners for the use of a trail instead of a railroad. All of that cost is born by the Federal Government.

Chad Whetzel – We have another question, Lisa Carloye, I believe that is how you say your name.

Lisa Carloye – Yeah, well done. Thank you. This is Lisa Carloye again from Pullman and the Pullman Civic Trust. I wanted to just echo on what Bob Russell just said and on what Bob Westby said before that. Because I think that rail banking can be confusing and the way I understand it is, that when you have an unused rail corridor, you can go one direction or the other. You can go to abandon it, in which case the reversionary rights then come into play and you would need to do the title searches and figure out what the underlying titles all say or you can go to rail banking. And the rail banking process means that you don't need to do that because reversionary rights do not come into play, because it preserves the corridor as a rail corridor, which is the rail banking part of it and then as Bob Russell said, the trail is considered interim trail until the time that the railroad or the State would like to turn it back into a railroad. And at that point, the law is clear, that it does go back to the railroad, regardless of whether the people love the trail and they fight against it, the law says it becomes a rail. And so, I think that the title question and the ownership of the land, it gets a little muddied in there, because there are two different pathways and if it becomes abandoned, then the titles become important for understanding the reversionary rights. But if it becomes rail banked, then it remains a relatively status quo and it is still considered a rail line that has a trail on it.

So, if I have misspoken, Bob Russell is a lawyer and he says so, please correct me, I am not an authority on that.

Chad Whetzel – Thank you. Larry Farr, I believe would like to speak.

Larry Farr – Yes. I live outside of Albion and that rail line goes right through the middle of my property and I'm with a group, we're railroad corridor property owners and I have a deed in my hands from 1893 that states my family bought it back then and I'm not going to read the description and all that, but there is a little statement here that says, containing 280-acres, saving and excepting there from the railroad right-of-way over and across. And then down a little bit farther it says, to be used for all legitimate railroad purpose and that is a right-of-way. But that over and across pretty much says that it's the 280-acres, which is the whole quarter sections there and I went into the tax thing today and the way they read it is, we pay taxes, we've been paying taxes on that whole 280-acres, which means underneath the railroad right-of-way.

Chad Whetzel – Thank you. Larry did you have something else?

Larry Farr – No, that's about it for right now. There is a lot more that I could say, but I'm not going to take up too much time.

Chad Whetzel – Right, no I appreciate that. I think the general so far, it sounds like there is going to be a lot of debate on this further down the road if this goes through and that is what the County Commissioners' decide on. I do have one question, real quick, for one of the Bob's and then we'll get to you Richard Old. On the rail banking portion, when they do that are they required, whatever entity, whether it's State, public or a combination of both, are they required to maintain the rail bed, as such that the lines can go back in?

Bob Westby – So a good example of a rail bank corridor is the Chipman Trail. And so, if you're familiar with the facility, you know what it is. That there really isn't a specific requirement to maintain it in a capacity where it would be able to, you know, flip a switch and it would become a railroad again. The key is, in the rail banking legislation is, they are trying to preserve the property corridor itself. I've heard anecdotally that there has been a couple of occasions, very few, where a rail bank trail has actually become an active rail line again, but I don't know that for a fact. But that is the purpose of the legislation, is to allow that. So, again the key is preserving the underlying property. Not specifically the rail bed as it existed or any of the rail infrastructure.

Chad Whetzel – Okay, because I guess my concern is, when banking any rail line in the Palouse, it crosses a lot of creeks and if the County or whoever, whatever entity that is in charge of it has to maintain the bridges for train traffic. That is going to be a lot of money and if they do happen to get through legislation to remove the dams and these rail lines start going back in, suddenly that group has spent a ton of money and has nothing to show for it.

Bob Westby – Now I understand the concern and maintaining a pedestrian bridge versus a railroad bridge is quite a bit different.

Chad Whetzel – Okay. Richard Old, we'll get you next. Go ahead.

Richard Old – Thank you. I'm a landowner on the proposed CAP Trail and there are two related points that I would like to try to make tonight. If the technology works as it should I would like to try to share some images. Let's see if we can try to get the first one to come up here.

(Slide of a No Trespassing sign)

Ever since the railroad ceased being active and the potential for a trail was discussed, there has been an increased number of unauthorized people on the right-of-way. We've had hikers, joggers, 4-wheelers, motorcycles, and even one vehicle designed to ride on the rails, despite it being posted as No Trespassing. I don't always see all of them. Sometimes it's just the beer cans I pick up or as shown here... (Slide showing bicycle tracks along the rail line) bicycle tracks down the right-of-way. This image was taken earlier this month. In effect, the right-of-way has become a de facto trail. All of these people have shown that they have no problem with trespassing. I am suspicious of any claims that people will respect the adjacent property. We've been promised that gates would be installed, at least at the ends of each trestle, to help curb this activity, but this has not happened. Obviously signage is not sufficient to keep people out. I believe the unused line is what would be deemed an attractive nuisance, from the liability standpoint. Whether or not there is an official trail at some point in the future, I would like to see those gates installed in the interim.

(Slide showing field that Mr. Old purchased)

A few years ago I purchased a half-mile of land on each side of the railroad right-of-way. That is in addition to the half-mile that I already own. This even shows a portion of that land. This land is excellent wildlife habitat and I purchased it to assure that it would stay that way in perpetuity. I spend my own money and pay taxes on it every year, with no return other than providing a home for the wildlife that I enjoy. There are deer, coyotes, skunks, squirrels, raccoons, badgers, porcupines, pheasants, quail, doves, fox, owls, bald eagles, herons, osprey, mink, otter, beaver, muskrats and the occasional bobcat. Many species of song birds, several species of ducks, geese and this year for the first time. swans.

(Slide showing hunters trespassing and slide showing a hunter on a 4-wheeler hauling out a dead deer)

The rail right-of-way provides an easy access to hunters that trespass on my land. If you look closely, in the middle of this image you can see them. In this image you can see them a little better, even the 4-wheeler. They have cut the railroad fences to access their kill. And they use the railroad to transport their kill. This is one of three

deer that I know of that they shot on my property in two days. Their faces have been obscured for reasons of legality.

My point here is that not only do we need to have gates to physically restrict the rail corridor, but increasing access to the rail corridor by converting it to a trail, is a very bad idea if you are interested in wildlife. As exemplified by the thousands of feet of trestles between Pullman and Colfax, the fact is, the rail corridor and the river corridor are inextricably linked. Though the trail might be a nice amenity for some people, the river corridor is a necessity for wildlife and the fewer people and dogs, the better. Preservation of natural resources is a priority in the Comprehensive Plan, a trail does not achieve that goal.

Chad Whetzel – Thanks Richard. Is there anything else that you want to add, or is that everything right now?

Richard Old – That is all I felt I should say tonight.

Chad Whetzel – Okay, thank you Rich. I see another hand up, Cheryl Kammerzell.

Tom Kammerzell – Hello, this is actually Tom. I wanted go a little higher level than this, regarding the trail system. Your #2 value in Whitman County was preserving agriculture and just referring to the Colfax to Pullman trail that would touch 640-acres of agricultural production land that would be impacted negatively by a trail. And when I say that, if you look right now, the County has to give notice when they are going to do any weed spraying along there so that there is diminished or no human interaction. Private agriculture does not have that ability to pay for public notice and the increased costs, or if you could even spray, because you don't want to take the liability of spraying somebody. So, keeping agricultural preservation should be on the priority and especially if you are talking about more trails throughout the county. That was one statement. And without hearing it before, I was taking some notes here with Richard Old and we have had the same concerns, implications with hunters trespassing on our property. On the rail line property, we had Geocaching going on and we have had the fences cut for hunting and we've even had people ask if they could come out, walk down the railroad and let their dogs run. Well, Fish and Wildlife has determined that the piece that is the wetland mitigation is a wildlife corridor and when you have interactions with dogs that is not conducive for wildlife. We have the same list that probably Mr. Old has. Thank you.

Chad Whetzel – Thank you Tom.

Alan Thomson – I just want to tell the public that we want to shut this down, close this meeting at 9 o'clock and it's about 10 till right now. This conversation is really interesting and it's vital and it's good, but it's kind of getting away from what we're trying to do here on the Comprehensive Plan update. This is a detail that has gone beyond what we are trying to do here. The mention of trails doesn't necessarily mean that a trail is going to be built. We know that this trail between Pullman and Colfax is probably

going to get litigated if it ever is going to get built, but that is not the purpose of what we are trying to do here tonight with the Comprehensive Plan. I know that a lot of people want to talk about this, but we don't have that much more time to do that.

Chad Whetzel – And I greatly appreciate that and I understand your point of view, but we've got a public meeting open right now and we do still have a few more people that want to speak. I told you before on the phone that I thought it was a poor idea to mix the Colfax to Pullman trail in with our growth management deal here tonight and this is exactly what I was talking about. A lot of people want to speak about this, they have a lot of passion on both sides of it and I think if we're going to go ahead with trails, the County Commissioners' probably need to have a better meeting about this. Yes, we can have the discussion about whether or not we have trails, whether that's a good idea or not and obviously a lot of people have some feelings on that. I am of the opinion that we've got to still listen to people here for a while. Go ahead Art.

Art Swannack – The issue for the Comp Plan is, what is necessary to have in the Comp Plan to have trails. Not whether what is necessary to have the CAP trail, specifically. You know, how do you enable the CAP trail, per se, is what is necessary for trails across Whitman County, some that exist and some that might be requested in the future and I think that is what Alan is trying to say. And this discussion tonight, for my part, is about the Comp Plan, not about specifically is this trail a good idea, will there be lawsuits, etc. So, what I would focus on is we need to know what do we need in the Comp Plan for trails, what is good or bad in terms of Comp Plan language, but not necessarily what focus is on, should we have the CAP trail, should we enable anything else. And we have some trails in here, according to when I talked to Alan, but the question was is it clear in the Comp Plan that we can have those, such as the Colfax trail and the Chipman Trail. You're probably going to need to have the right language to make sure that they are enabled, at least.

Chad Whetzel – And while I do appreciate that, I think this can of worms has been opened when it was specifically mentioned in the survey and that is where people have kind of gone off the rails. And I told Alan that earlier this week, that we should have been a little more specific and I do appreciate that the Commissioners' do want to know whether people want that trail or not.

Art Swannack – Just so you know Chad, our request for tonight was discussing the issue of trails as related to the Comp Plan, not whether we should have the CAP trail or discuss what is needed to have the CAP trail or any of that.

Chad Whetzel – Right, so at what point are we going to discuss that, because it was part of the survey?

Art Swannack – I would say that is just information in the survey, as far as I'm concerned. Going forward, right now, I would like to limit us at this point just to discussing is there something specific that Todd or others can tell us we need in the Plan to make it so that trails are enabled to be done in consideration of all the other

priorities of the Plan. And then the CAP trail; that discussion can occur forward in another 10,000 meetings, because that is probably what will happen when you actually go down that road.

Chad Whetzel – Well and that is kind of what I thought and that was kind of one of the issues that I had.

Art Swannack – Understood.

Chad Whetzel – I was told that we were allowed to have this discussion and we were going to have it tonight. So, having said that let's try to limit this more to what we need to decide, because my understanding of this update is that this is wish list for general direction, nothing is in concrete. But, something that the community thinks are things that we want. Having said that, we have a hand up, Michelle Mousel?

Michelle Mousel – Yes, thank you. I will point out that I am at the end of Hayward Road, right at the edge of that trail, or at that rail line. Bob, thank you for the signs, they aren't helping. But, as a horse owner, my request would be, if you're going to put more trails in, allow horse owners to use them, not just humans and to put a leash law in place on all county trails, to hopefully to prevent some of the wildlife, as well as, livestock and human issues that can happen when people walk their dogs without leashes, which happens all the time, because the county doesn't have a leash law. So, from my perspective you need to consider some of these other issues if you put trails in there, which is fine, I think we should have more trails. I'm not arguing that, but they need to be mutually agreeable and as a property owner, I would appreciate not having my taxes go up 400% again, to help pay for some of these things when my road is not plowed when it snows unless it is 6 inches deep.

Chad Whetzel – I appreciate that. Is there anything else that you would like to add there?

Michelle Mousel – No, thank you.

Chad Whetzel – You're welcome. Dave Gibney, you had your hand up.

Dave Gibney – I think Bobbie was ahead of me.

Chad Whetzel – Okay, Bobbie Ryder.

Bobbie Ryder – Hi, thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak and I am the President of the Pullman Civic Trust. Obviously we do advocate for trails in the county because that is the mission of what we do, because we care about the quality of life and creating communities in Whitman County and creating quality experiences for our citizens. I would like to touch on a few things. I think that the idea of trails very easily address at least 5 of your 10 goals in your framework goals. And I would like to go through that.

Framework Goal #4 – Support Local Business and Countywide Economic Growth: And we feel that trails create an economic opportunity that supports local businesses countywide. Local construction firms can be used to construct trails and this is an economic opportunity. Bicyclists like to eat and drink after a long bike ride and they tend to stay in the region of the trail, that research has shown, 2.5 days longer than automobile tourists. Bicyclists become heads and beds. Bicyclists and hikers shop in local grocery stores and even restaurants and they shop for clothing and gear and look for repairs. And all of this supports local businesses. During COVID, trail use is estimated to have increased nationwide by 60%, according to rails to trails.

Chad Whetzel – Bobbie, could you hold for just one second, please? I am hearing some background from somebody else, could we get everybody else to mute themselves so that Bobbie can continue?

Bobbie Ryder – Thank you. In Washington State trail use is up 3 times the rate of previous years and that is according to the Washington Trails Association. So the trails have been very important during COVID. And they have certainly been like the mainstay of people's social lives when we have had to be so isolated.

Framework Goal #5 – Protect Environmental Quality and Respond to Climate Change: I get the points that Mr. Old has made, but I also want to point out that bikes produce no exhaust and they move people while not polluting the air. Getting people into nature and on public trails and I do say public trails, not private trails, creates a greater appreciation for the environment. And interpretation information along trails can educate users about environmental quality and how to respond to climate change.

Framework Goal #6 – Promote and Improve Mobility Options: I would like say that trails, provide optional multi-modal forms of transportation. Also separated trails provide a safe and reliable transportation system that connects our communities.

Framework Goal #9 – Support Recreation and Access to Natural Areas: Trails provide county residents and visitors with guided access to outdoor recreation in natural areas. Trails also provide guidance to people about what is public property and what is private property. And by that I mean, if a trail is a county park, for example, there are rules of the road as there is on the Chipman Trail and they have not had trouble with trespassing. And there are design mechanisms that can happen to certainly curtail that and when there are more people around keeping their eyes out, there is more opportunity and there is someone there to police.

Framework Goal # 10 – Preserve Cultural Heritage of Whitman County: My last point is that, railroads have a fascinating and long history in Whitman County. In fact, one of the most significant events in the history and growth of Whitman County is the development of railroads. Rail banking...

Dave Gibney – Can Richard Huggins please mute?

Chad Whetzel – Thank you. Go ahead Bobbie.

Bobbie Ryder – Thank you. Rail banking unused rail lines preserves these rail corridors and preserves an important element of the cultural heritage of Whitman County. Rail banking provides opportunities to recognize the importance of railroads in our history and also recognize the farming families that made railroads possible here. Thank you for listening.

Chad Whetzel – Thank you Bobbie. Dave Gibney, you had your hand up.

Dave Gibney – Yes, the point was made is that we're here to talk about what elements we should have in the Comprehensive Plan and our goals and policies. And it's clear that we have gotten some information about that. It's clear to me if and when and where we put trails, we definitely have to have policies that support the adjoining landowners, the wildlife, and natural environment nearby and some greater enforcement of existing law. As I said, there is a leash law in every park in Pullman, if there isn't a leash law in the county parks, maybe that is something that the Commission should consider. And I agree completely with Richard Old, that there is no reason for dogs to be roaming through, what are effectively wildlife sanctuary areas and I hope he is actually going to try to prosecute those poachers. Thanks.

Chad Whetzel – You are correct. I think that even though there have been some good things brought up, like you said about multi-uses, not just the riding and the bicycling. A lot of those trails have been formed and if they go to a trail, they are public trails if they are going to build them, then they should be used by everybody. Hopefully the Commissioners' got some good information from this. There are a number of people that have complaints about them, I mean you can drive through anytime and see people walking down trails, the old rail beds all around. Definitely some considerations. Anything else from the Planning Commission? It looks like it's getting to be about 9 o'clock and we wanted to shut this down. Does anybody have anything else from the Planning Commission?

Bobbie Ryder – Can I just add one more thing?

Chad Whetzel – Is it about trails in general?

Bobbie Ryder – It's about railroads.

Chad Whetzel – Okay.

Bobbie Ryder – I didn't feel that in the Comp Plan, what I have read so far, and I know you are still working on it, is the importance of the railroads isn't well addressed and I would like to think that one of our common grounds that we could have is that we don't want to lose our rail system. I have heard it mentioned of a three-legged stool, you've got the rails, you've got the road and you've got the river and when one of those goes

down it really impacts the others. So, I would like to see that the preservation of the rail corridors be included in the Comprehensive Plan. Thank you.

Chad Whetzel – Thank you. I don't see any other hands up at this time. Alan, do you have anything to add?

Alan Thomson – No.

Chad Whetzel – Keith Paulson, go ahead.

Keith Paulson – Just one thing on the Comp Plan for the rails to trails, it seems like when I was looking at the map, on the railroads, it shows a lot of rail lines that really aren't there anymore. I mean the railroad bed is there but there are not tracks there. Is that something maybe Todd could address, that shows that there really isn't a rail line there? Or am I just thinking wrong.

Dave Gibney – The general point is that the rail corridor easement is still there until the railroad who owns it officially abandons it. The fact that there are no tracks does not mean that the corridor isn't there anymore.

Mark Storey – Some of the corridors in the County have reverted to private ownership, not all of them are still retained by the railroad or by the State.

Dave Gibney – Those should not be on our maps anymore, when we're done.

Chad Whetzel – So, basically we need to make sure that the rail lines that are, whether inactive or active, that are still considered in use are on there and all the officially abandoned ones need to be removed. So, our next meeting, are we planning on doing it on the first Wednesday of May?

Alan Thomson – I don't know that we will have anything to talk about, nothing really to report. Maybe we can skip that one, since it is not that far away.

Chad Whetzel – So, then we would be into June.

Alan Thomson – Yep.

Chad Whetzel – My computer kind of went down on me during some of the presentation, so I don't remember the timeline, but it seems like we've got some other things coming up, hopefully if all goes well.

Alan Thomson – The hope in June is that we can have an in-person meeting, depending on how the COVID thing goes for the State of Washington.

**9:06 p.m. – Motion to Adjourn.**

**Art Swannack – I will adjourn this meeting at this time.**