



Red Electric Trail Frequently Asked Questions

Project website: [Red Electric Trail: East of Alpenrose Design and Planning Project](#)

1/25/2023

Background

The [Red Electric Trail](#) alignment follows the historic Red Electric, which was an interurban train that ran between 1914 and 1929. The trail is an important regional connector long planned and advocated for construction.

[The Red Electric Trail: East of Alpenrose Design and Planning project](#) will produce 30% design drawings for the segment east of Alpenrose, from SW Shattuck to SW Cameron Road. The segment length is a little over half a mile, in addition to neighborhood pathways that will connect to it.

Additional Information:

- A [2007 Red Electric Trail Alignment Study](#) included a comprehensive public engagement process and resulted in a conceptual route for the entirety of the trail. This study will be a resource and starting point to guide the design work for this project.
- The [Red Electric Trail](#) is part of the Portland region's 220 miles of regional trails. When completed, there will be 16 miles of safer, mostly off-road Red Electric trail between the Tualatin and Willamette Rivers.

How is this project being funded?

The project is a \$750,000 grant recipient through the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funding (CSFRF) under the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) approved by Congress and identified by the Oregon Legislature in the Budget Report for House Bill 5006 (2021). The funds need to be spent by June 2024.

Why does the area need to be cleared if we don't have funds to build anything?

Before we can design and plan the trail, we need to understand the topography and inventory of trees. The contractors who are clearing and trimming non-native and invasive trees and brush are making it possible for the right-of-way and future trail to be surveyed. The survey crew will soon be able to take measurements to determine property lines, topography, and a tree inventory. All this work needs to take place before the design work, which will inform what we are designing and building.

What happens after the contractors are finished with their work?

The City has awarded Harper Houf Peterson Righellis Inc. (HHPR) with a contract to engage the public in what they want the future trail to be, to create alternative designs for the trail, and to generate the construction drawings.

In the meantime, the trail area will continue to be used as an informal trail and habitat. The vegetation will start to regrow and fill in, and much of it is more accessible than before (although standing water can be an issue for many months of the year).

Are you following environmental regulations – native plants and creating harm to the habitat?

Yes, we walked the site with staff with Portland Parks and Recreation and the Bureau of Environmental Services to advise and monitor the trail maintenance work. Our arborists are working closely with Urban Forestry to guide tree work. Our design team includes experts in landscape architecture, civil engineering, and natural resources. The future trail design will follow regulations to ensure that it is built to preserve and enhance the habitat that exists.

Will this attract homeless folks? How do we make sure that people don't camp on the right-of-way?

Homelessness is a citywide issue. This area's natural characteristics aren't favorable to camping. The trail is very steep in some parts and muddy and wet in other parts, and the trail is frequently used, especially along the school and the park.

Now that more of the trail is cleared, portions of it are more open, and there are fewer hiding places. By helping to be stewards of the area, and by using it as a pathway, neighbors can increase its visibility and may discourage its appeal as an opportunity for camping.

In the future, the trail's design can create ways to discourage camping, with boulders, stormwater facilities that capture and store rainwater, and by creating more sight lines to the park and along the trail. Folks are encouraged to share their concerns with the design team during the project's community engagement, so that future design solutions can address these challenges head on. Many trail organizations have been doing this work, and they also have expertise and experience to bear when we start these design conversations.

Can we build a trail and maintain a trail now that the right-of-way is clear?

The [Portland Pathways program](#), launched in 2014 to help communities make their neighborhoods better places to walk. Through the program residents were able to propose, permit, and build trails in undeveloped public right-of-way to make it easier to get around their neighborhood. The program was offered and supported by PBOT until the pandemic hit in 2020. Although the Red Electric Trail is a good candidate for PBOT's Portland Pathways program, the program has not yet re-emerged, and it is not staffed or resourced.

In the meantime, community members interested in realizing the Red Electric Trail have an opportunity to participate in the design of a future build-out. The survey and community engagement will inform where and how residents and community groups can design, build, and maintain a trail through this area.

This is an opportunity to take a measured response while considering what we've uncovered – in some cases, it's standing water. There might be issues of privacy and concerns about crime prevention that we want to talk about in the long-term vision that we should also include in a Portland Pathways project.

How can we ensure privacy to the adjacent residents who live along the trail?

On the public right-of-way, trail plantings and trail alignment can help ensure privacy. If there are specific concerns about privacy along the trail, adjacent residents should share their thoughts with the design team during the project's community engagement so that design solutions can address issues related to visibility and privacy.

What about development the trail beyond the project area, i.e., Alpenrose and beyond Cameron Road?

The project's scope is limited to the trail area east of SW Shattuck and south of SW Cameron Road, but the intent is that it will connect beyond its boundaries.

- **Alpenrose site, west of SW Shattuck Road:** This area is within private property, and it is [currently being planned for redevelopment](#). Active discussions with City Bureaus to build this portion of the Red Electric Trail as required by code as part of the future development are underway.
- **SW Fairvale Court north of SW Cameron Road:** After crossing SW Cameron Road, the Red Electric Trail route turns east on SW Cameron for 300 feet and crosses north to SW Cullen, where it continues towards SW Bertha Boulevard. Portland Bureau of Transportation's (PBOT's) [Transportation System Plan](#) includes these segments in the 11-20 year timeframe. However, a portion of this planned segment is within private property and there is currently no identified funding source or future project.