

Poulsbo Trail Survey 2009- Summary

Survey: This was an online survey on Survey Monkey, available on the City of Poulsbo website April-June of 2009. Of the 273 respondents, 54% live in the city, 81% live in the 98370 zip code. Two thirds answered for their households, one third as individuals. 85% of respondents were adults from 30-64, 8% were over 65. 80% expect to use the trails for exercise or pleasure but many want to use trails for errands (19%) or commuting (16%).

Activities and frequency of use: Eighty percent of respondents stated they expect to use the trail weekly or more, 28% expect to use it daily. When asked the top three activities they expect to participate in, most participants answered walking (86%) and bicycling (77%) but close to 1/3 of people included nature observation/birding, running, walking pets or going shopping or to public places.

Connections: The top choice for connections within Poulsbo was historic downtown (75%), 62% want connections to parks, 50% to shopping and 41% to schools. When asked their favorite bike destination beyond Poulsbo, after the top choice of OPG property or Port Gamble, people were equally split that either they knew of no place safe or they wanted to connect to Big Valley or Bainbridge Island. The best route of showing visitors Poulsbo was the waterfront boardwalk, followed by downtown Front Street and the Liberty Bay Trail. The best wildlife viewing was Fish Park, followed by the boardwalk and Liberty Bay Trail.

Preferences: The top requested design elements were a paved trail 51%, restrooms 46%, and benches 40%, but 1/3 of respondents requested garbage and pet waste disposal and 20% of asked for dirt trails, native plantings, mile markers/signs or gravel trails.

Safety concerns: When asked about impediments to walking/biking, the overwhelming answer was a concern about safety (77) with traffic being too close and inadequate shoulders and sidewalks. Another problem was lack of connections (30) and lack of signs and maps (12). When asked the best route for bicycling in town, after the Liberty Bay waterfront trail the most popular answer was there is no place safe. When asked their favorite place to ride, Liberty Bay Trail came in #1 but more distant separated paved trails such as Olympic Discovery (Clallam Co.) and Burke Gilman (Seattle) had the most votes if they were combined. We received many comments such as "We are desperately in need of safe, paved bicycling", "Make it easy to get out of cars and bike or walk away from cars" and even "The drivers seem to want to kill or maim me!"

Priorities: The locations for top requested improvements were the waterfront trail from Lemolo through downtown and to Fish/Nelson Park, loops near the High school/Wilderness Park/Raab Park, a safe connection by Finn Hill, and improving connections to downtown, schools, connecting the Westside, Olhava and to Clear Creek and Big Valley. Specific suggestions about route priorities, existing "informal trails" and connections are best understood by reading the written comments.

Opportunities: Combining the appreciation of our existing waterfront parks; Poulsbo's Downtown and waterfront park and improving connections between the very popular Liberty Bay Trails and Fish and Nelson Parks could combine the places people most like to walk with where they like to bring guests and where they like to enjoy nature. Many other requested amenities are less expensive; dirt trails, connecting existing trails, providing signs, garbage or a bench with a view to watch birds. The desired but expensive paved path would require grant funding but as a connection to the cross state trail and parallel to a major commute route, we may be able to find those opportunities.