

## Snoqualmie Valley Trail Gap Assessment

---

December 2021



**King County**

**I. Contents**

II. Relevant Motion Text ..... 3

III. Executive Summary ..... 3

IV. Background..... 5

V. Report Requirements ..... 9

VI. Feasibility Summary ..... 19

VII. Appendices ..... 20

## II. Relevant Motion Text

Motion 15378<sup>1</sup>

G.1. The council requests that the department of natural resources and parks conduct an assessment of the feasibility and cost for the following projects:

- a. the south extension of the Green to Cedar Rivers trail, including connections to a Black Diamond open space area; and
- b. closing the gaps in the Snoqualmie Valley Trail including, but not limited to, the former Mill site in the city of Snoqualmie, and between the Issaquah Preston Trail and Snoqualmie Valley Trail.

2. The department of natural resources and parks is requested to transmit the assessment to the council by December 31, 2021. The assessment should be filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who will retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff to the mobility and environment committee or its successor.

## III. Executive Summary

King County operates and maintains a regional trail system that makes up approximately 175 miles out of the more than 300 trail network miles throughout the county. This report focuses on the feasibility and cost for closing identified gaps in the Snoqualmie Valley Trail (SVT). It includes an assessment of four gaps or missing links in the trails network along and near the SVT located within the Snoqualmie River Valley, including the City of Snoqualmie.

The first requirement in the Motion is to assess the feasibility and cost for the south extension of the Green to Cedar Rivers (G2C) trail, including connections to a Black Diamond open space area. This assessment was previously provided in September 2020.<sup>2</sup> The assessment was conducted to explore alternative uses for the \$9 million in the 2020-2025 King County Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy (Parks Levy) for North Segment A of the Green to Cedar (G2C) trail in partnership with the City of Maple Valley.<sup>3</sup> After a collaborative process with the City of Maple Valley, it was determined that the \$9 million allocated in the Parks Levy to the G2C Trail should be used to develop an interim gravel trail in South Segment A rather than for fully developing North Segment A. The Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) and the City of Maple Valley recommended this proposed change in phasing of the development of the G2C Trail. This proposed change was strongly supported by the community.

With regard to the second requirement in the Motion, the four gaps assessed in this document are:

- Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension;

---

<sup>1</sup> [Parks Levy Motion 15378](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Alternative Uses for Levy Fund for Green to Cedar Rivers Trail North Segment A](#)

<sup>3</sup> [2020-2025 Park, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Levy](#)

- Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap;
- Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension; and
- Snoqualmie Regional Connector.

To close the Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension gap, alignment could be along the historic and abandoned Northern Pacific and Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific (Milwaukee Road) railroad corridor that was only recently acquired by King County. The Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap, also slated to use the Milwaukee Road further east at the City of Snoqualmie, would address a longstanding trail gap through the former Weyerhaeuser Snoqualmie Mill, a historic site between unincorporated King County and the city. In 2006, the County had initially considered extending the Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension eastward along the abandoned historic Seattle, Lake Shore, and Eastern Railroad corridor, using existing historic trestles and building new facilities to reach Snoqualmie. After consultation with the Snoqualmie Tribe, however, the project was paused due to its close proximity to Snoqualmie Falls. The Snoqualmie Regional Connector addresses a longstanding King County Parks regional trails goal, as well as the interest of the City of Snoqualmie, to connect the SVT to other regional trails within the city.

Parks’ trail planners and technical experts identified four factors to assess feasibility of closing each of the four trail gaps:

1. Regional trails planning context;
2. Physical development context;
3. Regulatory complexity; and
4. Anticipated planning-level project cost.

Research to better analyze the gaps and the four factors included review of planning materials such as the King County Open Space Plan, studies like Regional Trail Needs Report (RTNR), and other analyses developed by King County and cities surrounding the SVT that includes Duvall, Carnation and Snoqualmie. In addition, analysis of the surrounding physical development and regulations was conducted as a part of the assessment. Finally, planning level cost estimates were identified which also include design, construction, and administration.

A summary is provided of the key factors for each SVT gap project and whether the gap project has low, moderate or high feasibility based on these factors able 1 below.

**Table 1 – Summary of Gap Assessment Factors and Feasibility**

	<b>Regional Trails Planning Context Feasibility</b>	<b>Physical Development Context Feasibility</b>	<b>Regulatory Complexity Feasibility</b>	<b>Planning-Level Project Cost</b>	<b>Overall Feasibility</b>
Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension	Low	Medium	Medium	\$26,000,000	Medium

	Regional Trails Planning Context Feasibility	Physical Development Context Feasibility	Regulatory Complexity Feasibility	Planning-Level Project Cost	Overall Feasibility
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap	Low	Medium	Medium	\$28,500,000	Medium
Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension	Low	Low	Low	\$34,000,000	Low
Snoqualmie Regional Connector	Low	Medium	Low	\$14,000,000	Low

#### IV. Background

**Department Overview:** The King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) works in support of sustainable and livable communities and a clean and healthy natural environment. The department’s mission is to foster environmental stewardship and strengthen communities by providing regional parks, protecting the region's water, air, land, and natural habitats, and reducing, safely disposing of, and creating resources from wastewater and solid waste. These activities include the creation and operation of regional trails and related facilities for recreation and active transportation.

**Division Overview:** The Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) of DNRP is responsible for managing the King County Regional Trails System, a network of regional shared-use trails and related facilities used by the public to make millions of bicycling, pedestrian, and other trips each year. The King County Regional Trails System now comprises approximately 175 miles out of more than 300 miles of trails throughout the county. Parks maintains a long-range regional trails plan, the Regional Trails Needs Report (RTNR), which identifies future regional trail projects.<sup>4</sup> The four gap projects assessed by this report are identified in the RTNR.

**Key Historical Context:** Each of the four gaps addressed by this assessment are longstanding and recognized in Regional Trails System planning documents, such as the RTNR, and capital planning efforts. They are described in Table 2.

**Table 2 - SVT Gaps Description**

Trail Gap Name	Description
Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension	A trail gap at the north end of the Snoqualmie Valley Trail between the City of Duvall and the King/Snohomish County boundary.

<sup>4</sup> [2016 Regional Trail Needs Report](#)

Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap	A trail gap between existing SVT segments flanking the historic Snoqualmie Mill site.
Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension	A trail gap between the existing terminus of the Preston-Snoqualmie Trail and the Snoqualmie Ridge and Centennial trails at Railroad Avenue (State Route 202) in Snoqualmie.
Snoqualmie Regional Connector	A missing link between the Snoqualmie Valley Trail at Tokul Road SE and Railroad Avenue SE.

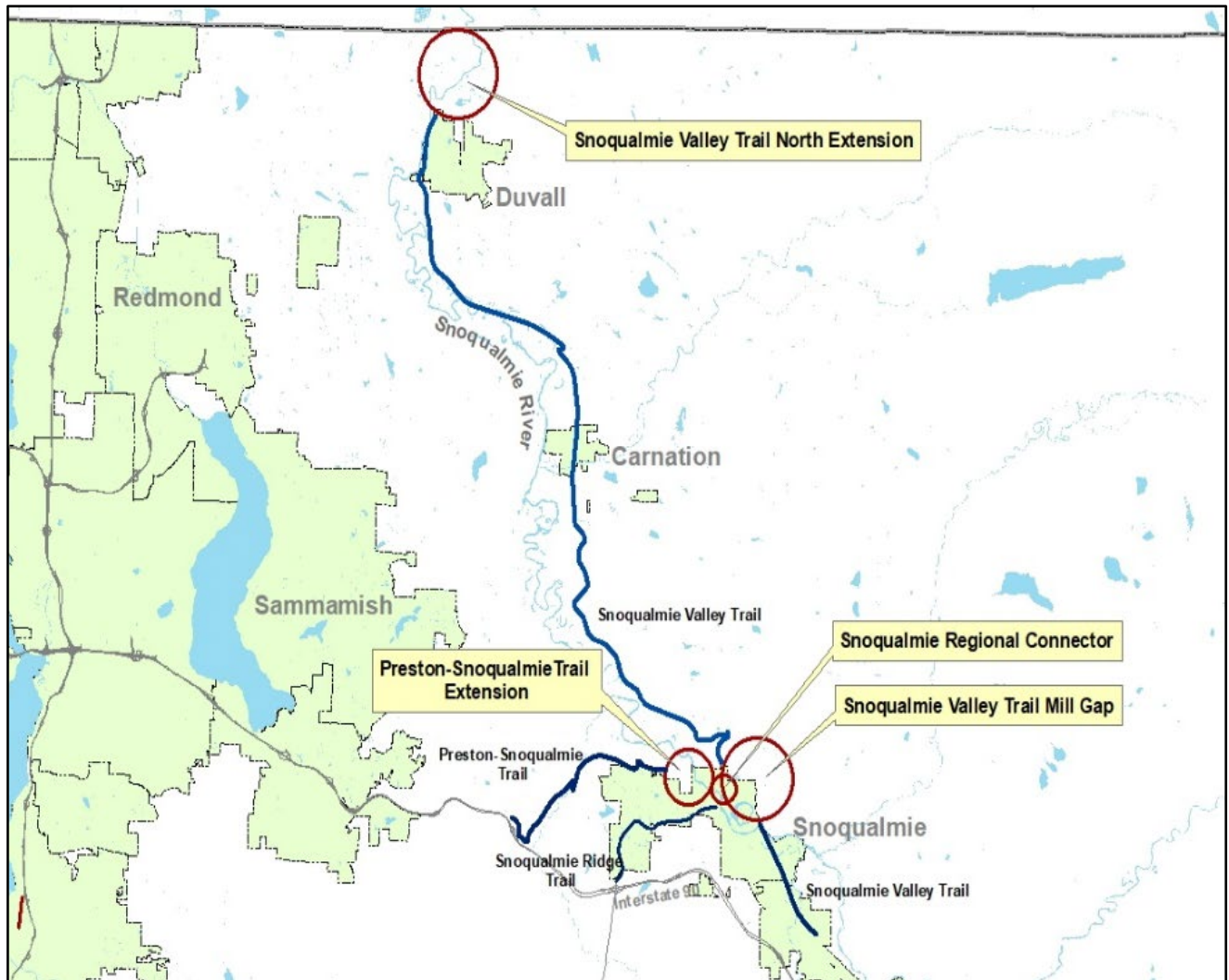
Two existing regional rail-trail corridors are associated with these gaps: 1) SVT and 2) the Preston-Snoqualmie Trail.<sup>5</sup> The Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension and Mill Gap are both gaps along the 30-mile-long SVT route. The Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension gap lies at the end of the Preston-Snoqualmie Trail route on the north side of Snoqualmie Ridge. The fourth gap is a missing link from the Snoqualmie Valley Trail to City of Snoqualmie trails along Railroad Avenue SE. This non-rail-trail would be filled by the Snoqualmie Regional Connector (SRC). These projects would be located largely in rural areas of King County within the Snoqualmie River Valley. Trail uses in these areas are predominantly recreational. The location of these gaps is shown in Figure 1 below.

The Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension was planned to be extended eastward along the abandoned historic Seattle, Lake Shore, and Eastern Railroad corridor owned by King County and Puget Sound Energy. The project proposed using existing historic trestles and building new facilities to reach Snoqualmie. After consultation with the Snoqualmie Tribe, however, the County paused the project on hold due to its close proximity to Snoqualmie Falls. The Tribe continues to support a possible alternative route for the extension away from Snoqualmie Falls.

---

<sup>5</sup> [Rails to Trails](#) Program: a voluntary agreement between railroad companies and a trail agency to use an out-of-service rail corridor as a trail.

Figure 1 Gap Locations



**Key Current Conditions:** Parks participates in regional trail planning activities with the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and is part of a developing network of trails throughout the four-county central Puget Sound metropolitan region.<sup>6</sup> The four counties are King, Kitsap, Pierce County and Snohomish counties. Trails are recognized as active transportation facilities and are included in the PSRC’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).<sup>7</sup> Active transportation is transportation that connects people of all ages and abilities to where they need to go using active modes such as walking and bicycling. Parks participates in the development of the regional Active Transportation Plan, Regional Bicycle Network, and other regional efforts.<sup>8, 9</sup> The PSRC works with the four counties on prioritizing regional trail development

<sup>6</sup> [Puget Sound Regional Council \(PSRC\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Regional Transportation Plan](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Active Transportation Plan](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Regional Bicycle Network](#)

projects. This information is considered by King County when planning for and developing regional trails as part of future parks levies.

Today, King County’s regional trails are largely constructed and maintained with funding provided by the Parks Levy and, to a lesser degree, by King County real estate excise taxes. Development of new regional trails has grown steadily since the first Parks Levy in 2002. The current Parks Levy has identified approximately \$160,000,000 for the design and development of several major regional trails projects. Examples of these are Eastrail, the Green River Trail Extension North, and Lake to Sound Trail.

The regional trails planning context provides the basis for future trail development. The RTNR identifies potential future trail projects based on availability of former railroad and powerline corridors, riverside routes, and necessary connections between these routes. Ongoing Parks capital improvement program (CIP) planning includes review and prioritization of prospective regional trail facilities based on their inclusion in the RTNR.

King County regional trail experts identified several factors when planning and prioritizing future trail projects, including project scale, anticipated project equity value, connectivity value, PSRC RTP, environmental and community complexity, and historical development context.<sup>10</sup> These are common assessment factors used in trail planning that help identify the priority for development of regional trails in King County.<sup>11</sup>

The Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) identifies project goals for the County’s regional trails for each levy period.<sup>12</sup> The King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan provides guidance on project selection based on consistency with plan goals, such as that capital development should be pro-equity and contribute to improved community conditions.<sup>13</sup> Other plans, such as the King County Strategic Plan and King County Parks Open Space Plan, also guide overall project development.<sup>14, 15</sup>

**Report Methodology:** This assessment has been prepared by Parks staff specializing in regional trails system planning, and regional trails capital development and project management. All four gap projects are recognized as potential candidates for development, and three – Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension, Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap, and Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension – have been the focus of previous and/or current corridor acquisitions. The fourth, the Snoqualmie Regional Connector, will provide increased regional trail connectivity in the Snoqualmie area. Long-range planning for these projects provides background for this assessment.

Parks’ regional trail experts selected four key planning-level determinants or factors for the assessment: regional trails planning context, physical development context, regulatory complexity, and anticipated

---

<sup>10</sup> [Regional Transportation Plan Score](#): air quality, freight, jobs, multi-modal, Puget Sound land and water, safety and system security, social equity and support for centers, travel.

<sup>11</sup> [Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Strategic Climate Action Plan](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan](#)

<sup>14</sup> [King County Strategic Plan](#)

<sup>15</sup> [King County Open Space Plan](#)



planning-level project cost. Analysis of these factors provides a broad survey of opportunities and issues associated with regional trail capital development.

Research included review of key planning materials, such as the RTNR, the Regional Trail Inventory and future project prioritization exercise for current Parks Levy projects, the [RTP](#) (PSRC, 2014, 2018, 2021) active transportation projects evaluations, the Regional Trails System Capital Program, 2014 Equity Impact Review (2014), and [King County iMap](#) (GIS data and images, 2021). Also reviewed were the 2016 King County Open Space Plan, the 2020 SCAP Update, and the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016 Implementation Guidelines (2004), Regional Trails Plan (1992), and the King County Urban Trails Plan (1971).<sup>16,17</sup> Review also used work from previous Regional Trails System CIP activities and documents, including a 2017-2022. Additional reports that were reviewed to inform this assessment can be found in Appendix A.

## V. Report Requirements

The first requirement in the Motion is to assess the feasibility and cost for the south extension of the Green to Cedar Rivers (G2C) trail, including connections to a Black Diamond open space area. This assessment was previously provided in September 2020.<sup>18</sup> The assessment was conducted to explore alternative uses for the \$9 million in the 2020-2025 King County Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy (Parks Levy) for North Segment A of the Green to Cedar (G2C) trail in partnership with the City of Maple Valley.<sup>19</sup> After a collaborative process with the City of Maple Valley, it was determined that the \$9 million allocated in the Parks Levy to the G2C Trail should be used to develop an interim gravel trail in South Segment A rather than for fully developing North Segment A. The Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) and the City of Maple Valley recommended this proposed change in phasing of the development of the G2C Trail. This proposed change was strongly supported by the community.

This assessment report provides a planning-level review of four King County Regional Trail System gaps in the Snoqualmie River Valley and projects which would address the gaps.<sup>20</sup> The review characterizes each of the four gaps in the regional trails network in the Snoqualmie Valley, as described below.

Each of the four gaps has been recognized in regional trails planning documents and capital planning efforts. The gaps are often referred to by the following project titles:

- Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension;
- Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap;
- Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension; and
- Snoqualmie Regional Connector.

**Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension:** This gap is located at the north end of the Snoqualmie Valley Trail between the City of Duvall and the boundary between King and Snohomish Counties. This 2.8-mile-long regional trail gap runs along an abandoned historic railroad corridor that now provides the linear

---

<sup>16</sup> [Regional Trail Inventory and Implementation Guidelines \(2004\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> Regional Trails Plan (1992), and the King County Urban Trails Plan (1971) are available in hardcopy y

<sup>18</sup> [Alternative Uses for Levy Fund for Green to Cedar Rivers Trail North Segment A](#)

<sup>19</sup> [2020-2025 Park, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Levy](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Parks Levy Motion 15378](#)

foundation for a potential extension of the SVT. The corridor generally parallels Duvall-Monroe Road NE (SR-203).

This assessment assumes that the project would create a 12-foot-wide compacted gravel trail with additional gravel shoulders of varying width on top of the existing railbed. Existing railroad trestles would be rehabilitated with new materials, decked with appropriately sized concrete panels, and fenced with railings for safety. The project would begin at the existing terminus of the Snoqualmie Valley Trail in Duvall and terminate at the King County/Snohomish County boundary. There is uncertainty as to when Snohomish County might extend the route north of King County. Trail character would be similar to the existing segments of the Snoqualmie Valley Trail and would lie atop the existing railbed above the surrounding landscape, Snoqualmie River, and adjacent Duvall-Monroe Road. Expansive views of the surrounding river valley and Cascade foothills would be expected.

This trail extension could potentially use the historic and abandoned Northern Pacific and Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific (Milwaukee Road) railroad corridor alignment for the trail. This railroad was only recently fully acquired, and it eliminates the need for the trail route to detour close to the Snoqualmie River. The City of Duvall has advocated for the project during the last decade to improve the city's access to trails.

**Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap:** This gap straddles the northern edge of the City of Snoqualmie and adjacent unincorporated King County. An existing abandoned railroad corridor crosses the gap while traversing the historic Weyerhaeuser Snoqualmie Mill site. This corridor is anticipated to provide the alignment for a missing segment of the Snoqualmie Valley Trail. The 2.0-mile-long project would link existing Snoqualmie Valley Trail segments northwest of the project at Tokul Road SE and southeast of the project at SE Reinig Road.

This assessment assumes that the project would create a 12-foot-wide compacted gravel trail with additional gravel shoulders of varying width on top of the existing railbed where it is available. Grading and earthwork would provide the basis for a continuous trail with gentle grades. The project would begin at the Tokul Railroad Tunnel on the existing SVT and continue across the Mill site to SE Reinig Road, where a new paved trail bridge would cross the road and connect to the existing SVT at the Snoqualmie River Meadowbrook Bridge. The railbed lies above the rest of Mill site and the Snoqualmie River Valley, offering views of the Mill site, the surrounding river valley, and the City of Snoqualmie.

The Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap would use the Milwaukee Road further east at Snoqualmie and would address a longstanding trail gap through the former Weyerhaeuser Snoqualmie Mill, a historic site between unincorporated King County and the city. The site is still owned, in part, by the Weyerhaeuser Company. Negotiations have been underway for a decade to complete acquisitions for the regional trail project and are continuing under the terms of a 2011 Annexation Agreement between King County and the city.

**Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension:** This gap is located between the terminus of the existing Preston-Snoqualmie Trail on the north side of Snoqualmie Ridge and the City of Snoqualmie east of Snoqualmie Falls, a distance of approximately 1.7 miles. As discussed above, the project as originally conceived was paused after consultation with the Snoqualmie Tribe due to its proximity to the Snoqualmie Falls. The tribe supports an alternative route for the extension away from Snoqualmie Falls.

Alternative A would make use of Lake Alice Road SE, a powerline corridor, and a short segment of Douglas Avenue SE, a Snoqualmie Ridge community arterial. This assessment, however, recognizes that other viable alternatives may have yet to be identified. It is assumed that, where possible, the trail should meet Parks' standards for surfacing, width, and grade – a 12-foot-wide paved trail with a maximum grade of five percent or less. This route would total about 2.8 miles to the Snoqualmie Ridge Trail along Snoqualmie Parkway. The route would then continue over the ridge on the Snoqualmie Ridge Trail to the junction of the Centennial Trail and Railroad Avenue for a total distance of about 5.1 miles.

**Snoqualmie Regional Connector:** this gap is located between the SVT corridor at or near the Tokul Railroad Tunnel, where the SVT crosses under Tokul Road SE to recent road improvements completed within the City of Snoqualmie that lead to Railroad Avenue and bridge across the Snoqualmie River. The project is conceived as a relatively straightforward 0.6-mile-long connection trail parallel to the alignment of Tokul Road SE.

This assessment assumes that the project would create a 12-foot-wide paved trail with 2-foot-wide gravel shoulders along a potential alignment through City of Snoqualmie property. This alignment would have to be acquired or otherwise secured from the city. The trail would begin at the SVT east of the Tokul Railroad Tunnel and continue south, parallel to the existing City of Snoqualmie property access road to SE Mill Pond Road. The trail would then turn west along SE Mill Pond Road as a side trail to the existing intersection of SE Mill Pond Road, Railroad Avenue SE, and Tokul Road SE at a road roundabout, where the trail would terminate. Users could cross through the roundabout on existing pedestrian facilities and continue along Railroad Avenue SE and central Snoqualmie.

It is anticipated that once addressed, the four trail gaps (Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap, Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension (Alternative A), and Snoqualmie Regional Connector) would become segments of the [proposed Great American Rail-Trail](#) through King County.<sup>21</sup>

**Gap Projects Assessment and Findings:** Each of the four gap projects was reviewed using the four factors described to ascertain its relative feasibility and cost for implementation to fill the identified gaps. The four factors were developed by Park's trail experts and findings are summarized below:

- Regional trails planning context;
- Physical development context;
- Regulatory complexity; and
- Anticipated planning-level project cost.

### **Assessment Factor 1: Regional Trails Planning Context**

This assessment considered each of the gap projects through their consistency with applicable plans and policies such RTP, 2016 King County Open Space Plan, the 2020 SCAP Update, King County Strategic Plan, and the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan. All gap projects are listed in the RTNR, which includes more than 60 planned trail projects. The RTNR rankings for the gap projects are shown in Table 2.

---

<sup>21</sup> Great American Rail-Trail: This will connect 145 and more existing rail-trails, greenways and other multiuse paths spanning more than 3,700 miles.

**Table 3 – RTNR Trail Gap Rankings**

Gap Project	RTNR Inclusion?	Ranked Order out of 60
Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension	Yes	No. 33
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap	Yes	No. 22
Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension	Yes	No. 36
Snoqualmie Regional Connector	Yes	No. 45

Projects in the RTNR are ranked based on the following:

- the project is already under development;
- the project is of regional trail network importance based on the PSRC RTP;
- the project is expected to be heavily used for active transportation and recreation.

For example, the five Eastrail projects are all ranked highest based on the criteria above. The placement of the gap projects in the RTNR is an indication of their priority for implementation among all identified future Parks regional trail projects. The Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap’s higher ranking reflects its longstanding value as a trail connection in the Snoqualmie Valley.

In 2017 and in preparation for the 2020-2025 Parks Levy, Parks capital planning experts assessed 15 potential future trail projects that were in the RTNR. This provides an additional prioritization of future trail project development priorities and is linked to the regional priorities established by the PSRC. Parks assessed 15 future trail projects using the criteria below:

- Project scale;
- Anticipated project equity value;
- Connectivity value;
- PSRC RTP score;
- Environmental and community complexity; and
- Historical development context.

Projects were scored and ranked by Parks trail experts for development consideration as the next step in expanding the Regional Trail System (shown in [Table 4](#)). Community engagement about regional trails projects took place during the development of the 2020-2025 Parks Levy.

**Table 4 - Parks Division Ranking of SVT Gaps**

Gap Project	Rank (Out of 15 Future Projects)
Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension	13
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap	12
Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension (Alt A)	15*
Snoqualmie Regional Connector	9

Planning for the PSRC RTP also provides an opportunity for Parks to evaluate the County’s future regional trails project.<sup>22</sup> All four gap projects were last evaluated in 2013 by the PSRC for placement in the regional plan as active transportation projects. The PSRC evaluates and scores prospective local projects across nine criteria that focus on alignment with the overall four-county regional growth strategy, which defines roles for different types of places in accommodating the region's population and employment growth. This then informs countywide growth targets, local plans and regional plans.<sup>23</sup> The criteria are as follows:

- Air Quality – influence on regional air quality;
- Freight – influence on regional freight operations;
- Jobs – support for access to regional jobs;
- Multi-Modal – support for multi-modal transportation opportunities;
- Puget Sound Land and Water – influence on regional critical areas and habitat;
- Safety and System Security – influence on safety-related conditions and resiliency;
- Social Equity and Opportunity – impacts to minority, low income, elderly, people with disabilities, and households without vehicles; influences on public health, support for access to opportunities;
- Support for Centers – support for access and mobility within and between regional and local growth centers, manufacturing industrial centers; support for denser housing and transit; and
- Travel – support to improve congestion.

As shown in Table 5, all four projects are lower priority from a regional perspective. The PSRC evaluation, with its focus on alignment with the regional growth strategy awarded a higher score (higher priority status) to the Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension. The remaining three projects scored among the lowest of the projects submitted to the plan with a score under 28, indicating that they are not good candidate trail projects.

**Table 5 - PSRC RTP SVT Gap Scores**

Gap Project	PSRC RTP Evaluation Score (project scores under 28 are low priority)
Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension	21
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap	23
Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension (Alt A)	30
Snoqualmie Regional Connector	23

**SCAP**

The SCAP provides a five-year blueprint for King County’s climate action. King County Parks’ regional trails play a role in the SCAP to promote active recreation and multimodal transportation and reduce dependence on motor vehicles. Goals focus on extending existing regional trails and developing new routes, especially in historically underserved areas and communities with poor health indicators relative to the County population. None of the four gap projects would be expected to support Parks’ current primary SCAP goals that recognize the completion of additional trail miles, crossings, and intermodal connection for current Levy projects. Completing these gap projects could augment the 2020 SCAP, however, and enhance the network for more recreation-oriented trail use. See Table 5 below:

<sup>22</sup> [Regional Transportation Plan 2018](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Regional Growth Strategy](#)

**Table 6 - SCAP SVT gaps Assessment**

<b>Gap Project</b>	<b>Supports Parks' Current SCAP Goals</b>	<b>Augments Current SCAP Goals</b>
Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension	No	Yes
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap	No	Yes
Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension (Alt A)	No	Yes
Snoqualmie Regional Connector	No	Yes

Equity and Social Justice

King County’s Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016-2022 states that long-term, sustainable changes within the community require a comprehensive pro-equity approach to King County government.<sup>24</sup> A part of that strategy includes capital development policy, budgets, portfolios, and programs that are pro-equity and contribute to improved community conditions.

The 2017 planning analysis referenced above included consideration of anticipated equity value of the gap projects based on the Regional Trails System Capital Program 2014 Equity Impact Review.<sup>25</sup> a The Equity Impact Review conducted by Parks assessed trail projects based on their anticipated positive impact to enhance more equitable outcomes, such as increasing access to trails for all King County residents. All four gap projects scored “low” in this capacity, which was reflected in the 2017 CIP prioritization exercise. As a result, it is unlikely that they would have a strong consistency with the current Equity and Social Justice Plan. See Table 7 below:

**Table 7 - Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan SVT Gaps Assessment**

<b>Gap Project</b>	<b>Consistency with the Equity and Social Justice Goals</b>
Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension	Low
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap	Low
Preston-Snoqualmie Valley Trail Extension (Alt A)	Low
Snoqualmie Regional Connector	Low

Other relevant plans include the King County Open Space Plan and the King County Strategic Plan.<sup>26 27</sup> Because these plans provide policies by which County facilities and operations are undertaken, including regional trail facilities, this assessment assumes all Parks regional trail projects, including these gap projects, would be developed consistent with these plans.

Table 8 provides a summary of assessment factor 1 which analyzes the regional planning context and provides a feasibility of low, medium, or high depending on ranking level, score and consistency.

<sup>24</sup> [Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan](#)

<sup>26</sup> [King County Strategic Plan](#)

<sup>27</sup> [King County Open Space Plan](#)

**Table 8 - Consistency with Regional Trails Planning**

	<b>Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension</b>	<b>Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap</b>	<b>Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension (Alt A)</b>	<b>Snoqualmie Regional Connector</b>
<b>RTNR Consistency</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>RTS CIP Priorities</b>	Ranked 13 out of 15 next projects	Ranked 12 out of 15 next projects	Ranked 15 out of 15 next projects	Ranked 9 out of 15 next projects
<b>Parks Open Space Plan</b>	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent
<b>Regional Planning (PSRC Evaluation)</b>	21 out of 100 Possible Points	23 out of 100 Possible Points	30 out of 100 Possible Points	23 out of 100 Possible Points
<b>KC Strategic Plan</b>	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Consistent
<b>Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP)</b>	Augments SCAP goals only	Augments SCAP goals only	Augments SCAP goals only	Augments SCAP goals only
<b>KC Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan</b>	Low consistency	Low consistency	Low consistency	Low consistency
<b>Feasibility for Regional Trails Planning Context</b>	Low	Low	Low	Low

**Assessment Factor 2: Physical Development Context**

Physical development context plays a significant role in the successful completion of a new regional trail project. The nature of the project and the physical context in which it can be accomplished are inherently linked. The physical development circumstances associated with each of the gap projects were examined in order to understand whether the projects could be developed. The assessment reviewed each of the four gap projects for opportunities and issues related to topography, sensitive areas, logistical challenges, and other physical challenges based on their development scope. These are summarized in Table 9 along with feasibility (low, medium, high) based on this factor.

**Table 9 - Physical Development Context**

<b>Gap Project</b>	<b>Topography</b>	<b>Environmentally Sensitive Areas<sup>28</sup></b>	<b>Logistical Challenges</b>	<b>Other Physical Issues</b>	<b>Feasibility for Physical Development Context</b>

<sup>28</sup> Environmentally sensitive areas are lands with natural hazards or lands that support certain unique, fragile or valuable resource areas.

<b>Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension</b>	Not a significant challenge; uses existing abandoned railbed in river valley.	Influenced by floodplain, aquatic sensitive areas.	Linear railbed and isolation from surrounding areas may limit access.	Previous agricultural uses and structures may require demolition or integration.	Medium
<b>Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap</b>	On abandoned railbed but some site-specific grading and improvements may be necessary to provide continuous suitable trail corridor.	Influenced by nearby floodplain and aquatic sensitive areas (e.g., wetlands and Lake Borst); possible mill contamination.	Multiple access points; coordination will be necessary with other existing and planned mill site uses.	Close proximity of the project to an existing gravel quarry and quarry encroachments may require negotiated solutions and corridor improvements.	Medium
<b>Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension (Alternative A)</b>	Significant elevation difference of 550 feet along the route would create challenging trail grades and may limit ADA compliance.	Steep slopes and landslide hazard areas, along with some aquatic sensitive areas, may constrain development.	Trail alignment with other existing facilities (Lake Alice Road SE, PSE power corridor, Douglas Avenue SE) would likely require co-location and coordination with other agencies; use agreements or partnerships with agencies would likely	Route could require significant clearing and grading to achieve acceptable trail gradient and meet ADA. Continued search for a more suitable alternative route may be warranted.	Low



			be necessary.		
<b>Snoqualmie Regional Connector</b>	Route would have a mild grade, but site topography (east-west) and necessary integration with existing municipal facilities could challenge implementation.	No aquatic sensitive areas are mapped on site, but area is a tributary basin to the Snoqualmie River.	Integration of the trail with existing and future municipal uses could be challenging; use agreement or partnership with the City of Snoqualmie would be necessary to implement.	Locating a trail through the site could be challenging, given existing uses. Continued search for a more suitable alternative route may be warranted.	Medium

As shown in Table 7, each of the gap projects would require addressing unique physical development circumstances. While the Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension would be located atop a level railbed, it will be influenced by the Snoqualmie River floodplain and related aquatic sensitive areas. The Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap must also address its relatively close proximity to the river and aquatic sensitive areas onsite. It also faces some unique challenges with an existing gravel quarry, as well as coordinating with future mill site uses. The Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension (Alternative A) faces significant grade challenges, along with the need to combine the trail with roads and other existing non-Parks facilities. A continued search for a more suitable alternative route may be warranted. The Snoqualmie Regional Connector would be a short project with a limited grade, but development options across the site would be challenging. East-west topography and existing site uses limit available options for a trail, and it would have to be integrated with City of Snoqualmie municipal uses. A continued search for a more suitable alternative route may be warranted.

**Assessment Factor 3: Regulatory Complexity**

Each of the four gap projects will be subject to local, state, and federal environmental regulations and permitting. Parks would have to complete an appropriate environmental review for each project with

documentation and must secure a variety of related permits before construction can begin. In some instances, interagency coordination or partnerships may be needed to realize the project, adding overall project complexity.

All four gap projects would require State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) environmental review. A variety of federal, state, and local environmental permits would also likely be necessary.<sup>29</sup> In addition, local building, grading, and clearing permits may be required. A summary of the anticipated level of complexity in meeting regulatory requirements is shown in Table 10.

**Table 10 - Regulatory Requirements Complexity**

<b>Gap Project</b>	<b>Environmental Regulations Complexity</b>	<b>Agency and Other Permitting Complexity</b>	<b>Level of Feasibility</b>
<b>Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension</b>	<u>Medium</u> - Regulations and permitting would likely focus on the proximity to the Snoqualmie River, floodplain, and aquatic sensitive areas. Moderately complex regulatory environment with focus on potential project impacts and mitigation.	<u>Low</u> - Local permitting and coordination with King County and the City of Duvall; possible coordination with County agricultural requirements.	<u>Medium</u>
<b>Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap</b>	<u>Medium</u> - Regulations and permitting would likely focus on the proximity to the Snoqualmie River and aquatic sensitive areas (e.g., wetlands and Lake Borst). Moderately complex regulatory environment with focus on project impacts and mitigation.	<u>Low</u> - Local permitting coordination between King County and City of Snoqualmie; grading and other local permits for project likely necessary.	<u>Medium</u>
<b>Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension (Alternative A)</b>	<u>High</u> - Regulations and permitting would likely focus on topography and steep slopes – necessary clearing and grading; co-location with roads and other facilities requiring multi-agency coordination and possible partnerships.	<u>High</u> - The alternative would likely require coordination and sharing of existing roads and other facilities with other agencies (e.g., the King County Road Services Division and the City of Snoqualmie) requiring ongoing coordination or partnerships, and consultation with the Snoqualmie Tribe.	<u>Low</u>

<sup>29</sup> Permits include Section 404 and Section 402 Clean Water Act permits, National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, State hydraulic project approval (HPA), and State Shoreline Management Act shoreline permits, as well as local critical areas permits and floodplain development permits.

<b>Snoqualmie Regional Connector</b>	<u>Medium</u> - Regulations and permitting would likely focus on local clearing and grading.	<u>High</u> - Integrating the trail with other development on the City of Snoqualmie site would require multi-agency cooperation or partnership between Parks and the city. Snoqualmie development regulations and permitting would apply.	<u>Low</u>
--------------------------------------	--	--	------------

**Assessment Factor 4: Planning-Level Project Cost**

Planning-level cost estimates, based on generic knowledge of the project development process and anticipation of project-specific circumstances, are identified below. Parks has provided planning-level estimates for each of the four gap projects for order-of-magnitude purposes and comparison. In all instances these estimates are high-level and include up to 50 percent contingency for early planning purposes (see Table 9).

**Table 11 - SVT Gaps Planning Level Project Cost Estimates**

Gap Project Cost Estimates				
Gap Project	Construction	Design Activities	Administration and Overhead	Estimated Total Project Cost
Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension	\$18,600,000	\$4,000,000	\$3,400,000	\$26,000,000
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap	\$20,000,000	\$4,800,000	\$3,700,000	\$28,500,000
Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension (Alternative A)	\$24,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$34,000,000
Snoqualmie Regional Connector	\$8,800,000	\$3,200,000	\$2,000,000	\$14,000,000

**VI. Feasibility Summary**

This report provides the feasibility assessment cost range to close the gaps in the Snoqualmie Valley Trail, the former Snoqualmie Mill site in the City of Snoqualmie, and between the Preston-Snoqualmie Trail and Snoqualmie Valley Trail as called for by Motion 15378. Below is a summary of the factors used to assess feasibility and cost of closing the SVT trail gaps.

Based on the assessment factors utilized and cost considerations, closure of the SVT North Extension and Mill gaps are medium feasibility for future levy periods but would require further study. The Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension and Snoqualmie Regional Connector are low feasibility.

	<b>Regional Trails Planning Context Feasibility</b>	<b>Physical Development Context Feasibility</b>	<b>Regulatory Complexity Feasibility</b>	<b>Planning-Level Project Cost</b>	<b>Overall Feasibility</b>
Snoqualmie Valley Trail North Extension	Low	Medium	Medium	\$26,000,000	Medium
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Gap	Low	Medium	Medium	\$28,500,000	Medium
Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Extension	Low	Low	Low	\$34,000,000	Low
Snoqualmie Regional Connector	Low	Medium	Low	\$14,000,000	Low

**VII. Appendices**

Appendix A: Documents used to inform the assessment of feasibility and cost of the gaps in the Snoqualmie Valley Trail

**Documents used to inform the assessment of feasibility and cost of the gaps in the Snoqualmie Valley Trail**

- The Preston-Snoqualmie Trail Alternatives Analysis (SBA, 2007);
- New Trail from the City of Snohomish to the City of Duvall, through the City of Monroe (correspondence from Tim Hermann with supporter's petition, June 2017);
- Snoqualmie Valley Mill Site – Regional Trail and Open Space Conservation Futures (CFT) 2015 Annual Collections Application for Funds (King County Parks, March 2014);
- Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Pond Site Missing Link Acquisitions Options (King County Parks, May 2018);
- Snoqualmie Valley Trail Mill Site Missing Link Acquisition Summary and Background (King County Parks, May 2018);
- Sediment and Soil Sampling Summary Weyerhaeuser Snoqualmie Mill Pond Snoqualmie Washington (PES Environmental, Inc, June 30, 2020);
- PES Environmental, Inc. Summary Response (Letter, King County Parks, September 16, 2020);
- Snoqualmie Recreation (Brochure, City of Snoqualmie, 2018); and
- Urban Trails Plan (1971).