

UNION STREET RAILROAD BRIDGE



Union Street Railroad Bridge

Connecting West Salem and Downtown. In April 2009, Salem opened the transformed Union Street Railroad steel bridge and timber trestle into a new passage for bicyclists and pedestrians. Two large parks – Wallace Marine Park and Riverfront Park - bookend this historic Willamette River crossing. The converted bridge connects Salem's bicycle and pedestrian systems into a single, safe, and enjoyable network.

The concept for this community project gained momentum in 2004 when the City purchased the Union Street Railroad Bridge and adjoining right-of-way from the Union Pacific Railroad for one dollar. Union Pacific donated \$550,000 for long-term maintenance, becoming the project's first partner. Additional funding for construction was provided by grants from the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, and the Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Salem, as well as donations from Cycle Oregon and individuals.

The City recently completed the lead paint encapsulation and installation of security cameras. Thanks to a \$2.1 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant from ODOT's Transportation Enhancement Program. This new paint system will help to preserve the bridge for years to come.

Vision. In addition to the Union Street Railroad Bridge Conversion, the City is planning to construct a new footbridge connecting Minto-Brown Island Park with Riverfront Park and downtown Salem. The two bridges hold the promise of connecting the City's major urban parks and trails, and providing needed multi-modal access for families, commuters, visitors, and recreationists who live, work, and play in Salem.

Linking the City's major urban parks will connect a 1,036-acre portfolio of popular downtown parklands and 26 miles of trails. The bridges will also unite bicycle and pedestrian networks on both sides of the River, becoming a popular spot for tourists. Bicycle and foot commuters from West Salem will be able to reach jobs downtown and at the Capitol Mall on a safer, more pleasant, traffic-separated route. Areas adjoining both proposed bridges are being transformed into vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods blending retail, office, and housing.

These facilities, located in the heart of Salem, are poised to serve as vital community connections as adjoining areas of the City transform and revitalize.



*Kayakers at Union Street Railroad Bridge
Courtesy: David Bogan*