



## Promoting Active Transportation in Soap Lake

The City of Soap Lake built new, safer, and more accessible streets to encourage walking and biking to work, home, and all activities in between for residents and visitors.

In North Central Washington, residents have more opportunities for physical activity and active transportation through the adoption of “complete streets” ordinances.

Complete streets ordinances promote the thoughtful design of roadways to include all modes of transportation and improve the walkability of communities. Complete streets are safer, more convenient, and comfortable not only for drivers but also for pedestrians, bicyclists, children, and people with disabilities.

With the help of the Rural Communities Design Initiative (RCDI) at Washington State University, Soap Lake developed a master plan and received funding from the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) to complete the first stage of the improvements. Local organizations and partners participated in the planning and donated money to improve the aesthetics of the street.

### **Parks and Recreation Plan**

Helping Soap Lake community members live healthy, active lives is one of the goals of the Parks and Recreation Plan. This goal is why the Grant County Health District was a key partner in the development of the plan, which started with the adoption of the Complete Street Ordinance in 2013. A major highway runs through the city of Soap Lake, so the ordinance was a huge win for residents because it ensures that all future development will consider walkability and safety in the small, rural city.



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### **The City of Soap Lake Plans for Complete Streets**

Over the last year, the City of Soap Lake has worked to implement their complete streets policy through their Main Street Project and Parks and Recreation Plan.

### **Main Street Project**

The City of Soap Lake wanted to improve street access for pedestrians and motorized vehicles on the main street and in the business district.



*Downtown Soap Lake after the implementation of the Main Street Project*

Photo: Tamara Blalock

In 2014, GCHD worked with the Soap Lake Parks and Recreation subcommittee to rally support and participation by holding community forums, conducting surveys, and hosting design meetings with both residents and visitors.

As they analyzed the data, one key theme that emerged was residents wanted to take advantage of the health and environmental benefits of a walkable city—they wanted Soap Lake to have safe and identifiable walking areas that both residents and visitors could enjoy.

Adoption of the Soap Lake Park and Recreation Plan by the Soap Lake City Council is expected in January 2016. The vision is to create a trail system that allows neighborhoods and key facilities to be accessible to all residents of varying ability. The plan will create an environment that naturally encourages active transportation by foot or bike from residents' homes to activities downtown or to parks and trails. The hope is that this environment will also increase recreational walking and biking.

The plan will also serve as a guide to complete a trail network, improve all city parks, make the Soap Lake shoreline a better place for recreation, and increase safe places for active transportation in the city and on the lake. With all of these changes, more people will have the opportunity to be physically active and enjoy being outdoors in Soap Lake.

Other communities in North Central Washington that have adopted complete streets policies or are currently working on pedestrian plans include: Electric City, Moses Lake, Quincy, Ephrata, Wenatchee, and Coulee Dam.



*The Interpretive Trail Plan for Soap Lake*

Map: Neil Kovach

**Quick Facts About 1422**

**State investments in community**

\$1.62 million annually

**Number of years awarded**

4

**Number of funded communities**

5

**Total number of counties reached**

22

**Total potential reach**

2,108,010 adult community members



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