

Rivera, Eva

From: Ray Paoella <rpaoella@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2026 5:04 PM
To: Martin, Trevor
Cc: Ask Planning
Subject: Yakima Comprehensive Plan Update and SEPA
Attachments: YHD BRIC Funding Request.pdf; Award Letter WODT.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Trevor:

On behalf of the William O. Douglas Trail Foundation (WODTF) based in Yakima, WA, I ask that the City extend the public participation review and comment period until the October 28, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, regarding: (1) the *NEW* Comprehensive Plan 2025 Update on Climate Resiliency and Transportation elements and (2) SEPA Checklist and Proposed DNS.

In a long-standing partnership with the City of Yakima, the William O. Douglas Trail serves many people in the East Yakima Overburdened Community, as designated by the Washington State Department of Health. WODTF has received grant funding from federal, state, and local agencies to support healthy outdoor recreation opportunities and access to green space for residents in the East Yakima Overburdened Community. For example, see the attached grant award from the Yakima Health District under the BRIC program (Building Resilient Inclusive Communities).

Many hundreds of children living in East Yakima use the William O. Douglas Trail on a daily basis to travel safely to and from school by foot or by bicycle. You can see this at Stanton Academy High School at the beginning and end of each school day.

WODTF also works closely with the Yakama Nation on enabling tribal access to Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP).

WODTF has been unable to effectively comment on the Climate Resiliency Element because the City did not disclose to the public the Climate Vulnerability Assessment Memo and Climate Element Crosswalk document. SEPA requires environmental full disclosure to the public. As of this morning, these important Climate documents were not on the City's designated public participation website.

Please include this email in the official record that goes to the Yakima City Council.

Thank you,

Raymond Paoella
WODTF President



Notification of Award

March 22, 2022

Attn: Raymond L. Paoella, President
William O. Douglas Trail Foundation
P.O. Box 2003
Yakima, WA 98907

Dear Mr. Paoella

Thank you for submitting your Letter of Request for Funding for Building Resilient Inclusive Communities (BRIC) Funds.

I am pleased to inform you that the William O' Douglas Trail Foundation has been awarded its full requested amount of \$6,900.00.

Our accounting department requires a W-9 from all awarded applicants. Please submit this to Jessica.vandoren@co.yakima.wa.us. **Please note: All BRIC funds need to be invoiced to the Yakima Health District by June 1, 2022.**

We look forward to seeing how the project evolves with the help of the BRIC funds. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with any future activities that help engage and increase safe physical activity that results in a healthier future for Yakima County.

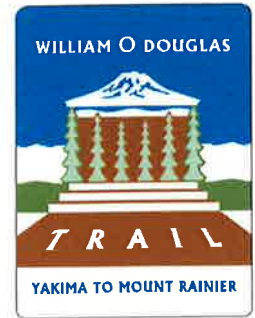
Sincerely,

Lilián Bravo
Director of Public Health Partnerships

DOC. Inclusive
D-14

March 1, 2022

Lilian Bravo, Public Health Partnerships Coordinator
Yakima Health District
1210 Ahtanum Ridge Drive
Union Gap, WA 98903



RE: Building Resilient Inclusive Communities Funding Request

Dear Ms. Bravo:

I am writing on behalf of the William O. Douglas Trail Foundation (WODTF), a Washington non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, to request funding under the Building Resilient Inclusive Communities (BRIC) program to increase community access to nature and safe physical activity opportunities.

WODTF would like to request a total of \$6,900.00 in BRIC funds. These funds will be used to enhance inclusive and equitable access to safe physical activity areas among disproportionately impacted, low-SES and communities of color in northeast Yakima by designing trail access improvements near 6th Avenue. The strategies to increase community access are described below, and the design tasks are specified in Attachment A: Budget.

The northeastern neighborhoods of Yakima are a significant "Overburdened Community" where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts. The State Department of Health has designated these overburdened neighborhoods as having high "Environmental Health Disparities," where communities of color and low-income populations are disproportionately affected by lack of access to safe physical activity areas and nature.

"Upstream" social, environmental, and institutional inequities can be the root cause of "downstream" chronic disease and increased rates of morbidity, especially in communities of color and among lower income populations that historically lacked adequate access to parks, green space, and healthy outdoor recreation opportunities. One key strategy for preventing and controlling chronic disease and reducing health inequities resulting from upstream factors can be to increase access to walking, biking, running, and experiencing nature close to home.

WODTF owns 70 acres of open space recreation lands on the north bank of the Naches River, including the William O. Douglas Hill Climb at Selah Gap. This area was used by U. S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas (as a teenager) to strengthen his disease-weakened legs by regularly walking two miles from his northeast Yakima home, crossing the Naches River, and then hiking up Selah Ridge. His health improved greatly. As he grew stronger and matured, Douglas continued with regular physical activities close to his Yakima home, became a brilliant student, a lawyer and judge, and came close to becoming President of the United States.

WODTF is working with the Cities of Yakima and Selah, and Yakima County, to create healthier neighborhoods by improving access to parks, open space, nature, and outdoor recreation areas close to where people live. Northeast Yakima residents could especially benefit from providing safe access to recreation opportunities along the Naches River and the William O. Douglas Hill Climb recreation lands at Selah Gap (see attached photo of Naches River Bridge with north bank recreation areas in background, together with a second photo of students who accessed this area from the Selah side).

WODTF seeks funding for engineering design and specifications for bridge decking and fencing on the Naches River Multi-Modal Bridge so northeast Yakima residents and students can walk, run, or bike north on the existing 6th Avenue pathway and safely cross the Naches River to access open space recreation areas at Selah Gap without relying on motor vehicle transportation. A licensed bridge and structural engineer will design this bridge walkway to meet and exceed all applicable safety standards and codes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Raymond L. Paoella
 Raymond L. Paoella, President
 William O. Douglas Trail Foundation
 P.O. Box 2003
 Yakima, WA 98907
 (509) 594-6999

Attachment A: Budget

<u>Description</u>	<u>Total</u>
Engineering Services, Plans, and Specifications • Design pedestrian walkway on Naches River Bridge that meets and exceeds all applicable safety standards and codes. • Design ADA accessible ramp from existing Greenway Path.	<u>\$4,900</u>
Wayfinding/Interpretive Signage • Design, fabricate, and install directional trail signs. • Design, fabricate, and install an informational sign about health benefits of hiking on William O. Douglas Trail.	<u>\$2,000</u>

Attachment B: Support Letters and Supplemental Information



Stanton Academy

802 River Road • Yakima, WA 98902 • 573-1200

William O. Douglas Trail Foundation
4001 Summitview Avenue, Suite 5-45
Yakima, WA 98908

Vision Statement:

"Beginning with the end in mind..."

Mission Statement:

*Students, families, and staff
working together towards
graduation.*

2015-2016 School Focus:

*Literacy
Relationships
Collaboration*

To whom it may concern:

I am currently the principal at Stanton Academy located on River Road to the west of 6th Avenue. We have direct access to the William O. Douglas Trail. Our students utilize the trail on a daily basis, coming to and departing school. A basic requirement for our students to graduate is the knowledge of United States History. What better opportunity than to explore the early life of one of our Supreme Court Justices? The local effort to preserve this important part of history is a movement our students should be involved in.

During the 2015-2016 school year, we had one third of our students participate in an outdoor activity that spanned many content areas. In order to do this transportation, was a large detractor to planning. The activity included history, hiking, natural sciences, and sustaining nature. Having grown up in the area and hiked and biked in the proposed area, I personally support the project. To have access to an area such as the proposed Selah Ridge Area and the William O. Douglas hill climb would be a boon for us.

Our students get most of their experience of the city, state, and federal government through text or multimedia presentations. The opportunity to participate in this effort at whatever level will support their acquisition of local history, local government processes, and the federal court system. Students will have the chance to participate in the improvements in the city infrastructure along the route they travel on a daily basis.

As this effort progresses, I hope that we may participate in some way to help the project succeed. Stanton Academy has a strong sense of family. The values that this project is built upon is to bring a sense of community, history and pride which being a part of a family includes. These are a few of the reasons that I, as principal of Stanton Academy and an educator in the Yakima School District for 34 years can support this effort.

Dave Chaplin
Principal

Rod Bryant
Dean of Students



Sincerely,

David Chaplin
David Chaplin
Principal

Yakima School District encourages workforce diversity and complies with all state and federal laws prohibiting unlawful discrimination.



A.C. Davis High School
212 South 6th Avenue
Yakima, Washington 98902
509-573-2700



Leadership Yakima
Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 1490
Yakima, WA 98907

Dear Leadership Yakima Team:

I would like to write in support of the Naches River Bridge Walkway proposed by Leadership Yakima and the William O. Douglas Trail Foundation. The Yakima School District and the staff of A.C. Davis High School endeavor to provide the highest quality educational programs and learning opportunities for our students. Part of the educational process is teaching students the significance of our heritage.

The William O. Douglas Trail presents an excellent opportunity to teach students about local history and the environment. Davis High School plays an important role at the start of this trail because Douglas attended and served on the faculty of this institution. Several teachers have guided students on interpretive hikes to the Selah Gap area. These treks have enabled us to integrate important aspects of natural history, literature, and social studies in a manner that is not always possible in the classroom. Many students learn best when the theories or concepts acquired in the classroom are linked to "hands on" or "on the ground" learning. The Selah Gap and Naches/Yakima Rivers Confluence Area possesses a rich storehouse of local history, natural history, and landforms within the urban area that enhance such learning.

Installation of a pedestrian walkway on the trolley bridge will enable students, faculty, and community members to access this important resource area at the confluence of the Yakima and Naches Rivers. We hope to see this project completed to promote these unique learning opportunities and healthy outdoor activities for the community.

Sincerely,

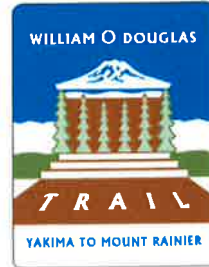
Ben Ramirez, Principal
A.C. Davis High School

We educate students for success: life-long learning, employment and social awareness.

"Yakima School District encourages workforce diversity and complies with all state and federal laws prohibiting unlawful discrimination."

WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS HERITAGE TRAIL

William O. Douglas grew up in Yakima, WA challenged by poverty and life-threatening illness. In a rags-to-riches story, Douglas overcame severe childhood disabilities, excelled academically, served prominently on the U.S. Supreme Court, and came close to becoming President of the United States.



William O. Douglas (born 1898) served on the U.S. Supreme Court from 1939 to 1975 — longer than any other justice in U.S. history. His father died when Douglas was 6 years old, and he was raised in Yakima by his mother. He graduated from North Yakima High School (valedictorian) in 1916 and attended Whitman College in Walla Walla from 1916-1920. He taught at Yakima High School for two years before jumping a train east to attend law school at Columbia, and thereafter became a law school professor at Columbia and Yale before being appointed in 1936 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to the new Securities and Exchange Commission. FDR appointed him to the Supreme Court in 1939 to fill the seat of retiring Justice Louis Brandeis.

On the Supreme Court, Douglas became a staunch advocate of Equal Protection for minority people, of First Amendment rights of expression, assembly, and religion, and of privacy rights. His influence on our law continues to be strongly felt. He was an extremely important figure to Native Americans and a very effective champion of preserving wilderness all over the Nation. He was also a prolific author, writing dozens of books and hundreds of magazine articles about his adventure travels and outdoor recreation. Douglas narrowly missed being selected as FDR's Vice-President in 1944, which would have made him President upon FDR's death in April 1945.

As a child, Douglas nearly died after being stricken with polio and was left greatly weakened. In 1912 he decided to strengthen his legs by hiking north from his 5th Avenue house in Yakima up into the hills near Selah Gap. The cure worked -- growing ever bolder during his teenage years, he explored further into the tangled, rugged mountains of the Pacific Northwest, and ultimately journeyed east to New York and Washington, D.C.

Info: www.williamodouglastrail.org

Email: williamodouglastrail@gmail.com

U. S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas on Hiking and Botanizing at Selah Ridge

My love of the mountains, my interest in conservation, my longing for the wilderness - all these were lifetime concerns that were established in my boyhood in the hills around Yakima and in the mountains to the west of it. This is one of the quietest, most peaceful spots on earth. It has special values for me. The Yakima Valley, whose orchards I see by day and lights by night, is the treasure house of my boyhood. It was there I dreamed the dream I lived as a man.

It was infantile paralysis that drove me to the outdoors. By boyhood standards, I was still a cripple, unable to compete physically. . . . I was a failure. If I were to have happiness and success, I must get strong. And so I searched for ways and means to do it. I got myself a set of barbells and practiced day after day, trying to strengthen my legs, back, and arm muscles. Even so, strenuous exercise still made me feel faint. Sometimes I would vomit, sometimes I'd get a severe headache. So I decided to start hiking the sagebrush hills that rim Yakima.

I would leave the town and head to Selah Gap, the point of the hills nearest my home on North Fifth Avenue. . . . The hills to the north of Yakima were only about two miles away. Thus I started my treks, and used the foothills as one uses weights or bars in a gymnasium. First I tried to go up them without stopping. When I conquered that, I tried to go up without a change of pace. When that was achieved, I practiced going up not only without a change of pace but whistling as I went.

That fall and winter the exercise began to work a transformation in me. By the time the next spring arrived, I had found new confidence in myself. My legs were filling out. They were getting stronger. I could go the two miles to Selah Gap at a fast pace and often reach the top of the ridge without losing a step or reducing my speed. My heart filled with joy, for I knew I could accept the invitation to visit the mountains. I would have legs and lungs equal to it.

The desert hills of Yakima had a poverty that sharpened perception - when a lone bitterroot is seen in bloom on scabland between batches of bunchgrass and sage, it can transform the spot as completely as only a whole bank of flowers could do in a more lush environment. It is the old relationship between scarcity and value, one of the botanical lessons which the foothills of Yakima taught me.

