

## Expanding Renton Trails

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The map in Figure 1 shows Renton trails in the Kennydale (K) and Highlands (H) areas of Renton. The map in Figure 2 shows the trail network that can be accessed from those areas via a **May Creek Footbridge** (red dot), if Renton completes any of 3 trails (missing links 1-3) to the bridge.

**Link 1** will complete the May Creek Trail from Lake Washington to Coal Creek Parkway, with a direct trail connection into Cougar Mountain Park.

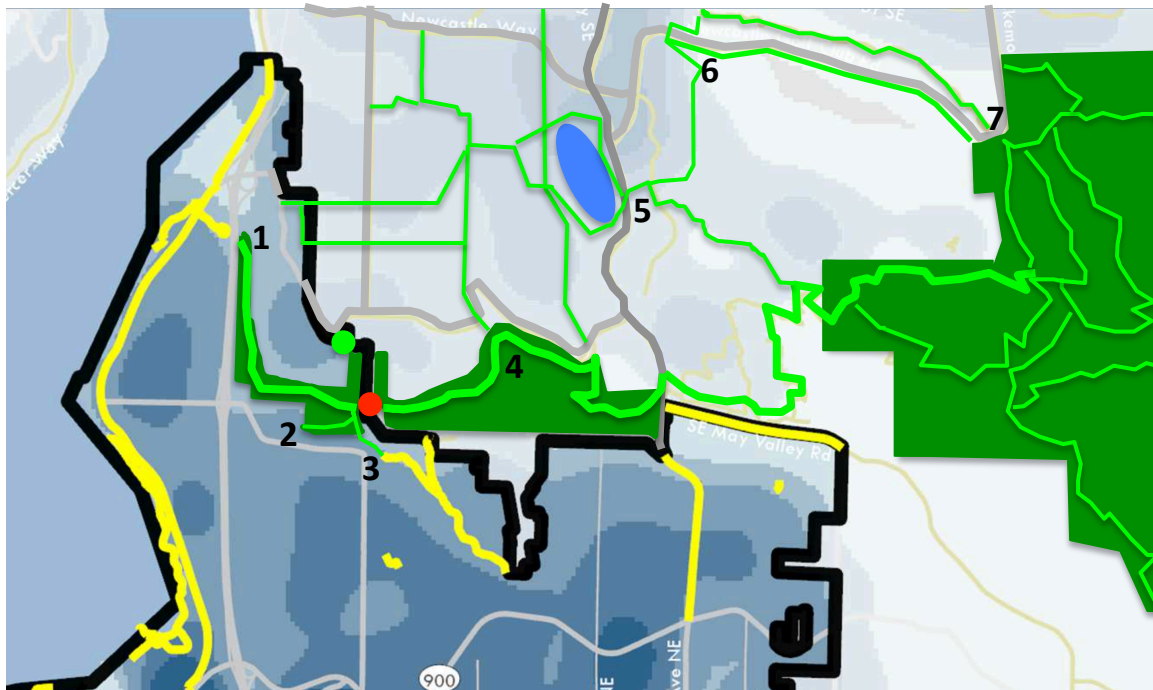
**Link 2** will complete the Pacific Railroad Trail from Kennydale to the footbridge (old trestle site).

**Link 3** will complete the Honey Creek Trail from the Highlands to the footbridge.

**At any time**, Renton can (a) build link 2 (on public land), and (b) renew the Renton-Newcastle-County partnership to pursue a grant and build the footbridge. Links 1 and 3 have the highest priority in Renton's Master Plan. Link 3 needs just one easement.

Link 2 (with a bridge) will expand Renton's trails into Newcastle, and complete a **history walk** on the old railroad grade: from Kennydale to the old trestle site (red dot), Bartram Station (4), Lake Boren (5), old Newcastle (6), and the Red Town trailhead (7). It might spur the completion of Kenyon-Dobson Park (green dot) and other links to the bridge.

### Figure 2. New Trails and Bridge Link Renton to Newcastle-Bellevue-County Trails



The **maps** in Figures 1 and 2 are based on Exhibit 2-2 of the 2019 **Renton Trails and Bicycle Master Plan**. That map shows bike and pedestrian trails in yellow, and population density in blue. In the maps above, green lines have been added to show proposed nature trails in Renton and (some, not all) existing pedestrian trails in Newcastle and Cougar Mountain Park. Newcastle's trails are shown as they'll appear in 2024. One exception: The Thomas Rouse Trail (on a historic road from 6 to 5) won't be complete until a **history park** at 6 is built in conjunction with a planned development.

The **May Creek Footbridge** is essential. It will complete long walking routes, link neighborhoods, and connect trail systems. It will link King County's Eastrail and Cougar Mountain Park via the May Creek Greenway. It will be a recreational attraction, like the suspension bridge in Bellevue's Botanical Garden. And, with the proposed Kenyon-Dobson (Gypsy Creek) trail, it will be the starting point for 5 trail walks (to Kenyon-Dobson Park or 1-4 and beyond), all in woodland, with views of creeks, varied destinations, and possible loop walks.

**Renton excels** in parks and bicycle trails. Coulon Beach Park will be the finest park on Lake Washington when the proposed Sam Chastain Trail is built. However, there's a deficit in pedestrian trails. A May Creek bridge-trail project can provide an under-served population with nature trails in two cities, and access to the large May Creek Park area owned by Renton, Newcastle and King County.

Of the 80 proposed trail projects in Renton's 2019 Master Plan, the highest priority goes to 23 bike and 3 pedestrian trail projects (Sam Chastain and links 1 & 3). But a project combining link 2 **and** the bridge might win the cost-benefit analysis. It can be started without delay. The project would increase the benefits (and benefit/cost ratios) of links 1 & 3, by greatly expanding the population served. And this might spur their completion.

**LOS Comparisons.** The benefits of links 1-3 go to the Kennydale and Highlands areas, which are deficient in trails. Their combined LOS (Level of Service in trail miles/1000 residents) is 0.13. Of the 7 other areas, 5 are higher (0.95, 0.61, 0.29, 0.23, 0.20) and only 2 are lower (.12 and .10). And the combined LOS for all 9 areas (Renton) is 0.29.

**City Comparisons.** In 2020, Renton (pop. 106,785) had about 30 miles of trails: 10 miles of pedestrian trails (with 4 soft surface), and 20 miles of bike trails (including shared trails and bike lanes). Newcastle (pop. 12,078) had about 20 miles of named pedestrian trails, but only 12 counted towards trail LOS (the rest are streets or sidewalks). Most of the 12 miles (and most of the green lines in Figure 2) are soft surface nature trails. For 2020, Renton's pedestrian trail LOS was .09 (10/106.785); Newcastle's was 1.0 (12/12.078). You can find a current Newcastle trail map at [www.Newcastletrails.org](http://www.Newcastletrails.org).

**Opportunity.** By building links 2 and 3, and extending link 1 west from the footbridge, Renton could provide the large population near the bridge with miles of nature trails and parkland, even before purchasing the private parcels needed to complete the May Creek Greenway.