

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
April 9, 2015

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***Board of Park Commissioners***

Present:

Lydia Albert  
Antoinette Angulo  
Diana Kincaid  
Brice Maryman  
Tom Tierney, Chair  
Bob Edmiston

Excused:

Barbara Wright  
Yazmin Mehdi, Vice Chair

***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff***

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent  
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

This meeting is held at Rainier Community Center, 4600 38th Ave S, 98118. Commissioner Tierney calls the meeting to order at 6:36pm. Commissioner Tierney asks for approval of the Agenda, and the Acknowledgement of Correspondence. Commissioner Maryman moves to approve the Consent Items and Commissioner Edmiston seconds; the Consent Items are approved.

Commissioner Tierney advises the community that the public testimony remain respectful and constructive. Each person has two minutes to speak.

**Presentation: Cheasty Mountain Bike and Pedestrian Trail Pilot Project**

*Presented by Paula Hoff, Doug Critchfield, and Jon Jainga, Seattle Parks and Recreation*

**Written Briefing**

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: April 2, 2015  
To: Board of Park Commissioners  
From: Paula Hoff, Strategic Advisor, Doug Critchfield, Manager, Natural Resource Unit, Jon Jainga, Planning and Development Supervisor, Natural Resources Unit  
Subject: Cheasty Mountain Bike and Pedestrian Trail Pilot Project

### **Requested Board Action**

Parks is seeking a recommendation from the Board of Park Commissioners on the proposed Cheasty Mountain Bike and Pedestrian Trail Pilot Project. The schedule calls for a briefing and public hearing at the April 9, 2015 Board meeting, a working session on April 23 and a vote at the Board's May 14, 2015 meeting. The preliminary design and evaluation criteria have been developed based on feedback from the Project Advisory Team (PAT), a community outreach meeting, as well as internal Seattle Parks and Recreation review. In January 2014 the Board recommended that Parks should initiate a pilot project to allow mountain bike trails to be built at Cheasty Greenspace, in conjunction with restoration and foot trails. We are coming back to you with a proposal for consideration.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff is requesting support for the proposed schematic design (Attachment 1) and evaluation criteria (Attachment 2) for the Cheasty pilot project. We are also requesting that the pilot project be limited to 15-month period, rather than the three-year period that was recommended for the original mountain bike park proposal.

### **Project Background**

Parks is proposing a schematic trail design that provides local recreational opportunities for families and under-served communities who may not always have access to nature. The trail design provides space for both pedestrians and mountain bikes, while at the same time addressing safety and minimizing environmental impacts to the site. This proposed trail has been designed to utilize best management practices for protecting wetlands and enhancing the stability of the steep slopes. We are also proposing monitoring criteria to help thoroughly assess the impacts of the pilot project.

Mountain bike trails at Cheasty Greenspace was originally proposed by a group of neighbors as a project through the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Opportunity Fund process in 2012. Because the project was contrary to Parks' existing bicycle policy, the project was not successful in the Opportunity Fund process. Rather than revise the bicycle policy, in January 2014, the Board of Park Commissioners recommended a pilot project to accommodate bike and pedestrian use in the Cheasty Greenspace.

Following a recommendation from the Board of Park Commissioners on the pilot project, the Parks Superintendent will make a final decision on the basic trail design and monitoring criteria, and the project will move to Parks' Planning and Development Division for development of a refined design, permitting and implementation.

### **Public Involvement Process**

Seattle Parks and Recreation recently completed a five-month public Project Advisory Team (PAT) process for the Cheasty Mountain Bike and Pedestrian Trail Pilot Project.

Based on information and input from the five PAT meetings, a public outreach meeting, two site tours and input from a Landscape Architect, Geotechnical Engineer and Environmental Consultant, in addition to the significant public comment and input throughout the process, Parks is returning to the Park Board with the PAT recommendations for a pilot project (Attachment 3). This includes evaluation criteria for the pilot.

The PAT meetings were all posted on the Cheasty PAT website, and communicated broadly to the PAT members and community. All PAT meetings were open to the public. The information from the PAT process can be found at: [http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/g\\_s\\_bike\\_trail.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/g_s_bike_trail.htm). In addition, a community outreach meeting occurred in early December that was advertised through community agencies, including the Department of Neighborhoods, Neighborhood House, Rainier Vista Boys and Girls Club, Horn of African Services, SHA, Asian Counseling and Referral Service and some leafletting at Rainier Vista. At the outreach meeting, after a brief introduction of the project, attendees broke into small groups and were asked a series of questions about their knowledge of the greenspace, the access they would like to see through this public space, travel patterns from Rainier Vista to Beacon Hill and what would make this space more inviting (Attachment 4). Although the turnout wasn't as large as we had hoped, the input was extremely beneficial and many of the attendees brought the information back to their neighbors and friends. There will be an additional public open house once the final trail design has been determined.

### **Why we think the Cheasty Mountain Bike and Pedestrian Trail Pilot Project being proposed makes sense:**

- The trail will provide recreational opportunities for currently under-served communities, providing families with the opportunity to experience nature and recreation in their own neighborhood.
- This project will provide a link between the Rainier Vista community and North Beacon Hill.
- The trail responds to environmental issues within the Cheasty greenspace and has been designed to work with the geology of the property.
- There is strong community support for the trail.
- Volunteer restoration work is a high priority for the surrounding community and there is a strong commitment to this project and the maintenance necessary to maintain the trails.
- Our City is experiencing unprecedented growth. We need to look at creative ways to provide recreational opportunities in our urban environment.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Parks will monitor the project for environmental impacts throughout the pilot. All trail construction, that is part of the pilot project, will conform to the Department of Ecology Erosion Sediment Control Standards. If constructed properly, the trail will protect the existing wetlands and enhance slope stability. (ESA report – Attachment 5)

### **Budget**

Future costs for Parks will include: permitting; contract and engineering documents; staff costs; and monitoring. Trail construction costs are the responsibility of the proponents; a \$100,000 Neighborhood Matching Fund grant was approved by the City Council, pending their approval of the design. Additional fundraising is underway. Parks will not have a cost estimate until the final trail design is known.

### **Schedule**

The schedule will be developed when the project is transferred to Parks' Planning and Development Division. It is dependent on permitting and funding.

## **Attachments**

Attachment 1: Proposed Schematic Design  
Attachment 2: Evaluation Criteria  
Attachment 3: Project Advisory Team Recommendations  
Attachment 4: Outreach Meeting Notes  
Attachment 5: ESA Report

## **Additional Information**

Project web page: [http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/gs\\_bike\\_trail.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/gs_bike_trail.htm)  
Paula Hoff: [paula.hoff@seattle.gov](mailto:paula.hoff@seattle.gov)

## ***Presentation***

Paula Hoff starts off by giving the public and the Board background information. The Project Advisory Team (PAT) was engaged to make recommendations. It was a 5-month process and encompassed 2 site tours and 5 meetings. Parks hired an environmental consultant, geo technical engineer and received much community input. Parks staff recommend limiting the pilot project to 15 months. The current design does not have any direct route from Rainier Vista to Beacon Hill; no area where younger kids can ride because it is a 1-way trail. Seattle is experiencing growth. This mountain bike/pedestrian trails would allow recreation opportunities for those not able to get out of the city. The trail will add positive activity to a site that has undesirable usage. There is a strong volunteer community.

Timeline: Park Board recommendation will be mid-May. Afterwards, it will go through the public design review process followed by confirmation from the City Council for the Neighborhoods grant. Parks Planning and Development division will take over the project at this point.

Doug Critchfield – Site has water movement, existing wetlands, and steep slopes. There are negative impacts due to encampments. This is a Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) site for restoration work; the schematic design is a result of work presented by a landscape architect. Council gave direction that this be a perimeter loop trail; combined option had negative impacts including a significant amount of tree/plant removal and exacerbated safety concerns. This idea was rejected by parks. A separate lane trail provides more flexibility by allowing the trails to move and follow contours. This also reduces the impacts to slopes and wetlands and improves safety. The current design includes a single direction 2-lane path except where there is a structure that will go over the wetlands. This design leaves the interior intact. Pedestrian trail would be 4' gravel and the mountain bike trail would be mineral soil 1-2' wide.

Parks staff are developing evaluation criteria; the monitoring will be done by staff in the Planning and Development division including the input from the PAT. At the April 23 Park Board meeting, staff are prepared to go into more detail about the evaluation criteria and monitoring. Doug introduces Jon Jainga who will address the environmental and geo technical study.

Jon Jainga – During the 1st two PAT meetings they received an overview from the GIS database system and the PAT requested more environmental information. December 2014 Parks hired ESA environmental and HWA geoscience to do environmental and geotechnical reporting. ESA did a field

investigation in December and January; they found 12 wetlands. The hydrology of Cheasty will be explored more during planning and development with the project manager. Geo tech investigation found existing soldier pile walls that are on the site and some wetland crossings. From Geotechnical report: "Construction of accessible trail is feasible but will require modifications in areas of observed instability and seepage. If properly designed, we do not anticipate construction of the proposed trail will result in increased slope instability." These consultants will be available at the study session on April 23.

GSP has been very active in the restoration. The PAT and Urban Forestry Commission have done tours. The Cheasty website has all information from the PAT meetings and reports.

Acting Superintendent Williams acknowledges the work of staff – they have done a tremendous amount of work.

Commissioner Tierney clarifies that the April 23 Park Board meeting will be a work meeting and the Commissioners will not be hearing any new testimony that night.

### *Public Hearing*

Roger Pence – lived on Beacon Hill for 26 years and has been very active in the community. He has an active civic life. He mentions the letter the Park Board in January stating their support for a comprehensive pilot project. He feels the process was backwards; wished the Park Board would have come to the public hearing with an open mind.

Sarah Welch – lived on Cheasty for 40 years and is a member of the PAT. She thanks the Park Board for holding the hearing and listening to what people have to say; she hopes this means they have not made up their minds yet. First, she believes natural areas are not places for active recreation; the Legacy Plan says our citizens predominately use parks for walking; 15% are preserved for natural areas and they need to be preserved. During the PAT process, they learned that if the mountain bike park was properly designed it could be done but the environmental report did say there are critical environmental issues with this site. She calls for a halt to this project.

Robert Gandy – Vice President of the Homeowners Association at Rainier Vista. He lives immediately adjacent to Cheasty. He would feel privileged to have a trail and bike park and asks the Park Board to please strongly consider. He is a teacher at a middle school for Seattle Public Schools and notices that getting youth into the natural areas has a positive impact. He supports giving them the opportunity to access nature.

Kathy Colombo – as a forest steward and resident of Cheasty Boulevard and an environmentalist – we do not need to have kids riding bikes in the greenspace to enjoy it. They can experience nature by having kids listen to the woods and appreciating it on a deep and passive way. She is a PAT member – wetlands are all interconnected and wonders how much damage do we want to do.

Melissa Jonas – lives on Beacon Hill and she's excited about the project because it will connect communities. She appreciates the letter from the Park Board that suggests cross trails. Social trails already exist – design trails that mimic what people need to get where they need to go. She is excited for a bike trail because it allows people to use that to connect with the other communities.

Becca Aue – She thanks the Board of Park Commissioners for their time and service. She appreciates the letter from the Board that states the importance of interior connector trails. She feels this is an excellent opportunity to prove the 3 guiding Parks values can be produced in tandem- access, sustainability and opportunity. She sees it already with the forest restoration in Cheasty. If the intent of the pilot is to test the feasibility – then let’s test it. She mentions her work for Seattle Parks Foundation. She asks the Commissioners to please stand by their letter.

Colin McDonald – He is an ecologist and habitat restorationist. He encourages the Park Board to recommend the Parks department go all in on this project because compromise won’t make anybody happy. The pilot should be used to test the viability of mountain bikes in parks. This park is a forest fragment and no rehabilitation is going to change it. Let’s use it.

Scott Avery – He attended every PAT meeting and the outreach meeting at Rainier Vista. He feels the cross trail possibilities are partly a safety thing – more people will feel more comfortable. He is thrilled by the idea of his neighbors getting out to enjoy nature.

Ryan Harrison – Thanks the Park Board for the opportunity to speak his mind on this project. He loves this project – walking trails, bike trails, restoration, and the community is amazing. Restoration is active recreation. This project encompasses both passive and active recreation. He is grateful for Park Board support on this project.

Erik Okuda – She brought her children to volunteer in Cheasty and none of them had ever done it before. They joined in February – really enjoyed it and it felt good. Her whole family loves getting into the woods and going Saturdays to do forest restoration. Little by little she notices the progress and she feels nice every time. She’s committed to the Cheasty project.

Ruth Williams – She is President of the Thornton Creek Alliance. She is glad to know that minds are not made up on the Park Board. She feels active recreation should not be allowed in greenspaces. One doesn’t play frisbee in the library; keep them true to their existing functions. Creating natural areas in exchange for specialized recreation is not sustainable. It is sufficient to provide opportunities with ADA and foot trails, develop educational programs. She states there is limited greenspace.

Judith Shoshana – She lives on Cheasty and she’s thrilled that the scope of the pilot has been expanded. We need paths that cross so the kids can get to school. She is excited that there is restoration work going on in the greenbelt. There was deer when I first moved there. She asks the Park Board to support the pilot project.

Steve Zemke – He is a friend of Seattle’s urban forest and feels Parks is taking a backdoor approach to the need for a bike policy. What place does wildlife have in the city? When you put in trails you are fragmenting the habitat. He feels it is important to balance out wildlife needs with human needs. A 15-month pilot project puts wildlife at the short end. The public will lose confidence if you change the duration. The maintenance yard needs to be fenced and Parks will need to deal with water runoff. Thanks Parks staff for the work they are doing.

Ed Newbold – He feels this project is land grab by athlete minority and the environmental issue is being reduced to native/non-native plants. This is about extinction; most terrestrial animals are doing okay, but there are several threatened bird species.

Lorelei Amato – She is grateful for the work the volunteers have been doing because it allows her daughter to go and enjoy the space every week; the trails will be separated so she does not see it being chaotic. She's never had that experience on shared trails.

Mary DeJong – She is the co-chair of Cheasty Mountainview. She believes access to nature helps to reduce stress and anxiety in children, improves motor skills, and builds the next generation of environmental stewards. This project provides access and fun in own backyards. She sees it as an opportunity to plan a trail design and get more kids into nature who otherwise would not have the opportunity. She thanks the Park Board for their visionary leadership. Wildlife and child life corridors can coexist.

Andrew Gehl – He works as the youth program manager at Refugee Women's Alliance (REWA) a multi-ethnic organization that serves immigrants and refugees by helping them integrate and find community. In the last 5 years over 100 kids have worked in the greenspace. He supports a comprehensive trail program. These clients are struggling to have a sense of belonging; Cheasty fosters community.

Velena Bryant – Cheasty resident; lived there 14,000 years – pains her that people kill things that are already there. She is completely against the bike park for what it's going to kill.

Linda Jensen – The opportunity to restore Cheasty is available free all the time; the bike park is not needed to create pedestrian trails and that should be encouraged. She encourages independent thought in the Board of Park Commissioners.

Jay Gairson – He cannot walk in the woods. The children in his neighborhood are overweight and they cannot walk in the woods. We need to create a space where children can play in the woods; conservation and recreation can be done together. Are bike trails compatible with conservation? Yes. He requests a comprehensive loop trail. He asks the Park Board to tell City Council let us test this project properly. Leave no child left inside.

Joe Harrington – He does not object to biking in the park; feels fine with cross trails and would use those.

Celeste Gilman – She grew up playing in forests in Puget Sound. She has a deep love for the planet and wants her daughter to have that experience. She is involved in the project – coming to public hearings because they feel so strongly about having the experience.

Leslie Clark – She recently moved to the neighborhood and is new to the conversation but she's a landscape architect and is very excited to participate in this process. She feels allowing different ways to enjoy the greenspace is great. There are ways to compromise and have different kinds of participation available to us.

Tom Linde – He lived next to Cheasty for 25 years and raised 2 children there. He never set foot in that forest because it was choked with encampments and invasive species. It was not welcoming; that forest needs to have people in it. For Seattle to have an in-city mountain bike park would be another jewel in its crown.

Joel DeJong– He wishes they had not applied for the neighborhood grant because it took the project in another direction. He feels Cheasty needs a comprehensive trails plan. He implores the Park Board to “go all in” because it is a pilot and should have the best possible trails plan.

Carrie Kincaid- She is a Cheasty resident and really excited about this project. She wants the opportunity to use the forest. She has called the police multiple times because of illicit activity in the neighborhood.

Adrian Rasmussen – He is 18-years old. He and his sister are both forest stewards and have been working on the project. He thanks the Parks department for all their attention towards skate parks; it has engaged the youth. He says that it is always the most used part of the park; kids want these parks. It’s sad that some people don’t want this project but it needs to be at Cheasty because it’s in the neighborhood.

Morgan Hougland and Solomon – They live on Beacon Avenue and have been volunteering at Cheasty for 8 months. They are avid mountain bikers and drive out to Swan Creek. They would love to have something in the neighborhood to have something to do together. They would love to have connector paths so his son can meet up with his friends. They have seen wildlife at other mountain bike parks; mountain biking isn’t aggressive.

Daniel Moore – He served on the PAT and appreciates the work of the Park Board. He feels that the assumption that not building trails will protect the greenspace but social trails and encampments will get worse. He feels the mountain biking will allow access and opportunity for more people.

Adam Porad– He lives up against the greenbelt – supports the trails – lots of kids from diverse backgrounds; when he was a kid they would spend all day in the woods playing and using their imagination.

Patricia Naumann – She is a resident of Southeast Seattle for 40 years. She is embarrassed by the letter the Park Board sent to the City Council. She looked at all the materials from the previous Park Board meetings and watched the videos but didn’t see any video where the Park Board saw the trails. She wonders what exactly the Park Board approved. She is concerned about the geotechnical survey. Chairman Tierney has conflict of interest for signing geotechnical covenants while with Seattle Housing Authority that indemnify the properties that are below Cheasty greenspace.

Paul Fairbairn – He works as an environmental consultant for remediation. He states putting trails in a forest presents zero risk for slides. Please don’t let a few people destroy something beautiful; he supports the project.

Mira Latoszek –She feels the Park Board was not acting appropriately when they sent the January letter during the PAT process; it was akin to walking into the middle of a room and yelling. She feels the whole process around Cheasty has been murky.



Mark Holland – Park Board is taking an activist role in this issue; how many people didn't show up at this public hearing because of the letter. He feels it is a social injustice that some natural areas should be protected but others won't.

Greg Briggs – He is happy to hear discussions about increasing access to forests and develop plan for use of natural areas to encourage access. He is supportive of comprehensive trails and happy it is moving forward. Bike trails have minimal impact on the forests and more volunteers will have a positive impact on the forest.

Jeremy Kallman– He is an avid outdoorsperson; last summer they would drive to Issaquah to go mountain biking. It will nice to have a place close by to experience the outdoors. Nature and mountain biking can coexist.

Donna Hartmann-Miller – She feels restoration at all urban forests is important; trees do such important work in this city and need to be taken care of. Let's set up front what the baselines; what does success looks like and what are the alternatives? She suggests looking at other locations.

Matt Neilson - Matt appreciates work that the Park Board does. He is supportive of full trails project. There are new supporters at each meeting that he has attended. This is an opportunity to explore the pilot process. I bought my first mountain bike for \$400 but it has lasted me a long time. It's time to change the perception that this is a rich white man's sport.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Jefferson Park golf course – \$8.7million investment that resulted in a new clubhouse and putting greens. There will be a grand opening on May 16.

Kubota Garden Terrace Overlook Dedication – Thursday, May 21. Stone structure carved in Japanese style of carving precision and doesn't require mortar and it overlooks a huge koi pond. This structure is intended to activate a portion of the garden that has not received much attention. It is the perfect spot for wedding receptions and family events. Commissioner Kincaid highly recommends people visit Kubota gardens; it's a real treasure.

Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) - related to moorage operations is scheduled for April 21 at the City Council Parks committee meeting.

1st quarter report at Park District- Parks has enhanced operational abilities of spring. 2015 is a ramp up year; Parks has borrowed \$10million from the city's cash pool. With this \$10million, Parks is working on performance management plan, community center strategic planning effort, Off-Leash Area strategic plan and 5-6 more plans that go hand-in-hand. This is a planning year and Parks is making an investment in creative and innovative programs. For example, Seattle Parks and Recreation is the 1st in the country to offer dementia friendly programming – creates socialization and connectedness in the community. There are also enhanced maintenance services in parks and staffing of community centers. The Park District Board will have their first meeting on June 29; Acting Superintendent Williams recommends getting this on the Park Board agenda after the 2nd meeting in June.

Mini-summit on natural areas and greenbelts use guidelines happened April 3. Susanne did an outstanding job and there was a great panel of professionals. Approximately 120 people attended; and the panelists offered a variety of opinions. There was a lot of positive feedback from people and staff walked away with some good ideas. Commissioner Maryman attended the mini-summit and it gave him something to chew on.

**Old/New Business**

Commissioner Kincaid has drafted a letter on public transportation and access to parks. Because of the new UW and Capitol Hill Sound Transit stations, metro has created a couple of routes that improve services to the stations and local parks. The letter encourages King County Metro to serve our parks better. It is a great opportunity for the Park Board to give input.

Brice makes a Motion to send the letter to King County Metro, Lydia seconds. It is approved unanimously.

**Commissioner Kincaid moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Maryman seconds the motion and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 8:33 pm.**

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Tierney, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners