



## FACT SHEET

A community group, the Friends of Cheasty Greenspace at Mountain View, would like to build mountain bike trails and pedestrian trails in Cheasty Greenspace.

The Board of Park Commissioners discussed and deliberated on the proposal at public meetings on November 14, 2013 and January 9, 2014. Their final recommendation to the Parks Superintendent was that Seattle Parks should initiate a pilot project to allow soft-surface mountain bike trails to be built at Cheasty Greenspace, in conjunction with restoration and foot trails.

### Can the plans for the trails be changed at all?

- Yes. The Friends of Cheasty Greenspace at Mountain View have submitted early plans for the trails, but these are not final. The plans will likely change in layout and features.
- Parks has not made an official review of the plans, and will make changes as needed to meet code, permits or environmental requirements.
- The community is requested to provide input on the desired location of pedestrian trails. At this time, most comments have been on the bike trails.
- An initial plan to construct separate pedestrian and bike trails was done to address concerns regarding safety; however, it is possible to combine the two uses into one trail. Many multi-use trails exist in the Pacific Northwest where pedestrian and bike uses coexist. St. Edwards State Park in Kenmore and Hamlin Park in Shoreline have had narrow soft surface trails open to pedestrians and bicycles for more than years. A more recent example is Swan Creek Trail in Tacoma.

### Are the pilot bike trails subject to change?

- This is a community-initiated, -funded and -constructed project and as such the community still needs to provide detailed plans, provide for any additional permitting necessary and line up the dollars and the volunteers to construct the project.
- Seattle Parks will do additional community outreach.
- The project needs to go through Seattle Parks' internal review once we receive plans.
- Seattle Parks will require environmental analyses consistent with all state and city requirements.
- The proposed trails may not trigger an Environmental Impact Statement; the trails construction will require minimal grading, and plant removal will be limited to non-native invasive species.

### What was the community outreach for this project?

- Step 1: The initiation of this project from the community. (As a community-driven and -funded project, Seattle Parks did not participate in the initial outreach by plan proponents.)
- Step 2: Board of Park Commissioners public hearing (Oct. 10, 2013)
- Step 3: Park Board publicly deliberated on the issue (Nov. 13, 2013)
- Step 4: Park Board at its regular meeting recommended a pilot project to create a mountain bike trails in Cheasty Greenspace and continue restoration of natural habitat (Jan. 9, 2014)
- Step 6: First design meeting in the community (March 25, 2014)
- Step 7: Superintendent and Parks staff conduct one-on-one and small-group meetings with community members (May 2014)
- Step 8: Second design meeting in the community (to be held in September)

### What is the typical outreach scenario for capital projects?

- Parks typically employs a three-step community meeting format. The first meeting is a brainstorming session with Parks staff and designers. At the second meeting, participants get to see the designers' early work, and the third meeting is used to finalize the plans.

### Where did the idea for the project come from?

- Mountain bike trails at Cheasty Greenspace were originally proposed by a group of neighbors as a project through our Parks and Green Spaces Levy Opportunity Fund process in 2012.
- The Opportunity Fund is a \$15 million fund included in the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy approved by voters. The fund was established specifically to allow the community to initiate park projects in neighborhoods.



# Cheasty Greenspace

*Pilot Mountain Bike Trails and Forest Restoration Project*

- There was significant community momentum for the mountain bike trails project, with the North Beacon Hill Community Council voting to support the mountain bike trails.
- Because the project was contrary to Seattle Parks' existing bicycle policy, the project was not successful in the Opportunity Fund process, and received no funding.

## **Why consider bike trails in Cheasty Greenspace at all?**

- One of Seattle Parks' goals is to respond to the changing recreation needs of the community. The Friends of Cheasty Greenspace at Mountain View asked Seattle Parks to revisit our 19-year-old bicycle-use policy. (The existing bicycle policy does allow for the Superintendent to designate specific areas for bicycle use.)
- The City's Comprehensive Plan, taken from the North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan relating to Cheasty Boulevard, includes: "Consider the development of pedestrian and bicycle trails through publicly owned greenbelts throughout North Beacon Hill" (NBH-P34).
- According to a recent Seattle Department of Transportation survey, 66% of Seattle's bike owners use them for recreation, and yet we have very few places in parks where bicycles can be enjoyed recreationally.
- The width and length of the trails totals less than 2 acres of land impacted in the 29 acres where the trails are planned, or less than 7% of the area will be impacted by bike trails.

## **What will the city monitor during the pilot?**

- We will monitor ecological and geological impacts of the pilot project quarterly for three years, including trails use, negative impacts, how and where users access the park, trails maintenance, erosion, parking impacts, any off-trails riding and forest restoration.

## **What benchmarks exist to compare current conditions with conditions three years from now?**

- A forest restoration plan for Cheasty Greenspace was created in 2005. We also conducted an inventory of the forest in 2011, which describes the forest's current conditions and the direction we need to proceed in for restoration.
- As part of the Citywide 20-year Green Seattle Partnership program, this area will have active monitoring and records of restoration work done. These protocols currently exist for restoration work and pedestrian trails.
- Seattle Parks will develop metrics for the impacts of the mountain bike trails as mentioned above.

## **What will happen to the site if the pilot has negative results?**

- This depends on many factors and the scope of the negative impacts.
- Restoration of trails in forested area occurs throughout Seattle Parks system currently. Social trails—that is, trails not developed by Seattle Parks—are restored by blocking the trails, planting, and soil mitigation by applying wood mulch.

## **Would the City consider other greenspaces for mountain biking?**

- Seattle Parks serves the interests of the community, and will examine any responsible recommendations made by the community.
- One goal of the pilot program is to determine community interest in this type of recreation, and our direction will be determined after the pilot program has been evaluated.
- Seattle Parks manages trails and forests across 6,000 acres (10%). Of these lands, 1,070 acres are steep slopes and 1,150 acres are potential slide zones as designated by the Department of Planning and Development. That is a combined total of nearly 40% of all the property Seattle Parks and Recreation owns. Many of our parks exist on steep slopes. Seattle Parks and Recreation has and will continue to safely build and maintain trails across these areas.

## **How will the pilot affect parking?**

- Parking impacts will be monitored during the pilot project.
- Parking on Cheasty Boulevard from the VA Medical Center occurs during the workday. The pedestrian trails would likely be most heavily used on the weekends.
- Seattle Parks will work with SPD Parking Enforcement to remedy negative impacts.