

## SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Leif Fixen, Chair • Tom Early, Vice-Chair

Gordon Bradley • Donna Kostka • Joanna Nelson de Flores • Jeff Reibman • Erik Rundell • Peg Staeheli • Steve Zemke

*The Urban Forestry Commission was established to advise the Mayor and City Council concerning the establishment of policy and regulations governing the protection, management, and conservation of trees and vegetation in the City of Seattle*

**DRAFT January 7, 2015**

### **Meeting Notes**

City Hall – Floor 7, Norman B. Rice room

600 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle

#### **Attending**

##### Commissioners

Tom Early – vice chair  
Gordon Bradley  
Donna Kostka  
Joanna Nelson de Flores  
Erik Rundell  
Peg Staeheli  
Steve Zemke

##### Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE  
Doug Critchfield - Parks

##### Guests:

Joel DeJong  
Mary DeJong  
Susan Zeman

#### **Absent- Excused**

Leif Fixen - chair  
Jeff Reibman

##### Public

Mark Ahlness  
Rebecca Aue  
Juli Cummings  
Marti Holland  
Linda Jensen  
Ed Newbold  
Sarah Welch  
Martin Westerman  
Ruth Williams

**NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details listen to the digital recording of the meeting at: <http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocs.htm>**

#### **Call to Order**

Tom Early will chair this meeting.

#### **Public comment**

Martin Westerman - Seattle Green Spaces Coalition – the group is advocating for SCL surplus substations to be turned into public parks. The group would like to create a partnership with the UFC. Their goal is to keep all surplus public land in the public domain for ecosystem services and public benefit. Parks commissioned the Trust of Public Lands a study to determine the value of parks. The study determined that they deliver \$500M worth of benefits to residents.

### **Adoption of December 3 and December 10, 2014 meeting notes**

**ACTION: A motion to approve the December 3 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and approved.**

**ACTION: A motion to approve the December 10 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded and approved.**

### **Cheasty Greenspace pilot program presentation – Susan Zeman, Mary DeJong, Joel DeJong**

They are part of the Friends of Cheasty Greenspace at Mountain View. The group was founded in 2008 and have been active participants in the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) hosting monthly work parties for the past seven years. They have a 12-person steering committee and have received \$160K in Neighborhood Matching Fund grants. \$60K went to restoration work. \$100K pending for the mountain trail project. Have been working on this land for years and to date have restored 10+ acres and have built trails with over 12,000 volunteer hours. They were the 2013 Denny Award recipients.

The location is very close to light rail stations. Central Beacon Hill is connected and people commute through the forest. It's used for environmental preservation. In the past there was a culture of fear around homelessness, sex and drug trafficking. It's become a healthy place for the community.

There are three existing trails: Hazelnut Trail, Ridge Trail and Valley View Trail. The place has been transformed over the years and it's now safe. Mountain View is in the restoration establishment period. They are wrapping up work on trails on this section of the forest.

The Mountain View section goes from South of Columbian Way/Alaska. Cheasty Main is where the pilot project for mountain bike trails is being planned. The vision for Cheasty Main is to reclaim the forest for the community; restore the health of the forest; reimagine the land to provide opportunities for recreation for children; and to reconnect with nature, ourselves and the broader community.

#### **Mt. Bike Pilot Project:**

- Seattle Parks Board of Commissioners approved the pilot project on January 9, 2014.
- Fall 2014 – Winter 2015 - Project Advisory Team
- Spring 2015 – design approval by parks board and City Council.
- Summer/Fall 2015 trail construction.

The project is about pedestrian and mountain bike trails, focusing on providing access to the community. All the restoration work has been done through the GSP. Bike trails – work with youth all summer getting them into restoration work. Kids connect to the land and they are joyful. There are kids that without specific support won't go to the forest. Concrete, computers, and couches get in the way.

The project team is looking at a generational shift. There is a distance between today's youth growing up in the city and forested lands. The forest is being pushed out by development farther and farther away from their home.

Cheasty Main: They are getting English ivy out of the forest, garbage is being pulled out, and homeless encampments are being dealt with. Cheasty is the #2 volunteer park in the city. 1,609 volunteers have provided over 5,000 hours of volunteerism since April 2014. Organizations want to get involved to help reclaim the area for the community. The 15 dedicated Forest Stewards have planted over 1,000 native trees and shrubs.

A theme you've heard is that this project is dividing the community and breaking neighborhoods apart. There is large support for this project. Supporters are behind the idea of equitable access. There is a way to restore the forest, increase canopy, provide quality habitat for urban wildlife while also providing quality habitat for children. We are not going to have the next generation of forest "restorationists" without promoting access now.

Other goals:

- Getting kids to school safely. Rainier Vista is a dense community. Children living in the neighborhood are assigned to Kimball Elementary.
- Neighborhood connectivity.

There are no through trails. This is a single 1.5 mile trail at this time and it's too long for children to go through. No way to get off once started.

UFC question/comment: how many additional trails are we talking about? What would make it workable? We did write a letter that said perimeter only.

Answer: more is better than less. A visit to the location would be useful. Experts determined what would be the most workable design.

UFC question/comment: people will create trails to get out of the main trail. Are kids going to ride their bike to school? Will it be necessary to get into a car and bring the bikes to the location thus requiring parking?

Answer: This park is designed to serve local families that want to ride to ride. They don't want to drive to ride. Jefferson community center's parking lot has ample parking throughout the day and on weekends. They would encourage people to take light rail to get there.

UFC question/comment: what do you want from the UFC today?

Answer – want to inform UFC on the project and how the community has been engaged over the past eight months. One of the barriers is the idea that the interior of Cheasty is sacred and shouldn't have cross-trails. The letter the UFC sent to Council only recommends one trail. They ask for UFC to reconsider and to visit the location.

UFC question/comment: this is a pilot. Other natural areas might be open to mountain bike activities in the future. There is no way there are not going to be exists. Areas dedicated for habitat will then be used to increase access, exits, etc. How are you going to preclude people from creating social trails?

Answer: There are encampments that have moved into the interior of the space. Without smaller trails, the pilot will not be successful.

Sara Welch: I'm part of the advisory group and we would be interested in seeing more options.

UFC question/comment: how wide is the bike trail, the pedestrian, and the combined?

Answer: standard 4 feet wide. Bike trail is half (2 feet) and doesn't need any material and they are one-way. The combined would be bigger than 4 feet. They don't want to consider the combined trail option because there is too much habitat removal. They want to keep them separate for safety and preservation of habitat.

Doug Critchfield (Parks): Parks has only seen one design with separated trail. In the past there was a design that combined the trails which was a large impact. The advisory team has indicated that environmental protection is the main concern and the second is safety. Parks was instructed by Council to provide a perimeter loop for this pilot. They will be developing a set of criteria to evaluate the success of the trail over three years. If not successful, the bike trail would be removed and the pedestrian trails would remain. For the pilot, Parks is looking at a single loop trail. Parks is developing a green space policy and the pilot would inform the policy decision.

UFC question/comment: the criteria Parks would use to evaluate would need to be identified now and would be useful for the pilot's design.

Answer: criteria will be developed and will be used for the evaluation and include biological, environmental, social, and economic indicators. They will also need to develop criteria for those social trails that would be developed by users.

UFC question/comment: Would Parks consider vacating the area they currently use for storage to allow the park to be larger?

Answer: That would have to be presented for Parks consideration.

UFC question/comment: Redmond, Tacoma, and Portland have mountain bike trails. Has Parks reached out to those cities so as to not reinvent the wheel?

Answer: They have looked at Swan Creek in Tacoma. They mentioned the social trails. Have also looked at county parks.

UFC question/comment: are there no natural areas to be left alone?

Answer: due to density there will be consideration of appropriate levels of activities. This issue will be looked at during the policy work.

### **2015 Work Plan – continues and possible vote**

Already discussed this piece a couple of times.

Changed to more organized display with numbers and letters. Reviewed dates and parties involved.

Commissioners provided input and voted to adopt.

**ACTION: A motion to approve the 2015 work plan as adopted was made, seconded and approved.**

### **Planning for CM Bagshaw's visit**

Commissioners brainstormed strategies for the meeting with CM Bagshaw.

Pick a few key points:

- Start the meeting reading the mission statement for the UFC.
- Would like to talk about UFC accomplishments including UFSP.
- Tree ordinance (DPD) to get it rolling faster and see where her interest is on that.

Sandra will send the 2014 Annual Report and the 2015 Work Plan to CM Bagshaw and let her know that the Commission would like to focus on the mission of the commission, the UFSP, DPD's ordinance, and funding (including the metropolitan parks district and GSP. Funding to remain as originally planned.)

### **New business and announcements**

Peg – After September's letter we found that many of the tree grates downtown were improved in many ways! Would like to send a thank you letter to SDOT. Peg to Review my draft and co-sign with Leif.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ruth Williams – lives in NE Seattle has been a long time Forest Steward. Nobody liked the option of just a perimeter trail. Cross trails will be steep. The whole thing looks inappropriate to her. Parks' plans are not making anybody happy. They are not looking for consensus or agreements. She works with a lot of children. Kids love being in the forest, they don't need bikes to interact with the forest. Proponents always want more trails which would be too much for such a narrow strip of land. Chief Sealth Trail would be a good alternative. Mountain bike trails could be put there and wouldn't disturb the forest. The way Parks is handling this has disappointed so many people on so many ways that maybe another authority needs to be involved.

Rebecca Aue – Columbia City resident and staff parson for Seattle Parks Foundation. She would like to express full support for the pilot that includes cross trails in the interior. This would provide safe connections for the community. A recent focus group of Rainier Vista showed almost unanimous support for both types of trails. She was dismayed by the UFC letter. Community members will support and love natural areas the can access. The pilot project is a test of how forest restoration can be enhanced by including recreation component. This will not open all green spaces right away. The idea is to learn from the pilot. The space can fulfil many uses. She hopes the UFC will reconsider the letter and allow a robust pilot. She would recommend to postpone the natural area policy review until we can include what we've learned from the pilot.

Mark Ahlness – Retired Seattle school teacher. Represents Seattle Natural Alliance and is advocating to protect our natural areas. At the beginning the pilot included a rather simple bike trail, except for a ride free area, that Parks said would not be included. Things have changed over time. Not sure that a pilot program is necessary to show that habitat will be impacted. Would like to thank the UFC for the letter sent. He has heard Council refer to it.

Linda Jensen - Lives on Cheasty Boulevard and has been involved with Friends of Cheasty since 1988. She has worked on protecting the natural area from development. She believes the pilot should stop until there is a policy on use of natural areas. That policy should inform whether there is a bike park or not, and not the other way around. The only thing authorized by City Council was a single, multi-use trail around the perimeter. The only thing presented by advocates was two separate trails. This divides the space into sections and removes the Olmstead Legacy for future generations. There are lots of ways to introduce kids

to the woods, not necessarily through bikes. There are a number of issues that Parks is promising to handle including increased homeless camps. We believe these trails would encourage encampments. Doesn't believe elementary school age kids will walk to school. Also there should be investigation on conflict of interests.

Mark Holland – lives on beacon hill. Safecheastyspace.org. A pilot project is done when you have the intention of doing more. He shared pictures of a skills mountain bike park in Seattle that has become a location for homeless and trash. A large portion of Cheasty, including Mountain View, was purchased with RCO funds (State funds). The original application was to preserve urban wildlife habitat. This location is an important green space because of its connection to other areas of the city. Parks pulled back the park to only use the parcels not purchased with RCO money (if they put a bike trail there, they would have to pay back the money to RCO). They haven't described the heavy usage that the park will get. Several bike organizations are talking about races and classes that will happen during dry season which is nesting season. St. Edwards in Kirkland was used as an example. This is an all multi-use trail with many places restricted from several sections. In this case the majority of the space will be accessible to cyclists and will keep pedestrians away.

Mira Latoszek – goes to Cheasty on a regular basis. She would like to dispel some statements. One was that the bike trail would be two feet wide. The trail will also have some mountain bike features alongside the trail, that widens the trail, jumping will affect the area around. There is not a lot of parking around Jefferson Park, Park, golf course, VA hospital, or the Community Center. Also, during the day workers park along Cheasty. There isn't a lot of parking and it will increase parking needs on an Olmsted Boulevard. There was mention that there are no connections... so why not work on fixing the connections, instead of trying to provide them through the natural area. Putting connections through the green space might not serve as a connection due to the steepness and landslide prone sections. There is a lot of economic pressure to get mountain bike trails on the urban environment. She went to Bikeworks in Columbia City and she saw a big push from the mountain biking and recreation industry to open up not just Cheasty but other natural areas in the city. Joel DeJong is the general manager of a bicycle business, which would be a conflict of interest. The statement that was made that there is need to have a mountain bike park to get kids involved in the forest is not necessarily true. There are ways for kids to learn to love nature. There is a lot of access to nature.

Sarah Welch – She thinks it's important to separate the issues of environmental education, access to school, restoration, and the mountain bike park. She doesn't believe we need to trade off the use of urban forests in order to achieve restoration. It might take longer and more work, but we can do it and it doesn't have to be in conjunction with a mountain park.

NOTE: Sandra will schedule site visit (include UFC, Parks, Proponents, Opposing view).

Ed Newbold – wildlife artist at Pike Place market. He sees this issue as a land-grab by businesses. He really knows the birds in the green space. The types of birds nesting in Cheasty are declining. Many might be in the path of extinction. Habitat should be protected.

Juli Cummings- has lived in the area. She voted to preserve habitat with as little invasion as possible.

## **Adjourn**

### **Public input**

**From:** Denise Dahn [mailto:denise@dahndesign.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 06, 2015 4:14 PM

**To:** Pinto\_de\_Bader, Sandra

**Subject:** letter to Urban Forestry Commission regarding Cheasty Greenspace

Dear Urban Forestry Commission,

Please do not allow The Cheasty Bike Park pilot to become the future of Seattle Urban Forests. This project is not fair, sustainable, or wise. It does not protect nature equally for all people, it has pitted neighbor against neighbor, and it will lead to overuse and degradation of our forested natural areas.

### **Sharing Nature Equally**

Every person deserves an equal right to enjoy the remnant wild nature we have left. When trails are kept as passive-use, it means we all share nature on an equal footing. No special user-group gets special rights to any part of the forest. It is the most fair to the most people.

Less than 1% of our city is left as Park Natural Area (City Park Facts, 2014). By eliminating the passive-use policy in urban forests, these precious fragments of peace, quiet, abundant plants and wildlife will be become over-used by competing specialized-user groups. Instead of sharing on equal footing, every user-group will demand their own piece of the Nature Pie. What will be left for ordinary people? Where will the old, the very young, the less-abled, the low-income, or the solitary and quiet people go to enjoy nature? Will our fast-growing city lose the nature that makes Seattle special?

### **Sustainability**

Once the Nature Pie is sliced up into more and smaller pieces, it will no longer be healthy, beautiful and ecologically rich. When urban forests are managed for heavy recreation they quickly become less natural. People need to park, use the restroom, they want a snack bar, they want to feel safe. Soon, structures are built, ground is asphalted, lighting added, bushes trimmed. Nature becomes just another development. Without protection—without passive-use—this is inevitable.

Our forests should be managed for long-term sustainability, not recreational desires.

Urban forests are a rare resource, and their use should be secondary to their ecological function. In 2003, a city study described Cheasty Greenspace as a rare place of “notable value” as wildlife habitat (Cheasty Greenspace Vegetation Management Plan). The study is full of descriptions of the forest’s rich habitat. Yet, the bike park promoters describe Cheasty as if it were a dying wasteland of crime and disease. Even the Parks Department has begun to describe Cheasty as a degraded forest, full of “problems” (Parks public meeting, March 2014).

Yes, Cheasty has invasive plants. What forest does not? Are we giving up on *all* our forests, or just this one? On a recent trip to Portland, I visited Forest Park, a famous 5000-acre urban forest. The park is beloved, and its nature trails are well-used by foot traffic. It is also heavily affected by invasive plants. In many places, the forest is so invaded with ivy that the understory is completely obscured for as far as you can see. The Park also has a bit of crime and garbage and homeless people, like pretty much everywhere else in American cities. And yet, it is not described as a dying wasteland. Portland has not thrown up its hands and said, sorry, we just can’t deal with this. On the contrary, people are enjoying it, and they are rallying to restore it, and forming conservancies and partnerships and making long term plans and conducting in-depth wildlife and biodiversity studies. They have committed for the long haul.

They have also committed to passive-use in the forest natural area. Mountain bikers—despite heavy lobbying—have not been given free use of the hiking trails. As a result, the forest is shared by everyone, equally, and is protected from overuse.

### **Service and Community**

In describing Cheasty as “gross”, the implication by Parks and the bike park promoters is that the only way to save the forest is to trade special-use privileges for eco-restoration services. To the vast majority of citizens who do not use mountain bike skills courses, this means a piece of nature has been taken away from the majority and given to a minority—for the price of free labor. Is this considered volunteering? It sounds more like a sale or a lease.

Seattle citizens and the Green Seattle Partnership are doing amazing work in restoring our forests, and many people have made forest stewardship a major focus of their life. And, most of them have asked for nothing in return. But, at Cheasty, by granting special-use privileges to a special-use group *in return* for restoration services, the city has turned volunteerism into a quid-pro-quo arrangement. What will this do to volunteerism in the future?

This project has caused considerable discord in the community. It has pitted neighbor against neighbor in an ugly, unproductive way. People have spent countless hours either fighting for or against this park. At one City Council meeting, I listened to a young Native American woman speak passionately—tearfully—of this wild remnant of land being special to her—about how wild things were important culturally as a reminder of her ancient tribal connections, and how the thought of it being used up made her feel unbearably sad. A few minutes later, a pro-bike person angrily scolded the opponents about how it was “just a bike park” and how people needed to “educate themselves”. Another said in effect that if people really cared about the forest they should prove it by helping to restore it. But what about people who don’t—or can’t—do that kind of work? Does the older person with a bad back, or the single working parent with no free time get less of a voice in their community forest than those with the strength to pull ivy and the resources to spare the time? Does any one group have the right to lay claim to a forest because they volunteer in it?

The bike park promoters make a strange case when they use their own earlier project as a reason we need a bike park. In Cheasty at Mountain View, the forest was restored and trails were built. Awards were won, glossy brochures were printed, and everyone benefitted. But now, they are telling us the greenspace across the street will die unless it is turned into a bike park. What happened to the overwhelming success of the non-bike park Greenspace?

Why not continue with the restoration, the passive use trails, and let *everyone* benefit?

Signed,

Denise Dahn

Co-founder, The Seattle Nature Alliance

Denise Dahn

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Dear Seattle Urban Forestry Commission:

January 6, 2015

I am a resident who lives within Cheasty Greenspace and a longtime member and President for the Friends of Cheasty (FOC) which has been a longstanding partner with the Parks Department and with the Friends of Olmsted.

I want you to think about the process you will use to assess and determine recommendations on behalf of the flora/fauna and the residents within and around Cheasty Greenspace. I want to encourage you to ask the necessary critical questions to gain an unbiased perspective for the entire Greenspace (this project breaks up the Greenspace) as well as the connection to Olmsted Legacy, in order to make fully knowledgeable decisions.

I am deeply concerned and interested in the lack of a full public process that continues to be used to determine that a mt bike park is the only viable option for Cheasty Greenspace. I am a member of the Parks-Public Advisory Team for Cheasty Greenspace, and have been actively attending meetings since last spring presenting opposition to the mountain bike trail due to the wildlife-deer, pileated woodpeckers, redshafted wood peckers, coopers' hawks, barred owls..a wide variety of song birds as well as reptiles, amphibians and mammals and plant life that sustains the animals that reside and or use the entire Greenspace as a wildlife corridor. I have, for several years(since 1980), been working to gain insight from neighbors as to how to maintain and improve the area, and at the same time being reminded of the need for increased density to prevent urban sprawl's affect into the Greenspace. Cheasty Greenspace and trail remained a quiet retreat for people to enjoy, whether it is someone walking to the Mt Baker Station or employees or veterans from the Veterans Hospital or the Asian Counseling and Referral Services needing a quiet get-away from their busy work environment. The FOC work aligns with the Parks' definition for Natural Areas-*"designated for preservation because of their natural or ecological qualities and their potential to contribute to an interconnected open space system"*.

I (FOC) have worked to remove invasives, pick up trash, and work to improve the neighborhood for city residents. There continues to be misinformation about the viability of the Cheasty Greenspace. Photos and comments presented by the proponents continue to use Mt View data to misrepresent the Cheasty Greenspace located from Columbian north to Winthrop and the residents who have been active stewards for the Greenspace. I initially was excited to see more public involvement to remove invasives and to restore Cheasty to its natural state. You can imagine my concern when I first heard about a mountain bike proposal last year-March 2014, and being supported by the Parks Department! What has happened to stewardship for our natural areas and the vision for preserving the city's natural areas as our city continues to increase in density?!

I (FOC) have worked closely with the parks Department for over 30 years. Our practices have been in alignment with Parks Department planning for Cheasty and then to hear that a Mountain Bike Park is something the Parks is advocating for, for the Greenspace, were quite a shock and a concern, on many levels. We have several serious concerns about the Greenspace's wetland and ravine being transformed into a mountain bike park; the long term effects on the topography, water flow, erosion (within land slide zones), effects on wildlife nesting, such as the Copper's hawks, Barred Owls, etc., and the increase in the population to the Greenspace the mt bike trail will serve, on vegetation and wildlife.

Cheasty Greenspace contains a wetland and is designated a geologically sensitive area -several slides have occurred and we want you to know that precautions should be considered, as there is a large population of skunk cabbage in the ravine which is an indicator species for wetlands-underground springs. As an example of the environmentally sensitivity for the area; we (my family) needed to secure a geotech to review and provide supervision for our lot before we could do any yard work to maintain soil stability. Parks and PAT is awaiting the wetland results to determine if a trail is even viable for the Greenspace. So far the Geotech data indicates a trail cannot go into certain areas-which means the trail has moved into the interior of the Greenspace, and over the wetlands!

When I (FOC) was a part of the walking trail design, I provided historical knowledge of the slide zones to Parks' planners to help determine the best location for the walking trail.

I am concerned with the ever increasing traffic and parking around the Greenspace. Mountain biking is a destination activity and we realize many people will be driving their cars to access the site. Where will they park? And how will traffic patterns be taken into account. Has there been a traffic pattern study? Has anyone looked at the traffic patterns now and then later to be able to compare? Having lived within the south end and raised 4 children all attending Seattle Public Schools, we know that only upper middle class families and children can afford a mountain bike. We are a dual working family and we could never afford a mountain bike for our children. They had and use street bikes...having a son who built street bikes for low income children at Bike Works, took a concerted amount of time to complete a bike for someone else. Will anyone be providing mountain bikes for the low income children who cannot access the trail otherwise? Another concern is –aren't you limiting the groups of people who will be using this site? Wouldn't it benefit a greater variety of people to put energy into creating an environmental walking trail in which Aki Kurose Middle School, Asa Mercer Middle School, Kimball Elementary, and Franklin High School could collaboratively create a walking trail and use the Greenspace to supplement their STEM curricula? We are concerned about the lack of transparency with this project- isn't that what a community dialogue is all about, to present ideas and to come up with one(s) that would provide the greatest benefit for the Open Space and for the largest amount of community members? I know teachers at the local schools who would love to have their students partner with the parks to collaboratively create something that would benefit schools, students, and the community. As an additional example of the value for full public process- look at Jefferson Park-there was a full and intense community processing but it was worth it, because the park represents all members of the community and provides for the uniqueness that makes the southend of Seattle a wonderful place to live. It is wonderful to walk to the Jefferson overlook path in the spring and watch our Samoan neighbors playing cricket and playing their drums!

Another concern that has not been addressed is the Landmark status designated to Cheasty Blvd ...how will this plan affect the Landmark status? Does this pilot project eliminate the work we have done to preserve and add to the Greenspace?

As the overseers as one of the agencies that provides the checks and balances for the Parks Department I would ask you to consider communicating to the Parks Department the following questions:

1. What is the overall plan for Natural areas? How does this project fit into the plan? Is this plan superseding the City-wide Natural area plan?
2. How does the Olmsted Plan affect the Natural area plan?

3. How does the Mt Bike Plan impact the Olmsted Legacy for the Greenspace and the Blvd.
4. How will the mountain bike plan benefit the Greenspace and how can they guarantee that a large amount of the community benefit from the mt bike proposal or is there another idea that is out there that has not been considered?
5. Isn't the mt bike trail leading the process, rather than the vision and legacy for the Greenspace and the Blvd leading the process? The focus for the trail is mt biking and not a walking trail.
6. The proposed trail is not in alignment with the City directive for a single-use multi-use perimeter trail. The proposal being presented is for a loop mt biking trail, that exists within the interior of the forest, not on the perimeter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kathy Colombo  
Friends of Cheasty (FOC)  
3820 Cheasty Blvd S

**From:** Denise Dahn [mailto:denise@dahndesign.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 07, 2015 12:45 PM  
**To:** Pinto\_de\_Bader, Sandra  
**Subject:** Information for the Urban Forestry Commission

Sandra,  
Please route this message and attachments to the Urban Forestry Commission.

Thanks,

Denise

Dear Urban Forestry Commission,

In case you were not provided these by the Bike Park promoters, please find attached a description of some of the trail features that are being presented to the Cheasty Pilot Advisory Team.

Sincerely,

Denise Dahn  
The Seattle Nature Alliance  
[seattlenaturealliance.org](http://seattlenaturealliance.org)

Plus, a Google Search Screen Grab showing Duthie, the bike park in Issaquah — built by the same organization associated with Cheasty. This gives an idea how these trails are used.

References on  
Mountain Bike Trail Planning, Design, Maintenance & Standards

**USFS Mountain Bike Trail Opportunities and Challenges:** <http://admin.ibt.org.il/files/86822590048.pdf>

**Whistler Trail Standards:** [http://www.mbta.ca/assets/pdfs/trail\\_standards\\_first\\_edition.pdf](http://www.mbta.ca/assets/pdfs/trail_standards_first_edition.pdf)

**Whistler Trail Standards-Technical Document:** <http://www.pacificafreeride.com/access/trail-standards.pdf>

**Shuswap Trail**

**standards:** [http://www.shuswaptrailalliance.com/userfiles/file/sta\\_trail\\_design\\_standards%20sml.pdf](http://www.shuswaptrailalliance.com/userfiles/file/sta_trail_design_standards%20sml.pdf)

**Trust for Public Land/Chatanooga:** <http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/tn-stringers-ridge-trail-plan-2012.pdf>

## Optional Technical Features

An optional technical feature would be a short parallel route or just a wide space in the trail for a challenge or obstacle. It is "optional" in the sense that a mountain bike rider has the option to use that feature or stay on the main trail. The PAT has referred to these as "pull-outs". The idea is to build features that make the best sense with the site. For instance, making a feature out of a fallen log, if there happened to be one, or making a wood bridge on posts or pin piles for low impact where the slope is steep, or for crossing a wet spot. Some features only make sense in flatter areas. The following information is extracted from the Beacon Bike Park document prepared by the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance for Friends of Cheasty Greenspace at Mountainview, dated May 28, 2014. These are features considered potentially appropriate for Cheasty Greenspace by EMBA. The document did not consider a wide range of technical features, that would be more challenging or impactful, that may be appropriate in other mountain bike parks. Please note that while there is a section on "jumps", no one envisions Cheasty to be a "jump trail". A plausible scenario would be an option for riders to try a pair of rolling bumps, where a beginner could gently go up and down, while a more advanced rider may "pop the gap" between the two bumps.

### 3. Technical Trail Features (TTFs)

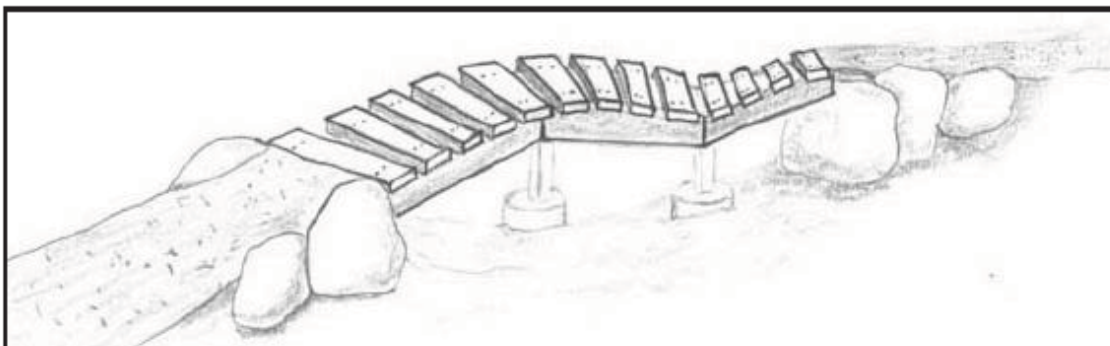
#### 3.1. Introduction

Selecting, designing and constructing Technical Trail Features (TTFs) is a large component of the Beacon Bike Park project. TTFs are natural or man-made obstacles or options in the trail or alongside the trail that require bike handling skills to ride. TTFs are fun for riders and they provide skill building and progression opportunities. In the case of bridges, rollers, berms and rock armored trail, they can also serve to improve sustainability. They range from easy (such as a 3" roll-able root in the trail or a wide bridge crossing a stream) to expert level (such as a steep rocky chute, a narrow elevated log ride, or a 5' high drop-off).

The following provides descriptions of the various types of TTFs that would be appropriate for Beacon and the key standards and not-to-exceed specifications to which they will be constructed. It does not describe all of the detailed specifications, standards and construction techniques involved. There is no guarantee that all of the features described below will be implemented.

#### 3.2. Ladder Bridges

Also called "boardwalks", ladder bridges were first used to allow trail users to cross wet areas. Now, they are common popular mountain bike trail features that can be built with varying width, twist and undulation to make them fun trail options that require balance and bike handling skills to cross successfully.



Not-to-Exceed Specifications for elevated ladder bridges:

|                                  | Easier ●   | Intermediate ■                               | Advanced ◆                                       |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Deck Height                      | <2 ft.   | <4 ft.                                       | <6 ft.   |
| Deck Width                       | >deck height   | >1/2 deck height                             | >1/4 deck height                                 |
| Bisecting angle between sections | <i>Easily</i> allow turns without wheel lifting techniques | Allow turns without wheel lifting techniques | Tight turns may require wheel lifting techniques |

### 3.3. Skinnies and Log Rides

When riding in the backcountry, balance is a key skill required to negotiate very narrow trail passages and/or trails with exposure to dangerous falls. Skinnies and log rides are narrow elevated riding surfaces for developing balance skills. They can be built from fallen trees, split logs, milled planks or dimensional lumber. Specifications are the same as for elevated ladder bridges (see above).



### 3.4. Drops

Rock, log and root drops are common natural features on backcountry trails, so are great skill building features to have at bike parks. The characteristic that distinguishes a drop from a jump is the take-off angle. A jump has a positive take-off angle, so sends the rider higher in the air than the lip of the jump. A drop has a flat or negative take-off angle, so sends the rider downward. The two require different skills and technique.

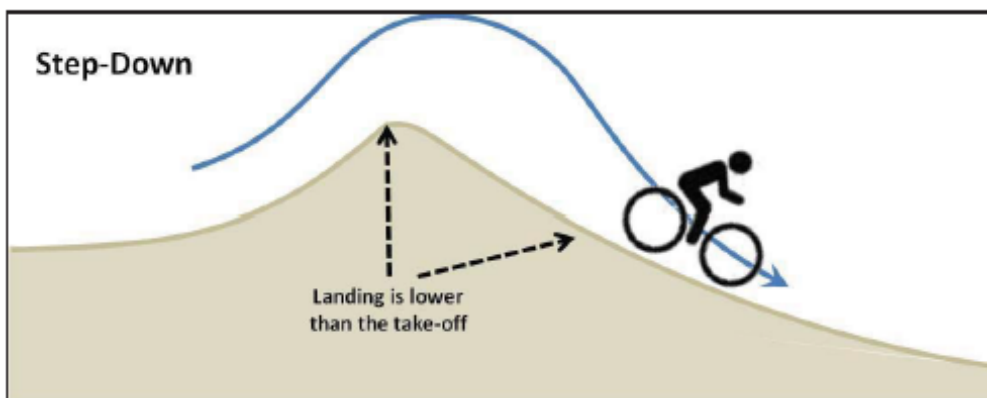
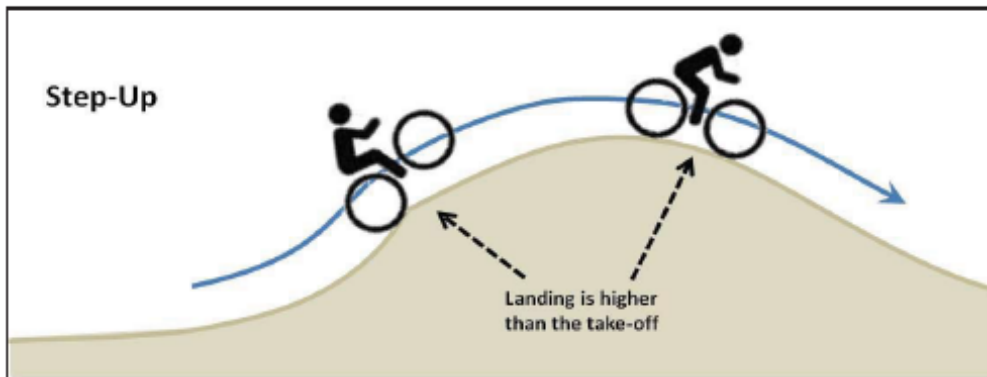
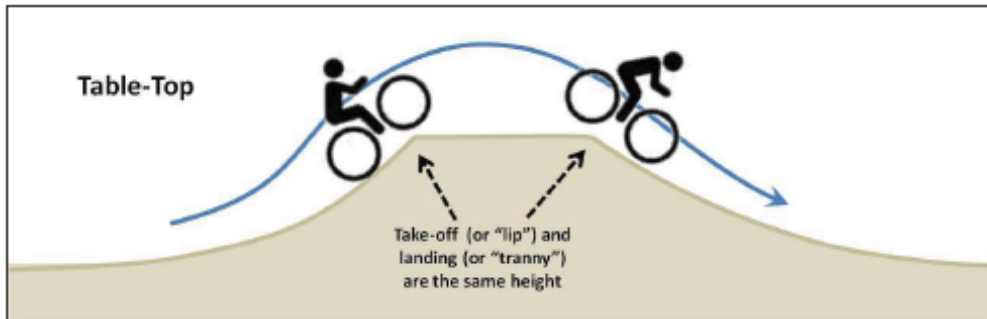


Not-to-exceed specifications for drop height and width:

|              | Easier ●         | Intermediate ■ | Advanced ◆ |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|------------|
| Deck height  | <1 ft (rollable) | <2 ft          | <6 ft      |
| Width:Height | 2:1              | 1:1            | 1:2        |

### 3.5. Jumps

The most popular and most common features at bike parks are jumps. The three most common categories are Table-Tops, Step-Downs and Step-Ups. The following are exaggerated to show the concept.

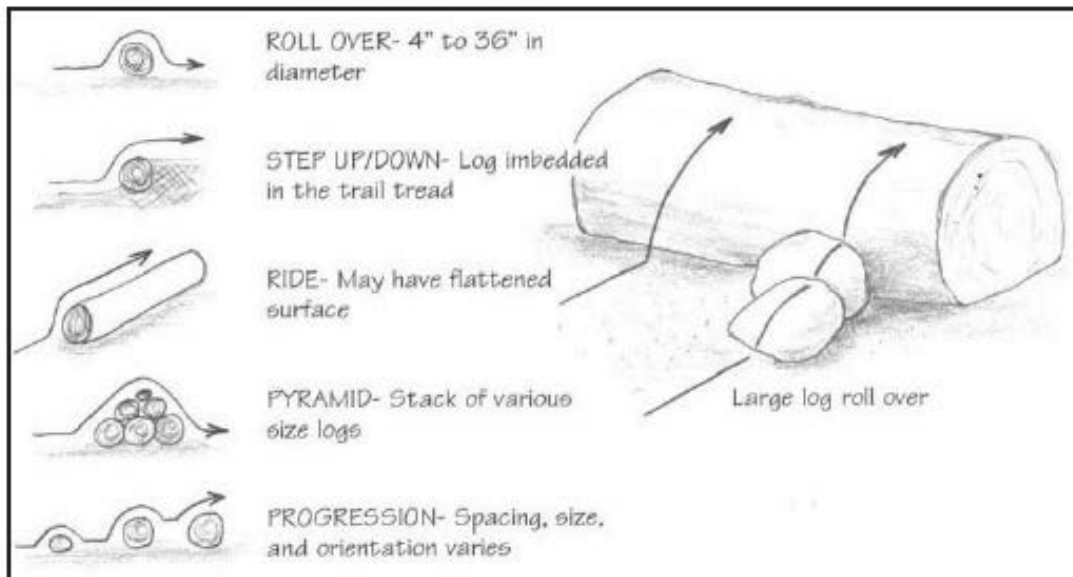


**Specifications.** Mountain bike jump design & layout depends so much on target audience, risk management objectives, skill level, progression, landscape, materials, speed and other factors that it is not recommended to have a general set of specifications. Smaller easier jumps may be barely distinguishable from rollers. Rollers may also be doubled up so that less skilled riders will naturally roll them, but expert riders take off on the 1<sup>st</sup> and land on the back side of the 2<sup>nd</sup>.



### 3.6. Other Log Features

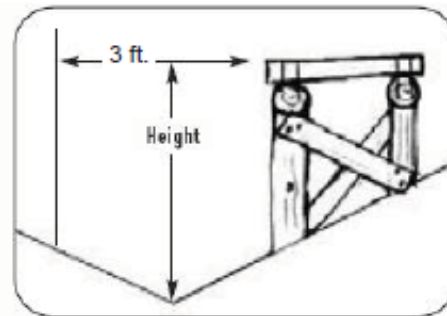
Blowdown logs are a common natural feature on trails in the woods and many different types of natural and manmade log features can be implemented.





### 3.7. Elevated TTF Height

A TTF's difficulty depends greatly on the height of the riding surface. TTF height is measured vertically from the feature's deck (tread or riding surface) to the lowest point within 3' adjacent to the feature.



### 3.8. Materials

The following materials will be used for wooden TTF construction:

- Framing (posts, stringers, braces): pressure treated dimensional lumber (in some cases, cedar or Douglas Fir logs may be used for stringers and sleepers/sills)
- Footings: poured concrete, concrete pier block or 2-4" cobble rock mixed with soil or +5/8" crushed
- Decking: split cedar or rough sawn cedar

Split Cedar is the preferred decking material. It is rot resistant, splits easily and provides a grippy surface and natural look. The disadvantage of split cedar is the labor involved in splitting and shaping the decking. The 2<sup>nd</sup> choice is rough sawn cedar. Although expensive and not as grippy as split cedar, it is rot resistant and very easy to work with.

## 4. Risk Management & Signage Plan

### 4.1. Risk Management Techniques

The following is a description of the key risk management techniques and practices that will be used when constructing mountain trails and TTFs at Beacon Bike Park.

- **Build trails according to established Trail and TTF Standards.**
  - Trails and TTFs must be durable, predictable and designed to moderate the risk of injury when riders fail to negotiate them properly.
- **Emphasize Skill Instead of Consequence.**
  - Challenging features don't have to be overly dangerous. All of the TTFs described above have various design techniques that emphasize skill over consequence. Example: An 8" wide log ride that is 1 ft off the ground is just as difficult as one that is 6 ft off the ground, but less risky.
- **Provide Options and Ride-Arounds.**
  - When building TTFs, offer easier alternate routes that avoid the feature whenever possible. Don't build advanced technical challenges on trails designed for beginners or intermediates unless they have a signed ride-around. Offer opportunities for all skill levels.
- **Build skill Gateway Features.**
  - Entrances to difficult trails and TTFs will be made challenging (at least as difficult as the average challenge of the trail). These gateways dissuade less skilled riders and reduce the risk of them attempting a trail or feature that is beyond their ability.

- **Build skill Filter Features.**
  - More difficult features located in less risky locations will slow riders down or cause riders to bail before a high risk area. Example: A tight turn before a small low-risk jump will cause riders lacking cornering skills to come up short on the small low-risk jump before a more difficult feature with higher consequences further down the trail. Example: a very narrow skinny low to the ground before a feature that is high off the ground will cause inexperienced riders to dismount or fall in a low-risk location before the TTF is high above the ground where the rider is more likely to be injured should a fall occur.
- **Provide appropriate Fall Zones.**
  - Hazards such as rocks and logs will be cleared from areas where riders are likely to land from a fall. TTFs will be located such that unmovable hazards such as trees and large stumps are not in the fall zone.
- **Build "Choke Points".**
  - Narrow, difficult and very visible TTFs will slow riders down or cause riders to bail before a higher risk area or before an intersection. Choke points are built close to the ground with safe fall zones in case of a fall.
- **Design Proper Flow into trails.**
  - Avoid abrupt transitions from open and flowing to tight and technical. Reduce the likelihood that a rider will have to ever slam on the brakes.
- **Reduce Surprise.**
  - Provide clear site lines and don't surprise trail users with unexpected technical trail features. Challenging trails should be properly signed. Make sure that people can see technically challenging trail sections well in advance. The most difficult section of a TTF will be made visible from the entry. By placing the difficult section in view, the rider can make an informed decision before they may get into difficulty with a TTF that may be beyond their ability.
- **TTFs should appear to be more difficult than they actually are.**
  - Test each feature with riders of various styles and skill levels and measure their bike handling and response after riding the feature. The feature should always be easier than it appears. If there is any element of negative surprise, the feature needs to be re-designed and re-built.
- **Mark trails and TTFs according to established Sign Standards.**
  - Trailhead and en-route signs can provide general information about trails and features, but their highest priority is to alert riders to the difficulty level and technical challenges on the trail ahead.
- **Educate riders.**
  - Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance and partners will offer various mountain bike boot camps, classes and technical riding skills clinics at Beacon Bike Park. Information on biking etiquette and how to reduce user conflict will also be taught and posted.

Throughout design, construction and maintenance of the mountain bike trail system, Evergreen will keep informed as to the latest changes, safety advisories, and recommended technical design changes that are occurring in the sport of mountain biking. If Evergreen becomes aware, at any time, that a constructed design feature has been identified as dangerous; it will bring the situation to the attention of Seattle Parks immediately and advise as to the range of actions that would be required to mitigate the perceived danger.

## 4.2. Fall Zones

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The Fall Zone is the area adjacent to the trail or TTF that the rider may deviate into should they fail to negotiate the trail or TTF. Trails and TTFs will be located with careful review of rider flow and the surrounding area. Potential causes of injury are trees, logs, branches, stumps, rocks and other forest debris. Like skateboarding

**From:** Mark Ahlness [mahlness@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 07, 2015 1:08 PM  
**To:** Pinto\_de\_Bader, Sandra  
**Subject:** To UFC Commissioners, on Cheasty Greenspace

Dear Urban Forestry Commissioners,

I know you are hearing a presentation at your January 7 meeting about the Cheasty Mountain Bike Pilot. I also realize you are hearing from many concerned citizens about this, as you did in Feb – April, 2014. I would say the concern is considerably higher now, as more of the public has found out about the proposal. I want to thank you for your thoughtful [Adopted Cheasty Mountain Bike Pilot letter of recommendation](#) from April 4, 2014. I attended several meetings prior to that, and I appreciated your close examination of many issues. Today I looked back at your letter and your nine recommendations:

- 1. Any mountain bike trail should be on the perimeter of the greenspace.*
- 2. The interior habitat area of the greenspace should be kept intact with no bike or pedestrian cross trails or meeting places.*
- 3. A wildlife permeable fence should be placed on the interior side of the bike trail to stop bikes entering the interior of the greenspace while allowing wildlife to pass through.*
- 4. A baseline for wildlife and plants should be completed before trail use begins.*
- 5. The four season data collection of impacts and changes should be extended to at least five years, consistent with similar regulatory protocols.*
- 6. Any volunteer mountain bike trail work shall be done in conjunction with comparable restoration work being completed on habitat restoration of the forest.*
- 7. A long term memorandum of understanding (MOU) shall be reached with bike trail proponents regarding construction costs, volunteer work, habitat restoration efforts, and trail maintenance.*
- 8. A goal of no net loss of habitat should be stated as part of the MOU.*
- 9. A competitive obstacle course should not be added.*

Unfortunately, almost every one of those is being ignored at this stage – as are the directions of the City Council, which truly listened to what you had to say.

I urge you to stand behind your recommendations.

Many thanks,

Mark Ahlness

mahlness@comcast.net

Seattle, WA

[www.SeattleNatureAlliance.org](http://www.SeattleNatureAlliance.org)

**From:** Rebecca Watson [rebecca.watson@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 07, 2015 3:09 PM  
**To:** Pinto\_de\_Bader, Sandra  
**Subject:** Regarding: Cheasty Greenspace and Proposed Bike Trail  
7 January 2015

Urban Forestry Commission:

It is my understanding that a presentation about the Cheasty Mountain Bike Pilot is on the agenda for today's UFC meeting.

I am a bit perplexed by this agenda item as I thought a clear resolution to this issue had been reached last April with the thoughtful compromise articulated in your [recommendation](#). Then I thought – wait, take a closer look. You must be missing something. Maybe this presentation was for the new, modified bike trail based on these recommendations? However, upon reviewing the presentation materials it looks like the supporters of the Cheasty Trails and Bike Park are still very energized, engaged and focused on placing a good portion of the bike trail within the Cheasty green space rather than restricting trails to the perimeter per your recommendation. I will say that their presentation at first glance is impressive. They make some strong points. I commend them on all the volunteer time they put in to eradicating invasive plants and picking up litter. This ‘volunteer’ work should always be acknowledged and applauded. But this investment of ‘volunteer’ time should not be a backdoor down payment for a bike trail through irreplaceable wildlife habitat. Also unsettling for me, is if the supporters of the Cheasty Trails and Bike Park are unwilling to accept the compromise proposed by the UFC from April 2014, I am concerned that if this new modified proposal is adopted (that does not follow the UFC proposed guidelines), how will the bike trail encroach on this space in the future (Give an inch, take a mile comes to mind).

As you know, green spaces such as these in the City of Seattle are a very rare - an irreplaceable resource essential to environmental health of our city and the health and well being of our citizens. I do not think the City of Seattle should be selling out on its core beliefs and values of environmental sustainability to the highest bidder. Instead the City of Seattle should be striving to serve as the model of what environmental sustainability should look like in its clear commitment to preservation of natural habitat.

Although the Cheasty Trails and Bike Park is certainly a very important issue, I think this lengthy debate more importantly has uncovered the need for clear and transparent guidelines and policies regarding these rare natural green spaces that are understood and followed by all.

I urge you to stand behind your recommendations with regard to Cheasty Mountain Trails and Bike Park. Be a leader.

Rebecca Watson

Seattle, WA

[rebecca.watson@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.watson@gmail.com)

-----Original Message-----

From: Roger Pence [<mailto:rpence@cablespeed.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 07, 2015 1:51 PM

To: Pinto\_de\_Bader, Sandra

Cc: [stevezemke@msn.com](mailto:stevezemke@msn.com); Kathy Colombo

Subject: Cheasty Green Space bike park, pilot project

Hi Sandra,

Thanks again for the phone discussion this afternoon. It was very helpful. Here is the additional information we discussed --

The Parks Dept. project web page for this is at [http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/gs\\_bike\\_trail.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/gs_bike_trail.htm) This page has links to most of the documentation associated with this project, including the April letter from the Commission.

On Aug. 11, 2014, City Council passed CB 118151 (Ord. 124546) allocating funding for various DON projects. Section 5 of that ordinance governs the Cheasty Green Space pilot bike project. The ordinance can be seen at <http://clerk.seattle.gov/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?d=ORDF&s1=124546.ordn.&Sect6=HITOFF&l=20&p=1&u=/~public/cbor1.htm&r=1&f=G>

City council video discussion of Aug. 11 re the proposed Cheasty Green Space pilot bike project. Relevant discussion begins about minute 34 on the video. --- <http://www.seattlechannel.org/mayor-and-council/city-council/full-council?videoid=x20397>

My personal observation is that the work so far by the Parks Department and the Project Advisory Team (PAT) indicates that the single perimeter ped/bike trail called for by City Council is infeasible. The perimeter location doesn't work due to terrain. And the single trail is also infeasible due to terrain and other issues; it must be two separate trails.

The bike trail project should be abandoned for Cheasty Green Space, and it should be relocated to another area that does not require the sacrifice of Seattle's limited inventory of green space.

We will get back to you soon re an "equal time" presentation by opponents of the bike trail, probably at one of your February meetings.

-Roger Pence-  
Seattle/Beacon Hill

**From:** Denise Dahn [mailto:denise@dahndesign.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 09, 2015 11:52 AM  
**To:** Pinto\_de\_Bader, Sandra  
**Subject:** Urban Forestry Commission

Dear Urban Forestry Commission,

I was unable to attend the meeting on January 7th where the Cheasty Pilot was discussed. I listened to the audio coverage, and I agree with all of the commenters that spoke against this project.

Please allow me to make two additional comments based on what I heard from the audio.

1. Joel DeJong stated that he would be "afraid" to let his child ride on the trails as they appeared in their presented map, because he might "never see them again". Ironically, he is arguing against his own project with such a statement. These bike parks are not viable for children in any urban forested natural area. Why not build them in open areas instead, where parents can keep an eye on them? An existing underutilized sport field or the Chief Sealth Trail would be more appropriate places for these bike parks. Other cities are building these parks in open vacant lots—not natural areas—which is a much better place for them.

2. Someone (I think it was a UFC member) made a comment about looking at other bike parks in other cities, and Forest Park in Portland was given as an example. Actually, Forest Park only allows bikes on

existing roads and fire lanes, not on hiking trails. No single-track mountain bikes trails exist in the park (the kind that mountain bikers want). The trails are reserved for hikers only. Last year, the Park commissioner turned down a request for allowing mountain bike trails to be built in the park—even though it is more than 100 times the size Cheasty—in part on environmental grounds.

Please see attached for the sources.

Thank you for your great work on this issue!

Sincerely,

Denise Dahn  
The Seattle Nature Alliance  
[seattlenaturealliance.org](http://seattlenaturealliance.org)  
Denise Dahn  
Dahn Design, LLC  
(206) 923-2853 tel  
[denise@dahndesign.com](mailto:denise@dahndesign.com)  
[www.dahndesign.com](http://www.dahndesign.com)

Map showing no-mountain biking on single-track trails in Forest Park in Portland:

Portland Parks Commissioner denying the building of mountain bike trails in Forest Park:  
<http://www.portlandonline.com/Fritz/index.cfm?a=480091&c=49233>