



## **Cheasty Trails Pilot Project**

### **Notes from Project Advisory Team Conference Call**

**December 18, 2014: 5:00-6:00 p.m.**

#### **Overview**

Cheasty PAT members participated in a conference call on Thursday, December 18, 2014. The purpose of this call was to provide a check-in between the regularly-scheduled meetings of the group. Items discussed during the call included:

- Comments on the preliminary schematic trail design presented at the November 20 PAT meeting.
- A report on the December 3 community meeting.
- The level of design/commitment for the pedestrian portion of the trail.
- A discussion of potential mountain biking features.
- A draft monitoring checklist for the project.
- An update on the environmental work underway.

**Margaret Norton-Arnold** had emailed members a bibliography of information related to trail design; this had been requested at the November 20 PAT meeting. The materials are not specific to Cheasty, but are intended as background information for the group.

Margaret also noted that the Parks Department is not necessarily seeking full consensus of the PAT on its recommendations related to the pilot project. At the final PAT meeting on February 19, 2015, Margaret will ask each member to weigh in individually on his/her perspectives on the pilot project trail design and monitoring process. While it is always helpful to have as much agreement as necessary, members are not being asked to be in full alignment with each other.

#### **Comments on the Preliminary Trail Design**

The call began with additional thoughts from members on the preliminary schematic trail design presented on November 20. Some members had wondered why two options weren't presented to the PAT; one that included two parallel trail "lanes" for pedestrians and bikes, and a second that was a single, multi-purpose trail. **Doug Critchfield** responded that the Parks Department had reviewed the single trail proposal for potential environmental impacts, and had determined that the environmental impacts of a single multi-purpose trail would be significantly greater than the potential impacts from the two narrower trail lanes. This is primarily due to the level of hillside excavation that would be required in order to build the wider, combined-use trail. In addition, the wider trail would not be as safe, as it presents too many areas for potential conflict between bikers and pedestrians. For these reasons, Parks believes the parallel lanes are the best option.

**Kathy Colombo** noted it was important to share this background information with both the PAT and the public, so that the rationale behind Parks' decision-making would be evident to all.

In response to various emails that had been shared between members, **Melanie Coerver** noted that when she spoke of "visioning" for Cheasty, she did not intend to stop the design process that has already been initiated; she intended for the group to think more broadly about the trail, also considering restoration opportunities, and goals for the ways in which children might play on and use the trail. She urged the group to not get too focused on the nitty-gritty aspects of trail design.

**Dan Moore** clarified some of his recent comments and emails. He has not been asking that the PAT achieve unanimous agreement on trail design, but suggested the group move beyond a literal interpretation of “perimeter” trail and be more open to other possibilities. He noted that proponents of the cross-trails had been disappointed when that option was eliminated from consideration. He does not believe it is a good use of time and money, at this point, to continue to ask for additional designs.

**Kathy** responded that she serves as a voice for her community, and that another trail option would have been helpful in order to make the best possible recommendation. *This is a natural area and it is important the trail is done right. I am trying to be open to the possibilities.*

**Phil Thompson** urged the group to find some kind of a consensus, *even if the only area of agreement is that the trail should be a perimeter trail only. The Parks Department is going to do whatever they want to do; ultimately, we’re just an advisory group. The details will work themselves out.*

### **Report on December 3 Community Meeting**

**Paula Hoff** reported on the December 3 community meeting at Rainier Vista. The small-group discussion format allowed for constructive dialogue; approximately 25 people attended. Parks will conduct additional outreach later on in the design process.

**Dan** had attended the meeting and helped to facilitate the discussion at one of the tables. A couple of the ideas generated by the group stood out to him: one was that more entrances and exits to the trail should be considered. Another was that Parks get a grant to hire someone to conduct outreach, give tours, and provide information. *It would help get other groups involved in the project; I thought it was a great idea.*

### **Pedestrian Trail Design**

**Sarah Welch** had said at the November 20 PAT meeting that it seemed pretty clear the bike portion of the proposed trail was getting more time and attention than the pedestrian portion of the trail. **Doug** reassured those on the call that the pedestrian trail is integral in the project, and is not being thought of as a “secondary use.” *Even If the bike trail is unsuccessful according to pilot project criteria, the pedestrian trail will remain intact. They both have to work in tandem for this project to be evaluated properly.*

Doug also noted that the types of comments that are most useful are the ones that Sarah had shared in an email, for example, where the perimeter trail should actually be located. *Those give Parks something tangible to work with through the design process.*

**Darrell Howe** wondered about the City Council’s ongoing interactions with the Parks Department. He felt the PAT should get a response from the Council on issues such as two trail lanes and the definition of “perimeter.” **Paula** responded that the goal of Parks is to develop a pilot project to present to the Council, and not for the Council to weigh in at every step along the way.

### **Optional Bike Features**

Another comment raised on November 20 was whether or not the trail would be of sufficient interest for mountain bikers; whether it would include jumps and other features. An “Optional Features” document had been posted to the OneHub site that provides examples of features that could be incorporated at Cheasty. **Doug** said the Parks Department is likely to be conservative in its selection of

these features. One diagram in the document had included a 7-foot jump, for example, and Doug said this would be too radical for what was intended at Cheasty.

**Margaret** asked the group whether these options alleviated their concerns about the overall level of interest for bike riders. **Dan** suggested that Parks get feedback on this directly from the bike community, and further noted that Dave Couture, one of the few mountain bikers on the PAT, would be better equipped to comment. *My hunch is that it isn't going to allay their concerns, and Doug your point makes sense that we have to be somewhat cautious in our approach here. I think what Maggi came up with last week is awesome and I'm super excited about it, but I think it would be good to talk to mountain biking advocates.*

**Ed Ewing** noted that mountain bikers are only one segment of the trail users; *I think the biggest users of the park will be families, and they represent the future of this park.*

**Sarah** said she *appreciates that Ed said we want to attract the local community/families.* She also indicated that she was pleased with the overall level of commitment she was seeing related to the pedestrian portion of the trail.

### **Draft Pilot Project Monitoring Checklist**

Margaret and Doug had prepared a draft checklist for PAT review. This checklist and process would be used to monitor the three-year pilot project. The draft will be further refined during January and February. PAT members offered their initial thoughts:

- Environmental education needs to be brought in here. Especially since we are doing the thorough environmental review; we can use that science to help educate people.
- This checklist is all about monitoring the harm to the environment. We also need to be monitoring the benefits to the environment. We should include the positive as well as the negative.

Margaret and Doug will refine the checklist for a second review by the group during the January 15 conference call.

### **Update on Environmental Work**

**Doug** reported that Environmental Science Associates is currently assessing wetlands and habitat areas in Cheasty. The geotech assessment will begin in early January. ESA intends to have their report completed in time for review and discussion at the January 29 PAT meeting.

### **Next Steps**

The PAT will have another conference call on January 15, 2015. The next PAT meeting is scheduled for January 29. The final PAT meeting will be combined with a public meeting and is scheduled for February 19.

### **Call Participants**

Weston Brinkley; Melanie Coerver; Kathy Colombo; Ed Ewing; Darrell Howe; Curtis LaPierre; Dan Moore; Phil Thompson; Sarah Welch. Doug Critchfield; Paula Hoff; Margaret Norton-Arnold; Casey Rogers.