



## **Cheasty Trails Pilot Project**

### **History, Current Status, and Process Moving Forward**

**October 2, 2014**

#### **Project Overview**

- The Friends of Cheasty Greenspace at Mountain View originally proposed the project through the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Opportunity Fund process in 2012. In August 2014, the Seattle City Council authorized a three-year pilot project for the trail, contingent on the successful completion of a Project Advisory Team and public process.
- Parks estimates that it will cost approximately \$450,000 to complete planning and design of the pilot project, Phase 1 construction of the trail, and forest restoration. These costs include an extended public involvement process, Parks management costs and cost for the three-year monitoring program associated with the pilot project. At this time, the City of Seattle is paying for completion of the public process, with other costs being paid for by the Friends of Cheasty Mountain View. The Department of Neighborhoods has awarded \$100,000 for the physical construction of the loop trail, once the final design, and the public process, have been completed.
- At this time, only concept-level drawings have been developed for the proposed trail. Seattle Parks does not have any preliminary design drawings, and has not approved or rejected any designs. Part of the role of the Project Advisory Team is to review, comment on, and actively influence the project's design.

#### **Action of the Seattle City Council**

- In July-August 2014, the City Council deliberated on the Cheasty project. The wording on the City Council resolution includes:

***Section 5.** Before approving a final plan for the Cheasty Greenspace Trails and Bike Park, which is proposed as a three- year pilot project, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) shall complete a full public process and technical review of the proposed design for the a multi-use bike and pedestrian perimeter trail, including review of engineering, environmental, design, and community factors, make necessary revisions to the proposed design, and report to the City Council's Parks, Seattle Center, Libraries and Gender Pay Equity (PSCLGPE) Committee. The report shall include a summary of the public engagement process and a plan outlining the method and criteria for evaluation of the pilot project.*

#### **Proposed Changes to the Existing Bicycle Policy**

- The existing bicycle policy for Seattle Parks was written in 1995 and is in need of an update.
- The Board of Park Commissioners held a public hearing on Oct. 10, 2013 at which a proposal to change the existing policy was introduced.
- The Park Board then deliberated on this issue at its Nov. 13, 2013 meeting.

- On January 9, 2014, the Park Board agreed to a three-year pilot project to create a mountain bike trail before any action is taken on the proposed bicycle policy changes. The Board wanted to understand what the impacts of mountain bike trail(s) would be on a natural area before making any policy changes. Parks staff suggested Cheasty as a pilot project because it was a potential project and had volunteer support. There was no other citizen group actively proposing mountain bike trail(s). The Board agreed to the Cheasty project in Cheasty Greenspace as a pilot project and required ongoing restoration of natural habitat as part of the pilot.

### **Community Meetings**

- A meeting was held at the Jefferson Community Center on March 25, 2014.
- Acting Parks Superintendent Christopher Williams and other Parks staff conducted one-on-one and small-group meetings with community members throughout May, 2014.
- A brief update was provided to the North Beacon Hill Community Association on September 9, 2014.

### **Project Advisory Team Formation**

- The invitation to join the Project Advisory Team (PAT) was announced by Christopher Williams on August 7, 2014. The invitation was advertised via newspapers, mailers, the Parks website and blogs.
- The PAT application period closed on August 29, interviews were conducted, and the roster was finalized on September 19.
- PAT Tours of Cheasty – which were also open to the public -- were conducted on September 24 and 27.
- PAT meetings will be held on October 2, October 23, November 20, and December 11, 2014.

### **Ongoing Public Process**

- All PAT meetings will be open to the public, and public comment will be incorporated into the meeting agendas.
- Additional public meetings will be held on the pilot project as the project continues to be designed and as it moves toward construction. The first of these will be in January 2015 and will provide the general public with the opportunity to review and comment on the work of the Project Advisory Team.
- Web updates to the project: [http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/gs\\_bike\\_trail.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/gs_bike_trail.htm).

### **DRAFT Criteria for Evaluation**

Parks will require a review of some or all of the following categories of potential impacts of the Cheasty Pilot Pedestrian and Mountain Bike Trail as part of the planning proposal as well as a basis for the quarterly review of impacts of the pilot project. This list is a DRAFT. The Project Advisory Team will be significantly involved in the review, and further development of, this list of evaluation criteria.

- Existing Conditions & Trends – A review of the current condition of the area to include known environmental and social conditions, uses and existing concerns such as slopes, wetlands and debris.
- Water Quality - The site contains known wetlands and has year-round water flow, so water quality and water control issues are a significant. Factors will include impacts to: wastewater, storm water drainage, solid waste and wetland impact and protection.
- Forest Condition – Parks has performed two levels of review of forest conditions of the site. Current review is through the Green Seattle Partnership Inventory process that guides restoration efforts in Parks' 2,500 acres of forested parklands. Sampling is done to determine forest type, forest condition and potential forest trajectory.
- Endangered Species – Urban forests provided benefits that include wildlife habitat for existing species as well as potential habitat for returning species. Wildlife inventories are long-term and require significant funding. Measurements of habitat quality, diversity of flora, soil quality, bird populations and other measures that can be replicated on a quarterly basis would be of the best use to determine impacts.

- Air Quality – Parking has a direct impact on air quality as do the reduced trips to more distant venues.
- Environmental Justice – Social and environmental justice issues are important criteria for the City of Seattle and Seattle Parks. The proponents of the plan will be required to provide outreach to all members of the local community to ensure inclusion and assure equitable use of the resources of this site.
- Community Facilities & Services – How the project will affect local facilities and services will be examined.
- Historic Properties – Historical research will be done to identify any potential impacts to historical resources.
- Noise Control- Impacts from users, vehicles and walkers may be examined via onsite interviews and observation, as well as research from similar sites.
- Contamination & Toxic Materials – A review of the site for hazardous materials will be ongoing during the pilot phase. Prior to initial work a review will be done for known contamination areas.
- Energy – Energy use may be forecasted through existing models.
- Alternatives – The development of alternative trail locations, trail types and construction methods will be examined through the PAT and through internal review by Parks.
- Project Mitigation/Modifications – Any mitigation measures necessary to address the impacts should be included in the study.
- Permitting – Local, county and state permitting for wetlands, steep slopes and forest restoration should be addressed through the planning process and with the use of professionals in the field.

#### **DRAFT Potential Quarterly Review Categories**

A draft list of the Parks staff evaluations that would be conducted on a quarterly basis throughout the pilot project includes:

- General trail condition.
- Estimated trail usage.
- Increased parking issues or impacts
- Noting areas of trail erosion and/or standing water, with recommended fixes.
- Noting areas of trail damage, with recommended fixes.
- Evidence of bicycles not staying within the constructed trail corridor.
- General vegetation health within the immediate trail corridor.
- Areas of damaged and or dying vegetation within the trail corridor.
- Increases or decreases in trash and or encampments in area.
- Development of unplanned trails.
- Any signs of wildlife.
- Maintenance activities undertaken during the preceding quarter include trail maintenance and vegetation management activities and volunteer hours.

#### **Goals**

- Provide input to the Parks Superintendent about the use of Cheasty Greenspace as an amenity that benefits all users, especially residents in the surrounding communities.
- Assess and provide input for a pedestrian and mountain bike trail pilot project design with the intent of attracting users from the surrounding community to take an interest in stewardship of Cheasty Greenspace and whose use will displace current negative activity.
- Achieve overall improvement of habitat quality in Cheasty Greenspace.
- Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to improve the reality and perception of Cheasty Greenspace as a safe place to enjoy and that contributes to the safety of the surrounding neighborhoods.