

CHEASTY TRAILS PILOT PROJECT
PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM



--DRAFT FOR REVIEW BY DOUG CRITCHFIELD--

Meeting #5: February 19, 2015

--Meeting Report--

PAT Members Present

Connie Bown
Dan Moore
Darrell Howe
David Couture
Edward Ewing
Kathy Colombo
Melanie Coerver
Sarah Welch
Tom Linde
Weston Brinkley

PAT Members not Present

Phillip Thompson
Curtis LaPierre

Project Team Staff and Consultants

Doug Critchfield, Seattle Parks and Recreation
John Jainga, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Paula Hoff, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Margaret Norton-Arnold, PAT Facilitator
Casey Rogers, PAT Administrator

Meeting Overview

Margaret opened the meeting and noted that this was the final meeting of the Cheasty Project Advisory Team. The format is different for this meeting; public comment will occur first, followed by a session with the PAT in which all members will individually voice their opinions on the future of the pilot project.

Presentation and Discussion

Doug Critchfield provided an overview of the schematic design for the proposed trail, which had been modified in response to the recently-completed environmental and geotechnical analyses. Doug also described the upcoming public and review process associated with the project. A copy of Doug's presentation is on the Cheasty website. Questions from PAT members on Doug's presentation included:

CHEASTY TRAILS PILOT PROJECT

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM



Q: How will regular maintenance be handled?

A: We're looking for a 72-hour response time to vandalism, etc.

Q: There has been some discussion about a capitol project in the maintenance yard related to water work?

A: Our geotechnical expert noted that Seattle's Department of Permitting and Development (DPD) will probably require that the water coming out from the road be piped through an above-ground pipe. And, we may need to build a structure on top of that. There is a lot of impervious surface in the yard because of the vehicles there. The geotech is worried about adding water to already-unstable soils. This will come up, but it does not have anything to do with the pilot project.

Q: My understanding is that the pedestrian trail would have a gravel surface. Is gravel considered an impervious surface?

A: Yes, the majority of the pedestrian surface will be impervious. But the gravel in the maintenance yard is larger than what would be used for the trail. It is easier to drain water through smaller rock. Our geotech said he would alert us to any situations in which he thought additional techniques to address storm water would be needed. So far he is satisfied with the areas we have addressed. Generally you do not need any additional special drainage for a trail.

Q: Do you have any idea of the costs for monitoring and evaluation?

A: We are developing those costs now.

Q: It looks like there are three wetlands crossings that will require boardwalks. Will all of those boardwalks be on pin piles?

A: Yes, they probably will be, but we will determine that further when we get into more design specifics.

Q: The coloration of the mapping looks like the project site encompasses SHA property; is that property now included in the pilot project?

A: The yellow color refers to the slope category. The SHA property was part of the study area; it was just a mapping convenience to include it.

Q: There are three crossings of Cheasty Boulevard; does that mean this project will include crosswalks for pedestrians?

A: Two crossings exist already; the third is indicated by the blue dot on the map.

Public Comment

Public comment at the meeting included:

The criteria need to be more quantifiable. This is a pilot project and we need to evaluate it according the threshold numbers. I also want to know which design elements could be added. Are we talking about small tweaks or are we talking about cross trails? Parks is developing guidelines for these types of projects and DPD is updating the Critical Areas Ordinance. Those will obviously affect what takes place at Cheasty. *Roger Pence*

CHEASTY TRAILS PILOT PROJECT

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM



I work at Cascade Bicycle Club and am a local resident in Judkins Park. This project is a good location as a focus point for education and programs that encourage youth to have interactive recreation in nature. It's good to see the separation of the bike and pedestrian trails. I have worked on many such trails in the past. *Josh Miller*

I want to ask the PAT to move forward with this project, the work we do is similar to that at Cascade Bicycle Club to make bikes and bicycling more accessible to people, especially to those in South Seattle. Thank you. *Steve Maluk*

I live right along the edge of Cheasty, so first I want to thank the Parks Department. I see there is a whole ton of effort to balance the concerns of this project and I feel they're fair. I was hoping for more cross trails. The 72-hour requirement will be tough. I have a job during the week and I think if the requirement was changed to the nearest weekend that would be great. *Greg Briggs*

I want to continue to thank the PAT; I appreciate your work. The plan has improved in many ways; it isn't perfect, but it is great. It's important to acknowledge that almost a year of work has been done in the space before trail construction; that work log from the Green Seattle Partnership should be used to document the conditions of a year ago, in comparison to the conditions now. *Scott Amick*

I live up on Beacon Hill by Jefferson Park. My 7-year-old son and I have been volunteering, and we are really looking forward to the possibility of this trail, both for mountain biking and pedestrians. It's been important for me to show my son civic involvement, all the volunteering, how that can make a difference in connecting communities. It would be nice to see a bit more connection pedestrian-wise through there. Last weekend we visited Swan Creek; there have been some comments about disturbing wildlife, but I think the adaptability of animals has been great. I saw deer this last week and I realize we're not a threat. *Morgan Hougland*

As a community member, a parent, and a bicyclist I am strongly in favor of going forward with this project. Thank you very much. *Alex Fleig*

I want to thank everybody for all their input and everyone who volunteered around the PAT table. For me this project is about community and relationships, so thank you everyone. Thank you to Parks and to Margaret; I know you're in a tough seat there. I think the design is coming along; I appreciated being out on the walk the other day and getting to see the design. This proposal was meant to get the youth engaged and involved, and one thing I don't see is a trail type that will really get youth involved. Hopefully we can work with Parks to develop this. President Obama issued an initiative today to get every kid into a national park. That initiative says: "Social research suggests that exposing kids to nature when they are roughly 9 years old establishes a connection to the environment that last through adulthood." *Joel DeJong*

This project seems like a microcosm of the world that's going on today. The debate was that bicycles would harm the environment, but the research shows that bikes have no more impacts than pedestrians. The geotech expert has said that trails could even help the area. However just like climate

CHEASTY TRAILS PILOT PROJECT

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM



change, people aren't willing to listen to science. Sadly, people have let their concerns about this project become personal. To make this valley a better place for our families and our neighbors, we must cooperate. Come join us this weekend to help connect restore and enjoy Cheasty – 9:00 a.m. *Jay Gairson*

I live on Cheasty Boulevard. One thing lacking in the plan is a way to address the parking situation, which we all know is pretty bad. One of the entries is near my house. It would behoove the PAT to suggest a parking plan; you can't put this pilot project together and think that there isn't going to be a parking issue on the Boulevard. *Rosie Selle*

I have lived right near the Greenspace for the past 8 years. The transformation we have seen there is remarkable. We have space that people are using for fresh air and to get in touch with nature. We should use that now to get in touch with nature through bicycles. I think we're looking at the right thing. *Bob Downing*

If you look at the map you see a fairly dense neighborhood on the bottom. We need cross trails so we can connect the two communities. I am not a mountain biker; I am mostly a dog walker and a hiker. The neighborhood has to come together, there are people on Beacon Hill who never really go to Rainier Vista. This project offers a new generation of families who want their kids to connect to the woods. This is not an evil plot from REI to commercialize the woods. *Paul Fairbairn*

My backyard is the greenspace, I am an avid birder and nature lover in general; I am dedicated to Cheasty Mountain View and I volunteer there. I hear branches falling during windstorms, I see the invasives every day, I've smelled the campfires, and have had people walk into my yard merely because they have lost the way. I firmly believe that we need this project. I want to give a shoutout to Mary and Joel, they have given so much time and proven their dedication with sweat. *Karen Beck*

I am providing you with a petition this evening from Change.org that includes 400 signatures asking that the project include a pedestrian trail only. We have ended up with a trail going through the middle of the forest, and this is not what was intended. I keep hearing people comment about the incredible crime that goes on in Cheasty, and that needs to be on the evaluation criteria. Someone needs to go out into the area and gather the crime data from over the last 10 years. The place that needs this more is the jungle on the east side of Beacon Hill. I looked at the SPD blotter today and that place has a lot of crime. *Mira Latoszek*

Here is Section 5 from the City Council bill, and you can see that it calls for a trail, not trails. If the bike trail is put in, there will be no other place for the animals to go. The deer in Cheasty are already gone, and the coyotes are missing as well. What is social justice? Many communities have forests nearby. What about parks in rich white neighborhoods, is that social justice as well? I saw Bruce Harrell speak recently, and he trying to figure out why there were so many lightbulbs out in South Seattle compared to the city. He found out that it's because they change light bulbs based on complaints, and people in low income communities don't complain as much. We are very tolerant. *Mark Holland*

CHEASTY TRAILS PILOT PROJECT

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM



We live in a finite biosphere and everything in that biosphere has an equal right; everything that lives in the biosphere is our habitat. Cheasty Forest is one of the scarce wild habitats in the City of Seattle, there are few things in the city of Seattle that are as wild. There are thousands of areas in the City where bikes would do a lot less damage. You can take a bike or walk in Lewis Park, where the forest has been manicured and transformed from something wild, and we're about to do that to Cheasty. In fact everything that has happened since we have started this process has damaged the forest, since it is a relatively wild place. And while some wildlife may remain, and even at the completion of the project may remain, look at the crowd of people who want to bring their family to the forest. They will destroy it. *George Robertson*

Thank you to everyone who has worked on this the past few months. I support this project and a comprehensive plan that supports multimodal transportation in the area. How do we do this in the fastest growing city in the nation? We do that through reclamation, through restoration, through best management practices. We are removing invasive species and planting thousands of native trees, which will improve the habitat. Thirdly, through imagination, this land has the potential to create community. A multi-modal trail system will help us achieve these goals. *Mary DeJong*

I am a 30-year resident of Beacon Hill. I helped to save the Mountain View property years ago when it was slated for development. Fortunately we were able to stall that project by asking for an Environmental Impact Statement. I voted to keep the property wild, to keep it as a wildlife preserve. I don't understand why this PAT has even continued to meet. As a taxpayer, I feel very offended that you are not following through on what the City Council asked for. The project appears poorly thought out; the proponents have emphasized that it is for children and I agree that we need places for children. But there are other alternatives in the city. I think it was Melissa Seaman who said this would not make a very good mountain biking trail. *Julie Cummings*

Thanks to the PAT members for asking tough questions and for listening a lot. Wherever this goes, I believe you will make it a stronger project. I walked up the trail the other night and spotted a couple of wrens. This area was covered in blackberries two years ago. I am an avid hiker, and I expect to hike through these trails, I expect to bike, and to teach my two young sons to bike on this trail. *Jeff Nachtigal*

I am here with my daughter Caitlin. We live at Cheasty. We support trails, we support connecting a community. I went door-to-door a few months ago gathering signatures, and every person we encountered was in support of this project. Not all of them can be here tonight, but there is a lot of community support for this project. *Christina Gilman*

I am not a biker, but I am a neighbor of this space, I am a mother, I am a nurse, and I am an environmentalist. It is important that our urban children experience nature. It's important that my daughter has a connection to the environment. I don't want us to nitpick this project to death out of fear, and out of process, but I do want us to think big, and think about cross trails and to utilize and bring children into this space. That includes pedestrian trails and cross trails. A previous speaker talked about crime prevention; that will come through cross trails and through more humans in this space. Another speaker thought that because we live in a diverse and working class neighborhood, we don't care about crime prevention. But we do care. *Susan Zeman*

CHEASTY TRAILS PILOT PROJECT

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM



I am a neighbor and forest steward and I want to echo things that other commenters have said about the PAT. I also want to thank the community members. I went on the trail walk and that was cool; it was good to see the feedback received, and that the next trail design responded to that feedback. There was good give and take in the field with everyone there, and with the geotech expert. The 72-hour response to vandalism, etc. – that could set us up for failure. I volunteer for another park and what we do is use social media, email that will say “there’s a tree down and we’ll take care of it on Saturday”. We need to take a realistic approach to this so we aren’t set up to fail. *Jim Denison*

I am with my daughter PiElla. This weekend we went on a walk in Cheasty and it was the first time we had done this in 3 months, we had such a good time looking at the restored forest, listening to the birds. We want to be able to do that every weekend if there is a trail near our house. There is a huge clash of ideologies in the comments that have been received. Humans can be good stewards and one with nature. I believe that humans are a part of nature and that our actions can enhance the natural environment. The friends of Cheasty at Mountain View have already proven that humans can do that. Thank you; we need community and safe trails. *Celeste Gilman*

I live right next door to the Rainier Vista park entrance, I want to thank the PAT for all of you efforts. I continue to support this project as someone who lives right next door. I would like to see more cross trails, so that this project can become something bigger. I have interacted more with my neighbors because of this project. Cheasty has been used by the Beacon Hill neighborhood to separate people from low income housing and the top of the hill. This project could be used as a gesture of empowerment; this is an opportunity to get people to invest and more positively connect with Rainier Valley. *Monica Duke*

I am the Executive Director at Washington Student Cycling League, and am here on behalf of the youth in the City of Seattle. We have 255 youth student riders in our program; few than 5% of those are from the City of Seattle. 78% of our high school students report that they have never participated in sports before; 36% of their parents started cycling because of their participation in this program. Our student athletes also report that they are making better food choices because of their biking, and improved social connections; it’s a fun and a low impact sport. They don’t even realize that they’re getting exercise, because they are having so much fun. These trails will make huge strides in getting our youth to be more active. *Lisa Miller*

I’m setting up my own recorder, as my comments have not been recorded accurately in past meeting reports. Here is a picture of my son Brian, he is a little bit older now. I own a couple of bikes and there are places to put mountain bikes, but Cheasty is not one of them. A 9-year-old, a commuter on the way to school, isn’t going to maintain the park. I have ridden goofy and I have ridden colonnades. The Parks Department is a disaster. What’s going to happen when people find something more fun to ride sooner and farther away from Cheasty? *Skip Knox*

We are discussing adding bike trails, a dual system at that, to a steep, skinny site with 11 wetlands and unusual birds in an urban setting. If we are serious about doing a useful, reproducible pilot project, why not pick a site that makes sense? Like the neighboring Chief Sealth Trail. Our natural areas are sources

CHEASTY TRAILS PILOT PROJECT

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM



of significant eco-services, habitat, education, quiet observation and reflection. They deserve much better. What's wrong with right activity, right place? You don't play Frisbee in the library, and you don't recreate with mechanized equipment in the natural area. It defeats the purpose of the natural area and is in no way consistent with social equity. *Ruth Williams*

I am a resident of Rainier Vista, and the prospect of having this in my back yard is very exciting. I look forward to having this come to a finish. *Adam Dodge*

Most of Cheasty is in a landslide hazard area. The first preliminary geotech report was completed on November 7, and was touched on at your November 20 meeting. But the actual report was not posted until the next day. I don't know if you all had a chance to question the geotech, I certainly didn't. What it says is that much of Seattle is in a landslide area, there are past landslides, there is a current landslide going on, and the report says that trails cannot be built in this area. The majority of the Greenspace is in a landslide area. There is peril here. *Patricia Naumann*

CHEASTY TRAILS PILOT PROJECT

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM



PAT Responses

After the public comment portion of the meeting, PAT members responded to three questions related to their opinions on the pilot project. These responses have been documented in a separate memo to Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent of Parks. This memo has also been posted on the Cheasty website.

Next Steps

This meeting concluded the work of the Project Advisory Team, but additional opportunities for public involvement will be available as the project continues through deliberations at the Parks Board and the Seattle City Council, and through the permitting process that will be required by the City of Seattle.