

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Leif Fixen, Chair • Tom Early, Vice-Chair

Gordon Bradley • Donna Kostka • Richard Martin • Joanna Nelson de Flores • Jeff Reibman • Erik Rundell • 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

April 1, 2015

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)

700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners

Leif Fixen - chair
Tom Early – vice chair
Donna Kostka
Joanna Nelson de Flores
Richard Martin
Erik Rundell
Steve Zemke

Absent- Excused

Gordon Bradley
Jeff Reibman

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Garret Farrell - Parks
Deb Brown - Parks

Public

Joel DeJong
Jay Gairson
Linda Murtfeldt
Patricia Naumann
Sarah Welch

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

Extended Public comment

Jay Gairson – Have been doing restoration in Cheasty. He sent a detailed letter early in the week. He supports the letter of recommendation regarding the Arboretum’s multi-use Trail project.

Patricia Naumann – Might want to comment later.

Sarah Welch – She is part of the group Friends of Cheasty. She would like to encourage the Commission to send a follow up letter. The Parks Board will be hosting a hearing and it would be important for them to get the Commission’s point of view on the Mountain Bike pilot program. Thank you for visiting the site.

Joel DeJong – Thanks to everyone that came out to the Cheasty tour. Hopefully, the Commission got a good idea of the space and the neighborhood.

Adoption of March 4 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the March 4 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Cheasty Mountain Bike Pilot Project discussion

- Tour debrief

Richard looked at the GeoTech report. He is concerned that the hydrology of the site has not been considered. He immediately noticed that by walking the space and looking at the wetland areas. Two geotech reports have been issued but they don't have real hydrology data gathered. They make assumptions that might not have been proven. Hydrological conditions are important to be established. Especially when looking at the work that will need to get done to support bridges and paths for the pilot project. If designed properly, these issues could be addressed but it could be that once the hydrology assessment is done existing hydrology conditions might preclude the construction of paths. It's in the project's benefit to do a hydrology assessment prior to getting to the design phase.

- Review April 2014 Recommendation

The Commission reviewed the April 2014 letter of recommendation.

- Mountain Bike Pilot Project discussion

A draft letter of recommendation to the Mayor and Council about Cheasty Mountain Bike Pilot Project was prepared by Donna Kostka. Donna was asked why a second letter was necessary at this time. She replied that slope instability is the most dominant environmental question at the Cheasty site. Proposed use of stabilizing pins 8 feet or more long indicates the soil can never be put back to its 2015 condition, if the pilot is considered a failure. Environmental impacts of mountain bike trails recently caused Portland, OR to ban mountain biking on these trails. And the National Park Service requires a full environmental impact statement to be done on any proposed mountain bike trails in national Parks.

Commissioners discussed and expressed their opinions on this project. The Commission is split on this issue. This could be an opportunity for more and diverse people to experience natural areas in a different way. Not everyone is going to be excited about listening to birds and getting people into the forest. The issue between hiking vs. biking is not really the problem. After reading all the letters that came in there are arguments that state that bike impacts are not necessarily more impactful than pedestrians.

Tom went out and walked the site. He could see there was a concern for habitat fragmentation. All the reading he did referred to 100 acres. Cheasty is already a fragment. One of the core beliefs is not to do any more fragmentation. In terms of the overall canopy cover goal, this pilot could be a good way to get a couple groups that care about these restoration areas to collaborate. This letter should be tabled for now.

This is an already impacted site due to homeless encampments. Not doing anything is not possible. The project supports stewardship of the site.

NOTE: For the full conversation details please listen to the meeting recording.

ACTION: A motion to table the draft letter at this point in time was made, seconded, and approved. (5-2) Steve Zemke and Donna Kostka voted against.

ACTION: A motion was made to send a letter to Parks Board expressing the hydrologist's concerns for the site.

Richard will look at current policy and will put together a draft for discussion.

Environmentally Critical Areas Ordinance – Sandra will invite DPD to brief the Commission.

Moving forward Sandra will place a disclaimer on all draft letters of recommendation saying:
MATERIAL PREPARED FOR DISCUSSION BY THE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION.
THIS DELIBERATIVE DOCUMENT DOES NOT REFLECT THE OPINION OF THE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
AND MAY OR MAY NOT MOVE FORWARD TO VOTE.

- Report on visit with Parks Board – Tom and Steve

The UFC will continue to weigh in at the policy level by participating in Parks' revised use guidelines process. The Parks Board and the PTA have been providing input to Parks.

Arboretum Mixed-Use Trail letter of recommendation – review and possible vote

Steve Zemke proposed an amendment to add a point: the Commission urges the Arboretum to re-design this project to save as many large trees as possible by utilizing the existing trail.

Garret Farrell (Parks) – the pathway being put in uses pathways that were pre-existing. There are entire sections that were irrigated and fell off the map with respect to the collection. The trail was designed to try to connect from 31st to the visitor center, forming a loop with Arboretum Drive. They did a lot of work to remove fill material from the creek to daylight the creek and provide access to several sections of the collection. Gravel is not maintainable for all sections of the trail. The original routing focused on the collection. The collection has priority over the native matrix. They worked the trail to preserve as many large caliper trees as possible. Have done an intensive effort to move some trees and also to propagate those that can't be moved. Have done a tremendous amount of groundwork and ground proofing all the road work.

UFC question: will you take away the existing trail that is along the road?

Response: the new trail will parallel a portion of the existing trail and then will connect with some of the existing paths. Many paths will remain. The 14 foot path is very curvy and it will be all-weather surface with gentle ups and downs.

UFC comment regarding exempting Parks for existing City tree protection regulations:

The project is being run by a public entity (Parks) which provides for the public good. Agencies are exempted from some regulations because they are doing work for the greater good of the community.

If we are asking developers to comply with regulations, even though they are providing for the greater good (housing) but then exempting public agencies from complying that might create a public perception problem. It's important to be aware of public perception.

Removing native trees impacts native wildlife. The Arboretum is not just a collection of plants but it includes wildlife.

Leif will produce a second draft of the letter for UFC consideration at the first May meeting.

New business and announcements

Tom – New business – SCL pruned trees. Debating in his mind, are they providing the canopy cover or is it a bigger detriment by keeping wrong tree in the wrong place or disfiguring trees. Maybe propose a study.

Sandra will send to the Commission the Richardson/Moskal paper on Seattle canopy cover.

Mayor's visit. Commissioners will talk about priorities:

Introductions

Mayor remarks

Urban Forest Stewardship Plan

- Canopy Cover
- Monitoring

Public trees

- Green Seattle Partnership
- 2 for 1 tree replacement policy

Private trees

- DPD ordinance

Donna, Steve, and Joanna participated in Parks' focus groups regarding the Revised Use Guidelines for Greenbelts and Natural Areas.

Steve – One focus group member from Goodwill was excited to open up these areas to the public. The majority considered these areas to be Seattle's jewels and want them protected. Parks doesn't seem to believe that providing habitat for wildlife is a valid use. They seem to be more focused on active uses. There was some discussion about keeping some of these areas as 'forever wild' but nobody in the group was advocating for no people.

Joanna – Her focus group was a bit more divided. Groups were interested in youth engagement and providing access. People provided very high-level feedback. The conversation around opening these spaces out was divided in terms of what 'opening up' means. Maybe produce a check list that would help Parks make a recommendation: canopy cover impact, wildlife impacts, and hydrology issues. The focus group didn't get past the initial debate.

Donna – was amazed at how they avoided some of the hard issues. They wanted to keep it at a different level.

Adjourn

Public input

From: Patricia Naumann [mailto:patnaumann@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2015 12:41 AM
To: Pinto_de_Bader, Sandra
Cc: Sarah Welch
Subject: Cheasty Acquisition

Hi Sandra,

I don't think I can provide crystal clarity or a confident summation, but I hope some help.
Here's the lineage as I see it:

ORDINANCE 83104 -- June 1954 -- http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Ordinances/Ord_83104.pdf
Cheasty parcel (29.9237 acres) was passed from the Public Housing Administration to the City "for corporate uses" using Emergency Funding, and then once conveyed it was temporarily placed under the jurisdiction of the Building Department. At some point along the line, it either transferred to Executive Services, or the "Building Department" becomes Executive Services.

- **RES 27852 -- September 1988** -- Mayor's recommended OPEN SPACE POLICIES -- http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Resolutions/Resn_27852.pdf
- **RES 28350 -- September 1991** -- Adopting URBAN TRAILS POLICY as part of the OPEN SPACE POLICY Policy http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Resolutions/Resn_28350.pdf
- **RES 28653 -- February 08, 1993** -- http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Resolutions/Resn_28653.pdf

Adopting a GREENSPACES POLICY and DESIGNATED GREENSPACES as part of the City's OPEN SPACES Policies. Policies: Attachment A; Maps of Designated Greenspaces: Attachment B. The large Cheasty parcel is not mapped but parcels surrounding it are.
"Greenspaces, with their natural environmental qualities, will be used only for low-impact activities, and will complement the City's parks and recreation system where open spaces may be used in a more active manor." [Attachment A Paragraph 2]

"Greenspaces shall include those areas previously identified as Greenbelts or Natural Areas." [Attachment A Paragraph 4]

"The City Council may consider proposed amendments to Designated Greenspaces when the proposed amendment is included in an adopted functional plan, neighborhood plan or other open spaces related plans/programs." [Implementation Guideline 5]

"The site is suitable for low-intensity recreation, such as walking trails, nature study, informal play areas, or P-patches." [Implementation Guideline 2: Criteria II Greenspaces]

- **ORDINANCE 119826 -- Approved 01.18.2000 --**
http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Ordinances/Ord_119826.pdf

TRANSFERRING JURISDICTION of certain real property located within...Cheasty...Greenspace(s) from the Executive Services Department to the Department of Parks and Recreation....as priority areas for preservation....open space, park and recreation purposes:

"Cheasty Greenspace: Acquired by Deed from the Public Housing Administration, dated May 7, 1954 Open Space Parcel No 214.9040 and RPAMIS Subject parcel No 442 (AKA 4099 Cheasty Blvd S...." [Page 5]

Note the 2nd from last sheet of the attached references Comptroller File Number 191095: a petition of the Board of Park Commissioners for acquisition of 28.5 acres of property between Cheasty Blvd and Rainier Vista Housing Project. Status: On File. Date of Full Council Action: April 10, 1950. Is that another parcel altogether? or maybe it is what generated the acquisition a few years later in 1954? **But the acreages differ slightly.** Sorting it out requires a trip to the Clerk's Office since records are not online.

Maybe this helps? Or you may have more accurate info available. I don't offer any bonding info here. That's a deeper dig and important, but the above should help if such a search is warranted. King County archives I found helpful, but I dropped the ball back when and never picked it back up. Comptroller's files are often helpful.

Patricia Naumann
patnaumann@msn.com

Friends of Cheasty
3820 Cheasty Blvd. South
Seattle, WA 98108

March 29, 2015

Seattle Urban Forestry Commission
Office of Sustainability: Attn: Sandra Pinto de Bader

We are writing to encourage the Urban Forestry Commission to send a letter to the Mayor and City Council to follow up your site visit at Cheasty Greenspace. This week the Commission posted a draft for such a letter. We encourage you to finalize and send it, especially because the Board of Park Commissioners is holding a public hearing on April 9th prior to their review of the final design for a Mountain Bike Park in Cheasty Greenspace. Further we believe your letter is important because the recommendations for Cheasty foretell an approach Parks is taking with their proposed "Supplemental Use Guidelines" for Greenspaces and Natural Areas, a planning process they intent to wrap up by June, 2015.

You may be considering, 'Why send a letter when we wrote to the Mayor and City Council a year ago on this topic?' There are several good reasons for you to send a follow up letter. The Mayor and Parks Superintendent never did reply to your April, 2014 letter nor did they address your advice based on your considerable knowledge. Now you have the benefit of both a site visit and the preliminary geotech and wetlands/wildlife reviews of the greenspace which underscore the value of your recommendations to keep the trail to the perimeter, to reduce forest and wildlife impacts and to track wildlife baseline data before changing the forest's use. You have the final design for the Mountain Bike Park which is more disruptive to the interior quality forest, the wildlife habitat and environmentally critical areas than even the original design had been. Lastly, we can all see how the "Supplemental Use Guidelines" for Greenspaces and Natural Areas are tracking with the decision on Cheasty so this is not an isolated decision but one that Parks intends to use to open up all our natural areas for recreational uses.

The Mountain Bike Park, as designed now has the following features and impacts:

- Duel paths go through the natural area—penetrating the sensitive wildlife habitat and quality forest, in direct contradiction to the City Council's and your recommendation that any trail be on the perimeter only.
- There are eleven, (not just five) wetlands in the property. Some are of significant size. (Wetlands have not yet been classified as a formal wetland as the designation process needs to occur over a number of months.)
- The Parks maintenance yard, a land fill site that utilizes heavy equipment to move materials throughout the City runoff water and debris of questionable environmental impacts through the greenspace.
- Wildlife is apparent in the greenspace with a number of species on the 'concern' list for the State.

- Steep slopes permeate the natural area--where the bike park trail will be perched. The consequences are that the bikers will tear up the area further.
- After the environmental reports, Parks expanded the scope of the project significantly. The current design adds retaining walls, boardwalks, cross walks, a deep buildup of soils and gravel along paths. All these features and oversight were added after the geotech, wetlands and wildlife reports documented significant soils and steep slope conditions and wetlands throughout the area.

We are making the following recommendations to Parks and the City Council: instead of a Mountain Bike Park in Cheasty Greenspace we recommend that the City:

- Reserve Cheasty Greenspace (and any existing natural area) exclusively for pedestrian access. A quote from Denise Dahn Co-Director, Seattle Nature Alliance in her blog "Passive Use-A Thin Green Line" articulates our concern "*when park natural areas are reserved for the general population, every person has equal access. It is the fairest, most democratic way to manage our most precious remnant wild. It ensures nature remains accessible for all people while protecting wildlife habitat from over-use and ecological degradation.*"
- Locate any mountain bike park only in a suitable area such as along the Chief Sealth Trail – under the City Light power lines or other rights of way or in developed parks.
- Initiate a planning for pedestrian access through the Beacon Hill/Rainier Valley area near Cheasty Greenspace. We do not need a mountain bike park to create pedestrian trails!
- That the City Council re-iterate its long held policy¹ for natural areas and greenspaces established by Resolution in 1993 and take a stand to protect our remaining natural areas and greenspaces.

We are continuing to work with the City Council and Parks decision making process for a successful outcome to this proposed project. Thankfully the City Council adopted many of your recommendations by directing Parks to protect the Greenspace² and now the proposal will come back to them for final approval. Through your good work people are looking at the impact and the consequences of this proposal. I encourage you to continue to raise your voices in the interests of sustaining our urban forests.

Thank you for your continued concern to this issue.

Friends of Cheasty, Kathy Colombo, President

¹ Resolution 28653 Open Space Policy Resolution Adopted by Seattle City Council, February 8, 1993.

² Ordinance 124546 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 (PSC/GPE) Committee...*

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

From: Joel W DeJong [mailto:joeldejong@me.com]

Sent: Monday, March 30, 2015 11:00 AM

To: Pinto_de_Bader, Sandra

Cc: Chris Williams; Murray, Edward; Hoff, Paula; Thatcher Bailey; Acosta, Rachel; Bagshaw, Sally; Burgess, Tim; Clark, Sally; Godden, Jean; Harrell, Bruce; Licata,

Nick; O'Brien, Mike; Rasmussen, Tom; Sawant, Kshama
Subject: FCGMV Response to Urban Forestry Commission Cheasty Recommendations

Hi Sandra,

I have attached the Friends of Cheasty Mt. View's response letter to the recently posted Urban Forestry Commission's 2nd draft recommendations to the Cheasty project. Please distribute this response to the Urban Forestry Commissioners as soon as possible in order to provide ample time for review prior to their scheduled meeting on Wednesday, April 1.

I have also attached the UFC draft for convenience for those on this thread that may not have that document readily accessible. Please confirm that you have received the Friends of Cheasty Mt. View response letter and are distributing it to the Commissioners. Thank you for your time.

Best Regards,

Joel DeJong
GSP Forest Steward, Cheasty Greenspace
Friends of Cheasty Greenspace Mt. View

Friends of Cheasty Greenspace Mt. View
2809 S. Alaska Pl.
Seattle, WA 98108
info@cheasty.org



March 29, 2015

Seattle Urban Forestry Commission
c/o Sandra Pinto de Bader, Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator
Office of Sustainability and Environment
City of Seattle
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2748
P.O. Box 94729
Seattle, WA 98124-4729
Sandra.Pinto_de_Bader@seattle.gov

Dear Seattle Urban Forestry Commissioners:

Thank you for taking the time to visit Cheasty Greenspace with the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation and the Friends of Cheasty Greenspace Mt. View on March 11. We found the walk with you informative and hope you had a similar experience.

We have been looking forward to how you would respond to your walk through Cheasty with us. When we saw that you had posted a draft letter, we approached it with excitement and then as we read it we were dismayed and shocked. We have reviewed the causes of that shock by performing a thorough analysis of the reasons you stated to destroy the bicycle pilot project. Our analysis can be summarized by the two categories of reason you presented:

- (A) Reasons based on the false axiom that bicycle trails and their use cause substantially more damage than pedestrian trails.
- (B) Reasons that are outside the bailiwick of the Urban Forestry Commission.

We address each of these categories respectively and the reasons assigned to them below.

(A) Reasons based on the false axiom that bicycle trails and their use cause substantially more damage than pedestrian trails.

The results of many surveys (Cessford 2003, Chavez et al. 1993, Janowsky et al. 2003, Mann & Absher 2008, Mason & Leberman 2000) demonstrate a **gap between the perception and reality of environmental effects associated with mountain biking**, and suggest the need for management of not only the effects but the perception thereof

as well.¹

As this quote emphasizes, there is a substantial gap between the damages perceived to be caused by mountain biking and the actual environmental effects of mountain biking. The Miistakis Review is the most current, thorough (89 research sources), authoritative, and neutral source on the impacts of mountain biking and the open questions that still need researched.

The Miistakis Review emphasizes that it is difficult to determine whether one mode of travel (foot, hoof, or wheel) is universally more damaging than the other.² It further emphasizes that any policy creation or project implementation must take into consideration how the local context differs from existing studies and consider site-specific assessment of potential effects.³

The Urban Forestry Commission's use of the axiom that wheels cause more damage than feet lacks the technical, scientific, and engineering rigor expected from a technical advisory commission to the Seattle City Council. To maintain relevance, the Urban Forestry Commission must apply the technical, scientific, and engineering expertise of its collective braintrust to thoroughly assess any recommendation it may make. We encourage the Commission to use its resources and the resources available to it to thoroughly analyze the situation, but recognize that the Commission may not have sufficient time to do that analysis. If the Commission lacks the resources or time to do the necessary analysis, then we ask that it not write a new letter and that it withdraw its April 2, 2014, Cheasty Greenspace Mountain Bike Pilot Project advisory.

Based on the available research, we ask that the Urban Forestry Commission change its axiom to a question: Is the impact of mountain biking on Seattle's urban greenspaces equivalent to the impact of walking trails?

In order to assist the Urban Forestry Commission in its analysis, we have taken each reason based on the fallacious axiom, cited relevant research materials, and suggested an alternative point that could be made.

UFC Reason #1: "Mountain biking can be expected to cause serious erosion to a site known to be a landslide hazard/steep slope area and likely also is an erosion hazard area."

¹ Michael Quinn, and Greg Chernoff, *Mountain Biking: A Review of the Ecological Effects*, Miistakis Institute, 24 (Feb. 2010) (Commissioned by Parks Canada: National Office) (emphasis added) available at <http://www.lib.washington.edu/msd/norestriction/b67566091.pdf> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015) (hereinafter "Miistakis Review").

² Id. at 22.

³ Id. at 24.

The first of the Commission's reasons does not take into consideration the geotechnical report done on Cheasty Greenspace or the available research on the relationship between mountain bikes and erosion.

In Fall 2014, the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation commissioned HWA GeoSciences, Inc., to evaluate the geotechnical conditions of Cheasty Greenspace and the potential impact of trails upon the wooded parkland. The reached the following important conclusion:

If properly designed, we do not anticipate that construction of the proposed trail will result in increased slope instability.⁴

At PAT Meeting #4 on January 29, 2015, Donald Huling went beyond the findings in the Geotechnical Report and stated the following:

Once we get to the final design, we could find that the trail will not have any significant impacts to slope or wildlife. You could even add design elements that would make the trail a net benefit.⁵

When pressed on this question, Donald Huling stated that proper design and implementation could improve slope stability and reduce erosion.

The Geotechnical Report also contained information on the historic cause of slope creep in Cheasty Greenspace:

Based on the upright nature of the trees on site, slope creep appears to have affected trees primarily early in life, after the site was exposed to runoff and erosion associated with historic clearing, burning, and/or landsliding.⁶

This emphasizes the need to take action, whether through trails or other mechanisms, in Cheasty Greenspace to prevent further slope creep.

Beyond Cheasty, substantial research has been done to quantify erosion, compaction, tread incision, water runoff, trail widening, and sediment transport resulting from mountain bike use.⁷ In regards to erosion, the most frequently cited study of soil erosion is summarized as follows:

⁴ Donald Huling (Geotechnical Engineer), and Brad Thurber (Senior Engineering Geologist), *Final Preliminary Report Cheasty Trail*, HWA GeoSciences Inc, 7 (Jan. 25, 2014) available at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/files/GEOTECH%20Report%20Cheasty%20Trail.pdf> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015) (hereinafter "Geotechnical Report").

⁵ Seattle Parks and Recreation, *Meeting Report*, Seattle Parks and Recreation, 4 (Jan. 29, 2015) available at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/files/REVISED%20Cheasty%20PAT%20Meeting%20Report%2001292015.pdf> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015) (hereinafter "PAT #4").

⁶ Geotechnical Report at 8.

⁷ Miistakis Review at 2.

One of the most frequently cited studies of soil erosion was published by Wilson & Seney (1994), who applied a prescribed treatment (100 passes each with four different types of recreational activity, followed by simulated rainfall to assess soil erosion potential) to 108 sample plots along a trail network in Gallatin National Forest, Montana. The authors found that foot- and hoof-powered activities (hiking and horseback riding) had greater erosive potential than did wheeled activities (off-road vehicles and mountain bikes). This effect was found to be especially pronounced when going downhill.⁸

Beyond erosion, numerous studies have evaluated the causes of trail widening, and found the common reasons to be similar for both foot and wheeled traffic: secondary tracks and shortcuts, avoidance of wet or muddy soil, and running water on trails. These are common trail maintenance issues that have been researched extensively and can be addressed by design and maintenance, and are covered in numerous trail design manuals reviewed by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation including the International Mountain Bike Alliance's (IMBA) *Managing Mountain Biking and Trail Solutions* books. For example, IMBA's design guides recommend proper trail slopes and in some cases trail armoring to reduce the risk and effects of erosion.

Furthermore, among mountain bikers there is a strong culture of trail preference:

The findings of this study suggest that mountain bikers exhibit a strong preference for trails that are technically challenging, that have well-developed facilities, and that have a minimal amount of environmental damage.⁹

In the Pacific Northwest, these trail preferences manifest in the mountain biking community as strong restoration and maintenance ethics.

Ultimately, the impact of wheels is no more than that of feet:

Though the effects on soil of wheeled travel are notably different than those of recreationists traveling on feet or hooves, it seems difficult to determine whether one mode of travel is universally more damaging than the other.¹⁰

As shown by the Miistakis Review and the Geotechnical Report, the research does not show any reason to expect mountain bike trails to cause serious erosion in Cheasty

⁸ Id. at 16.

⁹ Id. at 39-40 (citing Michael David Naber, *Integrating Trail Condition Assessment with Recreational Demand Modeling of Mountain Bikers in the Research Triangle*, PhD Thesis, North Carolina State University (2008)).

¹⁰ Id. at 22.

Greenspace. In fact, the Geotechnical Report suggests that the introduction of trails could potentially reduce erosion. Therefore, the Urban Forestry Commission's proposed Reason #1 lacks support and should be changed.

The Commission should focus its attention on contributing to the Monitoring Criteria and Evaluation Checklist criteria created by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation as a result of the Cheasty Project Advisory Team.¹¹ The Cheasty Criteria will be used to help evaluate the success of the pilot project and will inform the city on whether bicycle trails, including mountain bike trails, can be successfully implemented in Seattle's parks.

Therefore, we ask that the first reason be struck and suggest that it be replaced with a thorough review of quantitative elements within the proposed Cheasty Criteria.

UFC Reason #2: "Mountain biking can be expected to result in too much loud, sudden noise that will frighten wildlife. A Cooper's Hawk nest has been located on the site. The male and female are likely within the 20 individuals said to have been counted in the whole City during the last Audubon bird count. Other wildlife species/individuals have not yet counted by Parks as part of pre-project analysis and thus are vulnerable to not being recognized in post-project evaluation."

The impact of bikers on animals is relatively unstudied compared to other environmental impacts. The research that does exist points out two distinctions between mountain bikers and other forms of transportation: "One of the most significant characteristics of mountain biking as a form of wildlife disturbance is a result of the potential relative speed and silence of the activity."¹²

When considering the relative speed of mountain biking, it is helpful to compare it to a jogger who may be using the available pedestrian trails. Joggers are recommended to exercise at a pace between 5 and 6 mph and the average speed is within that range.¹³ Similarly, mountain bikers average 6.98 mph on single track, which is what is proposed for Cheasty Greenspace.¹⁴ Furthermore, when mountain bikers encounter technical features, the average speed generally decreases. In general, the speed at which a mountain biker travels is dependent on trail design: average trail speeds can be reduced by introducing switchbacks, rollers, chokepoints, and other features. Therefore, unless the UFC is ready to recommend that joggers as well as mountain bikers be excluded from the City's woodlands, the argument that speed will excessively startle urban wildlife (which is already used to vehicles and people and has a reduced flight distance) carries little merit.

¹¹ See Cheasty Pilot Project: Monitoring Criteria and Evaluation Checklist, Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (2015) available at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/files/MonitoringCriteriaandEvaluationChecklist.pdf> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015) (hereinafter "Cheasty Criteria").

¹² Miistakis Review at 2.

¹³ William McCoy, *Normal Speed for Jogging*, [LiveStrong.com](http://www.livestrong.com/article/526358-normal-speed-for-jogging/) (Jan. 22, 2014) available at <http://www.livestrong.com/article/526358-normal-speed-for-jogging/> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

¹⁴ Jeff Barber, *Are you fast or slow? Epic or not?*, [singletracks](http://www.singletracks.com/blog/uncategorized/are-you-fast-or-slow-epic-or-not/) (May 29, 2007) available at <http://www.singletracks.com/blog/uncategorized/are-you-fast-or-slow-epic-or-not/> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

In regards to the acoustic production of mountain biking, the literature repeatedly refers to it as a relatively quiet activity.¹⁵ This can be quickly confirmed with a simple point: mountain bikers typically ride on single track in single file and cannot readily speak with each other except when they stop and pull over, but hikers often walk abreast and regularly take the opportunity to speak. As a result of normal communication, hikers tend to be noisier than mountain bikers. Therefore, the stereotype that mountain bikers create “loud, sudden noise” is based on “a gap between the perception and reality of . . . mountain biking.”¹⁶

Furthermore, the habitat analyst hired by Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation did not find any rare or endangered species.¹⁷ The nest of the Cooper’s Hawk pair in Cheasty Greenspace is about 75 feet from Cheasty Boulevard and the existing pedestrian trail that is commonly used by pedestrians, bicyclists, and dog walkers. Cooper’s Hawks are a known edge or borderland habitat species and are regularly spotted feeding on the birds in people’s backyards.¹⁸ If this pair of hawks has not already abandoned this habitat in response to the innumerable vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and dog walkers passing them on Cheasty Boulevard, it is unlikely that they will fly away due to trails introduced in the greenspace. Similarly, the other species present are unlikely to be greatly disturbed by the introduction of bicycle or pedestrian trails.

Therefore, we ask that the Urban Forestry Commission apply its knowledge to the technical questions: how should the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation assess the environmental impact of bikes on trails in the forest; what should be done to improve habitat quality and tree canopy within the forest; and what rules should be adopted for restoration activities and trail building as related to breeding birds in woodlands?¹⁹

UFC Reason #3: “Mountain biking can be expected to destroy too much habitat as bikes cannot be expected to stay within 2 foot wide trails without crashing. A pedestrian

¹⁵ Miistakis Review at 2; and Jeff Marion and Jeremy Wimpey, *Environmental Impacts of Mountain Biking: Science Review and Best Practices*, Managing Mountain Biking: IMBA’s Guide to Providing Great Riding, International Mountain Biking Association, 107 (2007) (hereinafter “Environmental Impacts”).

¹⁶ Miistakis Review at 24.

¹⁷ Claire Hoffman, Ilon Logan, and Lisa Adolfson, *Cheasty Trail Pilot Project - Wetland Reconnaissance and Wildlife Habitat Assessment*, ESA, 3 (Jan. 22, 2015 revised Feb. 11, 2015) available at http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/files/CheastyTrails_Wetland%20and%20Wildlife%20memo_Jan2015_revised_Feb11_2015trackchange.pdf (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

¹⁸ *Cooper’s Hawk: Accipiter cooperii*, Guide to North American Birds, Audubon, available at <http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/coopers-hawk> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

¹⁹ For ideas, see Jen Syrowitz, *Forest Parkland Restoration Planning Related to Breeding Birds in Seattle, WA*, Prepared for City of Seattle Parks and Recreation, Audubon Washington (Sep. 2014) available at http://wa.audubon.org/sites/default/files/documents/cos_audubon_bird_bmp_final_9.29.2014_0.pdf (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

only trail could avoid the interior wetland area of the park and go around the Park landscape yard near its entrance gate.”

The primary habitat and social impacts of trails are a result of design and location:

In urban regions, remnant natural areas are important resources providing opportunities for people to engage with nature. Benefits of this include health, education and social connectedness with outdoor recreation largely viewed as a positive opportunity in areas otherwise lacking natural experiences. Recreational activities and the infrastructure provided for them, however, can also have negative environmental impacts where they are not effectively designed or managed.²⁰

When a trail is designed improperly, mismanaged, or informally created, it has a strong tendency to cause negative environmental impacts. In contrast, when a trail is designed with intent by experienced professionals and managed properly, environmental degradation is avoided or minimized.

Many environmental impacts can be avoided and the rest are substantially minimized when traffic is restricted to a well-designed and managed trail. The best trail alignments avoid the habitats of rare flora and fauna and greatly minimize soil erosion, muddiness, and tread widening by focusing traffic on side-hill trail alignments with limited grades and frequent grade reversals. Even wildlife impacts are greatly minimized when visitors stay on trails; wildlife have a well-documented capacity to habituate to non-threatening recreational uses that occur in consistent places.²¹

By utilizing proper design techniques, including an understanding of human park-use habits, park users will be kept on the trails and the fear of excessive crashing can be substantially reduced. A well-designed trail will encourage users to travel at an appropriate speed and avoid crashing: after all nobody wants to crash their bike into the vegetation, and bicyclists quite regularly use two-foot wide trails without incident.

While mountain bike trails can range in size from as little as six inches to six-foot or wider, the standard bike trail in Cheasty will be between two feet and four feet in width to optimize usability. The size restriction on bicycle trails in Seattle woodlands also has a secondary benefit: it discourages the use of motorized vehicles on the trails. In contrast to the equivalent environmental impact of feet and non-motorized wheels, a motorized vehicle has substantially greater impact and a tendency to widen paths.

²⁰ Mark Ballantyne, Ori Guides, and Catherine Marina Pickering, *Recreational trails are an important cause of fragmentation in endangered urban forests: A case-study from Australia*, *Landscape and Urban Planning* 130, 112 (Oct. 2014) available for purchase at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0169204614001595> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015) (hereinafter “Fragmentation Study”).

²¹ Environmental Impacts at 118-19.

Furthermore, bicycles, unlike footwear, create a natural deterrent from going off trail due to the difficulty of riding through the undergrowth. As a result, the environmental impact of bike riders can be managed through a well-designed and implemented management plan that utilizes both volunteers and staff, and when trail users are restricted to designated formal trails.²²

Therefore, the Commission should recommend that the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation hire a knowledgeable, experienced mountain bike trail designer and builder to ensure the trails will be easily maintainable, have minimal environmental impact, and discourage the development of informal trails.

UFC Reason #4: “Mountain biking can be expected to expand on site as the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners recommends adding connecting mountain biking trails, further fragmenting habitat in the park.”

Cheasty Greenspace is already heavily fragmented due to the presence of roads, houses, and informal (social) trails. The solutions to this fragmentation are few: remove the roads, buy the houses and turn them into woodland, and discourage informal trails. The first two solutions are expensive or politically unpopular, which leaves us to explore the latter. Unfortunately, informal trails will always be created by people:

Urbanisation is an important factor contributing to the creation of trails, especially informal ones which have a greater capacity to fragment.²³

The creation of informal trails is a natural human habit: people want to get to their destination quicker and easier, or they want access to nature. As a result there are only two surefire ways to deal with the problem of informal trails: build a fence around the space and constantly police it for people entering and exiting without permission, or construct planned and well-designed trails that discourage the creation of informal trails. The former would be much too expensive, but the latter can be done successfully:

Poorly designed and regulated, dense informal networks of trails with numerous access points are primarily responsible for the trail-based fragmentation we found. We propose that managing poorly designed trail networks to reduce forest loss and fragmentation should be the focus of a collaborative effort between conservation and recreation stakeholders.²⁴

It is in the best interest of our urban forests to encourage collaborative work between conservationists and recreationists. By doing so the negative impacts of informal trails can be mitigated. For example, there are substantial informal trails that already exist in Cheasty Greenspace and have resulted in substantial damage, including decreased

²² Id.

²³ Fragmentation Study at 120.

²⁴ Id.

slope stability, but these can be mitigated by the implementation of well-designed trails. Several Cheasty Greenspace Project Advisory Team members recognized this fact in their final recommendations:

Curtis LaPierre: The current design is thoughtfully composed and fits the site remarkable[sic] well given the slope and wetland constraints. Parks should consider adding cross trails as needed to enhance safety, circulation and potentially routes to schools. I am confident these trails can be built with little effect on the steep slopes and wetlands present. We should anticipate that cross trails will develop by default as social paths and plan those trails in the best places rather than let them happen haphazardly.²⁵

Dan Moore: I thought the original trail design was too intense; I was concerned about that. I am pleased at where the design has ended up. Two refinements would be to add in additional entrances and exits for people to escape if they feel unsafe on the trail for any reason. The appearance of social trails should be anticipated, so the design should include a few strategic cross trails. The latter will help connect Rainier Vista with the destinations up on Beacon Hill. We need to have faith that the geotech professionals know what they are talking about when they report that a trail system could have a positive impact on the area. We need to realize that this is not a pristine wilderness; people are negatively using the area already. A well-constructed trail, combined with habitat restoration, will be more protective of the environment than the current social trails. Our goal should be for a "Net Positive" result.²⁶

Phil Thompson [Ph.D.]: After hearing the geotechnical and environmental assessments, I believe it is possible to design and build a safe trail that will meet the intended uses while preserving habitat. I also believe that a managed "cut-through" pedestrian trail that uses boardwalks should be added to the design. This will circumvent the creation of potentially damaging social trails while providing a useful route for Rainier Vista residents to Beacon Hill schools and businesses. Evaluation criteria that establish baselines and continue monitoring of wildlife habitat, water quality, and parking availability should continue to be prioritized. The proposed project will have no significant environmental impact, and it has

²⁵ Cheasty Project Advisory Team, *Recommendations Regarding Cheasty Pilot Project*, Seattle Parks and Recreation, 3 (Feb. 27, 2015) available at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/cheasty/files/Recommendation%20Memo%20from%20Cheasty%20PAT%20to%20Christopher%20Williams%2002252015.pdf> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015) (hereinafter "Cheasty Recommendations"). Curtis LaPierre is an Urban Planner, Landscape Architect, Senior Project Manager, and Senior Associate at Otak, and Chapter Trustee for the Washington Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. LinkedIn Profile available at <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/curtis-lapierre/a/b25/394> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

²⁶ Id. Dan Moore has been a Naturalist at the Mercer Slough and at Discovery Park. LinkedIn Profile available at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dintystew> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

the potential for providing neighbors will[sic] increased access to outdoor activities and green spaces.²⁷

Weston Brinkley: Trails are not hindering wildlife or destroying ecological integrity; this is evident at both Schmitz and Seward Parks. In fact, the case could be made that those trails are helping to support wildlife. There will always be trails in Cheasty, no matter what the PAT decides. We cannot change the fact that the Greenspace is in the middle of the city. Although I support the current design, cross-trails should be added as a refinement. We've heard a lot about connecting communities, and the current design does not do that. People will continue to do that on their own through social trails.²⁸

After fifteen hours of public meetings, the Project Advisory Team, especially those with strong technical backgrounds, overwhelmingly recommended that the project go forward. They even recognized that informal trails already exist and that the project can help mitigate the damages caused by those trails.

Cheasty Greenspace already has informal trails in it. These trails can be rebuilt as formal trails where appropriate or removed as part of mitigating the impact of the creation of a formal trail system. This will mitigate the largest negative environmental impact caused by trails:

The science strongly indicates a curvilinear relationship between use and environmental effects; regardless of the type of activity that occurs, the most detrimental environmental effects (especially to soils and vegetation) occurs when a trail is first constructed.²⁹

The construction of appropriate bike trails in Cheasty Greenspace will have no more impact than similarly situated pedestrian trails. Furthermore, properly designed community access trails connecting the communities to the east and west of Cheasty will reduce the amount of informal trails crisscrossing and fragmenting the woodland. The implementation of community access trails, as recommended by the Parks Board of Commissioners, will encourage and restrict users to the use of designated formal trails.

²⁷ Id. at 5. Phil Thompson is the Director of Seattle University's Center for Environmental Justice and Sustainability, has a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering, and is Seattle University's 2015 Distinguished Faculty Award winner. Distinguished Faculty 2015, Seattle University available at <https://www.seattleu.edu/alumni/community/DistinguishedFaculty-2015/?LangType=1033> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

²⁸ Id. at 6. Weston Brinkley has a decade of experience in the urban forestry and natural resource fields, holds a Master of Urban Planning and Land Use Planning from the University of Washington, and is a professional consultant in Seattle providing urban environmental research, policy, and engagement. LinkedIn Profile available at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/westonbrinkley> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

²⁹ Miistakis Review at 22.

Environmental degradation can be substantially avoided or minimized when trail users are restricted to designated formal trails. Many studies have shown that the most damage to plants and soils occur with initial traffic and that the per capita increase in further impact diminishes rapidly with increasing subsequent traffic.³⁰

Ultimately, habitat fragmentation in Cheasty Greenspace is already occurring and will happen. The best action is to manage the fragmentation by mutually engaging conservationists and recreationists. By encouraging these groups to work together, the negative impacts of habitat fragmentation and human incursion on the natural space may be reduced.

Therefore, the Urban Forestry Commission should recommend that the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation foster a cooperative partnership between conservationists and preservationists as part of the Cheasty Greenspace Pilot Project.

(B) Reasons that are outside the bailiwick of the Urban Forestry Commission.

In addition to the four technical reasons, as described above, the Urban Forestry Commission has stated four non-technical reasons for abandoning the bike trail project. These reasons are outside of the Urban Forestry Commission's technical focus as they deal with the following topics: the legal ramifications of Washington State Habitat Conservation and Riparian Protection Account fund utilization; the impact of mountain biking on a historic Olmsted Boulevard; the best way to encourage restoration volunteers; and the politics of controversy. All of these topics are outside of the Urban Forestry Commission's role:

There is hereby established an Urban Forestry Commission (The Commission) 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.³¹

Nonetheless, we have addressed each of the Commission's stated reasons below.

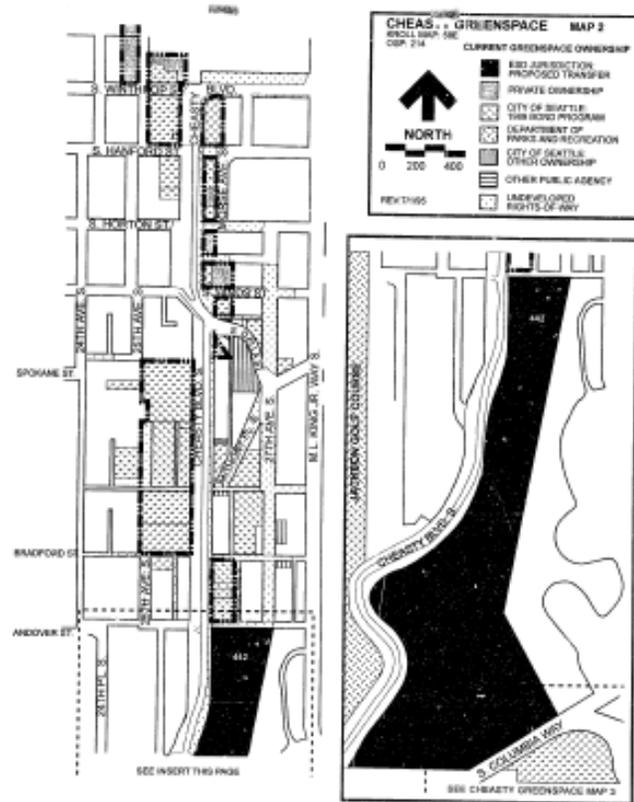
UFC Reason #5: "Mountain biking can be expected to cause the Washington _____ to ask the City for millions to be refunded because its grant in the 1980's was designated for greenbelt preservation and low impact uses only."

³⁰ Environmental Impacts at 118.

³¹ SMC 3.72.010 (2009) available at https://www.municode.com/library/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT3AD_SUBTITLE_IVCO_CH3.72URFOCO_3.72.010URFOCOST (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's restrictions on Habitat Conservation and Riparian Protection Accounts do not apply to the land the trails are planned on and the proposed trails would be a qualifying low-impact use.

The Cheasty Trails and Bike Park Pilot Project is planned for implementation in Cheasty Main: Parcel Number 162404-9161.³² Furthermore, no substantial land use change is needed for implementation of this project. The parcel where the project is planned was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks and Recreation from the Executive Services Department on January 18, 2000, when the Mayor signed Ordinance No. 119826.³³ This ordinance, which was sponsored by Councilmember Nick Licata, gave the land to the Parks Department for "open space, park and recreation purposes". Prior to that transfer, the City originally acquired 29.9237 acres of that land from the Public Housing Authority on June 10, 1954, under Ordinance No. 83104, "for corporate uses".³⁴ The map, to the right, from Ord. No. 119826 shows the affected parcel in solid black.



In contrast, land north and south of the Ord. No. 119826 portion of Cheasty Greenspace was purchased through the 1989 Bond Program, 1993 Conservation Futures, and the Habitat Conservation Account/RCO

³² King County Department of Assessments, Parcel Data for Parcel Number 162404-9161 (Updated Feb. 27, 2015) available at <http://info.kingcounty.gov/Assessor/eRealProperty/Detail.aspx?ParcelNbr=1624049161> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

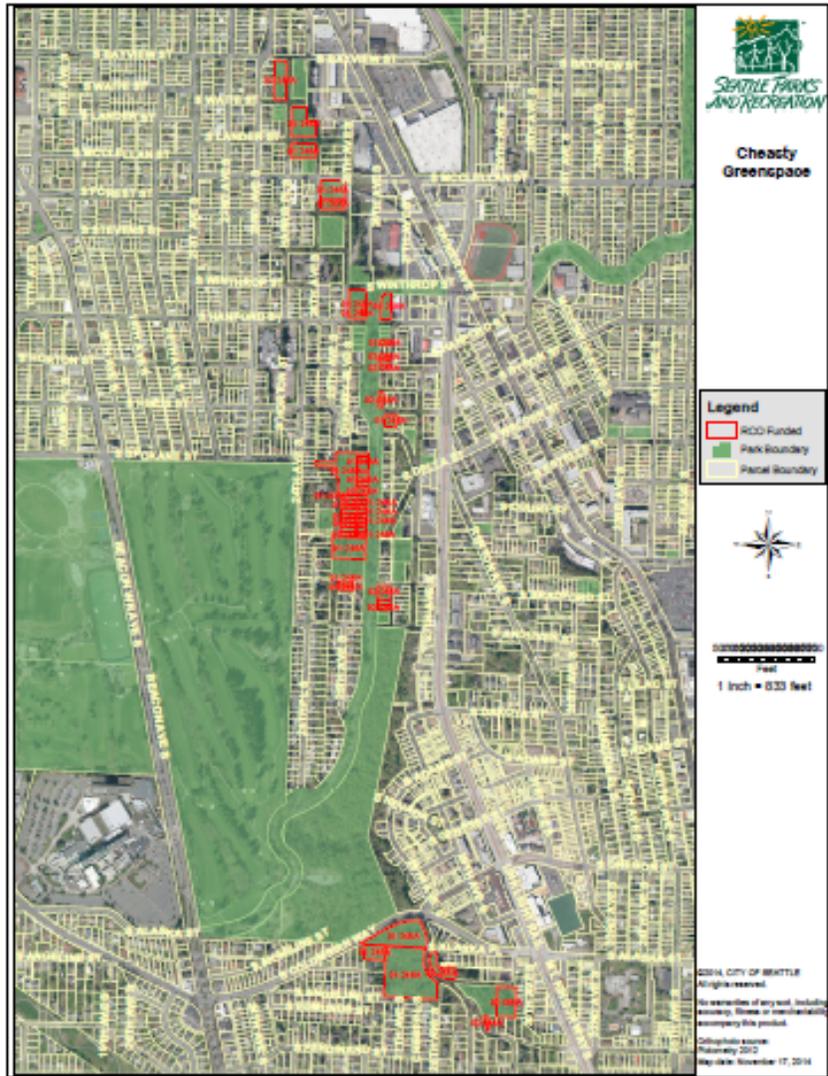
³³ Ordinance No. 119826, An Ordinance transferring jurisdiction of certain real property . . . (signed Jan. 18, 2000) available at http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~archives/Ordinances/Ord_119826.pdf (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

³⁴ Ordinance No. 83104, An ordinance relating to and authorizing the acquisition from the Public Housing Administration . . . (signed June 10, 1954) available at http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~archives/Ordinances/Ord_83104.pdf (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

Funded.³⁵ Each of these programs has restrictions on how the land can be used: in general the land cannot be converted to a commercial use (i.e., sold to a developer). For example, the portion of Cheasty Mt. View purchased as Urban Wildlife Habitat using the Habitat Conservation Account funds cannot be converted to a use other than that for which the funds were originally approved without prior approval of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's approval. Land within the Urban Wildlife Habitat category can be used to provide habitat; serve as a wildlife corridor; public use for wildlife interpretation and observation; development of limited facilities such as fences, trails, interpretive signs, restrooms, and parking; creation or enhancement of habitat; and protection of habitat and species.

As has been discussed above in Reasons #1 through #4, the impact of mountain biking on appropriately designed bike trails is no greater than hiking. Due to the similar impact, it can be readily said that mountain biking is a low-impact active recreation option and not incompatible with RCO Funds granted for Urban Wildlife Habitat.

As shown, the legislation used to purchase some portions of Cheasty Greenspace does not apply to Cheasty Main where the new trail system is proposed. Furthermore,



³⁵ Parcel Map for RCO Project Numbers 92-088 and 91-246, Cheasty Greenspace, Seattle Parks and Recreation (Nov. 17, 2014) available at <https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshotAttachmentData.aspx?id=208734> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015). Land purchased with RCO Funds are highlighted in red.

even if it did, the trail system would not violate any of the applicable legislation in the same manner as the Cheasty Mt. View trails did not violate the RCO Funding agreements applicable to it.

Therefore, the Urban Forestry Commission should focus on its expertise and recommend a standard methodology for habitat quality assessment in order to assist the city in identifying linkage, edge, barrier, and core habitat.³⁶ This would provide valuable information when implementing the 2013 Urban Forest Stewardship Plan and assist in evaluating future conservationist-recreationist partnership projects.

UFC Reason #6: “Mountain biking can be expected to attract out-of-neighborhood users who will come by car and need to park. Primary parking would be along Cheasty Blvd, but this street is part of the Olmsted legacy with limited parking only.”

While parking may become an issue, the proposed project is not inconsistent with the Olmsted legacy. The potential issues with parking by users of Cheasty Greenspace have been assessed and a plan has been formulated. Similarly, the Olmsted legacy along Cheasty Boulevard has been thoroughly researched. The results are clear: neither of these should be an issue that prevents the creation of bicycle trails.

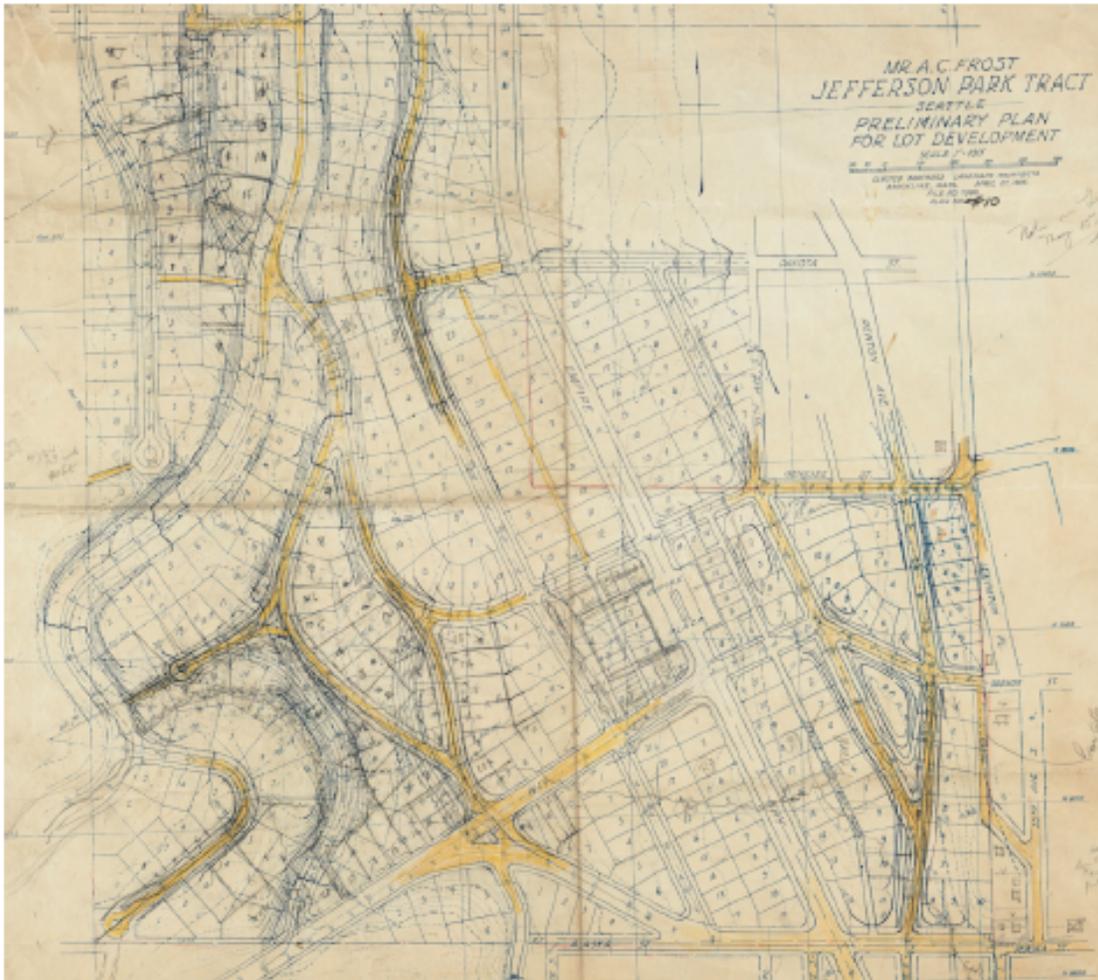
In September 2014, the Friends of Cheasty Greenspace Mt. View sent out a survey requesting public input on how people would commute to mountain bike trails located within Seattle. The survey received 51 responses. The survey revealed two key details about parking: travel preference and visit time. First, the general consensus was that if the park was located within 5 miles of an individual’s home or work, the primary way to get there would be by bicycle. As one astute survey participant put it, “When my family is too tired to ride our bikes to the local park, we are too tired to ride our bikes in the park.” Whereas, if someone had to travel more than 5 miles, the preference was to drive and most people indicated that they would then go to a larger, regional mountain bike park rather than a smaller, local park. Second, the average visit time of a mountain biker was two hours.

Based on the survey results, the Friends of Cheasty Greenspace Mt. View arrived at two-step potential solution for handling any parking issues near Cheasty Greenspace. First, the section of Cheasty Boulevard near the Parks’ yard and the main bicycle entrance should be rezoned to no parking. This would grant parking enforcement the right to ticket anyone who parks in this area and would substantially alleviate the pressure created by people parking on Cheasty Boulevard. Second, signage should be put in place encouraging drivers to park in the ample parking located along Beacon Avenue S at the far south end of the Jefferson Park parking lot (approx. 1000 feet from the main Cheasty Greenspace entrance) or in the parking located north of Columbian

³⁶ See generally Andrew F. Bennett, *Linkages in the Landscape: The Role of Corridors and Connectivity in Wildlife Conservation*, IUCN - The World Conservation Union (2003) available at <https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/edocs/FR-021.pdf> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

Way S on Beacon Avenue S (approx. 700 feet from the main Cheasty Greenspace entrance). Bicyclists could then enter Cheasty Greenspace from that location without parking along Cheasty Boulevard.

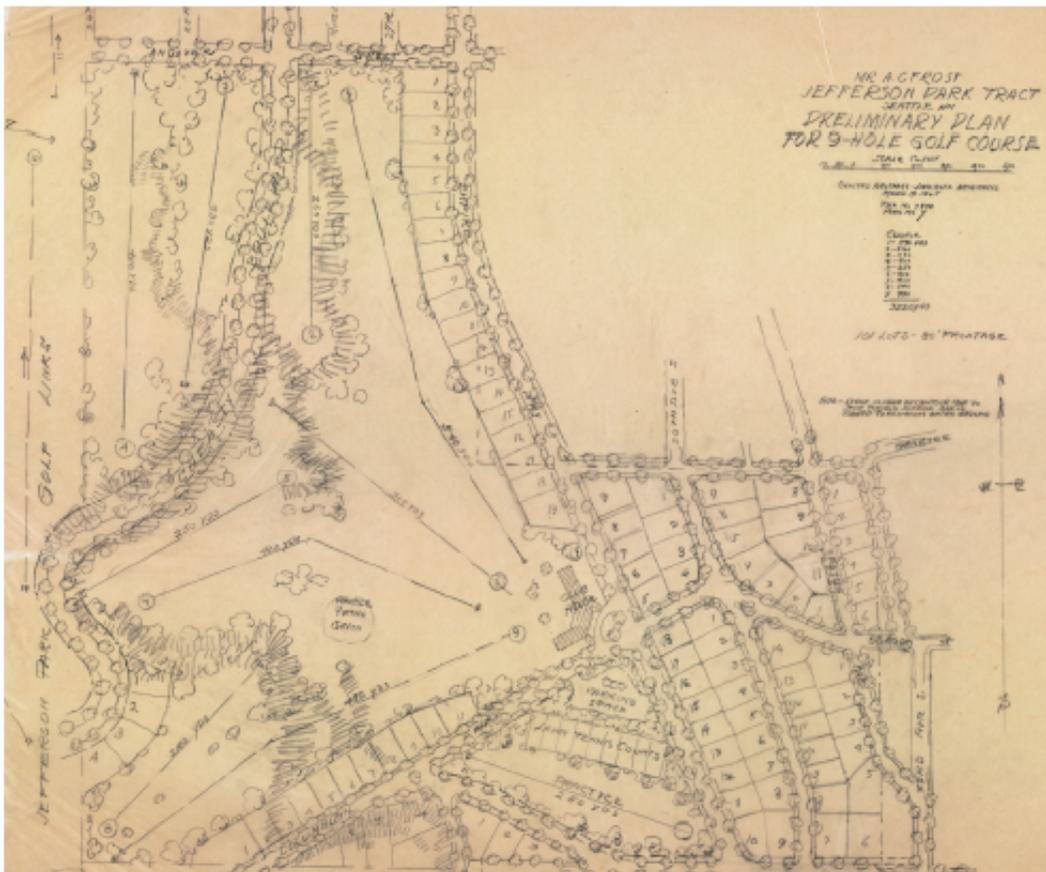
In addition to surveying potential users of the bike trails, the Friends of Cheasty Greenspace Mt. View have extensively researched the Olmsted legacy of Cheasty Greenspace. The most notable discoveries were the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects proposed plans developed at the request of Mr. A.C. Frost for the Jefferson Park Tract.³⁷ In particular, the Olmsted Brothers proposed that Cheasty Greenspace should either be developed into housing lots³⁸ or an additional golf course.³⁹



³⁷ See Project Details, Jefferson Park Tract, Seattle, WA, Olmsted Online, #07399, available at <http://olmstedonline.org/Job/Details/07399> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

³⁸ Preliminary Plan for Lot Development, Olmsted Online, #07399, Plan No. 10 (May 15, 1925) available at <http://olmstedonline.org/Plan/Details/835> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

³⁹ Preliminary Plan for 9-Hole Golf Course, Olmsted Online, #07399, Plan No. 07 (Mar. 17, 1925) available at <http://olmstedonline.org/Plan/Details/833> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).



Based on the Olmsted Brother proposals for Cheasty Greenspace, formerly known as Jefferson Park Tract, it is clear that they felt that the space should be utilized. However, the Olmsted legacy applies most distinctly to Cheasty Boulevard, but not the greenspace. Therefore, the Olmsted legacy should not be an impediment to this project.

While outside its bailiwick, the Urban Forestry Commission could suggest that Cheasty Boulevard be made no parking and encourage appropriate signage and online materials to ensure people park along Beacon Ave S.

UFC Reason #7: "Mountain biking has been used as an incentive to get people involved in the forest restoration. However, the local Green Seattle Partnership success story has demonstrated that pedestrian only trails can generate public passion for restoration. Cheasty could become a magnet for further public support."

The Friends of Cheasty Greenspace Mt. View's original project in Cheasty Mountain View is the local Green Seattle Partnership success story. In seven years that project has received a little over 7,000 volunteer hours to restore 10 acres of land. Based on that experience, it will take in excess of 21,000 volunteer hours to restore the 29.9 acres of Cheasty where the bike trails are proposed. At the historic pace that means it would

take at least 30 years to fully restore this new section of Cheasty Greenspace. That pace is unsustainable and will result in attrition.

In order to engage the local community and to capture Southeast Seattle's imagination, a new way of connecting to Cheasty Greenspace had to be found. A way of connecting that went beyond pedestrian only trails. In order to achieve the gigantic goal of having volunteers restore the next 29.9 acres in a reasonable amount of time, we had to think outside of the box.

After talking with many neighbors, the Friends of Cheasty Greenspace Mt. View proposed including bike trails along with pedestrian trails. This idea has ignited Southeast Seattle and brought thousands of people out of their homes and offices, into the woods, getting their hands dirty doing restoration. In eight months, starting April 2014, this project involved 1,609 volunteers who did 5,187 hours of restoration work. **Cheasty Greenspace was the number two park in the city by volunteers and restoration hours in 2014.**⁴⁰ At that pace in a single year, if it had started January 2014, this project's volunteers would have surpassed the volunteer work done in Mountain View in seven years. This is no small accomplishment and at this pace restoration could be completed within three to five years for this portion of Cheasty Greenspace.

It is the bicycle trails pilot project that has made Cheasty Greenspace a magnet for public and philanthropic support. It is this pilot project that makes restoration of the whole Cheasty Greenspace possible within the next 10 years. It is this conservationist-recreationist partnership that is making a difference, generating public passion, and becoming a major success story.

The Urban Forestry Commission should recommend that conservationist-recreationist partnerships should be explored thoughtfully with the goal of having a net positive impact on Seattle's urban wildlife habitat and tree canopy.

UFC Reason #8: "Mountain biking at Cheasty has become very controversial. Refocusing to a pedestrian trail only would have the advantage of enabling the City to give its full attention to developing a new policy for its natural areas and greenbelts unencumbered by a bike pilot project."

The controversy around Cheasty Greenspace has been manufactured out of red herrings, straw men, and fear. The controversy serves interests that want to maintain the status quo. However, this project does raise valid concerns as well: what is the social impact of mountain biking on the local community; can a net positive impact be achieved through restoration and recreation; what impact will it have on the local

⁴⁰ Preliminary stats on GSP volunteer action in 2014!, Green Seattle Partnership, Facebook (Jan. 1, 2015) available at <https://www.facebook.com/greenseattlepartnership/posts/10150478222389984> (last visited Mar. 29, 2015).

economy; can the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation responsibly manage bike trails; and more. Nonetheless, this project is not controversial for the thousands upon thousands of supporters for this project: for them it is a beacon that represents the possibility of getting children into the woods.

The Urban Forestry Commission should accept the controversy, research the concerns that have been raised, and hope that someday we will have a very unusual problem to deal with: an urban community where all children have a connection to nature through direct time spent in their local forest.

Conclusion:

In an ever-growing city, we need to constantly evaluate and research alternative methods to support, augment, and protect our valuable tree canopy and the habitat contained beneath it. In the city, a balance must be struck between preservation of nature and preservation of health and society. While good environmental quality can support nature, it can also support the health of our society: whether by providing safe routes to school or access to nature. Ultimately, the Urban Forestry Commission has a choice in its approach: support Seattle as a world-wide leader for urban forest restoration by engaging in constant re-evaluation and original research, or maintain the status quo and follow the work of others that are years and even decades ahead of Seattle.

Finally, we ask that the Urban Forestry Commission keep two things in mind:

- (1) The outcome of this project, even if a failure (in which case the bike trails would be decommissioned), will be a fully and timely restored forest that provides healthy habitat for nature as well as people.
- (2) Through restoration and trail building, we will improve management of Cheasty Greenspace and plant succession understory and conifers that will reduce erosion and improve slope stability.

Thank you for dedicating yourselves to Seattle's urban forest and for taking the time to thoroughly read our response, review the cited research, and make an informed decision on whatever recommendations you may make about this project.

Sincerely,

Friends of Cheasty Greenspace Mt. View

From: Sarah Welch [mailto:sarahwelch@comcast.net]

Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 12:28 PM

To: Pinto_de_Bader, Sandra

Cc: Mark Ahlness; Denise Dahn; Barber, John; Rebecca Watson; Williams, Ruth; Zemke, Steve

Subject: Letter in Support of Urban Forestry Commission Letter RE Cheasty Mountain Bike Park

Hello Sandra,

Please find attached a letter from a group of advocates for preserving our Seattle open space and green spaces. It asks the Urban Forestry Commission to finalize and send its draft letter regarding Cheasty Mountain Bike Park to the Mayor and City Council.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Welch and Mark Ahlness on behalf of the groups supporting this letter.

March 29, 2015

Seattle Urban Forestry Commission
Office of Sustainability: Attn: Sandra Pinto de Bader

We are a group of people and organizations dedicated to the preservation of natural areas and open space for Seattle. We are writing you today to encourage you to finalize and send your draft follow up letter regarding Cheasty Mountain Bike Park to the Mayor and the City Council. This week such a draft letter was posted for review on your website. Our Seattle Natural Areas Coalition is a coalition of Seattle neighbors who work tirelessly in our parks, greenspaces and natural areas to protect and restore our urban forests and natural areas. We are forest stewards, 'friends of' groups and citizens who are passionate about retaining and restoring our greenspaces and natural areas for all of their public benefits.

The timing of this letter is valuable because the Board of Park Commissioners is holding a public hearing on April 9th after which they are expected to send a final design for a Cheasty Mountain Bike Park to the City Council. We also believe your letter is important because the Bike Park recommendations for Cheasty foretell an approach Parks is taking with their proposed "Supplemental Use Guidelines" for Greenspaces and Natural Areas, the planning process they intent to wrap up by June 2015. We recognize and applaud the Urban Forestry Commission for taking a role in this larger citywide planning process for greenspaces.

Our concerns with the proposal Cheasty Mountain Bike Park are:

- The proposal fragments the habitat for wildlife. This final design has major construction for boardwalks that traverse many of the 11 wetlands and support active trails throughout the interior forest which is actually quality wildlife habitat. Wildlife is apparent throughout the greenspace with a number of species on the 'concern' list for the State. No wildlife baseline study has been conducted, however, despite your Commission's recommendation that Parks do so.
- The Bike Park gives exclusive trail access to mountain bikers at the expense of everyone else. Due to the nature of the sport, mountain biking actually denies use by pedestrians, birders and those seeking tranquility while visiting the forest. In her blog "Passive Use-A Thin Green Line", Denise Dahn Co-Director, Seattle Nature Alliance articulated our concern: "... when park natural areas are reserved for the general population, every person has equal access. It is the fairest, most democratic way to manage our most precious remnant wild. It ensures nature remains accessible for all people while protecting wildlife habitat from over-use and ecological degradation."

- Parks own surveys show how citizens value our natural areas and greenspaces. The recent Parks Legacy Plan¹—the foundation for the new Metropolitan Parks District underscores the value of Seattle’s Parks and Greenspaces:
 - 56% (of citizens surveyed) valued parks and recreation for “exercise and fitness”, followed by “healthy natural environment” (44%)
 - 53% walk or jog in or along a park weekly or more
 - Respondents, on average, ranked the importance of maintaining urban forests an 8.5 out of 10—just after cleaning restrooms and picking up litter in parks
 - The importance of maintaining trails ranked 8.2 out of 10
- Parks’ lack of attention to the environmental impacts from the Parks Maintenance Yard is a threat to this natural area. The yard, perched on fill dirt above the proposed Bike Park has water and potential polluting runoff, creating a potentially dangerous condition-for humans and wildlife.
- The science shows² the Cheasty Greenspace has significant wetlands (11 of them!), steep slopes and wildlife habitat. These are precious conditions in our increasingly urban setting. The proposal now recommends the building of retaining walls, board walks, and very deeply anchored paths using heavy machinery and fill materials for construction. The preliminary geo-tech and wetlands reports only underscore earlier concerns that this is not an area for a Mountain Bike Park.
- The practices for the Bike Park (stay on trail, volunteer led maintenance) are virtually unenforceable. Parks cannot guarantee that the bikers will stay ‘on trail’ without further destruction of the space, nor are there means to monitor dogs off leash, the separation of pedestrians and bikers for safety reasons, trash removal and sanitation or any other practices that should govern use of the greenspaces.
- What is the cost/benefit of this project? We recommend that City policy makers ask themselves this question. The cost is the loss of the use of the space for peaceful enjoyment while the material costs have risen with the requirement for significant construction. All for the benefit of a small group for limited use. Our recommendation is ‘no blank check’ for the mountain bikers for the use of this greenspace.
- What about sustainability? Again, Parks’ proposal is that the mountain bikers maintain the trails and the space after the Bike Park is constructed and that the experience be monitored for three years. What happens if there are impacts to the environment and the wildlife? What happens if use is not as intended? What is the decision process to evaluate the end of the pilot? Will the Mountain Bike Park need to be removed?

All of these are issues of central concern by the Urban Forestry Commission and we urge you to write again to the Mayor and City Council to voice your concerns as the proposal goes forward. We also encourage you to advocate for the Mayor and the City Council re-iterate its

¹ Parks Legacy Plan, September 2014, Page 144

² Cheasty Mountain Bike PAT Website: ESA Study and GeoTech Study

long held policy³ for natural areas and greenspaces established by Resolution in 1993 and take a stand to protect our remaining natural areas and greenspaces.

For questions you may contact Mark Ahlness at mahlness@comcast.net or Sarah Welch at sarahwelch@comcast.net. Thank you for your continued concern for this issue.

Thank you.

The supporters of this letter are members of the following organizations:

Seattle Nature Alliance
Friends of Leschi Natural Area
Friends of Seattle Urban
Forests
Friends of Ravenna Ravine

Friends of Cheasty
Plant Amnesty
Magnuson Environmental
Stewardship Alliance

Friends of Frink Park
Thornton Creek Alliance
Friends of Lincoln Park

From: Patricia Naumann [mailto:patnaumann@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2015 12:06 PM
To: Pinto_de_Bader, Sandra
Subject: Cheasty - Ordinance follow-up

Sandra Pinto de Bader

Some follow-up --

Here is the granddaddy of Ordinances -- #114900 - creating the Open Spaces and Trails Bond Program.

<http://clerk.seattle.gov/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?s3=&s4=114900&s5=&s1=&s2=&S6=&Sect4=AND&l=0&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=CBORY&Sect6=HITOFF&d=ORDF&p=1&u=%2F~public%2Fcbor1.htm&r=1&f=G>

The pdf version here: http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Ordinances/Ord_114900.pdf with an additional document/letter.

"Section 1. There is hereby created within the Department of Parks and Recreation an Open Space and Trails Bond Program to preserve Greenbelts, Natural Areas, other undeveloped Open Spaces, and to acquire and develop recreational trails within the City of Seattle."

The accompanying letter from then Parks Super Holly Miller Dec 08, 1989, on page 3 states:

"You will note on the attached detailed work program that we will prepare strategic plans for each greenbelt, Natural Area, and Trail. These plans will be reviewed with our Oversight Committee. Each plan will specify a strategy for protecting the most open space, the specific properties to be acquired, and the relative priorities of those properties. Any actions necessary for further long term protection of existing publicly owned properties within Greenbelts and Natural Areas will also be identified. For Trails, the strategic plans will deal with any necessary property acquisitions and include a design program for development."

At that time, the Cheasty parcel was publicly held by the Executive Services (which I think became the Finance Dept later) and with Ordinance 119826 would transfer to Parks. More sleuthing is required for clarity as to when and how that parcel was noted in strategic plans or how it was identified. In Ord 119826 it is identified as Open Space Parcel No 214.9040 and, it possibly as RPAMIS Subject parcel no. 442 (AKA 4099 Cheasty Blvd S" on page 5..

The Ordinance refers in the Whereas-es to Resolution 27987, Ordinances 114681 and 114763 and King County Ordinance 9071 as previously establishing the intent, identifying the projects, and authorizing preliminary activities...." but I don't have time presently to look into those now.

Patricia Naumann