

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2018

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

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<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Andréa Akita, Vice Chair

Tom Byers

Marlon Herrera

Evan Hundley

William Lowe, Chair

Kelly McCaffrey

Rachel Anne Williams

Excused:

Dennis Cook

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Holly Miller, Interim Deputy Superintendent

Rachel Acosta, Board Coordinator

The meeting is held at 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Byers calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. He asks for approval of the consent agenda- March 12 meeting minutes and the agenda. Commissioner Byers moves the Elections to immediately following the Superintendent's Report. The Commissioners approve the Consent Items unanimously.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

Jonathan Mark – First Tee has been selected to build a Junior clubhouse at Jefferson Park Public Golf Course. He feels the public input period is not sufficient and the benefits to the community are not commensurate to the loss of greenspace. The Plan privatizes public property and DPR should not fast track the proposal. This lease is too long.

Superintendent's Report

Presented by Holly Miller, Acting Deputy Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

City Tree Management Policy – A year long process to talk about how to manage city's forests and trees. Councilmember Johnson has been interested in centralizing tree management. There are different ways to manage trees based on different uses. Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities would manage trees differently than Seattle Parks and Recreation. Discussion is ongoing and SPR will keep us up to date.

Teen Summer Musical – Auditions for summer musical had been scheduled, SPR delayed them because staff was not ready. The production will happen and it will be wonderful, as always.

Legal updates

130th street – This Lake Washington street end has been used by community members for many years. Owners of adjacent property found out it belonged to them and fenced it for personal use. SPR has sought to condemn the property for public use and is supported in this effort by the appeals court. Owner could appeal to Supreme Court. If not, it will be remanded back to Superior Court to determine a sales price.

Moorages – There were two issues brought to King County Superior Court. 1) the complainant felt it violated Initiative 42 (which prohibits the use of park land for non-parks and non-recreational activities); and 2) there should have been a State Environmental Policy Act review on the contract. The judge dismissed with prejudice which means it cannot be refiled. SPR does not do SEPA on contracts. Marina Management is there now. They are starting design work and then they will have the permitting process.

The Board would like to receive the project timeline.

SPR staff will present two pieces of legislation at the Civic Development, Public Assets and Native Communities Committee; Woodland Park Lawn Bowling Lease Agreement and the Golden Gardens Concession Agreement. The Committee will also vote to approve Marlon, Dennis, and Jessica Farmer to terms on the Board. SPR staff will present the Race and Social Justice accomplishments for 2017.

Major Projects Challenge Fund – This is funded by the Seattle Park District. SPR received 13 applications. David Graves, Planner for this initiative will present these to the Park District Oversight Committee on April 17.

The Arboretum Loop Trail Grand Opening was on Sunday, April 8. Project manager Garrett Farrell and the partners at the UW Botanic Gardens and the Arboretum Foundation did a great job.

Public meetings: Puget Ridge Playground - April 16, Soundview Playfield - April 17, EC Hughes – April 19

TT Minor play area drainage problem – SPR staff did a great job cleaning it up. Commissioner Lowe lives nearby and agrees they were very responsive.

Green Lake Crew – They held their 25th annual auction and raised \$25,000. They started a capital campaign to renovate the boathouse.

Elections

Commissioner Byers nominates William Lowe to be the Chair of the Board; Commissioner Lowe has served as the Vice Chair for the last 2 years. Commissioner McCaffrey seconds, Commissioner Lowe is approved unanimously.

Commissioner Lowe nominates Commissioner Akita as Vice Chair, the Board approves this unanimously.

Briefing: Multi-use Trail Pilot Project

Todd Burley, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Written Briefing

M E M O R A N D U M

Date: April 6, 2018

To: Board of Park Commissioners

From: Christopher Williams, Interim Superintendent

Subject: Multi-use Trail Pilot Project

Requested Board Action

Washington State recently passed a law which defined and established statewide regulations for electric bicycles (e-bikes) as their use becomes more common. At the same time, Seattle Parks and Recreation has received inquiries from the public, elected officials, and other local jurisdictions that are exploring how to address the growing use and availability of e-bikes. These discussions have focused on the regulations for e-bike usage on multi-use trails and the safety of operating these bikes on shared use trails such as the Burke-Gilman, Elliott Bay, Mountains to Sound, Melrose Connector, and Duwamish Trails. We will be providing an informational briefing on this issue at the April 12 Park Board meeting, which will be followed by a public hearing on April 26 and possible vote on a proposed pilot project on May 10. The goal is to have regulations in place for e-bikes on Seattle Parks and Recreation multi-use trails by Memorial Day to prepare for the busy summer biking season.

Project or Policy Description and Background

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) proposes a pilot project to allow Class 1 and Class 2 electric bicycles on five of the multi-use trails we manage: Burke-Gilman Trail, Elliott Bay Trail, Mountains to Sound Trail, Melrose Connector Trail, and Duwamish Trail. These trails were chosen due to the width of the trails, the commuting connections they provide, and their ability to safely accommodate e-bikes. The pilot would include a speed limit of 15 mph on these trails, although there will be areas where riders need to reduce speed, for all users and an education campaign in partnership with the Seattle Department of Transportation.

Seattle has changed significantly since 1995, when Seattle Parks and Recreation passed a Bicycle Use policy (060-P 7.11.1) that banned all motorized vehicles on multiuse trails. The population has risen dramatically over the last 28 years (150,000 more people), bicycle use has increased on streets and trails (up 100% since 1985), electric bike technology has advanced, and there is now access to a number of bike share programs including e-bikes.

According to the NDP Group, e-bike sales are up more than 450% since 2013. A new study and the largest research study of its kind in North America, “A North American Survey of Electric Bicycle Owners,” measures how people are using their e-bikes and how they feel about them. The outcomes are promising for a continued rise in e-bike ownership and usage. Study findings include: e-bike owners ride farther and more often, replace more car trips, e-bikes eliminate barriers to bicycling (hills made easier, distances were considered too far before using an e-bike, avoidance of arriving sweaty to a destination, and the ability to carry cargo or children), and 96% of respondents shared e-bicycling is fun.

Earlier this year, Washington State passed a bill to define and regulate electric bicycles (SB 6434). It establishes three classifications for electric-assisted bicycles: Class 1 e-bikes are activated when pedaled, Class 2 have an independent throttle, and both have motors that are 750 watts or less and stop assisting at 20 mph. Class 3 e-bikes are pedal assist like Class 1 bikes, but can assist up to 28 mph. The law allows for Class 1 and 2 electric-assisted bicycles on shared use paths, although local laws can supersede this rule.

Currently Seattle’s multi-use trails cross multiple jurisdictions with inconsistent regulations. The Burke-Gilman Trail is managed by Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), University of Washington (UW), and King County (KC) beyond the city boundaries. The Elliott Bay and Duwamish Trails are managed by SPR, SDOT, the Port of Seattle. The Mountains to Sound Trail in Seattle is managed by SPR, SDOT, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), while the Melrose Connector Trail is managed by SPR and WSDOT. King County has a “reasonable and prudent” speed limit, whereby speeds in excess of 15 mph “constitute in evidence a prima facie presumption of violating” the regulation, while Seattle has no speed limit and the Port has 5 mph speed limits in some areas. Users are uncertain of the rules of the trail and often comment with questions and concerns.

To create consistency with the state legislation and across the relevant jurisdictions, SPR brought key staff together to share regulations, plans, and concerns. The SPR Multi-use Trail Pilot Project aligns with the intent and desire of managers from the other agencies and organizations, elected officials, addresses comments heard in our last briefing with the Park Board, and is consistent with state law.

Public Involvement Process

The Board of Park Commissioners briefings, and the public hearing will be the public review process for the Multi-use Trail Pilot Project, followed by a year of outreach and engagement with the public, including key stakeholders.

Issues for Discussion

What we’ve heard:

- **Speed:** Many people, particularly pedestrians and family cyclists, are very concerned about fast cyclists and the danger it poses to other users. There is no regulatory speed limit for bikes on most multi-use trails in Seattle, few signs to set expectations, and limited enforcement.

- **Technology:** Electric bike technology has increased rapidly and with it the use of e-bikes for people of all abilities. As is common with new technology, some people are concerned with the rise in popularity of e-bikes, and equate them with speeding cyclists. Others point out that e-bikes are generally designed to stop assisting riders at 20 mph and making cycling accessible to more people. Studies show that there is speed a difference of 0-5 mph between a traditional bike and an e-bike. The new state classification system for e-bikes creates some clarity around this new technology.
- **Safety:** The predominant concern we hear, from the public and key stakeholders, is for the safety of all users. There are adjacent home owners that must cross the trails regularly, pedestrians that feel unsafe in congested areas and with fast cyclists, and recreational cyclists that have concerns with racing bikes. These users generally ask for speed limits, physical infrastructure changes, and increased enforcement.
- **Clarity:** Many people are frustrated with the inconsistency in regulations across jurisdictions on the same trail, and the lack of clear signs to set expectations. They would like clarity on the rules of the trail.
- **Equity:** Much of the literature on e-bikes and many advocates in the community highlight how e-bikes offer access to cycling for seniors and people with disabilities. As such, they provide access to recreational opportunities and healthy lifestyles for a broad range of people. The growing appeal of e-bikes among older adults is allowing for health and wellness into later years, as e-bicycling for transportation and recreation results in stronger heart rates, lower blood sugar and reduced body fat.

Evaluation Process

During the pilot year, Seattle Parks and Recreation will collect data in the following ways: bike counters, field observations and on-site surveys, stakeholder focus groups, and public feedback through an online survey, emails and correspondence. This information will help us understand use patterns, safety concerns, and pilot outcomes. Following the collection of this data, Seattle Parks and Recreation will evaluate potential options and provide a policy recommendation to the Board of Park Commissioners.

Parks Board Input

- What community stakeholders should we engage as part of this pilot?
- What additional data would you like to see analyzed to assess the pilot project?

Parks Board Action

Public hearing (4/26) and vote (5/10) to allow for implementation of pilot project in time for summer.

Environmental Sustainability

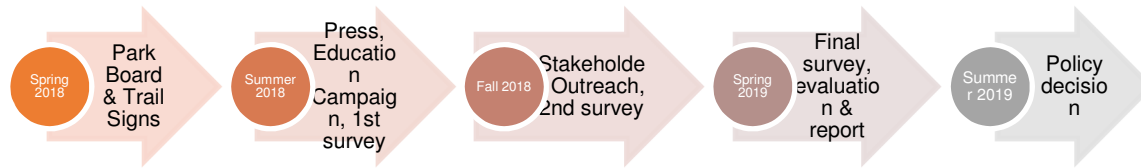
The Multi-use Trail Pilot Project supports the City's climate initiative and SPR's Healthy Environment Action Agenda by encouraging more cycling around the city, thus reducing carbon emissions.

Budget

Implementation of the trail pilot will primarily utilize existing SPR resources, including stakeholder coordination, communications and outreach. We will be partnering with SDOT for trail signage and an education campaign, highlighting trail etiquette and safety along the trails.

SPR plans to conduct surveys of trail users and other stakeholders throughout the pilot. The intent is to work with students or interns, keeping the cost low. Bike counters and other passive data gathering will happen in partnership with SDOT.

Schedule



Preparation for the Multi-use Trail Pilot Project has already begun with trail management stakeholder engagement and policy review. The intent is to plan the educational campaign and signs in April and May along with key stakeholder engagement. The pilot would begin on Memorial Day weekend with media outreach and installation of signs. Throughout the summer and fall an education campaign and user surveys would continue public engagement on the pilot. A final survey, evaluation, and report will be prepared after the year-long pilot and be presented to the Superintendent and Board of Park Commissioners in the spring/summer of 2019. Seattle Parks and Recreation would then prepare a policy recommendation to the Board in the summer of 2019.

Additional Information

Todd Burley, Sustainability Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Todd.burley@seattle.gov, 206-256-5615
www.seattle.gov/parks/environment

Attachments

- 10/19/17 Memo to Board of Park Commissioners
- Seattle Parks and Recreation Bicycle Use Policy (1995)
- King County Trail Code
- SDOT Trail Signs
- East Bay Parks E-bike Pilot Sign
- Superintendent's Authority

Presentation/Discussion

Todd understands the considerations for allowing electric-assist bicycles on multi-use trails and he understands the electric-assist bike technology.

Current regulations on these trails through Seattle Parks and Recreation prohibits the use of motorized vehicles on shared use trails. They are managed by multiple jurisdictions which results in a lack of consistency of rules. Furthermore, there is limited signage to make rules and expectations clearer.

Bicycle use is changing; it has increased significantly. Biking is healthy and affordable. Biking is a great transportation alternative that helps SPR meet their climate goals.

Increased use of e-assist for those with mobility issues or for those who are hesitant because of hills.

Bikeshare programs are growing; e-assist bikes are rented 3x more than normal bikes.

New state law classifies e-assist bikes, which is seen as a best practice. Requires regulatory consistency across multiple jurisdictions; classification will have to be visible on the bicycle. Local jurisdictions determine the rules for their trails and roadways.

Pilot project will be on 5 multi-use trails managed by Seattle Parks and Recreation. These trails were chosen because they are multi-use, well used, and 6 feet or wider. SPR staff looked for locations throughout the city.

The objective of this pilot is to think about a larger policy change as staff move through the pilot project.

Speed limit 15mph for all users and allow class 1 and class 2 e-assist bicycles which are currently prohibited because they are considered motorized vehicles.

There will be a safety and education campaign – working with Seattle Department of Transportation to change biking culture and remind trail users of the culture of the trails.

SPR staff will do an evaluation and monitoring to get some feedback and data. SPR will create a webpage to receive feedback.

Commissioners ask about data regarding safety and whether there are accidents/conflict issues on the trails. Todd responds he has heard a lot about cyclists going too fast or dogs on long leashes, or walkers taking up more than half of the trail.

The hope is the education campaign and signage will create a culture and a sense of proper etiquette.

SPR staff working with SDOT to put up radar signs to show people how fast they are going. All e-bikes have a speedometer.

What will enforcement look like? Mostly, that will be an education and changing the expectations on the trail.

There is no speed limits through SPR or SDOT. SDOT is prohibited to set speed limits less than 20mph.

Commissioners ask about the difference between health benefits of riding an e-assist bike versus a human powered bike. E-assist bikes increase access for people to bike more, especially for those who would not be able to normally.

Commissioner Byers asks if it would be worth calling the UW School of Public Health to see if they can get a study done through this pilot project.

Are there clear rules about trail etiquette now?

Bikes always yield to pedestrians. Stay to the right and take up less than half the trail. Travel at a speed in a "safe and prudent" manner; keep dogs on a short leash. Unsure about the legal perspective.

Are there other codes of conduct that could be added during the evaluations process?

Will there be a method for reporting accidents or conflicts on the trail? Bike counters can do user number and speed. WSDOT has said they will place counters on the Mountains To Sound and Melrose Connector

The goal is to have consistent signage throughout the trails.

How will people know which trails they can take their bikes on and which ones they cannot? Education campaign with partners and posting signs on the entrances to the trails. SPR will work with partners to get the word out.

During the pilot, SPR and SDOT will experiment with outreach.

King county has a 15-mph speed limit. It makes sense in terms of safety and it is an industry standard.

Will there be people out there for the opening to have a physical presence?

Partners and stakeholders are part of the conversation and there are many opportunities for outreach and education.

Timeline: Public Hearing will be April 26. The Board will vote on May 10.

Presentation: Citywide planning efforts

Samuel Assefa, Director, Office of Planning and Community Development

Sam introduces himself to the Board and says he will talk about how to deal with growth through a coordinated approach with multiple departments.

Seattle is a spectacular city. How to maintain the quality of life while planning for future growth.

Comprehensive Plan – 1994 plan was smart in terms of shaping how the city should grow because it focused infrastructure towards urban villages and urban centers. 18% land targeted for 75% growth.

Seattle 2035 – Primary themes: housing affordability, equity, and growing sustainably.

The Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) sets a very ambitious goal: 50,000 new homes in the next 10 years. Of that, 30,000 will be new market-rate homes to expand housing options throughout Seattle. And 20,000 will be affordable homes, with restricted rents reserved for low-income people and families. This goal will require that Seattle triple the production of affordable housing.

Mandatory Housing affordability (MHA) –

Mandatory Housing Affordability is a new policy that ensures growth leads to affordability. At its core are a few key features:

- Under MHA, anyone developing multifamily housing or a commercial building will either include affordable housing as part of the project, or they'll make a payment into a fund that the City uses to fund affordable housing throughout Seattle.
- To put MHA into effect, the City needs to make zoning changes that increase development capacity everywhere MHA applies, in order to partially offset the cost of the new affordable housing requirement.
- is a state-approved approach that other cities like Kirkland and Issaquah have used.

The rezone is underway, citywide; if new developments come in these areas, developers will have to create affordable housing.

Voluntary Incentive Zoning (IZ) – Currently, the City has incentive zones; most are downtown. This allows the developers to build taller in exchange for public space or affordable housing.

MHA represents two key improvements from the IZ program we have today:

- First, it's mandatory, meaning for the first time in Seattle's history the private sector would be required to contribute directly to affordable housing.
- Second, it applies citywide. Today, the Incentive Zoning program covers only about 3% of Seattle's land area, but MHA would increase that to more than 44%. MHA would apply in urban villages and in other zones that allow multifamily and commercial development.

Office of Housing takes the money from developers and uses it with other funding to build housing. No compensation for existing residents.

Implications of this: There will be a lot of infrastructure growth; the City will need to be creative to address need for quality public spaces through partnerships and private spaces.

Waterfront Park will bring major transformation for quality of life of Seattle residents.

The expansion of the Washington State Convention Center – large development project that will have significant public benefit components.

Physical Public Benefits

- Public Open Spaces & R.O.W. Improvements
- Historic Building Lighting
- Additional Improvements Beyond Code

Public Benefit Art

Funding Neighborhood Improvements

- Pike Pine Renaissance: Act 1 Funding
- Bicycle Master Plan Funding
- Lid I-5 Study Funding
- Freeway Park Association / Seattle Parks and Recreation Funding

Affordable Housing Funding

Lid I-5 – robust study funded by the Washington State Convention Center project. This would create decking over the freeway to create new public space opportunities.

Civic plaza – Looking to create more public space with private owned properties.

One Center City – 5 entities – Sound Transit; Seattle Department of Transportation, Office of Planning and Community Development, Downtown Seattle Association, and King County Metro – 20-year plan focusing on transportation, public space and public realms.

Seattle Center –Increase public space at Seattle Center through a renewed collaboration between the City, the School District and the community to serve the public, our students, and build new connections with the thriving arts, non-profit and business community.

Key Planning Objectives:

- Complete bike-ped path along August Wilson Way
- Improve connections to the neighborhoods
- Additional public open space
- Shared-use performance, events and athletics venue
- Quality design campus-wide

Many major cities have parks that act as living rooms of the city; Seattle Center could be the living room of Seattle.

Outside citywide coordinated planning for public spaces – Creative opportunities for private companies, other governmental agencies, and city departments to provide public space. Multiple city directors came together and brainstormed ideas. 37.5% of land in Seattle is publicly owned.

Engage beyond the normal to include all populations.

Challenges are access and connection. Chicago and Boston created links between parks and public infrastructure. One idea is to include connections in their thinking about public spaces.

The Commissioners encourage the City to strive for bold ideas.

The Commissioners feel it would be great to learn how departments leverage money to create bold ideas and openspace.

Could public institutions trade pieces of land to create public spaces? Yes, they look at this when they are doing projects.

The Commissioners ask Mr. Assefa to advocate on behalf of Seattle Parks and Recreation. He responds saying the Mayor is encouraging a focus on livability.

Public/private partnership – The Commissioners mention that there is cynicism and fear around the partnership idea and ask Mr. Assefa for suggestions on getting people to understand the benefits. Mr. Assefa says it is important to show results; different cities have different cultures; provide robust community engagement – have to show value and have to show results; work with the culture.

How to work with private sector to leverage and incentivize to create beautiful public-sector spaces.

Parks are viewed as empty space instead of open space by some people. Private companies creating pressures on openspace, how can we get them to include open space in their planning and designs.

Commissioner Byers mentions the City did start to create connections but they are bands of gray. Mr. Assefa has done a marvelous job of pulling departments together. Commissioner Byers suggests the City combine trail system and greenways and hire the Conservation Corps to plant green in those bands of gray.

Old/New Business

Commissioner Akita thanks Commissioner Byers for providing great leadership as chair for the past two years.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:28pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____

William Lowe, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners