

CHEASTY GREENSPACE

**Restoration and
Mountain Bike Trail Pilot Project
Process**

Recommendation:

Based on recent discussions with Parks Board, Parks staff is recommending that the proposed Bicycle Policy update be put on hold until such time as a pilot project can be implemented and evaluated. To that end, Parks staff is requesting the Boards' support in moving the Cheasty Greenspace project forward as a pilot project site on which to implement and evaluate mountain bike trail(s).


Cheasty is the one site that has community support and an active group of volunteers to implement the project. There would be a public process to determine the actual trail location and layout, Parks would oversee the construction and Parks would also monitor the project for a year. At the end of the monitoring period, we would then make a decision on whether to move forward with the larger policy change, keeping in mind that there are likely some natural areas and greenbelts where mountain bike trails would be inappropriate. What that means is that the current (1995) policy would remain in place for a while longer, with no changes.

CHEASTY Greenspace

ACQUISITION FUNDED IN PART THROUGH:
* KING COUNTY 1989 OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOND
AND CONSERVATION FUTURES FUND
* WASHINGTON STATE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE
FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION - WWRP

Preserved as Open Space



 City of Seattle
Parks and Recreation



Step 1: Review Forest Type

Closed canopy forested areas

- Unmanaged for 20-40 years
- Primarily deciduous
- Limited understory diversity
- Invasive shrubs and trees
- Unhealthy and declining canopy
- Invasive understory
- Mixed vegetation



Step 2: Management Area Forest Issues and Opportunities:

Restoration Goals:

- Improve native tree diversity by planting deciduous trees in riparian areas
- Increase conifers
- Decrease invasive cover in riparian/wetland areas
- Remove ivy from trees
- Remove all invasive maple saplings
- Remove invasive maple seed source along Boulevard

Green Seattle Partnership Restoration Sites



CHEASTY GS: CHEASTY BOULEVARD

Step 3: Review Existing Impacts:

Human Impacts

- Social Trails
- Encroachment
- Garbage and Yard Waste
- Encampments
- Trespass Tree Removals
- Replanting



Step 4: Review Existing Geologic Conditions:

Soils

- Generally well-drained mineral soils
- Sandy loam or sandy clay loam.
- Organic content is very low in upland mineral soils.
- Limited areas of organic mucky soils that are poorly drained

Slopes

Mostly gentle to moderate slopes, east facing.

Steep slopes (exceeding 40%) in a few isolated pockets.

Very few areas within the greenspace slope to the west, mostly east and south.

No significant erosion or downcutting was observed in any of the three small streams.

Potential slide areas are mapped.

No recent or active slides observed.

Step 5: Design Considerations:

Mountain Bike Issues:

Major Concerns

Erosion

Impacts to Wildlife and Plants

Impacts to Other Users

Changes in uses of Park

Maintenance of trail

Step 6: Design Solutions:

Erosion

- Average grade should stay under 10 percent (with grade reversals)
- Maximum grade should be 15 percent (except for natural or built rock structures)
- The half-rule: A trail's grade shouldn't exceed half the grade of the side-slope.
- Engineer solutions first, not after failures.

Impacts to Wildlife and Plants

- Route the trail on the uphill side of established trees to avoid their roots.
- Minimize trail width
- Avoid areas identified as critical habitat
- Line trail with native shrub species
- Engage bikers in restoration program
- Restrict access during sensitive times

Step 6: Design Solutions:

Impacts to Other Users

- Add grade brakes to reduce speed, reducing risk to other users
- Develop single use trails
- Encourage respectful riding
- Route trails to positive control points (viewpoints, other attractions)

Changes in uses of Park

- Project positive use.
- Maintain a trained, dedicated and friendly volunteer base.
- Opening up area for others to enjoy from the inside.

Step 6: Design Solutions:

Maintenance of trail

- Build sustainable trails eg “grade reversal”
- Show commitment for work parties, committee meetings, etc.
- Use as much rock as possible
- Emphasis on restoration projects
- Establish clear directions and expectations through MOUs and Leverage \$'s.

Anticipated Timeline:

January 9, 2014: Board Meeting for recommendations.

January – Fall 2014: Design Proposal, Review, Community Process, Fundraising Campaign.

Fall 2014 – Spring 2015 – Trail building, forest restoration.

May 2015 – Grand Opening, pilot monitoring period begins followed by quarterly inspections.

May 2016 – Pilot project period completed – report to Board of Directors on findings and for policy recommendations.

Requested Board Action:

Recommend that the proposed Bicycle Policy update be put on hold until such time as a pilot project can be implemented and evaluated.

Recommend that Parks staff move forward with the Cheasty Greenspace project as a pilot project site on which to implement and evaluate mountain bike trail(s) in a Greenspace or Natural Area.