



PORTLAND OFF-ROAD CYCLING MASTER PLAN

Project Advisory Committee Meeting #14

Meeting Summary

MEETING DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2017

LOCATION: BUREAU OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY, 1900 SW 4TH AVENUE, PORTLAND

TIME: 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

In Attendance

CAC Members Present

Kelsey Cardwell
Mike Houck
Adnan Kadir
Torrey Lindbo
Carrie Leonard
Erin Chipps
Matthew Erdman
Jocelyn Gaudi
Evan Smith
Michael Whitesel
Renee Meyers

CAC Members Absent

Jim Owens
Bob Sallinger
Kelly McBride Nastassja Pace
Punneh Abdolhossieni

Agency Representatives and Resource Members

Abra McNair, *Portland Bureau of Transportation*
Shannah Anderson, *Portland Bureau of Environmental Services*
Maya Agarwal, *Portland Parks & Recreation*
Rachel Felice, *Portland Parks & Recreation*
Jill Van Winkle, *Portland Parks & Recreation*
Jennifer Devlin, *Portland Bureau of Environmental Services*

Mark Peters, *Portland Bureau of Environmental Services*

Staff and Consultants

Michelle Kunec-North, *Project Manager, BPS*
Kristen Lohse, *Toole Design Group*
Adrienne DeDona, *Facilitator, JLA Public Involvement*

Audience / Members of the Public

Matt Weintraub
Chris Rotvik
Catherine Thompson
Spencer Bushnell
B. McGillicuddy
Andy Jansky
Marcy Houle

Overview

The committee:

- Reviewed and discussed the recommendations included in the overall draft Off-Road Cycling Master Plan and provided input that would guide staff revisions of the draft plan in some cases related to typos, definitions and clarifications. In other cases, the committee's feedback would be used to shape the content of the committee report that would be transmitted to Council with the recommended draft plan. The purpose of the committee report is to transmit the perspectives of the group, even where they differ, so that Council members have the benefit of hearing areas of general agreement and differing perspectives amongst the committee.

Welcome, Agenda Review & Project Updates

Adrienne opened the meeting with introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Meeting 13 Summary

Adrienne asked if there were questions/revisions to the previous meeting summary. The team will be using meeting summary to develop the committee report, so she wanted to ensure it was accurate. There were no comments from the committee.

Master Plan Status

Michelle provided an update on the status of the plan, saying that the Discussion Draft was available online for public review and comment. She explained that the previous meeting focused on Forest Park and the input collected from the committee at that meeting has been incorporated for the most part, including some refinements to the trail improvement concepts and other recommendations. Michelle noted that there were a few broader issues that came up that would be discussed today as part of the broader plan, including determining the ecological benefits of off-road cycling and the role of Forest Park in the broader system.

A committee member asked for an update on the public comments received to-date; which Michelle explained were unavailable at this time, but would be distributed to the committee following the public comment period and open houses.

Adrienne explained that at the meeting, the committee would spend approximately an hour and a half discussing the Discussion Draft section by section; prioritizing the sections on equity, the system plan, designing with nature; other sections will be reviewed more briefly.

Michelle thanked the committee for their help over the past two years in preparing the plan; which is a big achievement for the City.

Adrienne added that for the most part, the committee's feedback received about the plan prior to the meeting were supportive. She said that at this meeting we are looking to hear additional comments about what committee members like about the draft, as well as what they have concerns about.

Review and Discuss Off-road Cycling Master Plan Draft Recommendations for Forest Park

Section 1: Purpose & Process

Michelle introduced the section and explained that this section has been added since the last iteration of the Plan. The goal of this section is mostly to provide context, but also to highlight some of the big components of the plan.

Adrienne explained that most of the input received by the committee in this section was regarding the desired outcomes and goals, and comments on these issues are threaded throughout other sections as well. Adrienne asked the committee if there were other thoughts or opinions about this section.

One committee member suggested the plan should include measurable outcomes and said that there will be a legacy associated with this plan; we need to set goals to ensure we are making progress. We need a measuring stick to ensure the Plan has been successful.

Another committee member suggested that there be integration with other plans, including outlining the next steps moving forward. There was support for including some type of implementation “road map” in the Executive Summary.

Michelle asked the committee for their input on a suggested “triple crown” goal: 3 sites, 3 miles, within 3 year and if it would be doable. There was some agreement amongst the committee since it seemed simple and catchy.

Another committee member added that quantitative measurements are very useful and that the Plan will be integrated with Portland Parks and Recreation’s goals, so whatever measures are included in the Off-road Cycling plan should be consistent with Parks Bureau.

Section 2: Incorporating Equity

Michelle introduced the section by explaining that the equity effort for the Plan focused on engagement, decision-making, and equity in outcome, such as ensuring the Plan would benefit underserved communities by determining/mitigating negative impacts and ensuring there are ongoing opportunities for engagement and feedback during the Plan’s implementation.

Adrienne explained that the feedback from the committee prior to the meeting wasn’t clear if there was a concern about the equity process, the geographic distribution of possible sites, and/or other types of ‘access’ and asked for clarification on which aspect is a concern for committee.

One committee member suggested that equity is also about the bigger picture and to consider prioritizing providing park space/facilities in underserved areas then determine what facilities are desired. There are huge disparities across the City, even just for access to neighborhood parks. Some communities may value other things in parks, above off-road cycling.

Michelle responded: Many of the issues were addressed in the needs assessment; the team worked with Portland Parks & Recreation staff on the development of the Plan. We definitely need to make sure we’re adequately providing enough parks, but also what we’re proposing fits with community desires and needs. Michelle explained that Lynchview Park, which is currently underway with the master

planning process is an example of how off-road cycling can be considered for future sites and how the community will have an opportunity to weigh-in.

The committee generally agreed that the Plan has been put together with an appropriate equity lens.

Several committee members felt that the process to develop the Plan could have been more inclusive and had committee meetings in other locations more accessible to other members of the community. All of the meetings were downtown and we fell short in inviting people into decision-making process.

Other committee members responded that the open houses and community events were well attended and were held in locations that were accessible. More open houses are planned. It was also mentioned that the input gained at open houses might be more valuable than online comments for this reason. The outreach conducted earlier in the process by the Community Cycling Center efforts was also valuable in reaching diverse audiences.

The committee generally agreed that the Plan should call for prioritizing funding for sites that are in underserved areas and that also offer potential employment and programming opportunities. Consider partnering with schools or community centers when possible. There are great opportunities/interest in lower income communities to participate.

One committee member mentioned that we need to recognize that gathering community opinion is not the same as having diverse voices on the committee. We can't adequately identify the gaps within the underserved community because we don't have a committee that is representative of the larger community. Moving forward we need to ensure there is authentic engagement of community members in the decision-making process.

Michelle responded that when we were putting together the system plan, we worked with the Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs), and what we heard is that: "These types of facilities would be great all over, but can the sites be near schools, in places where families can go, where we can get there safely?" So, sites were selected based on concentrations of kids, near schools, on the bike network, where there are higher population densities, populations of people of color, and were coordinated with new park development opportunities.

The committee generally agreed that the maps should be connected with equity and implementation in order to more fully tell the story of site selection. It was suggested by at least one committee member to create a composite map with an equity outcome opportunity score.

One committee member suggested including some quotes from community members during the equity outreach in the equity section to provide some additional context.

Rachel Felice and Maya Agarwal with Portland Parks & Recreation explained that the Parks Bureau does have finer granularity in maps for Level of Service and Parks is currently in the process of developing updated level of service goals with the target of having a park within ½ mile/10-minute walk for everyone, and also to provide a variety of experiences (walking trails, pools, dog parks, etc.). This will help pinpoint where there are gaps in park access. Rachel and Maya said that the Parks Bureau needs to determine how prioritization/implementation will occur. They explained that there currently isn't funding in place to implement the Plan now and most of the sites are on Parks Bureau property. The Parks Bureau will need to figure out how the Plan fits within the greater needs of the City, and how off-

road cycling facilities weigh against all other parks priorities. Rachel and Maya added that the Parks Bureau has an equity scoring process for capital improvement projects—so there's an existing methodology.

Tom Armstrong added that each City Bureau has a racial equity staff person and a 5-year Equity Plan. He noted that some goals may be slightly different across different Bureaus. The equity staff person in each Bureau helps achieve consistency, and ensures equity as a critical input in decision making process.

Section 3: Off-road Cycling in Context

Michelle described how this section is meant to provide local context which includes a look at community needs, what's on the ground now and what's planned. It also provides regional context, and proposes the idea of Portland serving as a hub for the region. Finally, it looks at national trends, resources, and best practices guidance from other cities.

Adrienne pointed out that most comments were about on clarifying and reorganization some parts of the section.

The committee generally agreed that the comparison with other cities should provide an apples to apples comparison with cities similar to Portland in terms of geography, topography and size. The comparison is important to get right so that we can use it to reduce disparity over the next 5 years.

One committee member noted that many of the guidelines included in the plan were established by the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) and asked if this was valuable guidance.

Michelle responded that the IMBA guidelines were developed in partnership with and have been adopted by some federal agencies; therefore the City feels these guidelines are well supported.

Section 4: Planning an Off-road Cycling System

Michelle explained that this section looked at the six critical factors that were used for selecting and planning facilities and the system: physical setting, discipline/style, user characteristics (which includes highlights from needs assessment, participation, demographics, comparison with other trail activities), facility types, user experiences (safety and enjoyment) and service area.

Adrienne explained that there were comments from the committee prior to the meeting about costs, shared use trails, bike parks and trail width/difficulty.

The committee generally agreed that there should be some standardization factors for determining whether a trail is determined as shared use or exclusive use within the Plan.

It was suggested to include Gateway Green as a case study to give a perspective on the implementation process, effort, duration and cost.

One committee requested the source be included with the reference to management of shared use/crowded trails on page 35.

The committee generally agreed that alternating use of trails should be included in the Plan. Michelle clarified that this was included as a management strategy within the Plan. It was also suggested to include a bypass on alternate routes for challenging sections of trails.

Section 5: Creating a Sustainable System

Michelle explained that this section was intended to cover some big ideas that didn't fit into other sections, including foundational recommendations—the system cannot exist without well designed, and managed parks and trails. The section also explains that when looking at any site, achieving ALL components of sustainability is important, that all things must work together.

The committee generally agreed that community engagement was also an important component of a sustainable system.

The committee supported the balanced, three legged stool approach to sustainability; the importance of addressing all components.

One committee member felt that an engaged user base is also critical and that locations could be selected based on user groups, so they are invested in seeing it succeed. For example, Ventura Park Pump Track was built by NW Trail Alliance, which maintains it. The park has been successful because of the engaged user base.

One committee member felt that the Plan provided an opportunity to educate the community on the science aspect with regard to the natural environment and mitigating impacts to it.

Another committee member asked if the Plan incorporated the latest research conducted by Metro. Michelle said Metro's report was issued after our research, but we can incorporate that material.

Section 6: System Plan

Michelle explained how this section outlines the approach to Level of Service (LOS) and the site recommendations. It proposes a few citywide/destination sites, a few district sites, and then neighborhood sites for bike parks. It also discusses strategies for meeting interests in trails. Michelle explained that we don't really have enough land to meet the desire within the community, so the Plan proposes an approach to meet this need. Strategies include loop trails within parks, but also natural, off-road trail corridors along paved paths. She then described each type of proposed facility and the recommendations:

Natural trails

- The plan proposes improvements in existing locations with trails, plus additional sites
- For existing trails, recommendations include creating a management plan for master plan if not existent, restoration of degraded trails, removal of demand trails, improving and building new trails.

The committee generally agreed that the N/NE area lacks district scale sites for natural trails.

The committee also agreed that loop trails and stacked loops are an important opportunity for increasing trail mileage and felt like plan didn't address it enough. The committee encouraged staff to look for more opportunities for loops and stacked loops within the Plan.

Some committee members felt that Mt. Tabor would not be a desirable off-road cycling experience without new trails—the one trail that seems like the best opportunity is closed to bikes. Obvious trail connections would need to be made.

Michelle responded that recommendations for Mt. Tabor include connecting existing trails and improving signage.

Some committee members felt that the opportunities for habitat restoration that improved off-road cycling might provide would be important since Mt. Tabor is important birding habitat.

Riverview Natural Area

Michelle said that the Plan made some recommendations for off-road cycling at Riverview Natural Area. The Master Plan for the Riverview Natural Area included a trail concept along with actions and access concepts and these would be maintained. She explained that during the planning process for Riverview, the City Council put a prohibition on cycling which is currently in place. The off-road cycling plan recommends continuing interim prohibition until sustainable trails can be constructed. Michelle explained that the Riverview Natural Area Master Plan recommends a shared use trail with switchbacks, and she questioned whether such a trail would be desirable for biking given the steep grades. Other recommendations include ensuring a robust planning/design process, following best practices design, monitoring, management, identifying risk factors, etc. The Plan also recommends considering intensity of use with topography.

Adrienne and Michelle circulated a letter from the Bureau of Environmental Services regarding the recommendations for off-road cycling in Riverview Natural Area. Shannah Anderson summarized the letter. She explained the Bureau has reservations about expanded recreational access on the site due to a number of site conditions: the presence of special habitat, perched water table and over 2 miles of above-ground streams. It is considered a vulnerable site. In addition, the site was purchased for natural resource protection, not recreation. BES feels the site needs more study before recreation is allowed, and merits thoughtful technical consideration.

One committee member who served on the Riverview Natural Area Master Plan Advisory Committee said that the committee presumed a trail would be built and that there would be a more robust community discussion and technical analysis prior to implementation, including revisiting the trail alignment in light of the community process previously being put on hold.

Rachel explained that the Parks Bureau worked with BES to purchase and to develop ecological prescriptions for the site. The question of recreational access for bikes was deferred to this process, but this committee hasn't had a lot of conversation about this site. The primary goal is to protect natural resources, sustainable access is an 'IF'. The Parks Bureau is comfortable moving forward with exploring a trail but supports continuing the interim prohibition.

Michelle replied that it's hard to resolve this problem at this scale at this time. More detailed analysis, is needed to be certain that biking can happen sustainably at this site.

Jennifer Devlin, BES, agreed that certain things are hard to resolve at the master plan scale. She reiterated the concern from BES is the site will see more use than it can handle.

One committee member asked if BES is recommending ALL interim use be prohibited. Michelle replied that all use except for walking and hiking would be prohibited. BES and Parks are conducting ongoing monitoring and management of the site and closing trails that contribute to ecological degradation. Use has decreased dramatically since interim prohibition.

One committee member felt that switchbacks at Riverview might not be all bad. There might be some good design solutions.

Michelle closed the discussion on Riverview by saying that the various Bureaus may not have reached agreement yet on the future of off-road cycling at Riverview Natural Area, but that it's a on-going conversation.

Bike Parks

Michelle explained the Plan includes three existing and 14 new locations for bike parks with distribution across the City—a few places in each district in order to link places together on a longer ride. The Plan identifies the need for master planning efforts to take place at some of the larger parks like Gabriel and Fern Hill.

The committee agreed that all recommendations included in the Plan should be seen as a starting point, would like to see more. Michelle replied that all the other opportunity sites that didn't reach the recommendation level (approximately 100 sites) could be revived if they weren't screened out.

The committee also agreed that there isn't adequate land base and that it would be useful to point out in the Plan that we need acquisitions at regional and local scale, especially on the east side. We should recognize that need and encourage the City and Metro to pursue future bond levies for acquisition.

Jennifer Devlin added that we should think beyond Portland for example, partnerships with Gresham and Milwaukee are needed to address service gaps on the east side. The Metro regional bond measure provided unique opportunities.

Section 7: Designing with Nature

Michelle reviewed the highlights from this section, saying it pulls from the best practices report to address protection of soil and water, vegetation, wildlife and habitat.

Some committee members had concern with the language used explaining the avoid/minimize/mitigation concept. It was suggested to focus more on opportunity rather than what seemed as a defensive approach. It was also suggested to include stewardship and best practices opportunities in this section.

Michelle responded that there is social research that supports that idea, the "last visitor syndrome." She validated the sentiment. The committee members recognized that obviously we should restore, but questioned the phrasing of the approach. Michelle responded by explaining that the 'Avoid/minimize/mitigate' is standard practice. She also acknowledged that the City as whole does not have good foundational policy about using best management practices, but this plan has the opportunity to be innovative, but it shouldn't apply just to cyclists. She said it was also important to acknowledge that it's a TRAIL issue, not just an off-road cycling issues.

Group Round-Robin/Closing Reflections

Adrienne asked each of the committee members to reflect individually on their thoughts on the Plan and the process to close out the meeting. The following is a list outlines their comments:

Torrey Lindbo said the plan is very comprehensive, but he is concerned about good ideas getting lost in such a big document. He felt it would be important to elevate key items so they are easily accessible when it comes to Plan implementation. He wants the Plan to be usable.

Jocelyn Gaudi said we should more clearly tie the recommendations to the desired outcomes. For example, with regard to equity, the exclusion of off-road cycling on pedestrian trails in Forest Park does not seem to be in keeping with the equity goals included in the Plan. With regard to the desired outcome of a visionary and practical plan, she is concerned with future obstacles for the Plan through planning/management documents (such as POST). Finally, she felt there were not clear steps for moving forward especially with regard to Forest Park and coordination with other plans.

Kelsey Cardwell said she supported Jocelyn's comments.

Matthew Erdman thanked the project team and the committee for the work that's been put into the Plan. He agreed with Jocelyn's comments and felt that there needed to be a more clear implementation approach included in the Plan.

Michael Whitesel said he is pleased with all the work that's been done and feels it is an absolutely necessary foundation, but he's worried we're not going far enough. We need to be bold—there is urgency from cycling community to see action quickly, not drag on for years. The Plan should find opportunities to make quick progress. Cyclists have been banned from many trails without scientific support—we should open some trails, where appropriate and to get more mileage for riding off-road.

Erin Chipps said she supported others' comments and she thinks overall the Plan is exciting to see be completed.

Adnan Kadir agreed with the comments from others about the need to outline a clear path forward and what next steps need to be made.

Carrie Leonard said she appreciated the chance to provide input with regard to knowledge about urban habitat. She learned a lot from the committee discussions from the other perspectives in the room. She is excited about the opportunity the Plan provides to help people be outside more.

Evan Smith felt the recommendations for bike parks are super exciting; his daughters can't wait to get out there on them. However, he is disappointed by lack of longer trails—which where we find the real health benefits, especially in north and NE Portland, this part of the plan doesn't fit the visionary objective, it's not bold enough, and needs depth. Evan said we need more open space for off-road cycling sites. He felt that permitting will be tough in the future and through that should be flagged in the Plan as something to review and analyze. However, he felt that not providing increased access to off-road cycling also has impacts to overall community health. He thanked the agency staff for their time providing input and offering resources.

Mike Houck said that as a member of the Planning and Sustainability Commission, was initially concerned that the project was assigned to the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability rather than Portland Parks & Recreation. He now feels they did a fabulous job! He reiterated the need for more land and possible partnerships for funding. Through this process he has become impressed with the off-road cycling community and feels good about working together with the natural resource community to make projects happen in the future.

Public Comment

Marcy Houle said that she appreciates the committee's work over the past 2 years. She has been a writer/wildlife specialist for over 35 years and worked on the Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan. She points out that the legal ordinance contained in the Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan clearly states a six-point wildlife plan must be enacted, and applies to all user groups.

Catherine Thompson said she appreciated the work and equity focus of the Plan. She reviewed the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational study on local trail priorities and asked, given limited land, what are the priorities for the Off-road Cycling Plan. She urged people to review the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational study because it covers state, federal, local lands and referenced see page 16 of the study. Catherine indicated that based on this study, the priorities for the community are that 76% want more hiking and walking trails. They want to repair and preserve existing, natural features and maintain trails. She added that when the Off-road Cycling Master Plan goes before the City Council for adoption, the Council will look at Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational recommendations and see that the Plan is not based on scientific data.

Spencer Bushnell thanked everyone. He said the document is great initial starting point, but specific things have been missed. The urban trail corridors section misses the mark by using existing trails—this is a huge miss—the Plan does nothing to achieve parity with paved trails. For example, Marquam Woods should be considered since provides so much more available access.

Andy Jansky said it's hard to build trails and build community; rather it's easier to obstruct. He said the Plan is not perfect but it provides hope, and provides hope for the mountain biking community.

Matt Weintraub said the sustainability of a trail system is dependent upon having an engaged user base. We need to understand what the community wants. He recommended that staff look at urban trails in other cities for examples. He said in other communities 5 to 10 years following the implementation of off-road cycling the response has been positive—both in terms of biotic and social benefits. The Plan should include these examples in the appendix to show how cities have gone from conflict to collaboration.

Alexandra P. Clarke thanked BES for the wonderful letter on Riverview. She said that although held jointly by two Bureaus, the ratepayers paid for the land and the letter is very valuable. She said we need to keep mountain bikers out of Riverview, though she's not against mountain biking in general. If Riverview does get bikes—there will also be increased traffic and parking impacts in the neighborhoods.

Committee Report & Next Steps

Adrienne reviewed the process for drafting the Committee Report. She explained that she will summarize the input received from the committee through the questionnaires completed prior to the past two meetings and the meeting summaries. This feedback will formulate the first draft of the Committee Report which will be sent to the committee via e-mail for their individual review and comment. Adrienne will then revised the Report and sent it out to the committee a second time for members to include their support for or differing opinions on topics. Adrienne clarified that the Committee Report will focus only on the thoughts and ideas of the committee; not resource members. The Committee Report will serve to help staff finalize the proposed Plan and will be transmitted with the Plan to Council.

Michelle explained the process for completing and adopting the Plan. There will be a virtual open house as well as four physical open houses which will be advertised on the project website. The Community Engagement Liaisons will be used to reach out to underserved communities to gather a more diverse range of input. Staff will consider the input received from the community and the committee in this final phase of outreach prior to submitting the Plan to City Council for adoption. Prior to going before the City Council, the Plan will be shared with the Parks & Recreation Board in January. The Planning and Sustainability Commission deferred it's review to the Parks & Recreation Board.

Attachments

- Project Advisory Committee Meeting #14 Presentation
- Comments submitted in writing from the public