



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

April 3, 2018 | 3:00 – 5:00pm
1900 Building | Conference Room 7A

Board Members Present Patricia Frobes, Paul Agrimis, Joseph O’Leary, Jeff Anderson, Tonya Booker, Michelle Dedeo, Kathy Fong Stevens, Christa Stout, Ian Jaquiss, Paddy Tillet, Jim Owens

Board Members Absent Kendall Clawson, Gladys Ruiz, Judy Bluehorse Skelton, Jenny Glass, Meryl Redisch

PP&R Staff Present Mike Abbaté, Hailee Vandiver, Brooke Gardner, Mark Ross, Art Hendricks

Commissioner’s Office Commissioner Fritz and Cristina Nieves

Call to Order and Welcome Pat Frobes called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm

**Rose Quarter
Redevelopment Proposal** Zari Santner and Rukaiyah Adams presented their non-profit’s Rose Quarter redevelopment proposal. The Rose Quarter, also known as Albina which is said to mean “bright light,” is 94 acres of the city that runs from the north side to the water front. These 94 acres were razed and it is now where the Moda Center and Memorial Coliseum reside. Albina was a part of the city that connected Portlanders, new and old, to the river and to each other. Three years ago, Rukaiyah and Zari gathered a group of people to create a vision of a community where people can work and play. The group talked openly about racism and urban policy. The plan draws inspiration from cities that are connected to their waterfront and have overcome division like Berlin and Warsaw. The site is now disconnected from the waterfront by the highway and railroad. The vision Zari and Rukaiyah presented is a 50-year vision, but there is also a 5-7-year shorter-term version.

Pat Frobes asked how the Parks Board can help.

Rukaiyah responded that advocating for affordable housing and thoughtful development at the Blanchard School site and ensuring freeway LIDS are not harming pedestrian access to the street grid would be helpful. Decisions about the Blanchard site and freeway LIDs could preclude the establishment of the foundations of the plan. The Parks Board members applauded the team on their compelling vision.





**Introduction to Testimony
on Discussion of Draft Off-
road Cycling plan**

Pat Frobes introduced the testimony and panel arrangement for this meeting and explained the Parks Board's role in the Off-Road Cycling Master Plan (ORCMP). There are 185 pages of written testimony posted on the Parks Board website. Though most of the testimony received was concerning Forest and Riverview Parks, this is a citywide plan. The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) developed this plan and the Parks Board's role is not to approve or disapprove the plan, but to provide advice to city council and other bureaus that deal with green spaces. Once the Parks Board has approved comments they will be submitted to BPS for consideration; when the plan has been finalized the Parks Board may or may not make further comments. The testimony for this meeting has been separated into four parts.

**Panel 1: Portlanders
Concerned about Additional
Off-road Cycling in Forest
Park**

Panel Members: Catherine Thompson, Marcy Houle, Tom Cunningham, Mike Lindburgh

Marcy Houle read a letter from Governor Barbara Roberts (see posting online of panel written testimony for April 3 meeting) that listed environmental and safety concerns for biking in Forest Park.

Catherine Thompson stated that Forest Park is designated as a wildlife habitat and the state says it must be inventoried and monitored for capacity. Thompson stated that Commissioner Nick Fish did not approve of new trails being built in Forest Park in 2010 without further studies being done. She concluded that we need to protect the children and the wildlife in Forest Park

Thomas Cunningham's comments to the Parks Board are attached.

Mike Lindburgh stated that cycling in Forest Park requires an exemption from existing land use law. He said the city must carry out wildlife studies, implement safety measures, and in accordance with the strategy plan, develop recreational opportunities at other sites before bringing them to Forest Park.

**Part 2: Portlanders in Favor
of Additional Off-road
Cycling in Forest Park**

Bob Laudarud stated that a diversity of management tools is necessary to manage a diversity of demands. He serves as the president of Northwest Trail Alliance. He has received over 60 emails from Portlanders concerned about the lack of trails.





Erin Chips stated that trail options provided in the plan are too steep and narrow. She stated that trail guidelines have been adopted across the country and world so there are no justifiable reasons shared trails would not work in Forest Park. She also said that studies show bikes cause the same amount of erosion on trails as hiking or running does. Cyclists contribute thousands of volunteer hours. Humans need nature and nature needs us too. Banning people from natural areas prevents stewardship.

Evan Smith lives next to Forest Park and was on the masterplan advisory committee. He worked with Charles Jordan who nurtured his love of Portland Parks and Recreation. He views the plan through his daughters' eyes and explained that there is nowhere for them to ride in Portland. He called for more paths that are suitable for beginning cyclists. His daughters have ridden in Hood River and Bend where trails are shared successfully. He stated that cyclists are concerned about the environment, but he believes the biggest concern is not type of usage, but apathy.

Jocelyn Quarrel stated that Gateway Green is of particular importance to her as she served on the board for five years. As the population of the city grows so do the demands on public lands. Portland demands a high quality of life where people can connect and engage sustainably with nature. She asked the Parks Board to reconsider closure recommendations that were made outside of the meetings.

**Part 3: Individual Comments
on Riverview Natural Area
(Pros and Cons)**

Con: John Miller and Alexandra Clark

John Miller recounted that legends say mountain biking trails were built decades ago on the cemetery. He also stated two mountain bikers were seated on the panel when the plan went to council.

Alexandra Clark brought a copy of the conservation easement with her. She quoted her grandfather saying, "be thankful for good health." She said good health and longevity depend on high water and air quality. She asserted salmon species are threatened and interruption of the waterflow and water cycle is detrimental to Riverview Natural Area. She urged the Parks Board, on behalf of concerned citizens, to continue the ban on off-road cycling and dogs off-leash areas.

Pro: Andrew Jansky and Spencer Bushnell





Andrew Jansky recounted his surprise at being called into Commissioner Fritz's office in 2015 to receive the Riverview cycling ban. He said that a common argument he hears against off-road cycling is the Metro Conservation Easement which some interpret as stating cycling has negative environmental impacts. Andrew emailed Metro (see posting online of panel written testimony for April 3 meeting) and asked if cycling was permitted under the Conservation Easement. Metro responded that they consider biking nature recreation so it is allowed. His main concern was ensuring the next generation develops into parks stewards.

Spencer Bushnell reiterated current scientific evidence stating that cycling does not cause more ecological impact than running. He asserted biking can exist in Portland and it is a great opportunity to reinvigorate a natural area.

**Part 4: Individual Comments
on Other Aspects of the
ORCMP**

Paul Hobson lives in the Woodstock neighborhood and rides to Powell Butte before going to work in the morning as an environmental engineer. He stated that shared trails have not been an issue in his experience.

Daniel Greenstadt said the parts of the ORCMP that don't concern Forest Park and Riverview look like good ideas. He is a member of the Riverview Neighborhood Association and is a PTA president so he is heavily involved with families and kids in the neighborhood seeking recreation in parks. From his experience with the community, he believes the parts of the ORCMP that touch on parks are well received and the main concerns are safety and the environment. These issues have been resolved in other places and he suggested Portland could benefit from considering those places and learning from them.

Christian Treibal stated the dog bowl located in the Overlook neighborhood is not large enough to accommodate the multiple usage suggested in the ORCMP. It is currently largely used by the Overlook community. People from Overlook meet there and use it as a beloved dog park even though it is not owned or operated by Portland Parks and Recreation. He expressed his concerns how this plan would impact the Dog Bowl.

Rick Kappler is a westside resident and desires for council to work with ODOT on mountain biking trails. He stated ODOT right of way is very important and encouraged work to be done on potholes in Portland roads to allow for safer biking. He specifically mentioned locations by I-5 and Highway 26.





**Parks Board Deliberation:
Draft Statement (Jim Owens)**

Jim Owens presented his written report to the Parks Board. He mentioned the ORCMP has been a fascinating project to be involved in and it is a great example of civic engagement at its rawest and finest. We've had more public comments on this conceptual masterplan than any other issue in his five years on the Parks Board.

Director Mike Abbaté said there is a lot more in the plan than Forest Park and Riverview

Jim Owens explained the plan provides an expanded system of trails for cycling from four areas to nine surface trails, 15 more bike parks, and 3 new urban off-road cycling trails. However, it is a conceptual plan and does not authorize anything. Every facility mentioned in the plan would have to go through detailed design and planning and those in Forest Park and Riverview would have to go through additional review. Nothing is going to happen overnight. The opportunity is for the Parks Board to give recommendations to BPS on the Off-road Cycling Plan and to create a good set of practices to apply to shared trail usage. The major criticism, he observed, is that the plan is limited to city owned properties so the system is not interconnected. This issue was raised by the committee but never resolved. Additionally, the plan does not have listed priorities for implementation. In short, the plan is not done and the committee should be reconvened to talk about timing, funding, and priorities before it goes to council for adoption. Lastly, given budget constraints, nothing will happen in the short term unless groups step forward to take advantage of the momentum of this process to meet the demand.

Pat Frobes mentioned that this plan is conceptual, but responds to trends nationally for a growing demand for more cycling, and responds to the 2020 vision. However, it relies on the best management practices being quickly adopted.

Tonya Booker pointed out a significant amount of resources are required to make this a reality. She also mentioned the difficulty of balancing the cost of this plan with the other needs within Parks and Recreation. Moreover, she pointed out her concerns that the process for development of the Off-road Cycling Plan has not been equitable.





Director Mike Abbaté said he would like to reach out to BPS to talk about their outreach efforts to show that input in the plan was inclusive and equitable.

Kathy Fong Stevens suggested that the Parks Board's comments should include language to ensure an equitable and feasible plan.

Several Parks Board members agreed.

Pat Frobles reminded everyone that the Parks Bureau has had budget cuts 7 out of the last 10 budget seasons.

Jim Owens reminded the Board that these plans are typically 20-year plans and there may not be the resources today to implement it so calling it a blueprint plan is appropriate so it can be used when resources come available.

Pat Frobles also pointed out that the Parks Board will have another opportunity to submit another set of comments if the Off-road Cycling Plan is revised.

Tonya Booker suggested adding reconvening the advisory council as a recommendation to BPS.

Paddy Tillet moved that the Parks Board forward comments as put together by the Board with the amendments just described. Tonya Booker seconded. Motion passed, with one abstention (Christa Stout) and no nays.

The motion to approve the March minutes was seconded and passed.

Approval of March Meeting Minutes

Meeting Adjourned

Pat Frobles adjourned the meeting at 5:17 pm

Next Meeting May 1, 2018



Testimony Presented
at the Parks Board Meeting,
April 3, 2018, 3-5 p.m,
By Thomas Cunningham, Attorney at Law, NE Portland

Chair Patricia Forbes and fellow Parks Board members:

We have a serious safety problem in Forest Park.

I speak today because I have to take exception to the representation about safety conditions in Forest Park that Jim Owens has made in his March 26, 2018 "Discussion Draft: Off-Road Cycling Master Plan" that is now before this Board. Mr. Owens represents, and I quote, "The reports on trail conflict *are largely anecdotal...*". Pg 10.

That is simply inaccurate. The safety problems in Forest Park are widespread, chronic and well known.

As the Portland Parks and Recreation knows, the City had already acknowledged bicycle/pedestrian user conflict back in 1992, more than 35 years ago, in the Forest Park Trails Policy Task Force. See Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan (1995) pg. 21.

Safety issues was one of the major problems that the Forest Park Management Plan, a 1995 ordinance, intended to avoid. The Plan established standards for trail use by cyclists, and permitted cyclists for the first time in Forest Park.

Unfortunately, the safety actions items required by the Plan have *not been* implemented.

Even more dangerous, today we have continual conflicts in Forest Park between mountain bikers and walkers because of illegal bike riding, which puts all users in harm's way.

The liability to the City is great. Of greater worry to me, however, is that people are getting hurt.

You are receiving numerous letters from people who have encountered cyclists riding illegally throughout Forest Park. Some of those people are ending up in the hospital.

Mike Becker has written you:

"I have personally been struck by cyclists twice over the years, once landing me in the emergency room. The young men did not stop, and left me lying on the Wildwood trail with broken ribs."

Ian Smith has written the City Council, just three days ago:

"My young son almost got squashed by a bike that came extremely close to hitting him on Holman Lane. Bikes travel on the narrow trails, which also make it very scary" for kids and other walkers.

Pam Hayes has written:



"On many occasions I have been walking on a trail in Forest Park and have had a mountain biker come over a rise speeding toward me. Once i was with two others and luckily we all dove right while the mountain biker skidded off the trail and barely missed us. if the bikers had encountered a family with small children or the elderly, they could not have stopped."

The Parks Bureau, itself, admits there is a problem:

Parks Manager Emily Roth told the ORC committee that Parks has not been successful in keeping cyclists off the pedestrian-only trails on Powell Butte. Mr. Owens, a member of that committee, was likely in attendance when Ms. Roth made her presentation.

Part of the problem is that Portland does not have the enforcement that other city park bureaus have.

Yes, there is a safety crisis today in Forest Park. Fortunately, this Board is authorized to take immediate steps to help, as directed in the Parks 2020 Vision. For this reason, we ask you, the Parks Board, to recommend to the City that the **Five High Priority Recommendations** as required in the Forest Park Plan be funded and be fully implemented before any further trail development is considered in Forest Park. The City Council must:

1. Write enforceable code that authorizes the ranger to issue tickets to cyclists riding illegally.
2. Erect signs stating the code.
3. Inform the public about what uses are appropriate and why.
4. Erect barriers to keep cyclists off pedestrian-only trails.
5. Coordinate enforcement with police. This item may well be necessary to end night-time riding on Wildwood Trail, which is expressly illegal *any* time of day, and is definitely harmful to wildlife.

Whether you are a cyclist, walker, equestrian or runner, safety needs to come first in any decision that you make today. People's lives depend on it.

Thank you.

Tom Cunningham, J.D., M.B.A.
Attorney at Law
Northeast Portland

