

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 8, 2017

PRESENT: **Parks Commissioner:** Jim Lewis
 Additional Committee Members: Luke Brandy, David Chapman, Stephen Jensen, Jim McGinnis (11:22)
 City and APRC Staff: APRC Interim Parks Superintendent Jeffrey McFarland; APRC Supervisor Jason Minica; GIS Analyst Lea Richards
 APRC Minute-taker: Susan Dyssegard (standing in for Betsy Manuel)

ABSENT: Parks Commissioner & Committee Member Mike Gardiner; Committee Member Torsten Heycke; APRC Director Michael Black; AFR Division Chief-Forestry Resource Chris Chambers; APRC Minute-taker Betsy Manuel

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chapman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at 51 Winburn Way, Ashland OR.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a.* August 11, 2017
- b.* August 25, 2017

After a brief discussion, the Minutes were tabled pending further review.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND GUEST SPEAKERS

Chapman introduced Mike Oxendine, Landscape Services Supervisor from Southern Oregon University (SOU). He explained that the Trail Master Plan Update Committee was working on defining corridors – areas where there were possibilities for a trail system. Chapman explained that Roca Creek traverses the SOU campus and input from SOU staff would be helpful. McFarland added that the Trail Master Plan was being renewed based upon the original Trail Master Plan of 2006, an official document approved by APRC and the Ashland City Council. Portions of the document became part of the City's Transportation Systems Plan (TSP). Corridors identified in the original document provided opportunities to develop a system of trails that would enhance connectivity.

Oxendine presented a map showing a section of Roca Creek where a failed storm drain led to extensive repairs. The pipe was installed originally in the late 1800's, prior to the construction of the Churchill administrative building. Repairs entailed the construction of a 12-foot trench that would channel Roca Creek underground. In response to a question by Jensen, Oxendine described the creek's underground route throughout the campus. He traced the creek as it re-daylighted at Iowa Street above the railroad track. The stream continued on with a portion becoming part of Bear Creek and a portion ending in the TID Ditch.

Oxendine highlighted areas of interest such as the SOU arboretum. SOU designed the arboretum to contain meadows populated with pollinator plants and a native riparian area. In addition, the arboretum hosts approximately 65 trees that are identified by their Latin names and history. He stated that SOU engineered a trail from the arboretum on a steep slope that could be accessed from Roca Street. He stated that the route had not been advertised as the gradient engineering was never approved by the City of Ashland.

It was stated that two properties (667 and 668 Roca Street) contain steep slopes that are significantly eroding into the Roca Creek Canyon. Ashland is attempting to repair the storm drain in that area and bolster the hillside. McFarland stated that the trails in the area are spotty, with missing connections. He offered to work with SOU to obtain easements or provide connectivity to SOU's trail system. McFarland asked about the possibilities for signage depicting the creek's route throughout the campus – even though the stream was mostly underground.

Richards commented that the trail system could mitigate areas such as those close to the sports fields where people walk on the roads. Oxendine agreed, indicating that he had proposed a running trail in that location. He reported receiving a mostly favorable response, even though there would be a financial outlay for fencing. Oxendine stated that he would install trail markers along SOU's portion of the trail.

Jensen proposed that SOU's trail plans be discussed in the updated Trail Master Plan. He outlined connectivity from the Ditch Trail on the upper end to the Central Bike Path where it meets the railroad. Brandy supported the idea as an opportunity for greater trail connectivity.

There followed a brief conversation about trail connectivity within the Roca Creek Corridor. Lewis agreed with Jensen that a description of future opportunities should be noted in a new section in the chapter detailing the Roca Creek Corridor. Oxendine agreed to write up SOU's portion of the Roca Corridor – the current trails on campus as well as the potential for additional trails in the future.

Chapman asked about the potential for daylighting the creek throughout the SOU campus. Oxendine noted that SOU staff had proposed the idea but the cost to execute a plan was prohibitive.

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

McFarland introduced staff member Jason Minica, APRC's newly appointed Forestry, Trails, Outer Parks and Open Space Supervisor.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Continue Reviewing and Discussing:

I. Tolman Creek Corridor

McFarland noted that Tolman Creek was primarily outside the Ashland City limits. The creek connects to Siskiyou Blvd. in an area where there is currently little connectivity. Brandy stated that in his opinion, Tolman Creek was a low priority. He explained that connectivity to Crowson Road was not a preferred destination for hikers, given the narrow sidewalk and shoulder along the road. Chapman talked about

connectivity from the Croman Mill area that leads to Crowson Road as desirable for cyclists. Brandy suggested connecting instead to the Oak Knoll Golf Course.

McFarland noted the current pedestrian trail through Oak Knoll Golf Course. He talked about the Croman Mill site, stating that if it develops, trail connectivity for at least the lower end of the Tolman Creek Corridor would provide opportunities for multimodal transportation

Lewis recommended keeping the Tolman Creek Corridor in the Trail Master Plan for future connectivity. He stated that much of the area was in Jackson County's jurisdiction and if the county were to allow growth in the area, Ashland's Trail Master Plan would document the potential for future trail connectivity.

There followed a brief conversation about the creeks that ultimately connect with Emigrant Lake. It was agreed that Richards would extend the mapping for Tolman Creek to the TID Ditch even though it was primarily county land. Chapman noted that the original document depicted Tolman Creek ending where it connects with Neil Creek on the opposite side of Highway 66.

Brandy talked about trails that connect with the Greenmeadows trail system. He stated that those trails include signs that are similar to signage provided by the City of Ashland, although the trails are actually in the county and/or might be part of property owned by the Greenmeadows Homeowner's Association (HOA). McFarland commented that discussions with Greenmeadows HOA officials about a possible easement for a side trail (that would connect with the entrance to Oredson-Todd Woods) was dependent upon an easement through private property.

Brandy talked about acquisition of the Clay Street waterfall. McFarland noted that the property owner had approved access to the Toothpick Trail but denied access to the remainder of the property.

Richards suggested that the Tolman Creek Corridor be incorporated into the Trail Master Plan with an explanation that unlike other named corridors following creeks, the Tolman Creek Corridor does not follow Tolman Creek.

II. Side Corridors

McFarland reviewed the potential for side corridors in areas such as Otis Street and Mountain Creek. He stated that the Committee might prefer to acknowledge areas where a side corridor could develop – or just make a notation where connectivity could be combined with a corridor in the future. Chapman stated that in his opinion, those areas would typically be a branch of a corridor.

There followed a discussion regarding trails in rural areas and trails that require homeowner participation. Jensen stated that safety issues sometimes prevent property owners from granting easements. Issues such as creating areas where the homeless can congregate or camp were identified as concerns when creating corridors.

McFarland suggested making a list of the identified opportunities that could develop as corridors in the future. He proposed the establishment of criteria that would minimize homeowner involvement or that

referenced populated areas as low priority developments.

Discussion moved on to focus on “Creek to Crest” connectivity, as part of the Eastern Forest Lands area. McFarland stated that the route called “Creek to Crest” travels through the City, follows a section of the Ashland Creek Corridor to the Central Bike Path onto the Bear Creek Greenway Corridor to the White Rabbit Trail and finally connects to the Pacific Crest Trail.

Chapman summarized the progress to date, noting that a list of possible side corridors should be developed and the “Creek to Crest” route might be discussed under “New Business.” In addition, he noted that the designations of Eastern and Western Forestlands should be addressed under “New Business” at the next meeting.

Chapman described the forestland areas with the Imperatrice Property as the gateway to Emigrant Lake and from Bear Creek to Grizzly Peak. After some discussion, it was agreed that a new chapter would be incorporated into the Trail Master Plan, called the Cascade Foothills area. Lands within the area would be located on the east side of the I-5 Highway.

McFarland updated the Committee with regard to a section of Grandview where the street intersects with the Ditch Trail. He stated that the access road was a public right-of-way, but a portion of the parking area encroaches on private land and the property owner has requested that no parking be allowed on the private parcel. McFarland stated that a Mutt Mitt station and trash can near the trailhead has been moved further away and Public Works was installing “No Parking” signs. APRC has been discussing purchasing a portion of the parcel to alleviate the problem. Chapman reported that he alerted a nearby neighborhood not to park in that area until matters could be resolved.

McGinnis stated that it would be helpful if the City developed a strategy of collaboration with all stakeholder agencies when similar situations arose with regard to private property owners. Ways to identify potential issues and create a system of communication among City Departments, APRC and homeowners were discussed. McGinnis suggested connections through the GIS system and it was agreed that further exploration with City officials would be warranted.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review and Discuss Additional Trail Corridors*
 - I. West Side Forestlands (new)
 - II. East Side Forestlands (new)

VII. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a. September 29, 2017*

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Manuel, Minute-Taker
Trail Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission

These Minutes are not a verbatim record. The narrative has been condensed and paraphrased at times to reflect the discussions and decisions made. Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Subcommittee meetings are digitally recorded and are available upon online.