

IMPORTANT: Any citizen may orally address the Parks Commission on non-agenda items during the Public Forum. Any citizen may submit written comments to the Commission on any item on the Agenda, unless it is the subject of a public hearing and the record is closed. Time permitting, the Presiding Officer may allow oral testimony. If you wish to speak, please out the Speaker Request Form located near the entrance to the meeting room. The chair will recognize you and inform you as to the amount of time allotted to you, if any. The time granted will be dependent to some extent on the nature of the item under discussion, the number of people who wish to speak, and the length of the agenda.



MEETING AGENDA

ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION Trail Master Plan Update Committee June 1, 2018 Siskiyou Room—51 Winburn Way

10:00 a.m.

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (if available)
- III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & GUEST SPEAKERS
 - a. Open Forum
 - b. Review Additional Public Input Since Last Meeting (if any)
- IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA
- V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
- VI. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Review Chapter 4: Bear Creek Greenway Trail Corridor (Gardiner)
 - b. Review Chapter 6: Ashland Canal (McGinnis)
 - c. Roundtable Discussion (All)
- VII. UPCOMING MEETING DATE
 - a. June 15, 2018
 - The Grove, Otte-Peterson Room—10:00 a.m.
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT—11:30 a.m.

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2018

- PRESENT:** **Parks Commissioners:** Mike Gardiner, Jim Lewis
 Additional Committee Members: David Chapman, Torsten Heycke
 City and APRC Staff: Interim Parks Superintendent Jeffrey McFarland; Trails and Forestry
 Supervisor Jason Minica; GIS Analyst Lea Richards
 APRC Minute-taker: Betsy Manuel
- ABSENT:** APRC Director Michael Black; Committee members Luke Brandy; Stephen Jensen, Jim
 McGinnis; Forestry Division Chief Chis Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chapman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at The Grove 1195 E. Main, Ashland, OR.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- *Minutes of April 20, 2018 and April 27, 2018*

Motion: Heycke moved to approve the Minutes of April 20, 2018 and April 27, 2018, as presented. Gardiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & GUEST SPEAKERS

a. Open Forum

There was none.

b. Review Any TMP Comments Received Since Last Meeting

McFarland reported that the Open House conducted on May 2, 2018, was well attended. A large group of equestrians responded with approximately 12 – 15 comments regarding possible closure of USFS equestrian trails in the outback and the development of trails in the Imperatrice area. Equestrians advocated for separation of uses on trails. Challenges included disagreement about packing out horse feces and finding trailheads with room to maneuver horse trailers. McFarland noted that APRC had worked with the Forest Service to develop a turnaround at the White Rabbit trailhead. He briefly discussed the lack of turnarounds due to Ashland's topography.

Input received from other attendees included comments regarding the proposed extension of the Bear Creek Greenway (seen as a positive development) and people's concerns regarding connectivity along the Ashland Canal. Gardiner stated that bikers felt that Oak Street was too dangerous for bikers. He noted that Oak Street was a sharrow also known as "shared lane bicycle marking." Gardiner stated that it would be helpful to create greater awareness of streets that are designated as shared lanes – how the streets are marked and what it means. There followed a brief discussion about other streets in Ashland that are so marked.

Lewis asked about the status of a potential bridge at Nevada Street. Chapman stated that a vehicular road was no longer planned for the area, but a bicycle/pedestrian bridge was under consideration. Gardiner stated that the Bear Creek Greenway Committee was also interested. He said that the Committee had a research document outlining connectivity from Oak Street to North Mountain Ave – and that included development of one or possibly two bike/ped bridges. Gardiner stated that potential options were a bridge from Nevada Street to Kestrel and back

through the new Riverwalk property – a plan that would enhance connectivity for the Greenway. It was agreed that a bridge could come to fruition at some point in the future. Gardiner stated that from the Greenway perspective, the preferred route would be the wastewater treatment plant road to Oak Street – with a crossing to private property to Kestrel Park to reach North Mountain Park and beyond.

McFarland talked about public input regarding the need for trails where beginners can ride their bikes. Heycke noted that people often ask for easier trails, even though the constraints are within the land itself. McFarland detailed efforts to develop sections of the trails for family bike rides that failed for various reasons. Lewis noted that Ashland's trails have been called "black diamond trails" (per APCR Director Black). He stated that little could be done given the region's topography.

Richards indicated that the ultrarunners would like a trail to Grizzly Peak. Chapman suggested beginner bike trails along the ponds on the Michelle Street property. He noted that electric bikes remained an issue as well – something that must be addressed by State and Federal laws. Heycke relayed that Federal law exists that limits the wattage of electric bikes.

McFarland stated that off leash dogs were also an issue. Lewis highlighted the hot spots of the public open house, indicating that the Ashland Canal, the Greenway and the Imperatrice Property generated the most interest.

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Richards asked for time to discuss a web-app for public comments about the maps – similar to the one used by the consultants for the Lithia Park Master Plan. She stated that the tool would facilitate conversion of mapping comments to pins locating the comment areas.

Richards indicated that the first page of the app would describe the topic and the mapping system. The second page would be a map of the City depicting the trails and corridors of the Trail Master Plan. She stated that people could touch the area of interest and a comment box popped up, allowing comments to be associated by their position on the map.

In response to a question by Gardiner, Richards noted that a webpage would be created for the map-app. Heycke cautioned against going outside City boundaries because of jurisdictional issues.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Final Committee Review of Appendix C: Geology of Ashland – Foundations of our Trails

McFarland introduced the amended version of the Geology section, stating that the Chapter had previously been reviewed but not approved. Changes resulted in additional data and commentary.

Chapman commented that it was a fun and interesting read. Lewis suggested adding commentary about off-trail uses and the damage that could be done to sensitive granitic soils. After some discussion it was agreed that the Appendix would stand as is.

Motion: Gardiner moved to approve Appendix C as presented. Lewis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review Chapter 8: Ashland Creek Corridor

Amendments were as follows:

First paragraph: Remove *could create*

The sentence would read – “The Ashland Creek trail corridor is visualized as the natural extension of the existing trails within Lithia Park as it follows: Ashland Creek to its confluence with Bear Creek - a pedestrian route nearly three miles long.”

Chapman commented that it was not as clear as it could be that the Ashland Creek Corridor was the connection between The Bear Creek Greenway and Ashland’s downtown. McFarland suggested “Broadly, the corridor extends south from the Bear Creek Greenway, at the confluence of Ashland Creek and Bear Creek through to Ashland’s downtown and the upper reaches of Lithia Park.”

“...the southern terminus in the Ashland Watershed there are trails aplenty...”

Changed to

...the southern terminus in the Ashland Watershed there are numerous trails...

“...the Parks and Recreation Department...”

Should be

...the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission...”

Strike: Oak Meadows Park

Heycke recommended removing all of the commentary in red beginning with “...To remedy this conflict...” through “by approximately one-half mile”. He also asked that Bicycle Technical Institute (BTI) be removed as well. It was agreed that the sentence beginning with “an important section...” would be re-phrased to say: *an important section of the southern trail corridor terminates near the water treatment plant access road*. Richards noted that you could then access the western section. Heycke noted that the Ashland Creek corridor connects to the east and west side corridors. It was agreed that the detail would be researched and revamped.

Gardiner asked about a parking agreement with Ashland Christian Fellowship that would allow hikers to use the parking area as a trailhead. McFarland stated that there was no formal agreement. Gardiner suggested that the term “generous parking” be changed to *parking*.

Chapman stated that “The trail could provide a safe route for students to walk or bicycle to these schools and playgrounds” be changed to: *The trail could provide a safe route for students to access the schools and playgrounds*.

Heycke advised that the sentence “A trailhead at the top of Granite Street could provide...” be stricken because there was an existing trailhead with plenty of parking. He proposed a change to “A trailhead at the top of Granite Street provides a point of entry.” After further discussion, it was determined that the sentence was out of place and should be removed.

Gardiner suggested that the words “...enjoyment of Ashland Creek...” be changed to “*appreciation of Ashland Creek...*”

It was agreed that the sentence “The desire is to continue the overall character of Lithia Park along this route” would be removed. The sentence “Bicycles and horses are not allowed on the trail from upper Lithia Park to Nevada Street” would be stricken as well. Heycke explained that trying to account for the changing uses along the trails was confusing given the number of permutations along the trails. The following sentence shall read *Alternative*

bicycle routes are established to allow cyclists to travel the corridor and reach City facilities. The final sentence, "The northern and southern may present an opportunity for equestrian use" will be stricken.

Motion: Chapman moved to approve Chapter 8 – the Ashland Creek Corridor – as amended. Lewis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

b. Roundtable Discussion

Chapman announced that he had a jury call and therefore might not be able to attend the meeting of May 25, 2018. Richards also reported that she would be unable to attend.

McFarland noted that the Chapter on the Bear Creek Greenway had been completed and would be discussed at the next meeting. In other news, he announced his retirement date of July 13, 2018. He stated that the date had been selected so that if there was a final TMP meeting on that date he could attend. He indicated that McGinnis was still working on his assignments (Central Bike Path and the Ditch Trail). Jensen has several small items such as the Executive Summary to complete. McFarland stated that more Chapter photos were needed.

Gardiner announced that on June 21, 2018, an Open House was planned by the consultant on the preferred routes for the Greenway. It would be an evening meeting with the time and place yet to be determined.

VI. UPCOMING MEETING DATE

May 25, 2018 @ Siskiyou Room, Community Development Building @ 10:00 a.m.

VII. ADJOURNMENT – 11:50 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Minute-Taker

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 and Subcommittee meetings are digitally recorded and available upon request.

THE BEAR CREEK GREENWAY

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The Bear Creek Greenway is a twenty-mile trail that connects five cities and a number of municipal and county park sites all within Jackson County. It is the premier bicycle and pedestrian transportation route that transverses a significant portion of the Rogue Valley. The route begins near Dean Creek north of Central Point and extends generally south along Bear Creek, through Medford, Phoenix, Talent and currently terminating at Nevada Street just past the Ashland Dog Park. Several of the parks along the route provide support facilities including restrooms, parking, drinking water, picnicking areas, benches, and wildlife viewing areas. These parks serve as important trailheads offering the aforementioned services to users who can enjoy segments of the greenway.

Governance: The Bear Creek Greenway has its own comprehensive planning document which has been endorsed by the city of Ashland and is administered by several agencies, including Jackson County Parks and the private, non-profit organization, Bear Creek Greenway Foundation. The funding for the maintenance of the greenway is administered by Jackson County Parks through a Joint Powers Agreement between the five municipalities and Jackson County. *(Is it appropriate and useful to mention the source of continued funding?)*

A trail guide has also been published. This guide has been updated and made available through Jackson County Parks.

The Greenway enters the jurisdiction of the city of Ashland on the north end of the Ashland urban growth boundary where approximately two miles of the Greenway lies within the urban growth boundary and the city limits. This portion of the trail runs predominately west to east and extends from Valley View Road and then following Bear Creek to the current termination point at West Nevada Street near the Ashland Dog Park and the Verde Village housing development. Another three miles of trail is proposed to extend through Ashland to the southeastern edge of the Ashland Municipal Airport. FAA security standards may prevent the building of a trail near the airport so alternative routes should be considered on the south side of Bear Creek or along East Hills Drive to East Main and around the airport. From here, the route could continue southeast, following Bear Creek, to the proposed Tolman Creek Trail and beyond. The planned route consistently follows the south side of Bear Creek. Near the confluence of Hamilton Creek and Bear Creek, the route would ideally cross under Interstate 5. Such a route would require significant inter-agency discussions and agreements.

A future trail extension from West Nevada Street to North Mountain Park has become the scope of work for a new trail building project. Currently an Alternate Routes Proposal study is being funded by a joint agreement between the Ashland Public Works Department, APRC and the Bear Creek Greenway Foundation Board. (Can we make this more clear?)

LINKAGES

When completed, the Bear Creek Greenway will potentially connect with the Wrights Creek Trail, Ashland Creek Trail, Roca Creek Trail, Clay and Hamilton Creek Trails, and Tolman Creek Trail. The Greenway will also connect to Helman and Oak Streets, which are designated bike routes. The route is planned to connect from Oak Street through the newly acquired APRC property below Clinton Street and connect with North Mountain Avenue and North Mountain Park. Even though access to this section is currently limited, significant linkages are in place through North Mountain Park connecting the Greenway to the Roca corridor and the existing links to schools and civic features described in other chapters. In the future, the proposed trail alignment could connect the Greenway to the Ashland Pond open space giving good linkages to Helman Elementary School, the Central Bike Path, and downtown Ashland.

CHARACTER

The corridor's character is largely wooded riparian vegetation with many open views to the surrounding landscape including large sections of riparian open space, an often vigorous flowing Bear Creek, farmland and Cascade foothills viewscales.

EXPECTED USERS

Users include bicyclists, pedestrians, runners, skaters, wheelchairs, and maintenance and emergency vehicles. Equestrian use is expected to be mainly outside the city limits to the northwest and southeast toward Emigrant Lake.

TYPICAL SECTION

The Greenway Trail is a multi-use asphalt trail of ten-foot width. Portions of the trail have an adjacent equestrian surface.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

New settlers bestowed the name Bear Creek in the early 1850s due to several near-fatal encounters with grizzly bears along its banks. Ashland's section of the Greenway includes several important small, remnant groves of mature ponderosa pine and California black oak, a vegetation community that once characterized many portions of the valley floor.

ASHLAND CANAL

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The Ashland Canal, commonly called “the TID ditch” is a significant part of the recommended trail system that visualizes completing the “emerald ring” around the city of Ashland. The Talent Irrigation District (TID) was formed in 1917, in the middle of World War I, to provide a dependable supply of irrigation water to upper Bear Creek Valley’s orchardists, farmers, and ranchers. The Ashland Canal, a major “lateral canal,” was excavated during the early 1920s as part of TID’s Hyatt Lake reservoir development. Most of the water in the Ashland Canal comes from the southern Cascades east of Emigrant Lake.

The Ashland Canal provides a unique connection between many neighborhoods as it passes through otherwise difficult urban terrain. Local residents have used the maintenance road along the north bank of the Ashland Canal as a recreational walking and running area since its construction in the 1920s. Many long-time residents remember a time when you could walk and run the ditch from one end of town to the other. Current trail usage is significant and includes pedestrians, runners, users with strollers, dog walkers, and occasional mountain bikers.

The Ashland Canal begins southeast of Emigrant Lake at a diversion near the Green Springs Power Plant on Emigrant Creek. Traveling toward Ashland, the Ashland Canal enters the urban growth boundary and continues past Tolman Creek Road until it reaches the intersection of Pinecrest Terrace and Starlite Place where the city of Ashland takes ownership of the water and assumes responsibility for maintenance of the canal until its terminus at Wrights Creek. It is important to note that the maintenance easement does not include a public access element.

The trail segment in Ashland generally travels at or close to the wildland-urban-interface along the southern edge of Ashland and roughly follows the 2,300-foot contour. Alligning with the hydrologically necessary contour, the Ashland Canal is generally flat to gently sloping and has nearly six miles of linear footage most of which are in close proximity to the southern border of the city limits.

Approximately 2.2 miles of the Ashland Canal trail intermittently exist on public property or private property with public access easements in place. Approximately (unclear, need more info) miles of easement acquisition are needed to complete a unified route from Tolman Creek Road to the Wrights Creek corridor (see Ashland Canal map insert). A possible extension of the Ashland Canal trail would continue southeast following the canal’s path all the way to Emigrant Lake, However, numerous jurisdictional obstacles would need to be resolved before such a robust extension could occur.

A large part of the Ashland Canal corridor from Tolman Creek to Wrights Creek is on or closely borders private property. Because the canal access/maintenance road was not originally intended as a public access corridor, the original property owner easements were designated for canal maintenance only. Public access easements have been secured in some areas and it is desirable to continue the process of acquiring other easements to complete the public access component.

At a few points, the trail route may need to leave the canal alignment and be routed along city streets when an adequate trail corridor does not exist or public access easements are simply not obtainable. One significant gap in the trail occurs where the piped canal crosses Ashland Creek in Lithia Park. The canal itself goes underground at Terrace Street down into Lithia Park and then daylights to the west of Granite Street halfway between Ashland Creek Drive and Lantern Hill Road. Thus, the trail through this section does not exist and, in the future, most likely will not and an alternate route should be considered and could include directing trail traffic from Terrace Street to Ashland Loop Road and along Glenview Drive to meet with the Ashland Canal trail on the west side of Lithia Park.

The Ashland Canal trail corridor crosses several roads and streets. Most of these are residential streets and can be controlled with signage and pavement marking. All of these crossings represent potential points of access. Some or all of these crossings, depending on usage, may need improvements, such as crosswalks, signage, and curb cut ramps.

LINKAGES

The Ashland Canal trail provides access to the following parks and open spaces: Oredson-Todd Woods, Siskiyou Mountain Park, Liberty Street trail and open space, trail to Waterline Road, Cottle-Phillips open space to Ashland Loop Road (2060), Lithia Park trail system, Burnson and Granite Street properties. The Hald-Strawberry Park, when developed, may serve as a trailhead.

Linkages from the Ashland Canal trail to existing trails are too numerous to list here. However, important street access points to the trail are Tolman Creek Road, the Oredson-Todd trailhead on Lupine Drive, Park Street, Walker-Pinecrest Terrace, South Mountain-Elkader Streets, Liberty Street trail, Morton Street, Weller-Taylor-Long Streets, Terrace-Ashland Loop Road, Granite Street, Strawberry Lane, and Grandview Street, with connectivity to Hitt Road and the Wrights Creek corridor. The Hearts and Granite Street trails currently provide access to the westside Ashland Canal segment from Lithia Park.

Pinecrest Terrace bypass:

There are Ashland Canal closures at private properties traveling southeast from Emma Street near Elkader Street for approximately one-half mile, making it necessary for trail users to bypass the closure area by using streets. Trail users can make the connection by following Elkader Street uphill one-tenth mile to Pinecrest Terrace. Follow Pinecrest for two-tenths mile to the intersection with Woodland Drive. Continue on Pinecrest for another one-tenth mile to a wooden foot-bridge below the road which enables trail users to link up with the Ashland Canal trail again. *Is this paragraph needed? Is this level of detail necessary? Seems to permanentize a situation that could change for the better.*

CHARACTER

The route runs predominately across an open, wooded hillside, which provides both forest views and commanding views of the city as well as cross-valley panoramas. Open areas offer superior

views of the Bear Creek Valley and the mountain ranges to the north and east.

Several prominent local landmarks are also visible. The contrasting views of urban spaces below and relatively undeveloped slopes above give an imminent sense of the urban-wildland interface. Wildlife sightings, footprints, and scat provide further evidence of the proximity of wild places.

While some sections of the Ashland Canal are bordered by established yards and cleared areas, there are also extensive wooded sections with imposing canopies. Most downslope water drainages are forested and thick with vegetation. This canopy of riparian trees provides welcome shade in hot weather. The more open sections are often lined with blackberries. Many areas of the corridor provide good animal habitat with deer, fox, and occasional bobcats, mountain lions and bears reported.

EXPECTED USERS

Primary use in all sections will likely be foot traffic and runners. The wider sections may be appropriate for other uses, such as mountain bikes, strollers, and possibly equestrians. These wider sections also provide essential access for canal maintenance vehicles.

TYPICAL TRAIL SECTION

Due to many existing constraints, the trail width and surface varies. The long-term objective should allow for a trail that offers as many multi-use features as reasonably possible.

Fencing, screening, and buffer plantings may be needed to separate the trail from adjacent properties and future development.

Along daylighted canal segments, the existing access/maintenance road surface is generally composed of compacted earth and rock, except when crossing paved roads or driveways. The width of the existing trail varies from two to more than ten feet. Where wide enough, the route is often used by maintenance equipment and will likely need to remain unpaved because of the nature of maintenance excavation requirements. In some segments, the earthen surface becomes too muddy when wet and often provides only seasonal use.

At underground segments, the existing surface is crushed rock, grass, or other cover and is generally wider. Some areas have been at least partially incorporated into residential yards. The underground segments may offer opportunities to add crushed rock or paving. (realistic ??)

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Historically, the Ashland Canal represents an important part of the development of the area's fruit growing industry in the early twentieth century. The Ashland Canal was part of the original Rogue Valley Project irrigation system design and was initially constructed in the early 1920s to irrigate apple, pear, and peach orchards nearby. At the turn of the century, peaches and apples from Ashland were known throughout the Pacific Coast and were marketed in the eastern states and Canada. The Ashland Canal in its present form was completed in the late

1950s.

The sound and sight of water running near the trail is a pleasant quality. Is this a value solid enough for a TMP?

Also see Character section above. (HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THIS CONSIDERING THAT THE CANAL MAY BE COVERED SOON?)

Also, should the pending piping project be mentioned specifically in this TMP?