

Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association
Ashland, OR

March 5, 2018

Director Michael Black
Ashland Parks and Recreation
340 S. Pioneer Street
Ashland, OR 97520

Director Black:

As the local Mountain Bike Trail advocacy group in Ashland, Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association (RVMBAs) has been looking at ways to increase riding opportunities for youth in Ashland. One way to do this is to create a safe, sustainable, and progressive bike skills park with the goal of getting more kids on bikes through local access and skills development. With that being said, we would like to officially propose building a mountain bike skills park in Ashland utilizing city park land.

A skills park is a collection of features consisting of variable terrain, surfaces, riding lines, and berms/rollers shaped in a way to offer a progressive experience for all who choose to ride. This begins with offering a safe place for kids young enough to be on "balance bikes" (as young as 2) while at the same time featuring terrain that will give users the ability to progress through intermediate and advanced features as well. We envision a community space where citizens of all ages can practice, challenge themselves, and develop skills and confidence that will transfer to some of the more difficult trails in the watershed. Currently, this is a missing link. By including youth and getting more kids on bikes, we can continue the tradition of stewardship, safety, and the love of the outdoors Ashland is known for.

Several cities along the west coast have built parks in the recent years, and RVMBAs has been in close contact with those responsible for building them. (See references) We have taken ideas, suggestions, and advice from people experienced in the process to come up with a plan and vision for Ashland.

We propose to do this by building either one pump track with beginner, intermediate, and advanced lines that all can ride, or 2 pump tracks, one beginner and one intermediate/advanced. (Fig1) A skills trail with various wooden or rock features, jumps, rollers, etc would complement the pump tracks and offer a realistic simulation of watershed trails. (Fig2) This would all be created in a sustainable, safe, and aesthetically positive way by utilizing a professional bike park company for design and build.

An emerging trend is to build a pump track from asphalt, with grass islands interior. Some key benefits of this surface are:

- Maintenance free surface, other than occasional sweep with broom
- Safe from liability with a non-alterable surface
- All season usage with all weather surface
- Inclusive to scooters, skateboards, and bikes with road tires
- Dirt track would take estimated 2 FTE's yearly to maintain. Asphalt is 0
- Aesthetically pleasing, conforming with surrounding park features

RVMBA has a history of attracting community volunteers for trail work days, and this project would be no different. We have been speaking with a representative from a top bike park building company in North America, and are confident that we could support a volunteer force to reduce costs and essentially maintain the park other than perhaps irrigation/mowing and trash can collection, which we would hope to work out a maintenance agreement with the city. We want this to be a showcase for Southern Oregon and the Rogue Valley, and will commit to maintenance needed which can be seen in our watershed trail maintenance.

Funding for a bike park built by a professional company can be daunting. RVMBA plans to use our 501c3 status as a means to apply for grants, acquire corporate donations, organize community fundraising, etc. While funding from the city would be a boon, we understand the recreational goals of the city and the high priority projects that are at the forefront at this time, and we are confident we can raise funds to begin designing and building a park. We believe building the park in phases can help us set realistic goals and expectations, creating a project that adds value over time and doesn't become a case of putting the cart before the horse. As we demonstrate value of such a park over the coming months, we hope to have our project added to the recreational goals for future budget cycles, and possibly have the city apply for an Oregon State Parks grant to assist in funding. Such a park will have a price tag of around \$200,000, not including any donated materials or volunteer labor, which would assist in lessening that figure.

Support for a project like this has been spreading throughout the community. Local businesses and bike shops, the Chamber of Commerce, area schools, and community parents and leaders have all expressed support, and when the time comes, we will be able to manifest this support in any way the city would like in order to show that the many different segments of the community are behind this.

Finally, we have been searching for a location for the park in Ashland, and believe we have found a great location. We are asking for a land donation from the city to build our park in Ashland Creek Park, below the existing kids park and community garden. (Fig3) This area offers everything we are looking for to benefit the most people in the community:

- Accessibility from area schools
- Existing infrastructure in place

- Connectivity to skate park, playgrounds, and existing recreational sites nearby
- Visible location/sightlines that will benefit from a clean, sharp looking park
- Existing grade conducive to supporting our infrastructure.
- Area has been vetted by our professional park building contact as the optimal location

In summation, we envision a community-gathering place to meet the needs of novice riders while also offering intermediate and advanced riders a space to hone their skills. We are asking the city to a) donate city park land for the purpose of creating a bike skills park and b) entering a planning/design, build, and maintenance plan with a private company and RVMBA to properly carry out the vision stated throughout.

We are confident that with an organized, thoroughly laid out plan, city and community support, and a professionally designed and built park, that we can fulfill our mission and begin teaching the next generation stewardship, skill, safety, confidence and self worth that makes Ashland such a great place to live.

Signed,

Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association

Figure 1 - Asphalt Pumptrack examples





Figure 2 - Skills Park examples





Figure 3 – Location Proposal. Ashland Creek Park



Bike Park References: The creators of these bike parks were contacted and used as resources in developing our plan and ideas for a bike park in Ashland.

Leavenworth Pumptrack - Leavenworth, Washington

Prineville Bike Park - Prineville, Oregon

Caldwell Jr. Bike Park - Redding, California

Bijou Bike Park - South Lake Tahoe, California

Purpose: To develop a plan to build and operate a bike skills park on city owned land in Ashland.

Who we are:



Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association

- Casey Botts
- Alison Botts
- Duncan Coppedge
- Bill Roussel
- Don Morehouse
- Andrea Napoli

What we are asking for:

- City park land donated/earmarked for the construction of a multi-phased bike skills area to serve the growing population of youth and entry level mountain bikers, with an emphasis on safety, progression, sustainability, and community.
- Create the park in such a way that intermediate and advanced riders will be able to utilize as well to create a park that no rider will outgrow.

What is a bike park?

- A collection of features consisting of variable terrain, surfaces, riding lines, and berms/rollers shaped in a way to offer a safe and progressive experience for all who choose to ride. Circular or connecting tracks of features are called “pump tracks.” Smaller areas of individual features are “skills areas”. Trails with features built in along the trail are called “flow trails” or “slopestyle trails.”



Why is a bike park important, and needed in Ashland?

- Offer city youth more outdoor recreational opportunities to promote positive, active, healthy lifestyles in the ongoing campaign to keep kids benefiting from the outdoors
- Foster a culture of growth, safety and stewardship for our future watershed trail users by adding in the missing link – the next generation.



- Create a community gathering place to develop skills, beginner to advanced, that are needed for safe, efficient, and fun trail riding
- Meet the infrastructure demand of one of the fastest growing outdoor sports in the country

- Take pressure off of the well used skate park



- Continue to create a top bike-tourism destination on the West Coast by tapping into additional mountain bike demographics not currently targeted
- Many surrounding areas have built parks with great results.

What would our bike park look like?

Phase 1:

We propose to build asphalt surfaced pumptracks
The following are the benefits of asphalt:

- Used year round

- Minimal maintenance
- Cannot be altered once poured
- Inclusive to scooters, skateboards, and bikes with road tires
- Aesthetically pleasing by offering clean, sharp lines and maintain an open, park look.





- One asphalt pumptrack would be a beginner only, suitable for riders as young as 2 on balance bikes, up to beginning adult riders looking to learn how to safely ride.



- A second asphalt pump track would offer a progressive entry to an intermediate /advanced pump track that would be built in

such a way to offer differing line choices to cater to riders who may become bored by the beginner course.

Phase 2:



- Skills zone with wooden features/ramps/twists and turns to develop balance and confidence.

Phase 3:



- A flow trail or slopestyle line to offer a short trail experience more in line with what a true mountain bike trail would involve. This would have progressive lines so anyone could ride it and attempt the features that they wanted to, and skip the ones they weren't ready for all on the same trail.

Location

- We propose the bike park to be located at the Ashland Creek Park, North of the playground and community garden



Reasons for location:

- Accessibility from area schools
- Existing infrastructure in place
- Connectivity to skate park, playgrounds, and existing recreational sites nearby
- Visible location/sightlines that will benefit from a clean, sharp looking park
- Existing grade conducive to supporting our infrastructure.
- Area has been vetted by our professional park building contact as the optimal location

Community support



- There is strong support in the community and a buzz around this project. Supporters include many more than just mountain bikers:
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Local businesses
 - Schools
 - Community leaders
 - Local families and residents
 - Would go hand in hand with new youth mountain bike team coming to Ashland

Costs

- Important to build a high caliber, professional park
- Have consulted with bike park company and cost would be 200-250k for full buildout.
- Cost could shift lower if materials, some labor, etc were donated by local materials companies
- Grants, fundraising, donations to RVMBA are how we would hope to fund.
- We understand the city has a process to pay for projects, and while help would be nice, we are confident we could raise the funds phase by phase and get this project built in ways other than the city

paying. Our main concern is getting approval on the space.

In closing

- Vision of a community gathering place in which beginner to advanced riders can have a safe, progressive, and sustainable space to ride
- Returns of investing in our youth through bikes will be tenfold; building the next generation of stewards and riders by opening the sport to those who may not have access otherwise





- Ashland is changing, there are more families moving in, more mountain bike trails being developed, and more bike related tourism every year. The need, support, and drive are there to move this project forward.

We are confident that with an organized, thoroughly laid out plan, city and community support, and a professionally designed and built park, that we can fulfill our mission and begin teaching the next generation stewardship, skill, safety, confidence and self worth that makes Ashland such a great place to live.