

Chisenhall Hike and Bike Trail – Maintenance

Parks Board Meeting
July 13, 2023



Overview

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Background

- Chisenhall Hike and Bike Trail is located within Chisenhall Fields and features over 10 miles of soft surface trail
- In approximately 2014, the first two miles of the trail were cut in at what is called the Field Loop today
- The trail has experienced a huge spike in popularity since 2020 and draws hikers and riders from all over DFW and beyond
- In 2022, Strava - which represents about 65% of all trail users - logged over 17,000 attempts of the two major entrance trails alone



Site Summary

- 10.5 miles of trail
- 7 trail loops ranging in difficulty from beginner to expert level
- Bike and pedestrian friendly soft surface trails
- Emergency trail markers



Current Maintenance Responsibilities

Maintained primarily by Burleson MTB Riders with support from Parks staff

Burleson MTB Riders (BMTBR):

- Founded in 2019
- No formalized membership
- Over 1,000 members on Facebook page with 85% actively engaged
- 1 current lead person with small group of alternating volunteers
- Current Parks Beautification Agreement participants since September 2021
- Provide trail cleaning, trimming, and maintenance services
- Over 900 volunteer hours logged at Chisenhall since 2020 representing over \$17,000 in labor services
- Unlogged volunteer maintenance hours are estimated to likely double that amount



Maintenance and Operation Duties CURRENT

Task	BMTBR	Parks Staff
Hand Mowing and Trimming	✓	
Large Area Tractor Mowing		✓
Minor Brush Trimming	✓	
Major tree or brush removal		✓
Litter/debris removal	✓	
Debris Disposal	✓	✓
Feature Construction and Maintenance	✓	
New Feature Approval and Administration		✓
Trail Opening/Closing	✓	
Emergency Marker and Info Kiosk Management		✓
Herbicide Application		✓
Provide Maintenance Storage Area		✓

Current Risks and Vulnerabilities

- Remaining BMTBR leadership looking to step down or take a reduced role.
- Becoming more difficult to recruit consistent group of regular volunteers to meet maintenance demands
- BMTBR is not a 501c3 so organization and fundraising ability for maintenance is not ideal
- Since BMTBR is not a formal organization, they do not possess the means to obtain/fund insurance
- If volunteer coordination and leadership by BMTBR ends, Parks is not equipped to provide adequate maintenance and trail would return to natural area unless funding is identified



Risk Reduction Option 1 – Management Agreement

STAFF RECOMMENDED OPTION

Benefits

- Insured trail stewards and event host
- 501c3 non-profit
- Low risk
- Skilled in feature construction, design and maintenance
- Ability to raise funds and sustain maintenance
- Greater depth of volunteers for maintenance
- No cost increase to City

Costs

- No additional costs to City or additional duties beyond existing partnership with BMTBR



Fort Worth Mountain Bikers Association (FWMBA)

Manages 4 Trail Systems in Greater Fort Worth

- Fossil Creek Trail (City of North Richland Hills)
- Gateway Trail (City of Fort Worth)
- North Z. Boaz Trail (City of Fort Worth)
- Sansom Park Trail (City of Fort Worth)

Funding and Outreach

- FWMBA is funded through membership dues, donations, partner grants, and fundraisers
- Membership recruited through events, programs, website, and educational outreach
- Official website to manage trail status, events, announcements

Maintenance, Programming and Design

- 20 trail stewards/assistants
- Experience in maintaining, designing, and coordinating events for large trail systems
- Received letter of endorsement from Fort Worth Police Dept.

Organization

- 501c3 non-profit and insured for trail maintenance work and special events



Risk Reduction Option 2 – Full Maintenance by Parks

Benefits

- Self-insured
- High quality grounds maintenance and skilled in parks operations

- Low risk

Costs

- Requires additional funding for two part-time positions at \$64,000/year
- Not skilled in new feature construction or design
 - new feature construction or replacement of existing features may not be possible or would require **professional services contracts**. Time restraints and lack of expertise limit continuous improvement and innovation by leadership.



Maintenance/Operation Duties: Current vs Proposed

Task	Current		Proposed Option 1	
	BMTBR	Parks	FWMBA	Parks
Hand mowing and trimming	✓		✓	
Large area tractor mowing		✓		✓
Minor brush trimming	✓		✓	
Major tree or brush removal		✓		✓
Litter/debris removal	✓		✓	
Debris disposal	✓	✓	✓	✓
Feature construction and maintenance	✓		✓	
New feature approval and administration		✓		✓
Trail opening/closing	✓		✓	
Emergency marker and info kiosk management		✓	✓	✓
Herbicide application		✓	✓	✓
Provide maintenance storage area		✓		✓
Project and event approval		✓		✓
Project and event coordination	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fundraising			✓	

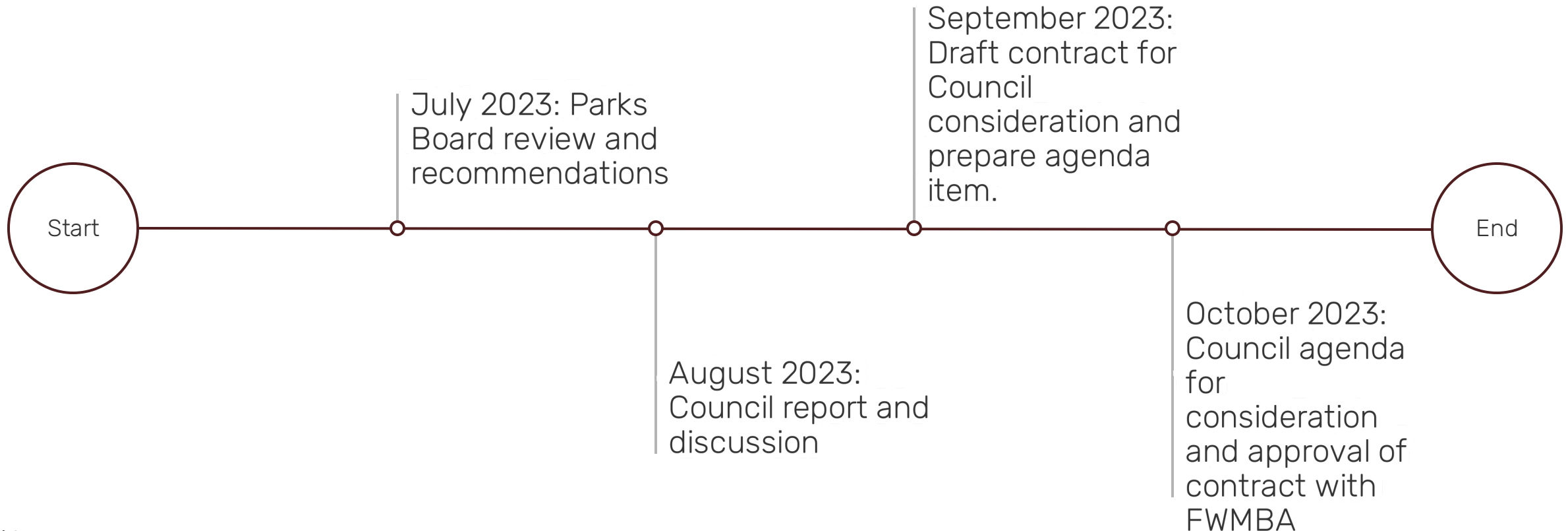
Next Steps

Staff recommends partnering with FWMBA

- FWMBA desires to partner with Burleson and enter into agreement for maintenance/operation of Chisenall Hike and Bike Trail
- BMTBR leadership/volunteers support and respect FWMBA as a partner and have shown overwhelming support in favor of FWMBA as steward of Chisenhall trails.
- If approved as partner, FWMBA desires to recruit existing trail stewards/volunteers from BMTBR and support local businesses through collaboration
- If Parks Board supports, prepare discussion item for City Council feedback and direction
- If Council supports, work with Legal to draft contract for Council for consideration/approval



Proposed Timeline for FWMBA Agreement for Chisenhall Trails



Feedback?

Floodplain Compliance

- Floodplain permit received showing all proposed features as compliant
- All features to be anchored in concrete if approved
- Proposed features will be maintained by Burleson MTB Riders

