



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Item 3
January 5, 2023
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Bike Skills Area: Conceptual Design Update	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Review and discuss Bike Skills Area project update and conceptual design.	

STAFF:	Jason Kintner (Chief of Operations) Alaine Sommargren (Deputy Public Works Director) Sarah Bluvus (CIP Project Manager)
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Craig Reynolds
EXHIBITS:	1. Conceptual Design Second Draft

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

On December 1, 2022, the Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC) received the first draft of the conceptual design for a new Bike Skills Area (BSA) at Deane’s Children’s Park ([Video Recording](#) | [Agenda Packet](#)). American Ramp Company (ARC) created the concept design on site evaluations, staff input, and community feedback collected via a community survey (173 responses) and a community meeting held in November 2022. Survey respondents and meeting participants felt a new BSA would be an exciting new addition to the park and the Island; fun for all ages and skills levels; and a good activity for improving kids’ mental and physical health. They also expressed concerns about safety and conflict between park users; potential environmental impacts; and strains on parking and access.

The first design draft included beginner features such as a bicycle playground suitable for ages 2-12; two trail options leading to the start hub; two separate courses including a variety of jumps and other features; two dedicated facility access points; and other elements designed to work for riders of all ages. ARC also provided signage examples, such as entrance signage that would illustrate the entire course and trail signage that would alert users to upcoming course features. During the discussion of the conceptual design, the PRC provided feedback on facility access, design features, trees & vegetation, user separation, and the community engagement process. Six community members also provided public comment on the conceptual design during Public Appearances.

FEEDBACK ON CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FIRST DRAFT

Commissioner comments on the draft conceptual design primarily fell into the following categories:

- **Balanced design:** Commissioners felt that the first draft of the conceptual design balances the constraints and complexities of the geographic area.
- **Park user conflict and trail congestion:** Commissioners were concerned that the conceptual design did not separate potential BSA riders and other park users enough. Requests included considering

alternative facility access, such as adding an entrance on the west side of the park and designing a physical barrier, as opposed to natural buffers, to separate BSA users from park users coming from Island Crest Elementary School.

- **Rider safety:** In addition to elaborating on how the design will limit user conflicts, Commissioners requested more details about how the design will promote rider safety. Suggestions included reconfiguring the beginner and intermediate trails to better separate them from the proposed bicycle playground.
- **Impacts on trees and vegetation:** Commissioners continued to emphasize the importance of limiting tree removal and other impacts to the natural landscape of the park area.
- **Materials used to build jumps and other features:** Commissioners appreciated the use of wood features to match the natural landscape and minimize long-term maintenance needs. However, they wondered whether wood materials would hold up year-round in Pacific Northwest weather and if riding the features would create additional noise in the area.
- **Community input:** Commissioners wanted to continue hearing from the Island's biking community and encouraged broader engagement with neighbors of Island Crest Park/Deane's Children's Park and the general community. Requests included sending postcard mailers to park neighbors to boost awareness of upcoming engagement opportunities.
- **Types of users:** Commissioners were interested in opportunities for adding an advanced course or other features to accommodate more experienced riders.

Since the December PRC meeting, a second community survey was conducted to collect feedback on the draft conceptual design. The survey was open on Let's Talk from December 9-31, 2022, and promoted through the following channels:

- E-mail announcement and follow-up to Let's Talk subscribers (81 subscribers)
- E-mail announcement and follow-up to project contact list (158 contacts)
- Article in MI Weekly newsletter (featured December 14 and 21)
- Mercer Island School District social media post and e-mail (shared December 15)
- Postcard mailer to park neighbors within a 500ft radius (287 individual addresses)
- Posts on City and Parks & Recreation social media channels

The survey received 192 responses (as of December 29). Respondents gave the conceptual design an average ranking of 6.15 on a scale of 1 to 10 (1=do not like; 10=my dream bike park). When asked what the design was missing or what else they'd like to see in the design, respondents requested:

- More jumps, including advanced jumps
- More dirt jumps
- Adding a pump track
- Adding fencing around the bike park
- Adding a separate entrance to the bike park

Survey respondents also frequently commented on the location of the BSA at Deane's Children's Park and the potential impact of the facility on the existing walking trails.

UPDATED CONCEPTUAL DESIGN + NEXT STEPS

ARC incorporated all this feedback into the second draft of the conceptual design (Exhibit 1), which the PRC will discuss and provide input on during its regular meeting on January 5, 2023. Modifications to the conceptual design include the inclusion of a separate entrance to the park, added fencing around the bike park, and other design improvements based on feedback received.

Following the PRC meeting, staff and ARC will further refine the design concept to present at the next community meeting coming up on January 24, 2023, at 6pm, via Zoom. “Save the Date” information about that meeting has been posted on the City calendar and Let’s Talk, and more details will be shared with the community by January 10, 2023. Staff anticipate presenting a final draft design to the PRC at its February 2023 regular meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Review and discuss the updated conceptual design; if desired, provide additional recommendations.