

SYRINGA PARK NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN WORKSHOP

Questions and Answers • November 30, 2015

For more information, please contact Parks Design/Development Manager Neil Miner at nminer@ci.missoula.mt.us.

Site Planning & Design

1) What user group is the park designed for, and how will the park serve a variety of ages and interests?

The park is designed to provide facilities that are not found in nearby parks like Pineview Park. Syringa is being designed as a neighborhood park with bike skill amenities and not as a competition bike park. Bike features will be designed for novice, intermediate and advanced riders. The bike course will not include inverted jumps or features. In addition, a public bike repair workstation area will be provided.

The park will also include a shade shelter and small plaza, picnic tables, a perimeter walking path, seating boulders, trash cans and a seasonal restroom.

2) Will there be water on site for drinking, bike track construction and ongoing track maintenance?

If feasible and permitted, the department will drill an on-site well to supply water for track construction and ongoing maintenance. A drinking fountain will depend on available budget at the time of park construction, and may be added to the park as funding becomes available. Connecting to the municipal water system is a backup option if a well is deemed impracticable.

3) What type of restroom will be provided?

A vault or waterless restroom is the preferred option. A portable toilet restroom with an enclosed structure is an alternative with lower initial construction costs.

4) Will a shade shelter be included in the bike park?

Yes, a shade shelter with picnic tables will be included in the master plan and installed as funding becomes available.

5) Will a sidewalk be constructed along Lower Lincoln Hills drive to provide safe pedestrian access to the park?

The master plan will include a non-motorized bicycle/pedestrian natural surface path south of Lincoln Hills Drive for the length of the park, providing park access and connections to the park's perimeter walking path. This will set the stage for future connections to Rattlesnake Drive as active transportation connections are completed.

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Parks and Recreation is working closely with the Bike/Ped office, the Transportation Planning Office, the update of the Long Range Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan, to continue to make improvements for non-motorized transportation in the Rattlesnake corridor.

We are also coordinating with Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS), Mountain Line, and both Upper and Lower Rattlesnake Neighborhood Councils to improve connectivity for active transportation. Sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus routes on Van Buren/Rattlesnake Drive continue to improve each year. There is a trail through most of the Hellgate High School property that connects Syringa to the Creek Crossing Neighborhoods.

6) How much of the park will be developed?

The entire park (2.05 acres) is included in the planning and development process. Space within the park will be incorporated to plant native and climate-adapted landscape vegetation.

(Please see question #20 below.)

7) Will non-motorized access be provided from Sunflower Drive?

With contiguous private residential property on the south side of the park, a connection from Sunflower Drive is dependent on an access agreement with an adjacent homeowner. There is no defined connection in the master plan. The park design will be able to accommodate a future connection from Sunflower Dr. to the perimeter path.

8) Will there be a maintenance shed on site to store and secure hand tools?

A secure maintenance storage area for hand tools is being considered in design of the master plan. Available funding and resources will influence the type and size of storage area that can be provided. An open and public accessible storage area will not be provided as this creates additional concerns for park safety and on-going maintenance challenges. However, a public bike repair workstation area will be provided.

Park Safety

9) Can medical kits be provided in the park?

Safety of park users is a primary concern in the design and use of all City parks. For liability and budget reasons, it is not feasible for Parks and Recreation to provide stocked medical kits within the park system. We promote park safety through design, park maintenance, and park specific signage to identify and clearly communicate the associated risk to the intended user. In the event of a park emergency or injury, contact 911 immediately for City emergency services response.

Park Management

10) Will there be park lighting?

No, park lighting is not part of the master plan. Neighborhood residents identified preservation of the night sky and dark sky design as a priority for the park.

11) How will the park be maintained?

The park will be managed as a conservation land, or a “natural” park with special recreation features in conjunction with the Conservation Lands Management Plan and City Park & Open Space Ordinances. The Conservation Lands Management Plan eliminates the need for individual site plans and considers the entire open space system as one ecosystem.

12) Will the park be fenced?

The park will not be enclosed by fencing. Sections of fencing may be constructed to manage circulation patterns. A living fence utilizing vegetation may be included along the southern property boundary to enhance neighborhood residents’ experience.

13) Will the bike skill features be changeable over time?

Dirt-specific bike features or pre-fabricated features will not be modified as they will be designed and constructed to provide a specific experience for beginner, intermediate and advanced rider.

14) Will pets be allowed in the park?

Per City ordinance in all City parks, pets must be leashed in the park to protect pet safety and prevent conflicts with park users.

15) What will be park hours of operation?

Conservation Lands and Open Space hours of operation are 6 a.m. – 11 p.m.

16) What is the anticipated impact on wildlife with the development of Syringa Park?

Urban wildlife and the biodiversity it represents are vital to our ecosystem and to our way of life. Nature makes our cities livable and provides recreational and aesthetic benefits. We appreciate living with a menagerie of other creatures for their beauty and companionship, and we respect the intrinsic rights of wildlife to exist in the places in the places they’ve long inhabited.

Fortunately, urban wildlife has proven to be endlessly resilient and adaptable. During the construction and re-vegetation stages of park development, some wildlife may temporarily migrate away from Syringa Park to Mount Jumbo and the many other open spaces in the Rattlesnake.

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As the native grasses and other vegetation regenerate to provide food and security, urban deer and other wildlife will likely return to the park.

Most importantly, a bike skills park at Syringa should eliminate the disruption of vital wildlife habitat on Mount Jumbo. Current illegal bike use and jump construction on Mount Jumbo is located within a critical black bear travel corridor. By providing a sanctioned area for bike skills riders, Parks and Recreation expects to eliminate unauthorized construction on city Open Space. Development of Syringa Park, which is already surrounded by housing and city infrastructure, will have a minimal impact on nearby wildlife but will provide a significant benefit to wildlife throughout the Rattlesnake Valley.

17) Will the park be available for year-round use?

Riding conditions will be weather dependent to prevent rutting of the track and damage to dirt jump features. Park access and use of the shade shelter will be available for use year-round. The vault toilet will be available as use demands.

18) What type of landscaping will be used in the park?

Vegetation will emphasize native, drought-tolerant grasses as the primary plant palette. Drought-tolerant grasses, trees and wooded shrubs will be interspersed throughout the park. The viewshed of Sunflower Dr. residents to the north will be considered when placing vertical vegetation with significant height and width characteristics.

Class I trees, which are relatively low-growing (less than 30') will be considered to limit viewshed obstruction and maintain sightlines per CPTED principles (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design,) The detailed design/development plan will specify particular plants and soils, so there will be opportunity at that time to determine exact planting and maintenance schedules.

Funding and Partnerships

19) How will the park be funded?

The City has partnered with I Ride for Tanner (IRD4T), a local non-profit, to raise funds for construction costs. The project budget is undetermined until after the park design process is complete. Missoula County's Parks, Trails and Open Lands matching grant program has awarded the project a \$5,000 grant. In addition, the SRAM Corporation, an Illinois-based bike component manufacturer, has awarded Missoula County a \$10,000 grant to encourage bike safety and bike recreation through neighborhood bike parks.

20) What organizations are partnering with the City to develop and maintain the park?

Parks and Recreation is collaborating with Missoula County Parks, Trails and Open Lands in the master planning process. Friends of Syringa Park, a neighborhood advocacy group, has been actively involved in noxious weed mitigation and other park maintenance issues for many years, and continues to be involved in the future of Syringa Park. The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is consulting to help design a high-quality bike skills park. IMBA is a leader in bike park development with experience from projects around the world.

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There is a well-established partnership with the local cycling community, which is supportive of park development and maintenance.

Park Signage

21) What type of signage will be provided?

Typical park signage will include the park name, partner recognition, Conservation Lands and Park use regulations, and a park map that identifies bike skill features and skill level, circulation patterns and rider expectations.

22) Will there be biking tips, bike safety and education signage?

At this time we are not actively seeking the development of a bike education and safety tip signage package, though this could be added in the future pending funding. General park safety and rules are included in a typical park signage package.