



TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 19, 2025

Lithia Park Cabin, 340 S Pioneer Street – 4:15 PM

Committee Members Present: Adams (Park Commission Ex-officio), Bender, Braught, Cott (Chair), B. Hansen (Vice Chair), E. Hansen (City Council Ex-officio), Kuwabara, Seffinger
Staff Present: Director Houston, Division Manager Caldwell, Supervisor Minica, Executive Assistant Mero
Absent: Heycke

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Cott called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM
- II. **ROLL CALL** – Cott, B. Hansen, Kuwabara, Seffinger (additional TAC members arrived after the roll call – see above)
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 1. Trails Advisory Committee September 22, 2025
Seffinger moved to approve the minutes. Kuwabara seconded the motion. Chair Cott asked for unanimous approval. No objections. Minutes approved.

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Chair Cott asked to add to the agenda a review of the Trail Proposal Procedure.

Questions/Discussion:

- The review process in the procedure is flawed, specifically section C 1a. and 2b.
- Concern that the Parks Department (Department) could refuse to move a trail proposal forward based on not enough staff to maintain the proposed trail and available volunteer hours aren't acknowledged in the procedure.
- Can the Fenceline trail proposal move forward? A: Not without getting a permit/permission from Jackson County as the land is outside the city limits of Ashland.
- Due to the concerns Houston offered to do another tracked changes version of the Trail Proposal Procedure.
- Acknowledgement that the TAC is at an impasse regarding trail proposals. There is no approved procedure for moving proposals forward.

- Houston said that a proposal could get approval retroactively, so it was okay to discuss/make a recommendation on proposals. However, public meeting law prohibits moving an agenda item listed as informational to an action item. The trail proposals on the agenda for this meeting were listed as informational items.
- Staff liaison Mero said that this question had previously been asked of the City recorder and legal counsel, and they said an agenda item could be changed from informational to action during a meeting.
- What is the process for moving the Trail Proposal Procedure forward?
- Chair Cott gave a brief recap.
- Suggestion was made to form a working group. Determined the working group will include Director Houston and TAC members Braught and Bender.
- Request for a site visit to proposed Dormouse Trail. E. Hansen and Adams volunteered to lead the visit(s). Mero will follow up with an email to the TAC members for logistics.

V. PUBLIC FORUM – Chair Cott asked the members of the public in attendance to introduce themselves and say why they were attending the meeting.

- Nancy Boyer: Attending because of interest in city/parks business.
- Barb McGee: Interested in how committees work. She is an avid hiker. Used to be a biker, too.
- Pat Turner: Always interested in what's happening in Ashland.
- Shannon Bryson: Listening. Interested in City happenings.
- Dan and his daughter Maya Barklund: He's a hiker himself, but his young daughter is into mountain biking. Supports having biking trails for kids particularly from the Watershed to town.
- Dave Richards: A member of the City's Transportation Advisory Committee.
- Lea Richards: Public Works staff/GIS manager.

VI. BUSINESS

1. *2026 Trails Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule – Chair Cott

SITUATION – Chair Cott of the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) has created a meeting schedule for 2026.

ASSESSMENT – Chair Cott created the meeting schedule based on input received from the members of the TAC and confirmation from staff that the Lithia Park Cabin was available.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS – The date of the March 2026 TAC meeting still needs to be determined. Suggested dates are March 18 or March 25. The date will be determined by a vote of the members of TAC.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

ATTACHMENTS – 2026 Trails Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule

TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2026

January 21, 2026 4:15 – 5:45 PM
March 18 or 25, 2026 TBD
May 20, 2026 4:15 – 5:45 PM
July 15, 2026 5:00 – 6:30 PM
September 16, 2026 4:15 – 5:45 PM
November 18, 2026 5:00 – 6:30 PM

Motion: I move to approve the Trails Advisory Committee 2026 meeting schedule with the March meeting date confirmed as _____

Motion:

Second:

Bender		Brought		Cott	
Hansen		Kuwabara		Seffinger	

*Note: This business item was not addressed.

2. Dormouse Trail Proposal – Director Houston

SITUATION – The Department has received a trail proposal

ASSESSMENT – The trail proposal was received on 9/17/2025. Staff has begun the review process, outlined in the draft trail proposal procedure. At the 7/15/25 TAC meeting, staff recommended using a trail proposal (like this one) to assess the draft procedure.

Staff is recommending that this proposal, given its location and documented concerns about cycling on Lithia Park’s trails, should have a public meeting and comment period if this proposal was to be recommended by the TAC prior to being presented to the Park Commission.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – PROS Plan (in process)

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

ATTACHMENTS – Dormouse Trail Application

PREPARED BY: Rocky Houston

- Commissioner Adams (author of the proposal) gave some background on the proposed trail then addressed some of the “whys” for the proposal
 - Traffic data: Most cyclist/car accidents on Winburn Way occur near the Ice Rink and the head in parking by Lithia Park. Reported four accidents involving bikes annually.
 - Safety: The trails in the watershed are wonderful, but a rider’s skill level needs to be intermediate or better. Need trail opportunities for children/new riders in Ashland.
 - Tourism: Offering mountain bike trails suited to a variety of skill levels will draw visitors. Having a safer route from the watershed trails to downtown will potentially increase revenue for businesses.
- The proposed trail was designed to avoid pedestrian/bike interactions
- Historically trails have been user created then legitimized by Parks.
- The pedestrian/bike crossings on the proposed trail were thoughtfully planned at places where bikes would naturally slow (uphill).
- Potential issue: the proposed trail is within the boundaries of Lithia Park where bikes are currently not allowed, but things change over time.

Questions/Discussion:

- Noted that the original proposed trail included a connector trail that would enter Lower Lithia park below the Pioneer street extension and exit near OSF/the lower duck pond. This plan was tabled for the future by the previous trails advisory committee (ATAC) then the entire proposal was delayed by the official formation of the TAC.
- Noted that the proposed trail would exit riders near parking lot on Hargadine and a bike shop.
- The Hillside area of Lithia Park is underutilized.
- Concern expressed that the proposal doesn’t address how trail would impact traffic on the Pioneer extension which is heavily used by people with mobility issues and dog walkers.

- Noted that the proposed trail runs from Glenview St. into the Lithia Park upper hillside area exiting onto the Pioneer extension (exit is near the stairs for the existing hillside ped trails not far from where the extension joins the paved portion of Pioneer).
- Noted that bikes are currently allowed on the Pioneer extension.
- Concern expressed regarding adverse interactions on the trails between different users.
- Suggested that the trail would potentially work to reduce adverse interactions between users.
- At this point in the meeting an audience member wanted to give public comment. As a point of order it was noted that the public forum period of the meeting had passed, and no audience members had asked to give comment.
- Suggested that 85% of the bikers currently using the Pioneer Extension would be enticed to use the proposed trail
- When the trail was first proposed, the topic of allowing dog walkers in the upper Lithia hillside area was raised.
- Noted this was a separate issue from the trail proposal under discussion.

Proposed Dormouse Trail review criteria (from draft Trails Proposal Procedure):

1. Does the proposal address a need:
 - Yes there is a lack of green rated trails in the current trail system.
 - Also addresses need for equity and inclusion. In the current trail system trail users might need a vehicle, potentially with a bike rack and potentially even a 4WD vehicle to access mountain bike trails/trailheads. Not fair to trail users unable to afford those things.
2. Does the proposal have support from trail users and a funding plan for construction/maintenance:
 - Is there funding for this trail proposal? A: No money currently earmarked for this proposal. The Parks Department's current CIP includes \$75,000.00 for trail work in Siskiyou Mountain Park. The allocated money could be moved by following an established process.
 - Majority of TAC members supported prioritizing the proposed Dormouse trail over the trail work in Siskiyou Mountain Park. One member did not support this idea.
 - The proposed trail would necessitate a robust community engagement process. Bikes are currently not allowed in Lithia Park.
 - Public engagement needs to have a clear, consistently followed process.
 - Once the proposal has been brought to the community, can it move forward regardless of the outcome?

- Suggested that the proposal go first to the Park Commission then garner public input.
 - Director Houston: First the proposal needs to be assessed as a trail. It can be recommended to move forward in the process with the noted caveat of potential impact on the City.
 - Is conducting a public process outside of the TAC's purview? A: Yes. Public process would be at the request of the Park Commission.
3. Does the proposal create a sustainable/pleasing user experience:
 - This trail would be the first adapted trail in the trail system. The trail width would allow the use of three and four wheeled bikes.
 - Noted that there are two adapted trails in the USFS portion of the trail system.
 - The proposed trail is low angle and sustainable.
 4. Does the proposed route minimize impact on water quality, habitat, existing rec uses, etc.:
 - The trail is likely to positively affect existing trails.
 - Was there a study done on erosion? A: The proposal includes a lot of information on this.
 - Erosion is often introduced as an objective way of saying, "I don't like this proposal".
 - Construction of proposed trail might require several small culverts. There are no seeps, swales, or creeks that would qualify as seasonal.
 5. Does the proposal address the closure of similar unauthorized trails:
 - The area currently has multiple skid trails. If the proposed trail is fun to ride, riders will use it instead of the skid trails.
 6. Does the proposal address externalities such as impact on parking lot congestion, traffic flow, impact on other user groups, larger citywide economic impact, etc.:
 - The proposal would bring users closer to established, underused parking (Hargadine lot).
 - Noted that the Pioneer extension is a designated route for David's Chair.
 - Concern expressed regarding cyclists ending up on Pioneer right at OSF.
 - Noted that there have only been one or two recent accidents in that location. Safer than Winburn Way.
 - This trail proposal would help reduce bike traffic on Winburn Way.

Clarification on moving forward with this vote noted previously in these minutes (above).

From IV. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:

- Houston said that a proposal could get approval retroactively, so it was okay to discuss/make a recommendation on proposals. However, public meeting law prohibits moving an agenda item listed as informational to an action item. The trail proposals on the agenda for this meeting were listed as informational items.
- Staff liaison Mero said that the question of moving an agenda item for an advisory committee meeting from information to action had previously been asked of the Ashland's City Recorder and Legal counsel. They both replied that an advisory committee agenda item could be changed from informational to action during a meeting.
- From the notes under Trail Review Criteria point 2:
 - First the proposal needs to be assessed as a trail. It can be recommended to move forward in the process with the noted caveat of potential impact on the City. Chair

Chair Cott offered to write a narrative to be submitted with the proposal. He will share it with the TAC members for feedback. The members supported this idea.

Motion: I move to recommend the Dormouse Trail proposal and move it forward to the Park Commission.

Motion: Cott

Second: B. Hansen

Vote:

Bender	Yes	Brought	Yes	Cott	Yes
Hansen	Yes	Kuwabara	Yes	Seffinger	No

VII. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF – N/A

VIII. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. January 21 4:15 – 5:45 PM, Lithia Cabin
2. March 18 or 25 (TBD) 5:00 – 6:30 PM, Lithia Cabin
3. May 20 4:15 – 5:45 PM, Lithia Cabin
4. July 15 5:00 – 6:30 PM, Lithia Cabin
5. September 16 4:15 – 5:45 PM, Lithia Cabin
6. November 18 5:00 – 6:30 PM

IX. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Cott adjourned the meeting at 5:45 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy A. Mero, Executive Assistant