



Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

The Grove 1195 E Main Street - 4:15 PM

To attend the meeting or to provide public input, see public participation instructions.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Trails Advisory Committee Meeting July 15, 2026

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

V. PUBLIC FORUM

VI. BUSINESS

1. Outcome of the Proposed Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trails and Next Steps

VII. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. November 18, 2026 5:00 - 6:30 PM at the Grove

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Nancy Mero at nancy.mero@ashlandoregon.gov or 541.552.2256. (TTY phone number 1.800.735.2900). Notification at least three business days before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Public Participation Instructions

This meeting will be held in-person at the Grove, 1195 E. Main St. Those who wish to provide oral testimony must attend the meeting and fill out a speaker request card.

Written testimony will be accepted via email sent to nancy.mero@ashlandoregon.gov. Please include “**Public Testimony**” in the subject line. Written testimony submitted the day before the meeting by 11:00 am will be made available to the Trails Advisory Committee members before the meeting. All testimony will be included in the meeting minutes.



TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

July 15, 2026

The Grove 1195 E. Main Street – 5:00 PM

Committee Members Present: Ethan Braught (Vice Chair), Stef Seffinger, Torsten Heycke
Staff Present: Interim Director Dials, Public Works Staff/GIS Manager Richards, Forestry Officer Chambers, Executive Assistant Mero
Absent: Josh Cott (Chair), Yu Kuwabara

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Vice Chair Braught called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

II. **ROLL CALL** – Braught, Seffinger, and Heycke in attendance

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Trails Advisory Committee Minutes May 20, 2026

Heycke moved/Seffinger seconded to approve the May 20, 2026 TAC minutes. Braught, Seffinger, and Heycke voted to approve the minutes.

IV. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA** – None

V. **PUBLIC FORUM** – None

VI. **BUSINESS**

1. **Trail Proposals Procedure DRAFT** – Interim Director Dials

SUMMARY – The Parks and Recreation Department (Department) needs to develop a procedure to formalize the process to assess trail proposals.

ASSESSMENT – The Department, with assistance from the previous trails advisory committee, developed a process to review new trail proposals. With the adoption of Policy 1.01.001 – Policy Framework, the Department needs to formalize a procedure for this process. The Trails Proposal Procedure (Procedure) was introduced at the July 15, 2025, Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting. The primary issue raised by TAC members was the preference to eliminate the staff recommended scoring system. A working group was

formed to provide TAC with an opportunity to edit the Procedure. The draft Procedure is inclusive of the working group's proposed edits. The draft Procedure was again reviewed at the May 20, 2026 TAC meeting where more revisions were suggested. Other City management staff also had some suggested edits that are incorporated into the draft proposal.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – Policy 1.01.001 – Policy Framework

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – This procedure will not directly impact Department operations or capital budgets. The Department will manage the capital and operations budget within the current budget limitations.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S) – I move to approve the draft Trail Proposals Procedure.

ATTACHMENTS – Draft Trail Proposals Procedure

PREPARED BY: Nancy A. Mero, Executive Assistant

PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE: 3.3.001 – Trail Proposals			
EFFECTIVE:	DATE APPROVED	CANCELS:	PRIOR EFFECTIVE DATE
DIVISION(S):	Park Operations	NEXT REVIEW:	2 TO 5 YRS
KEY TERMS:	Trails, New trails, Re-route of trails, Trails Advisory Committee		
APPROVED:	_____ Name, Director	_____ Name, City Attorney	

I. PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this procedure is to define the process the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) follows to assess trail proposals from trail proposers. A trail proposer is an individual or group who submits a proposal for a new trail or trail project. The goal is to ensure that all trail proposals are consistent with Department adopted plans such as the adopted trails master plan, that they address recreational needs, and that the community has an opportunity to review the proposal before action is taken by the Parks Commission. Trail proposals on City property outside of Parks managed property will require consultation with the City Manager (or their designee) and may require a separate process depending on the location.

II. SCOPE

- A. This procedure applies to trail proposers, Department staff, and the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC).

III. REFERENCES

- A. Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee, AMC
- B. TAC Charge/Formation

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Demand or user created trail: a route that is not authorized or managed by the land manager.
- B. Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee (FLMAC): The FLMAC is a City management advisory committee that advises the Ashland City Council and the Parks Commission on the management of city-owned forest lands. They provide oversight for wildland-urban interface fire protection, wildfire mitigation and the municipal watershed.
- C. Proposal – A formal application for a new trail or trail project from a proposer from outside of the Department.
- D. Proposer – The individual or group who submits a proposal for a new trail or trail project on City of Ashland Property.
- E. Trail: a non-motorized route that is authorized, developed, and managed.
- F. Trail Advisory Committee (TAC): a seven-member advisory committee charged with making recommendations to the Park Commission on matters pertaining to trails.

V. PROCEDURE

A. Proposal Application

1. Application will be considered complete when the following information is submitted.
 - a. Proposal Application Form
 - i. The Department's proposal application form is required to be used to be deemed complete.
 - b. Map
 - i. A USGS map or topographical map, with the proposed trail alignment, existing trails and/or roads, and a map legend is required to be deemed complete.
 - c. Additional information as requested
 - i. Additional information on construction details, property lines, onsite drone footage, other land manager approvals, or similar information may be required to assess the proposal.

B. Proposal Submission

1. External Proposals
 - a. Proposals can be submitted in person or electronically.
 - i. In person: The Grove 1195 E. Main Street
 - ii. Electronically: Submit at parksinfo@ashland.or.us with title: Trail Proposal – Name of proposal in the subject line
2. Department Proposals
 - a. Proposals will be routed through the TAC staff liaison.
 - b. Trail maintenance projects are exempt from the proposal process.

C. Review Process

1. Department Review
 - a. Staff liaison will complete a review to determine the completeness of the application.
 - i. Minimum eligibility standard:
 - (1) ☐ **Property Control:** The proposed trail must exist entirely within property legally owned and controlled by the City of Ashland (including established easements or rights-of-way).
 - (2) ☐ **Environmental Protection:** The trail alignment must not cross into, or negatively impact, any designated protected conservation areas or critical wildlife habitats.
 - (3) ☐ **Regulatory Compliance:** The proposed route must comply with all local zoning, environmental, and safety regulations.
 - b. If deemed complete, the proposal will be forwarded to the TAC for review.
2. TAC Review
 - a. TAC will review the proposal based upon the criteria established in section D.
 - b. The proposal will be reviewed by TAC at a regular business meeting if the proposal has been submitted a minimum of 21 working days from the date of the submittal.
 - c. TAC will provide one of the following recommendations:
 - i. Resubmit

- (1) TAC will provide what would need to be addressed in the proposal prior to any resubmittal
 - (2) The proposal will not move forward in the process and will need to be resubmitted
 - (3) The proposal must be submitted to the Department 21 working days prior to the next TAC meeting to be considered at the next TAC meeting.
 - ii. Deny
 - (1) TAC will outline the reasons that the proposal is denied
 - (2) The proposal will not move forward in the review process
 - iii. Recommend
 - (1) TAC will outline the reasons that the proposal is recommended.
 - (2) If there are multiple proposals currently under consideration TAC will assign an order of priority to the proposals.
 - (3) The proposal will move forward to the FLMAC for review
 - 3. FLMAC Review
 - a. FLMAC will review the proposal for wildfire risk and natural resource impacts.
 - b. FLMAC will provide Department staff a written opinion on the proposal that outlines the following:
 - i. Recommendation on proposal (recommend, deny, or resubmit)
 - ii. Identification of benefits or impacts of proposal
 - iii. Mitigation actions, if applicable, for the proposal
 - c. The proposal would move forward to the Park Commission review only if there is a favorable recommendation or if the proposer has addressed the mitigation actions in their proposal to FLMAC recommended level
 - 4. Public Review
 - a. The Department will provide at least a 30-day comment period for all new trail proposals.
 - i. Public testimony on the proposal will be gathered at the Park Commission study session and at the Park Commission regular business meeting when the approval of the proposal is reviewed.
 - 5. Park Commission Review
 - a. The Department will present the findings from TAC and FLMAC to the Park Commission
 - i. The proposal will first be presented at a study session to provide an overview of the proposal
 - (1) Staff will address any questions or identified revisions to the proposal and determine if the proposal should be returned to the TAC for review or be moved forward with staff making the revisions.
 - ii. The Park Commission will take action on a trail proposal at a regular business meeting.
- D. Review Criteria
- a. Does the proposal address an identified need?
 - b. Does the proposal have support from trail users and a plan for funding (or otherwise address) construction costs and maintenance?
 - c. Does the proposal create a sustainable and pleasing user experience?

- d. Does the route minimize impact on water quality, habitat, existing recreational uses, etc.?
- e. Does the proposal address the closure of similar unauthorized trails?
- f. Does the proposal address externalities such as impact on parking lot congestion, nearby traffic flow, impact on other user groups, larger City-wide economic impact, etc.?

Interim Director Dials reviewed the tracked changes on the draft Trail Proposals Procedure.

Questions/Discussion:

- A question was raised regarding the restrictive phrase “The proposed trail must exist **entirely** within property legally owned and controlled by the City of Ashland (including established easements or rights-of-way)”, found in Section V.C.1.a.i.(1). Decided to change the wording to something like, “must work with other jurisdictions, such as BLM, Forest Service, private property owners, etc.”
- Could a trail proposer live outside the City of Ashland? Since the TAC members have first eyes on a proposal, they can deal with any issues on this subject when they receive and review a proposal.
- Is there an estimate of how much each proposal costs? A: No.

MOTION: I move to approve the Trail Proposals Procedure with the proposed amendments to be made by staff.

Heycke moved/Seffinger seconded

Vote: All yes.

2. **Alice in Wonderland/Mimsy Trail Proposal Update** – Torsten Heycke

SUMMARY – This item is to update the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) members on the proposed Alice in Wonderland/Mimsy Trail proposal.

At the May 20, 2026 TAC meeting, Torsten Heycke representing the Ashland Woodlands Trail Association gave a presentation on the proposed trails.

Proposal is for two new very short trails in the area of the Alice in Wonderland and Mimsy trails on the former Palen property. Mountain bike trail is .14 miles long downhill only averaging 8% grade. The pedestrian/equine trail is .11 miles uphill

only averaging 9.5% grade. The trails are in concert with but not necessary for future Forest Service trails. The routes have been flagged.

The pedestrian/equine trail is already partially built and would only take two people about two hours to finish. The downhill only mt. bike trail would likely take a team of four to five people four days to build. Soil is not ideal right now so work could be done in the winter months.

Benefits: Increased safety due to separation of user groups, beginner level mt. bike trail from White Rabbit to Mimsy, affords various loops for user groups, improves overall experience for everyone.

The decommissioned section isn't necessary, but it is an erosive spot.

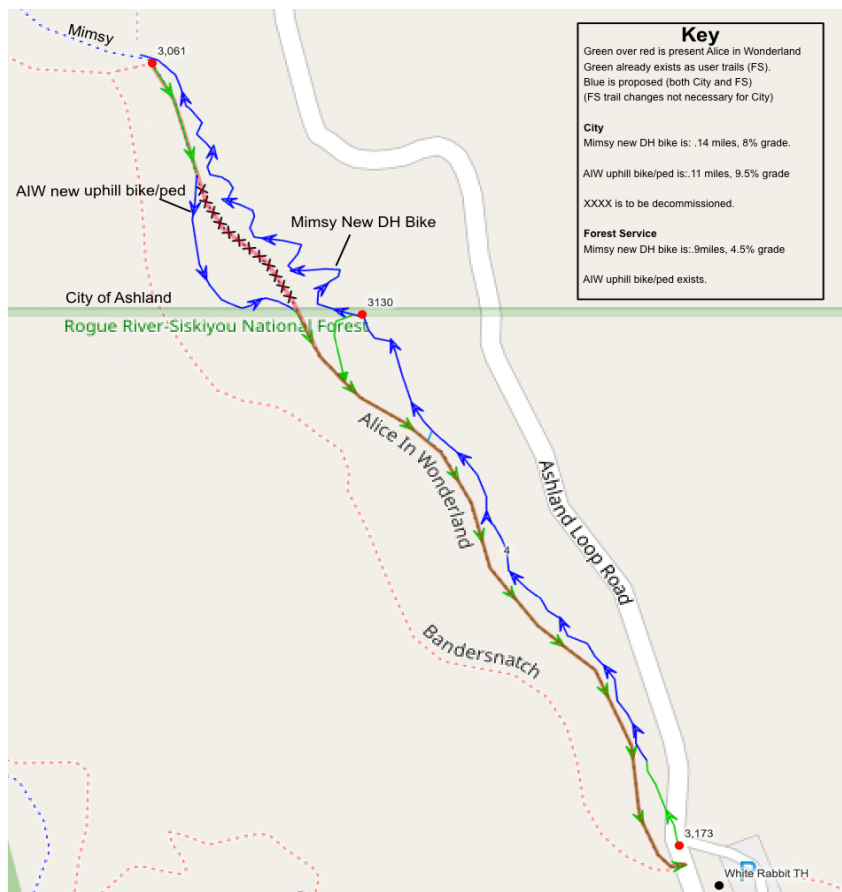
Following discussion, questions, and a review of the proposal using the criteria from the draft trail proposal procedure, the TAC members voted to move the proposal to review by the Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – Trails Advisory Committee Bylaws/Charge

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – The Ashland Woodlands and Trail Association (AWTA) will be responsible for funding the proposal. The AWTA and the Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association could maintain the trails.

ATTACHMENTS – Map of proposed trail

PREPARED BY: Nancy A. Mero, Executive Assistant



Questions/Discussion:

Chris Chambers and the Forestlands Management Advisory Committee (FLMAC) are in the process of reviewing the Alice in Wonderland/Mimsy Trail proposal. One expressed concern is that the proposed Mimsy trail might encourage people to use the unsanctioned Pepsi trail because it would take riders closer to Pepsi. Still, Mimsy riders are going to use Mimsy and Pepsi users will use Pepsi.

The proposal received mostly favorable comments and support from the FLMAC. Chris will send their formal Memo to Rachel/Parks.

3. **Update/Discussion on Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trail Process –** Interim Director Dials

SUMMARY – Originally submitted on September 17, 2025, the proposal for low angle uphill and downhill mountain bike trails on the hillside between Glenview Street and Lithia Park has been renamed for reasons of transparency. It is now being called the Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trail Proposal.

At their November 19, 2025 meeting, the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended the proposal move forward in the approval process for review by the Forest Land Management Advisory Committee (FMLAC). The proposal was presented to the FMLAC. Included in the packet is the memo from Forestry Officer Chris Chambers with recommendations from the FMLAC.

Parks and Recreation Staff have initiated a public input process:

- A comment period opened on the website on June 15. Comments will be received through September 3, 2026. As of July 10, 2026, we have collected 92 public comments dating back to 2025. There is a direct link on the main Parks and Recreation homepage that highlights the public process, ways to give input, and includes a link to the trail proposal.
- The trail proposal will be presented for discussion and public comment *only* at the Park Commission Study Session on August 5, 2026, at 6:00 PM in Council Chamber.
- The trail proposal will come before the Park Commission for potential action at their regular business meeting September 9, 2026, at 6:00 PM in Council Chamber.
- The proposed trails are now marked with biodegradable paint. RED for the uphill section and ORANGE for the downhill section. The trail crossings are currently marked with two lines (=) on trees and on the ground. Specific signage for the trail crossings and a notice of the proposed trail will go up by July 22nd or as soon as possible.
- Staff would like to coordinate with TAC to hold at least one public meeting on-site to view the trail.
- Staff have viewed the full trail site. The proposed trails traverse rough terrain which may make it difficult for some members of the public to see the full impact. It was suggested that TAC or the proposer put together some drone footage that could be shared.

At the TAC meeting staff will need recommendations on the last two items:

- Scheduling a potential on-site public meeting
- Discussion of potential drone footage

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – Trails Advisory Committee Bylaws/Charge

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – There is money budgeted for trail work in Siskiyou Mountain Park in the current CIP. If the proposed trail were approved the Park Commission could redirect that money to this project.

ATTACHMENTS – Memo of Recommendations from Chris Chambers, City of Ashland Forestry Officer

PREPARED BY: Nancy A. Mero, Executive Assistant

DATE: June 4, 2026

TO: Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission FROM: Chris
Chambers, Forestry Officer

DEPT: Fire & Rescue

RE: Dormouse Trail Application

The Ashland Forestlands Management Advisory Committee and City Staff discussed the proposed Dormouse Trail proposal at the May 12th meeting. Parks Commissioners Weiner and Adams were present to answer questions about the proposal, approval process, and relation to existing Parks and Rec planning and budgets. The Forestlands MAC was requested to review the application for potential impacts to site ecology and sustainability, and some recommendations touch on public safety as well. Overall, the proposal can avoid direct impacts to soils and plants if planned, implemented, and monitored carefully. Having a well-used trail (mostly the downhill route) stands to have a positive impact on fire danger by increasing the number of people who can report illegal activities as well as the trail itself being a more formidable barrier to grass fires than the smaller existing trails that have not hindered recent fire spread on this hillside due to their narrow nature. The downhill route is located in a useful location for prescribed fire operations aimed at fortifying Glenview Drive just above by reducing fuels on the Lithia Park side of the road.

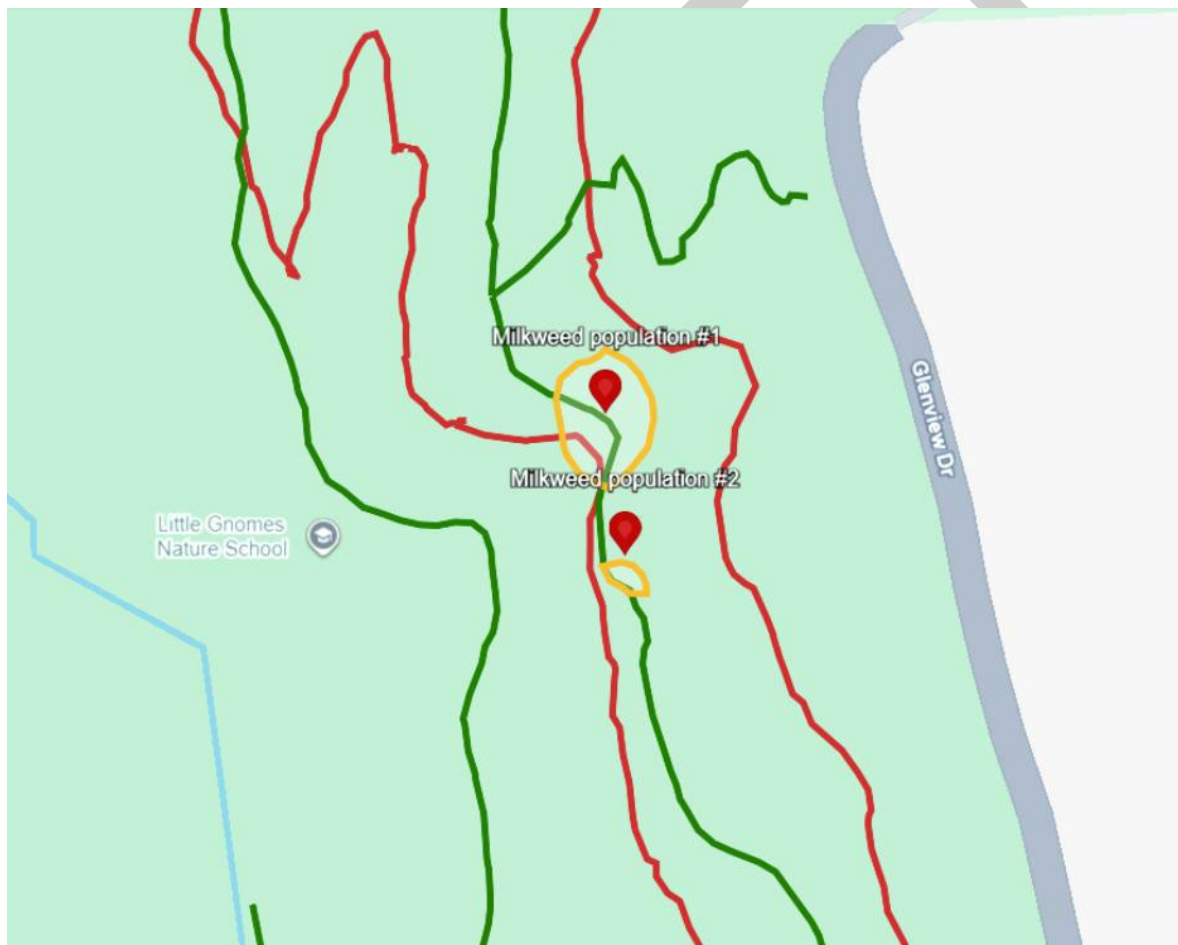


Specific recommendations and mitigations are as follows:

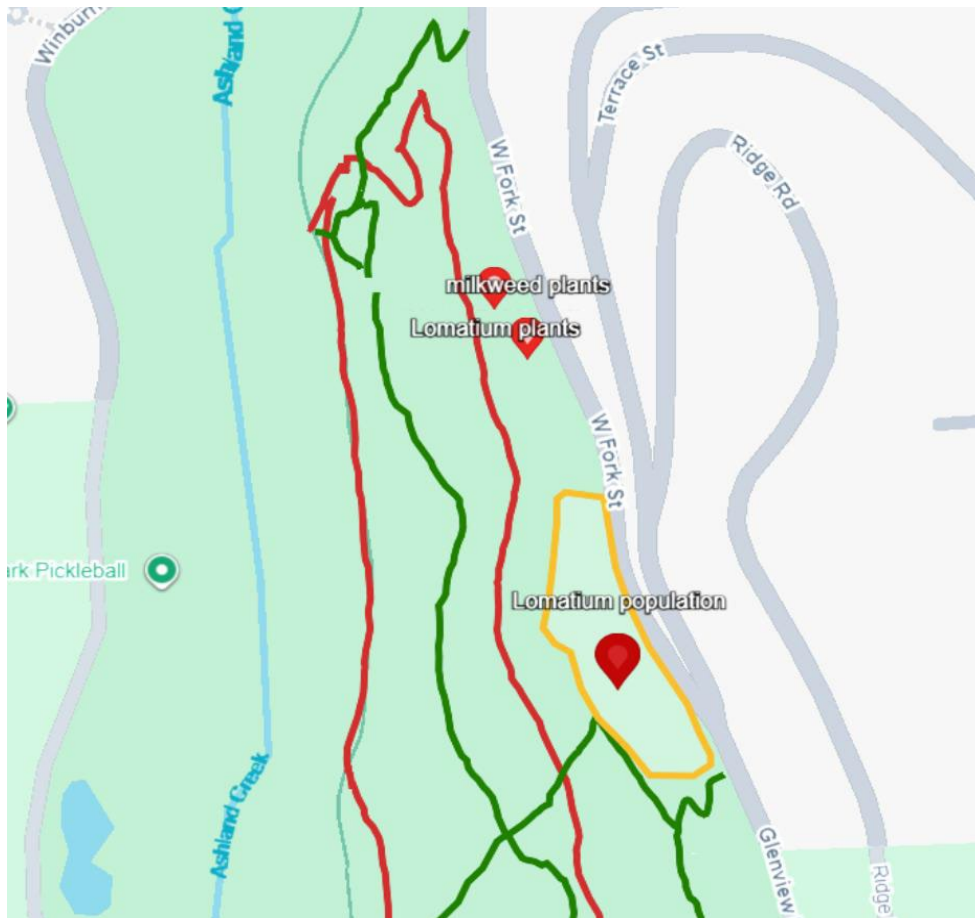
1. Sign pedestrian trail crossings with downhill bike route for public safety. Consider public safety on Pioneer Street if bikes are exiting Dormouse toward OSF and downtown.
2. Decommission trails that cross proposed Dormouse routes that are not mapped trails. If possible, achieve a net-zero trail impact by removing as much mileage as proposed.
3. Use steps on mapped crossings of pedestrian trails with proposed Dormouse downhill trail to help call out the crossing to pedestrians as they enter the intersection.
4. Avoid populations of locally rare plants: Milkweed and California Lomatium (*Asclepias* and *Lomatium* species). See maps below.
5. Avoid the rare shrub called silk tassel (*Garrya fremontii*). Take care not to confuse it with birch-leaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides*), which are numerous.
6. Use guidance from the Ashland Municipal Code (AMC) for tree protections (AMC 18.4.5.030) when considering layout and excavation of the downhill trail. Unlike many surface trails dug by hand, machine trails have more potential to disrupt root zones and drainage patterns of adjacent trees. Pay close attention to larger trees of all species, as defined in AMC.
7. Monitor disturbed areas where bare dirt will likely attract invasive species. Invasive plant establishment can be minimized by pre-treating known populations that the trail will intersect and by seeding bare dirt with native species after construction (on side-cast dirt below the trail).
8. Avoid wood cribbing as much as possible to reduce damage during prescribed fire operations.
9. Remove dead and/or dying trees along the trail route for public safety.
10. Make trail users aware that periodic closures for forest and fire management activities will take place and precedence over trail use while providing for organized event and training days where trails have to be open.
11. Consult with the City's Forestry Officer during trail layout and construction to avoid specific sensitive species and trees of concern listed above.
12. While difficult to quantify or mitigate, it is nonetheless important to acknowledge that consistent bike and human presence has an impact on wildlife species and habitat by altering movement patterns and removing/altering certain habitat structures like dead trees and fallen logs.

This location is already inside the city's urban core and likely has less wildlife use than forests connected to the broader landscape.

13. Ground disturbing activities in forestry operations permitted through the Oregon Department of Forestry (this trail proposal is not subject to these rules) strongly suggest a review for cultural and historical resources through the [State Historic Preservation Office, or SHPO](#). Given longstanding human use and occupation of sites in the core area of Ashland, there could be archaeological sites in the area of the proposed trail.
14. Specify maintenance schedules, conditions to be remedied, and responsibility. Major storms or fires should trigger immediate monitoring and maintenance as needed for safety and integrity of the trail, trail users, and soils.



Milkweed populations (yellow circles) along proposed Dormouse (red lines) and existing trails (green lines). Overlap appears to only be with proposed uphill trail in this section.



Populations of California lomatium (yellow circle and red symbols) and a small milkweed plant (red dot) on northern section of proposed trail area. Keeping the downhill proposed trail below plant populations appears feasible.

Dials reported that the proposed trails have been marked in orange biodegradable paint for the downhill trail and red for the uphill trail. Next there will be two poster boards with a map and information placed at the beginning and end of the trails and orange signs will be added at the trail crossings.

Members of RVMBA are taking drone footage of the trails. The footage will be posted on the Parks and Rec page of the City website.

Chris Chambers spoke to the 14 point memo submitted by the FLMAC. The existing trails on the hillside never went through a formal process and aren't named. Chris reinforced the importance of working towards a net zero by decommissioning some of the demand trails. The Lithia hillside is included in the Ashland Forest management plan which is why they looked at the rare plants, none of which are in the path of the proposed trails.

There are some significant old trees on the hillside including White Oak. If the trails were built we would need to monitor the disturbed 'bare dirt' for invasive plants and possibly plant some native plants. Should also monitor the trails for potential negative impacts to prevent runaway erosion.

There are currently plans for prescribed burns on the Hillside (No wood cribbing allowed). No hazard trees should be left especially if they might impact the proposed trails.

If approved, Chris would like to be onsite for the building of the trails.

Might be worth having an archeological consultation and/or reach out to SHIPO because of the proposed excavation.

Questions/Discussion:

- Is there a schedule for prescribed burns? A: Approximately every ten years. It is done in small chunks. The proposed trails would be good from a fire management perspective.
- Is there an appetite amongst TAC members for an onsite tour? A: No.
- Concern was expressed for where the proposed downhill trail exits onto the Pioneer extension.
- Suggested to add an 's' on trail on the posters.
- How will the public see the comments that have been received on the proposed trails? A: That is to be determined.
- Will there be transparency? A: Yes, staff will provide the results in some fashion.

4. Update on Trails Advisory Committee Member Recruitment – Dials

5. **Update on Trails Advisory Committee Member Recruitment** – Interim Director Dials

SUMMARY – There are two (2) vacant positions on the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC). One (1) at-large position and one (1) pedestrian position.

Five (5) applications have been received.

Staff will be working with Park Commission Chair Jim Bachman to conduct interviews with all candidates and make final selections. More information will be available at the September TAC meeting.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – Trails Advisory Committee Bylaws

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S) – N/A

ATTACHMENTS – None

PREPARED BY: Rachel Dials, Interim Director

Staff had an open application period for people interested in applying for the two vacancies on the TAC. We received five applications. The next step will be to schedule interviews with the applicants.

VII. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. September 16, 2026, 4:15 – 5:45 PM the Grove
2. November 18, 5:00 – 6:30 PM the Grove

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Vice Chair Braught adjourned the meeting at 5:46 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy A. Mero, Executive Assistant



Council Business Meeting

Date: September 16, 2026

Agenda Item	Outcome of the Proposed Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trails Vote and Next Steps
Department	Parks & Recreation
From	

TIME ESTIMATE

CATEGORY

Informational - this is to inform the body on a particular topic. No motion or direction needed.

SUMMARY

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FISCAL IMPACTS

SUGGESTED ACTIONS, MOTIONS, AND/OR OPTIONS

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

1. VI1. Outcome of the Proposed LPEHMBTs
2. VII2. Proposed Lithia Park East Hillside Mt Bike Trails





TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

AGENDA BRIEF

September 16, 2026

Agenda Item	VII. Outcome of the Proposed Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trails and Next Steps	
Presenter	Rachel Dials	Interim Director
Item Type	Action ☐ Information ☒	

SITUATION

Following a robust public comment period, the proposed Lithia Park East Hillside mountain bike trails went before the Park Commissioners for action at their September 9, 2026, business meeting.

The Park Commission voted to deny the proposal for the Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trails. As part of the motion, the Commissioners directed the Trails Advisory Committee to work with RVMBA and other trail advocacy groups in identifying alternative routes for beginner mountain bike trails outside of Lithia Park.

ASSESSMENT/NEXT STEPS

1. Determine additional trail advocacy groups to invite to the discussion
2. Identify potential beginner trail locations outside Lithia Park

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funds for future trails projects are designated in the Parks Capital Improvement Fund.

ATTACHMENTS

September 9, 2026 Park Commission Business Meeting Memo for the Proposed Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trails

PREPARED BY: Rachel Dials, Interim Director

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

AGENDA BRIEF

September 9, 2026

Agenda Item	VII2. Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trails Proposal	
Presenter	Rachel Dials	Interim Director
Item Type	Action ☒ Information ☐	

SUMMARY

The Ashland Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) received a trail proposal from the Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association (RVMBAs). Previously called the “Dormouse” trail it is now temporarily titled the Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trails. Originally submitted on September 17, 2025, the proposal describes the trails as beginner friendly, low angle and adaptive connecting to both Glenview and Pioneer Streets.

At their November 19, 2025, meeting, the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended the proposal move forward in the process for review by the Forest Land Management Advisory Committee (FLMAC), (see addendum), and then to the Park Commission.

Beginning June 15, 2026, APRD opened a comment period to run through September 3, 2026, to collect feedback on the proposal. At the August 5, 2026, Park Commission study session, the public was given the opportunity to provide in-person feedback to the Park Commissioners.

Public Input Received

As of September 4 (date of this memo), APRD has received 933 total public comments regarding the proposed mountain bike trails. Of those comments, 804 were from unique individuals. Every comment received has been shared with the Park Commissioners. Within the public comments, 256 were supportive of the proposal and 545 were not supportive. The remaining three commenters were neutral. The main themes of the public comments were:

Pros/Support themes from Public Comment

- Beginner mt. biker and adaptive access
- Safer route from watershed mt. bike trails to downtown
- Fire mitigation and deterrence of illegal camping
- Economic impact
- Increased recreational opportunities
- Draw for young families to move to Ashland

Cons/Not supportive themes from Public Comment

- Environmental damage and erosion
- Loss of tranquility
- Potential for issues between mt. bikers, other user groups and wildlife
- Lack of necessity
- Expense: concerns over initial construction expenses and ongoing maintenance costs
- Potential that mt. bikers would stray from the designated trails, creating unofficial trails and enforcement issues.
- Safety concerns regarding the downhill exit onto Pioneer St. Extension
- Safety concerns regarding increased bike traffic and pedestrians on Pioneer Street through the Oregon Shakespeare Festival campus

ASSESSMENT

At the August 5, 2026, Park Commission study session Commissioners gave direction to staff to come back with a staff recommendation on the proposal. In assessing the proposal staff considered the following:

1. Lithia Park Master Plan & Addendum

The guiding document for Lithia Park, the Lithia Park Master Plan was adopted by the Park Commission in October 2024. The plan was designed as a comprehensive 100-year management framework for the park's resources, facilities and visitor experiences. Identified within the document are 37 specific recommendations to guide future projects and priorities. The document does include specific current and future guidance recommendations related to bicycles in and around Lithia Park. They include:

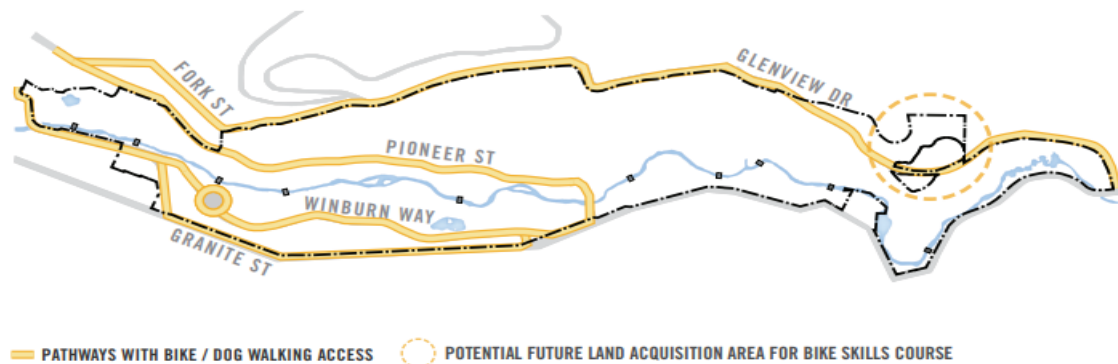
From Guiding Principles for Lithia Park (page 49) “Emphasize places for solitude and gathering

Lithia Park is beloved for both the places of solitude it provides and the lively community gatherings it supports. Both should be provided, and the balance should be continually calibrated to ensure that both are equally sustained into the future. “

Recommendation 18: “Ensure three speeds of traffic are accommodated within the park and are clearly identified. Lithia Park should continue to provide for slow (vehicular), slower (bicycles) and slowest (pedestrian) modes of traffic with slowest traffic being the primary and dominant mode. While the modes and transportation devices may change or evolve in time, all three speeds should be clearly accommodated within the park. This does not mean that all trails and roads need to serve all speeds, but all speeds do need to be accommodated within the park. As modes and levels of use of different modes change over time, roads and pathways may need to be re-identified as to what modes they are addressing. Providing clear signage and identification of what modes are welcome on each trail and road will continue to be a critical component so users can be informed of where they can and cannot use a particular mode of travel. In particular, the three speeds of traffic need to be better balanced throughout the park. For example, slow (vehicular) traffic dominates Winburn Way but, as a primary route through the park, the road must accommodate all speeds of travel. S. Pioneer Street is also a primary route and should support both slower and slowest paced travel. This plan highlights routes where leashed dogs (slowest) and cyclists (slower) ***are allowed and proposes no changes to the current policies but does emphasize prioritizing safe access along these routes where different speeds overlap.***”

“Addendum to Recommendation 23 Support mountain biking opportunities through potential land acquisition area adjacent to the park. (Pg 99) With the exception of Pioneer Street, mountain bikes can currently only travel on roads shared with motor vehicles when traveling from trailheads through or around Lithia Park to downtown Ashland. Any future consideration of separate mountain bike access within Lithia Park boundaries should avoid the ecologically sensitive and more highly trafficked riparian corridor along Ashland Creek”

Pg. 101 (Caption in LPMP plan) “While this plan does not propose additional bike access within the park, future land acquisitions can provide opportunities to develop a mountain bike skills course where kids can practice safely or enhance connections to regional mountain bike trails.”



Decision-making for Lithia Park should align with and reflect the vision, goals, and recommendations established within the Lithia Park Master Plan and its addendum that was adopted in 2024. According to the master plan document, bike trails within the park should be avoided with a focus on other areas.

2. Ashland Municipal Code AMC 10.68.210 Vehicle Use Restricted

AMC 10.68.210 currently restricts bicycles within Lithia Park.

- A. *No one shall ride or drive any bicycle, motorcycle, scooter, motor vehicle, truck, wagon, horse, or any vehicle or animal in any part of the parks, except on the regular drives designated therefore; provided that baby carriages, wheelchairs, and such vehicles as are used in the park service are not included in the foregoing prohibition. No one shall ride or be upon any skateboard in any part of Lithia Park*
- B. *No one shall drive any hearse, vehicle in a funeral procession, market wagon, milk wagon, dirt cart, moving van, dray, truck, heavy-laden vehicle, or vehicles carrying or ordinarily used in carrying merchandise goods, tools, material, or rubbish, except such as are used in the park service, over any drive or boulevard in any of the parks; provided, however, the park commission may in its discretion grant permission in writing for vehicles to carry materials over the park drives or boulevards to buildings abutting on parks; when no other road, street, or way is accessible or passable.*
- C. *Vehicles shall be driven with great caution and at a reasonable speed, having regard for the traffic, the safety of the public, and use of the parks. The speed on any of the public driveways in the parks of the City shall not exceed fifteen (15) miles per hour.*
- D. *No one shall hitch horses or other animals to any tree, shrub, fence, railing, or other structure, except such as are provided for such purpose, or allow horses or other animals to stand unhitched while the driver or attendant is beyond reach of such horse or other animal.*
- E. *Any person who violates any provision of this Chapter is subject to Section [1.08.020](#) of the Ashland Municipal Code. Any violation of this section is a Class III violation. (Ord. 3137, amended, 2017; Ord. 3026, amended, 08/03/2010)*

It is the opinion of the City's legal department that the phrase, ***"except on the regular drives designated therefore,"*** acts as an exception to the standard rule. In other words, the standard rule is that vehicle use of any kind (e.g. bicycles, motorcycles, scooters, or vehicles) are prohibited in parks unless the park is specifically designated for that use. Applicable examples include the Skate Park, bike only trails, and hiker only trails. In this vein, the Commission's potential "designation" to allow mountain bikes on the proposed hillside trails would be a similar exception to the general rule that bicycle use is prohibited in parks.

If the Parks Commissioners were to approve the proposed mountain bike trails and permit bicycle use on the hillside trails, the existing ordinance will apply to the hillside trails and would not need to be changed.

3. Practical enforcement of trail regulation has challenges.

Managing shared-use trails with budget and staffing constraints makes enforcement nearly impossible. The department must rely on alternative strategies, including physical barriers, educational signage, and targeted patrols. A critical concern is preventing bikes from straying off designated paths—a recurring issue already in the Ashland watershed—which is further complicated by the ongoing difficulty of e-bike enforcement on trails.

4. Drainage and erosion of the Lithia Park hillside

The Department lacks internal expertise to assess drainage and erosion on the hillside. A full review of the hillside by a specialized geotechnical engineer should be completed if the Commissioners are interested in advancing this proposal. Staff have also raised concerns regarding proposed trail segments near Glenview Drive and Pioneer Street related to slope instability and the potential need for retaining walls in some areas.

5. Safety concerns related to the downhill exit onto Pioneer Street.

The dirt portion of Pioneer Street is a shared use road. The bike trail proposal does not include plans for slowing bikers on the proposed downhill trail where it meets Pioneer Street.

6. Trail alternatives and East Main Street Community Park

Throughout the public input process, staff and Commissioners have repeatedly heard how much the Ashland community values expanding beginner mountain bike trail options. Viable alternative locations in and around the Ashland watershed could accommodate beginner trails without impacting Lithia Park. Additionally, construction is underway at East Main Street Community Park, where a new pump

track and bike skills park are set to open in late summer 2027. These amenities will serve as a key draw for beginner riders and the broader mountain biking community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Park Commission deny the proposal for the Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trails. Upon denial, staff further recommend that the Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association (RVMBA) consider collaborating with the Trails Advisory Committee on alternative proposals for beginner mountain bike trails located outside of Lithia Park.

If the Park Commission wishes to consider the current trails proposal, staff request that a comprehensive geotechnical assessment of the Lithia Hillside be completed prior to a final decision.

POLICIES/PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Lithia Park Master Plan with Addendum

26-27 Department Workplan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Within their proposal RVMBA states the trail would cost around \$30,000.00 to build. There is currently money in the Parks Capital Improvement Plan for future trail work. A geotechnical assessment of the Lithia hillside would cost approximately \$8000-\$10,000 and could be funded under the current operations budget. Other than the geotechnical assessment, staff does not have an estimate on construction costs to build the proposed trails.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S)

Move to approve the staff recommendation as outlined in the memo.

Move to approve the staff recommendation with the following amendments...

ATTACHMENTS

Glenview Hillside Trails Proposal (Lithia Park East Hillside Mountain Bike Trail Proposal)

11-19-25 TAC meeting Minutes

Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee (FLMAC) recommendations and mitigation memo from Forestry Officer Chris Chambers

Lithia Park Master Plan with Addendum

AMC 10.68.210

PREPARED BY: Rachel Dials, Interim Parks Director