

# Agenda Minnetonka Parks & Recreation Board

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

7 p.m.

Minnetonka Community Center – Council Chambers

## **P**arks & Recreation

### **Board Vision**

A city with outstanding parks and recreational opportunities within a valued natural environment.

### **Board Mission**

The mission of the Minnetonka Parks & Recreation Board is to proactively advise the City Council, in ways that will:

- » Protect & enhance Minnetonka's natural environment
- » Promote quality recreation opportunities and facilities
- » Provide a forum for citizens interested in our parks, trails, athletic fields and open space

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
  - \_\_\_ Jack Acomb
  - \_\_\_ James Durbin
  - \_\_\_ Chair Nelson Evenrud
  - \_\_\_ Cynthia Kist
  - \_\_\_ Peggy Kvam
  - \_\_\_ Chris Gabler
  - \_\_\_ Madeline Seveland
  - \_\_\_ Chris Walick
3. Approval of Minutes
  - A) January 3, 2018
4. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the Agenda
5. Business Items
  - A) Mountain Biking Report and Public Meeting
  - B) Presentation of the 2017 Shady Oak Beach Operations Report
6. Park Board Member Reports
7. Information Items
8. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items
9. Adjournment



## **Minutes of the Minnetonka Park Board Meeting of January 3, 2018**

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### **1. Roll Call**

Park Board members in attendance included Jack Acomb, James Durbin, Nelson Evenrud, Chris Gabler, Cindy Kist, Peggy Kvam, Madeline Seveland and Christopher Walick. Staff members in attendance included Jo Colleran, Kathy Kline, Kelly O'Dea, Amy Weiss, Sara Woeste and Perry Vetter.

Chair Evenrud called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

Durbin moved, Seveland seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of December 6, 2017 as submitted. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

Vetter explained a new practice that is going to be put into place for 2018. The city council just adopted the 2018 budget and included in that was to issue park board members iPad devices with City of Minnetonka email addresses. Training for the iPad devices should be close to the March meeting. In the interim, park board members will be issued an email address with the naming convention @eminnetonka.com. The email addresses will go live right away and resources will be provided on how to check them from a web portal. Once the email addresses are live, they will be posted on the Minnetonka Park Board page. Another advantage of receiving an iPad is that the park board packet will be delivered electronically through an app called iLegislate. City council members can also review them because this app is where all the meeting packets are posted.

Evenrud thanked Vetter for doing that and said it is a great improvement.

### **3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda**

Ed Friedman, 2700 Crestwood Circle, Minnetonka, wanted to talk about the potential for mountain bike trails in Big Willow. Friedman and many others have been attending public input meetings and are finding that they cannot get any information out of the meetings. He feels the meetings are very specific and that there are disrespectful responses from the leaders to the public when they ask questions. Friedman asked if the park board might be able to do something about that and maybe have a presentation put together with information that is known. Several months ago the park board asked staff to examine the feasibility of other locations other than Big Willow. It seemed like staff did not like that so they went into the reset mode and nothing has happened on looking at other locations; at least nothing has been shared. After the last meeting, Friedman asked if the trails are developed, will they be for multi-use (walking and biking) or will they be exclusively for the bikers. He was told by the City Manager that it would be exclusively for the bikers because of safety concerns. Friedman says that a decision to put bike trails like that in Big Willow Park is not providing the mountain bikers a place to enjoy. It is also taking away the park for those that enjoy walking there with their families. Friedman was hoping the park board could direct staff to do the feasibility on other potential sites and postpone the last meeting so the results of the feasibility study are known and people can respond appropriately.

Diana Houston, 12201 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka explained that she mailed out a packet to park board members. Houston wanted to make a few points regarding mountain biking that has to do with the migration of Minnehaha Creek. Houston says that she believes the trail has been moved down there at least once. It is not a static area, it is a natural area and it is volatile. Houston wanted people to keep in mind with any proposed development in that area that it is a volatile type of environment.

Another point Houston wanted to talk about is attractive nuisance. Under that definition as private property; that is something that someone has on their property that could be a danger to children and children do not recognize it as being a danger. How that applies to Big Willow is that people are using the rail line to cross from the north section or south section and vice versa. Part of the reason why they are using that is because of the flooding that occurs quite frequently under the bridge trestle. That is federal property there, it is trespassing, it is a federal offense to cross the rail line and there is a mandatory court appearance if you are caught doing that. With installing a bike trail in Big Willow Park that is creating an attraction for people to come and use the park. If the path under the bridge is flooded, what choice do people have to get there? People can take the long way around or the more direct route; so the concern is that safety issues are going arise by creating more of an attraction in Big Willow, especially for mountain biking. Houston spoke with Amy McBeth, with Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), she is a regional public affairs director and she was appreciative of being aware of safety issues of this project proposal. McBeth mentioned that she will be getting ahold of city staff to have further conversations about the concern with the use of the park and the rail conflicts there.

Houston wanted to discuss the potential parking problem at Big Willow Park and identified the current parking locations. During the summer time, the parking is very full at Big Willow, especially when there are activities taking place at Guillian Park. People have said that they are going to ride their bikes and some are riding; but what we witness is people driving there and parking. So parking is still an issue in that particular area.

Houston noted that feedback from the last community engagement discussion was not attached to tonight's minutes. She found that information on the website but because the feedback from the focus groups were attached to the minutes last time, she thought it would be again. Houston recommended attaching the community engagement discussion feedback from the meetings to the minutes because people may be looking for them there. Houston said that Friedman touched on the feasibility study and thought there is a question that a few people had since they were informed that the staff does not have a feasibility study. The meeting minutes from September 6, 2017 states, "consultants will also assist staff with technical aspects of creating mountain biking trails, staff continues to research locations, options, study safety concerns, environmental impacts and parking needs of potential trails. The complete results of this research will be presented to the park board at a later date." On the mountain biking project website it identifies a section saying that the city of Minnetonka researched and is identifying the criteria that goes into the research, which includes: locations, safety, environment impact, parking, signage, feasibility and resident input so again this is still saying there is a feasibility study in progress. At the November focus group meeting, it was identified that staff was working on the feasibility study and they were hopeful to have the results of that as well as a short list of sites before the Jan. 8, 2018 meeting. It is an excellent idea, and staff should proceed with the feasibility study. Houston's question or concern is regarding a statement made at the final public engagement meeting on Jan. 8, 2018. The statement was that individual's feedback on criteria would be used to determine project feasibility. Houston then asked when public input equates to a feasibility

study. Also, who decided that the feasibility study was not needed, because it sounds like it is not being done?

O'Dea responded by saying that one of the information items is talking about the update on the process. The next step is that staff will develop a recommendation regarding mountain biking trails within the park system and present it at the February 7, 2018 park board meeting. Close to the January meeting, an email went out to all subscribers saying that we will hopefully talk a lot about criteria and have the public provide feedback to us on potential criteria that we think should be used to determine if mountain biking is feasible within the park system.

Vetter added that the February 7, 2018 meeting will also be used as a delivery to the park board of the community engagement process. The criteria, was it feasible or not? That feasibility report or park board report will come to the February meeting, which is a public meeting. At the official meetings people are always asked for their name and address. You cannot prevent non-residents from talking but all boards and commissions and council take the status of those people's addresses into effect. Vetter also complimented O'Dea's comment and said that the feasibility report will be delivered at the February meeting and staff will be looking for recommendations on where to go. That does not preclude that there will not be more public meetings. This is kind of that community engagement period we'll deliver in February and take direction.

Houston understood that there is community input on the feasibility, and asked if there is a separate feasibility study along with that?

Vetter clarified that O'Dea's staff will be delivering a feasibility report on mountain biking at the February meeting and it will be an agenda item. At that time, it is recommended that the park board take public comment on that.

Evenrud reminded people that for the public engagement meetings, only a couple of park board members have attended those meetings at a time due to quorum. Some park board members may have more information from those meetings because they were there.

Evenrud thanked everyone for sharing their information from those public engagement meetings so the park board members that did not attend can hear their input and information from them.

O'Dea said that feedback staff has received from residents will be included before that February meeting.

George Skinner, 15330 Lynn Terrace, Minnetonka, had a couple of comments and questions regarding procedures and how things are being perceived in the community. Skinner was at the November park board meeting and also at the December 13 mountain bike study meeting. It was very well attended and he thought the staff moderated the large meeting very well. There were a number of issues that residents that he knows brought to his attention after the meeting and he wanted to pass them along. They were quite shocked and surprised to learn they were the only, or maybe one of two residents at each of the tables they were sitting at. It kind of gave the impression that the meeting was being high jacked. Skinner requested that staff be instructed to maintain some type of checklist on survey comments regarding three different proposals that would indicate whether or not the commenters were Minnetonka residents. He thinks that leaves a bad impression with

people. Also, he wanted the park board to be aware of another issue that is happening in the country. Land use managers across the country are being pressed in a really coordinated national effort to establish mountain bike trails in areas where they are not in mandated use or sometimes even where they currently prohibit the use. This is why Skinner is really concerned about the number of non-residents being given input and consideration regarding the use of Minnetonka parks. These are not regional resources and perhaps you can't keep non-residents out of the meetings; but he believes that some greater efforts should be made in the study sessions and other meetings to differentiate residents from non-residents.

Evenrud thanked everyone for their information.

#### **4. Business Items**

##### **A. Review of 2017 Farmer's Market Operations and staff recommendations for 2018 operations.**

O'Dea reviewed that Minnetonka has operated a Farmer's market since 2009. For the first six years it was operated under the administrative department and in 2016 it was transferred to Recreation Services. In 2016, Amy Weiss was hired as the Farmer's Market Manager and she is here to review the 2017 market and give some recommendations for 2018.

Weiss highlighted a few items from the market from a packet she handed out. Weiss noted that all items listed under the market enhancements were recommended for 2017, if they are italicized, they were completed this year. The biggest feedback received from guests in 2016 is that they wanted a wider variety of items. Weiss spent a lot of time at other markets and a lot of time canvassing other vendors. Beef, chicken, and jams and also added artists were added so it is broader than just a Farmer's Market. Customer's wanted to know more of what was happening with the city. With the addition of Scott Marks and the police department, we had police presence at almost every market and also The Landing Shop had a great presence at many of the markets this year. The music selection was also expanded by getting new musicians and a wider variety.

The big takeaway from this year is that we had a 34 percent increase in foot traffic between 2016 and 2017. The number of vendors was relatively steady. Our market is unique in that we do not require the vendors to sell with us for the entire season. Vendors can choose to sell on individual dates or a half season or full season.

The Power of Produce program was implemented and was completely new for us this year. The program started at a market in Seattle and it allows kids to get a token for two dollars, or it was actually a voucher in our case. It allowed kids to go shopping at the market for fruits and vegetables and it was their own two dollars. The first 300 kids who participated also got a tote bag that they could color and bring every week. Some kids spent their two dollars every week and some kids saved them up all season and cashed them in for pumpkins and gourdes at the end. It gave us an opportunity to get a sponsor to underwrite the cost for the program. We worked with South Lake Pediatrics this year and they also had a presence at the market for some of the weeks. There were 407 registered kids; which far exceeded expectations so a volunteer was added to help because registration lines were deep. There were 168 unique families that participated. The best part was that 23 percent of the participants came four times or more so it

became a habit for many of them. All but 90 of the over 1,000 tokens that were given out were redeemed over the course of the season.

Another thing that was added was the Hennepin County Library. They created their own little area located near the musicians and every week they had a new activity. Staff provided electricity for them to check out books and they checked out almost 1,000 books. They only had to take back 275 books so people were not using them to return, which was good.

Food trucks were also added this year and were a big hit. We really tried to incorporate them and asked them to stay as long as possible so they could be part of Music in the Park. Community groups were expanded as well and they were asked to have a presence at the market. Some weeks there were multiple groups and some weeks there was just one or two. The library and master gardeners were there every week and the others rotated.

The final thing that was entirely new this year was the winter market. It came about by a survey question at the end of 2016. Vendors and the community were asked if they would be interested and overwhelmingly they said yes. The first one was held on Dec. 16, 2018 and it was very successful. Almost 600 people attended, not including musicians and vendors. Vendors sold out of product and there are vendors who cannot participate in February because they do not have enough inventory. The second one is scheduled for Feb. 10, 2018. The plan for next year is to hold the December one again and then make a decision after the February 10 market, whether or not to do more.

Surveys continue to show that both the vendors and the guests love the community feel. The foot traffic can be contributed to more things to do for families. There was a lot of positive feedback both at the booth and from our surveys from people who are thrilled to have something for their kids to do. The library having their presence there really added a lot.

For 2018, some logistics and continuing to increase the diversity of products will be worked on. At the winter market, there was a wider diversity of products and a lot of feedback from customers encouraging us to try and do that for the summer market. Also, having more food trucks with meals was suggested. It was hard for families who came hoping to have a meal and stay for Music in the Park. Then to find out that particular week Kona Ice or brownies were there, which are not ideal meals from a parent's perspective. Another thing to work on is continuing to add more kid's activities. The library is working on figuring out whether or not they will be available for the market next summer. They were part of the winter market in December and will be in February. Lastly, she will continue to look for community partnerships and sponsorships so we can provide the Power of Produce program again. Weiss asked for questions or feedback.

Walick said he was sad that they missed it and they came a lot the year before. Walick asked if Weiss advertises all these new things on social media, including the food trucks that will be there on a certain date. Weiss responded that yes, they have a couple of things they do for advertising. When she started, there was about 1,000 email names that had specifically requested information about the market. That list has grown to almost 4,000 now and so every week an email is sent on Monday. Theoretically, the information that is in there is accurate, however, a vendor may call on Tuesday morning

or sometimes Tuesday at noon saying that their truck broke down or that they cannot be here so it changes. The city has resorted to Twitter when food trucks back out.

Evenrud said he can relate to food trucks backing out. They are hard to pin down sometimes. Evenrud said that he is a repeat fan of Tuesday night's and he loves watching this grow. Evenrud said that at the Summer Festival, he always enjoyed the Senior Services hamburgers and asked if they would ever sell those on Tuesday nights. Weiss responded that we used to have a hotdog cart and that did not go well and did not have the repeat business. That is part of why we started looking at the food trucks. With food trucks we can also diversify and they have the mobility to also move up to Music in the Park and have a greater presence. There is a large senior population that comes to the market and even more so this year. Often some of the vans from the Senior Housing came and they stopped by the information booth and shared vegetables. Not everybody needs 10 tomatoes so they did their trading at the table with us.

Seveland commented that Weiss has done a really awesome job growing this program and making it successful. Minnetonka is sandwiched right between Hopkins and Excelsior and they both have established and fairly decent sized, well attended Farmer's Markets. Everything you have brought in, the numbers you are getting and the community you are building is really awesome to see.

Walick said that he was looking at the market enhancements and Weiss talked about expanding the music selection. Walick asked what kind of expansion Weiss is referring to because he always thinks about how to bring in the younger crowd. When you think about the music you would bring into the Farmer's Market, what do you conceptualize in there?

Weiss responded that currently there is usually one musician or set of musicians that plays for a two-hour window. There have been requests to have maybe two different groups in the same week, just one on the early end and one on the later end because it takes a little energy away when one group is playing for four hours on hot pavement. We have looked at different musicians and have spent a lot of time listening online or going and listening to musicians and working with other markets. There is a group of other city run market managers that work together, we are collaborating on a much more formal basis than we have before so we've been trading that information. That is initially the starting point. If that does not work out, Weiss has talked to the schools and to the Music Association of Minnetonka. It is harder to get the kids during the summer because they are not around or not around consistently enough to practice. The hope was to get a group that would come a couple of times over the course of the summer.

Vetter thanked Weiss, O'Dea and Woeste for agreeing to take over the market in 2015. Administration ran the market since 2009 and that year, we turned over seven of 14 positions in the department. Weiss started with a clean slate because there was not a whole lot of things on it. Vetter commented that Weiss was the person at the right time at the right moment with the right skill set for that position. Especially with that kind of passion to grow it to what it has become is truly great.

## B. Adoption of 2018 Park Board Strategic Plan

O'Dea reviewed that back in December they brought the park board a draft version of this plan. Staff brought a few changes and then gathered input from the park board. Staff made a few changes based on the input and are bringing that back this evening. With the main discussion point, do you see any other changes you want to make to the 2018 strategic plan, if not, we are looking for action.

Evenrud asked for input from the board members.

Kvam moved, Gabler seconded a motion to approve the adoption of the 2018 park board strategic plan. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

## C. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

O'Dea explained by ordinance the park board is required to select a chair and vice - chair at the February meeting of each year. Currently, Chair Evenrud and Vice - Chair Kist's terms will expire on Jan. 31, 2018. The new term then would be from Feb. 1, 2018 – Jan. 31, 2019. With that, O'Dea opened it up for discussion amongst the park board members.

Evenrud asked if there are any interested parties. None were heard.

Seveland moved, Durbin seconded a motion to appoint Nelson Evenrud as Park Board Chair for a term beginning Feb. 1, 2018 and running through Jan. 31, 2019. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

Evenrud moved and Durbin seconded a motion to appoint Cindy Kist as Park Board Vice - Chair for a term beginning Feb. 1, 2018 and running through Jan. 31, 2019. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

## 5. Park Board Member Reports

Seveland said that a couple of them were talking about getting informational, educational signage at certain parks reminding people to pick up dog waste and the leash laws.

Seveland explained she was recently at Jidana and came across a family and they did not have their dogs leashed. We informed them that people are getting more fines lately and told them what the ordinance says and where they can bring their dogs if they want them off-leashed. They were grateful and just did not know. The information can be put in the *Minnetonka Memo* and it can be posted online but unless it is at the spot where people are making that decision it gets missed and there is a lot of psychological research behind that. If you want someone to take an action, the information and the action that you desire has to be posted at that location. Particularly at the parks that there are more struggles with dogs being off-leash. Exploring ways to inform people at those particular sites should be done in order to make citizens happy and to make things clearer.

Evenrud said that was great information on a subject where there really is not enough information. If he remembers correctly, the last time there was a full place was over dog leashes.



Vetter said that a number of years ago we had an education campaign. There were signs about the leash law that were posted. It was at the spot and it brought a little bit of levity to the situation because it was kind of a reminder to people, rather than posting 75 things you shall not do in a park system. Unfortunately, it was done during the recession and all of the signs were made out of aluminum and along with all of the handicapped parking signs they were all taken for scrap. Vetter thinks maybe looking at a synthetic or composite material and getting back to resigning all those would be good. There was a big push of getting all the handicap parking signs and ADA accessibility signs back up because they are required. Vetter thinks it is that trickle effect of now going out and adding back a little bit of quality of life; such as the educational pieces back into the park systems.

Evenrud said the signs sounded great.

Kist commented that she was going through some papers and found some 2013 park board member park assignments. Since then, several of the names on there have moved on. Kist was wondering if at some point in the next couple of months that would be something we would be interested in doing again. Kist said they went through all the city parks and each park board member took several parks and that is kind of where it ended. Kist asked what action they can take if that is something people are interested in.

Vetter said that was kind of a park board directed item. The parks were divided up depending on which ones you frequent and the idea was for park board members to help keep an eye on the parks and report back to staff. This process was also to be used if there was an improvement to that park; the park board member would be the liaison to that project. If that is something the park board would like to redo and bring back, staff can bring that back. There is not a motion needed, but we just to see if there is an interest. Kist asked if people are interested and what they thought about it. Kist also did not know if it would work in conjunction with the minnetonka email addresses.

Evenrud remembers doing that and recalls that by the time he reported something; it was already being taken care of by city staff. The process is so smooth that when there is something brought to staff's attention, it gets taken care of and park board members did not really have a lot to do with it. Evenrud thinks it is a good idea if we decided to do that as an ongoing, as-needed basis and not making it mandatory to do it at a scheduled time. Evenrud thinks there is something that could come of it and it could be a good thing.

## **6. Information Items**

O'Dea gave an update on the mountain biking community engagement process. Back in October, WSB presented public engagement options to the park board and the park board then recommended the population based outreach process; which included two focus group meetings and two general public meetings. The first general public meeting was held on Dec. 13, 2017 with the second meeting being held next Monday, Jan. 8, 2018 at the Minnetonka Community Center at 7 p.m. The next step in the mountain biking community

engagement process will be that staff will develop and present a recommendation regarding mountain bike trails within the park system and present that at the Feb. 7, 2018 park board meeting.

Woeste explained that the city will be hiring a park and trail planner in 2018. It is actually in the operating budget and not the CIP that was noted in the packet. The CIP has been focused on trail development, connectivity, walkability of the city and therefore we are looking for getting a park and trail planner. That person will be housed out of Recreation and come out of the Recreation budget. They will work across departments, such as Engineering, Planning, Public Works and it will be an interesting position because it will have a lot of roles within the city. When new amenities are needed, this is the person that could start the process and take it from start from finish. Vetter worked hard on our park renewal system back in 2001, so the amenities are now becoming old and it's a process we need to revive. This will be somebody you will see in the future. Currently, applications are being taken for this position and the hope is to have it filled in March. Vetter asked when the position closes and Woeste responded by saying on Friday of this week. It is currently posted and has been posted for about a month.

O'Dea reviewed the athletic field use summary. There are athletic fields that are used by the community and for city programs. The thing that stuck out the most is the number of reserved field hours were down about seven percent. The main reason for that is because some city programs shifted from one park to another and that could have been from a Minnetonka park to a Hopkins park. O'Dea thinks that was a big portion of the decrease. Some of our city programs were held at different parks due to availability, amenities at the parks, etc. When comparing the total revenues from 2016 to 2017, it is pretty similar so he believes the 2017 ending revenue after sales tax was just over \$29,000. Then 2/3 of that goes into the operation of the fields and 1/3 of that helps some of the capital costs for the fields. The numbers as you go across the board from 2015 to 2016 and 2017 are pretty similar when you are looking at the revenues.

Evenrud asked with the capital fund for future upgrades, if the \$9,000 that was revenue for field use can be used towards that. O'Dea said that he thinks that money is allocated towards capital improvements for fields, not necessarily operating like mowing and things like that. It could be used towards fences, etc.

Vetter said the 2/3, 1/3 split was a decision that was made during the park renewal process. This was the city council saying not to let our parks degrade again and plan for what is needed out of the CIP, do not try to let it get behind. The athletic fields were looked at in that same way. In the past, all the revenue that came in for field fees was put right back to off-set operating expenses. The thought at the time, was to take 2/3 of that operating and put 1/3 into kind of like an escrow per field for future capital. So that way, there is a fund we can access right away instead of waiting a few years for the CIP if we know dugouts, fences, pitching mounds, etc. are deteriorating. That was kind of the thought about dedicating some of that revenue that users are paying in and saying lets park that aside for future capital for fields. That was the key for all the associations that pay, is knowing that those revenues would stick to fields so that \$9,600 is divvied up by field for each of those and it continues to build.

O'Dea reviewed the Gray's Bay Marina season end update. The season started on April 7, 2017, which is about normal per season. Fuel was available for sale on April 21, 2017 and water was at the facility for restrooms and pump out, etc. on April 27, 2017. The two major

items for the marina were 1). It was operated without road construction. Highway 101 was done so we were able to operate the marina without any road construction for the first time in two years. 2). The amount of gas that was sold. Almost 24 percent more gas was sold than the average of previous years. O'Dea thinks that is partially because of the road construction and there was a lot of nice weather specifically on the weekends. The renewal process for the leases has started for 2018. The slip fees remained at \$3,900 and there were four slip holders that did not renew their leases for the 2018 season. Those vacancies have been filled and there are 13 people on the waitlist. The nice thing about that is the vacancies were filled faster than in the past. When the city first took over the marina, there was 100 or more names on the waitlist and it has been kind of dwindling down. It is nice to see that once people are contacted, they are still interested in slips. The revenues exceeded the expenditures by just over \$70,000 which is great. Putting the estimated year-end balance of the escrow fund just over \$544,000. This was discussed at a previous meeting but when large items are required at the marina, those are big expenditures. When looking at docks, it typically isn't \$1,000 - \$2,000, it is larger expenditures so \$544,000 is a great balance but there is definitely some large expenditures that will be needed. Vetter mentioned that the marina is a true enterprise fund so it does not receive general tax dollars support. It is all based on revenues so that escrow does seem high but if those docks go, there is no general tax dollar to go back to. It is all about that fund operating on its own.

Evenrud commented that the last thing the citizens want to see is an enterprise ran by their city losing money so having that cushion is great.

## **7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**

Originally the Historical Society was scheduled and it was decided to schedule that item again, likely mid to late 2018. This is due to working around a maternity leave for the staff member who works directly with the Burwell House and the Historical Society.

Woeste asked if anyone is interested in volunteering for Kids' Fest to let her know after the meeting. Evenrud asked what the minimum age is for volunteering. Woeste said the minimum age is 12.

Kvam requested an update on the monument sign at Shady Oak Beach for the February meeting. Woeste said that it might have to come at a later date because there is a meeting in February regarding that. The meeting is with the planning department because it goes along with the sign ordinance. That one has been on hold but it has been on our radar so possibly but it might have to be March.

Evenrud said that he loves the new logo and branding and that is looking really good.

## **8. Adjournment**

Gabler motioned to adjourn, seconded by Kist. Evenrud adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

# Minnetonka Farmers Market

## Background

The Minnetonka Farmers Market began in the summer of 2009 and was managed by the city's Administration Department from 2009 to 2015. Recreation Services took over management of the market beginning in 2016. This past season was the first season that Recreation Services had the full calendar year for preparation and planning purposes.

**Staffing:** Market Manager – PT (marketing and operations)  
 Market Assistant – PT (logistics, on-site assistance)  
 Finance Coordinator – PT (handles on-site transactions)

## Recommendations for 2017

### Logistics:

1. Improve signage especially on Minnetonka Blvd.
2. *Start season earlier (June 13<sup>th</sup>)*
3. *Explore idea of closing market at 6 p.m. in September*

### Market Enhancements:

1. *Increase diversity of products – more food choices including ready to eat options*
2. *Increase the number of high-quality artisans*
3. *Engage more community groups*
4. *Highlight City of Minnetonka programs and services*
5. *Add more structured kids activities*
6. *Implement PoP (Power of Produce) program*
7. Offer health screenings (blood pressure checks, etc.)
8. *Expand musician selection*
9. *Add winter market dates; include as option in application materials*
10. Increase employee participation through Health Rewards program
11. *Explore community partnerships/sponsorships*

*Italicized items were accomplished in 2017*

## Participation

Year	Attendance	Weekly Average	# of Vendors	# of Community Groups
2017	6,890	510/market (13.5 markets)	40	10
2016	4,225	338/market (12.5 markets)	35	10

## Financials

Year	Credit Card Trans	CC Total	Ave. \$ Sale	EBT Trans	Ave. \$ Sale	Healthy Savings
2017	220	\$5,115	\$23.25	28	\$10.14	386
2016	216	\$4,025	\$18.63	26	\$9.96	364
2015	231	\$4,642	\$20.42	34	\$10.56	282

## New in 2017

### Power of Produce

The Power of Produce (POP) Club provided a fun opportunity for children to engage in the local food system through conversations directly with farmers, periodic food tastings, and exposure to new fruits and vegetables.

- POP Club kids received vouchers to spend at the market, allowing them to make their own shopping decisions
- \$2 Vouchers were available each week upon check-in
- Vouchers were limited to fresh fruit or vegetable purchases
- Created a sponsorship opportunity to help fund program
- 168 unique families participated
- 23 percent of participants visited the market at least four times during the season

### Power of Produce Program

Age	Number of Participants
3	2
4	75
5	55
6	59
7	58
8	50
9	38
10	33
11	19
12	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>

Week	New PoP Registrations	PoP Check-ins
June 13	34	34
June 20	43	57
June 27	69	103
July 11	62	107
July 18	Cancelled due to weather	0
July 25*	25	62
Aug. 1	20	78
Aug. 8	37	95
Aug. 15	29	108
Aug. 22	33	99
Aug. 29	8	74
Sept. 5	10	67
Sept. 12	21	72
Sept. 19	2	48
Sept. 29	14	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>1,075</b>

\*Closed at 5:15 due to weather

## Hennepin County Library

### Hennepin County Library Booth Visits

Pre-K	K-5	Teen	Adults	Seniors	Checked out	New Cards	# Returned
603	373	60	621	130	947	25	275

### Food Trucks

- Finer Meats
- Hockey Mom's Brownies
- Kona Ice
- Sandy's Italian Ice
- Stanley's on Wheels

### Community Groups

- Commuter Services
- Extension Master Gardeners
- Hennepin County Library
- ICA
- Jewish Family & Children's Services
- The Landing Shop
- Minnetonka Fire
- Minnetonka Police
- Minnetonka Senior Garden Club
- Music Association of Minnetonka
- Sierra Club

### Winter Market – December 16, 2017

30 Registered vendors; 25 attended

6 – Registered community groups (Hennepin County Library, ICA, The Landing Shop, Mtka Fire, Mtka PD, Senior Services)

581 guests, not including vendors or musicians

Credit Card transactions - \$975

Next market scheduled for Feb. 10

## Survey Results - Vendor

### Vendor Survey – 53% response rate

- 77% returning vendors
- 23% new vendors

### Perceived sales: (only 14 answered)

- 62% reported sales were the same or better in 2017
- 86% plan to apply for 2018
- Vendors chose to participate in this market for the location, customer base and community feel

## Survey Results – Community Partners

### Community Partner Survey – 60% response rate

- 67% returning vendors
- 33% new vendors

100% said experience met their expectations

### What are the top three reasons why you chose to participate in the Minnetonka Farmers Market?

- Outreach to the community about our organization; recruitment of new participants in our programs and attendees at our programs; and generate interest in our program for musically-talented and/or musically-interested youth
- To reach residents and let them know about our free resources.
- To support customers during the time the library was closed, to connect with new people, and to support early learning in the community.
- Local, meet a wide variety of people
- Community engagement

## Customer Survey Summary (115 responses)

### Why do you come to the Minnetonka Farmers Market?

Support local growers	78% (89)
Convenience	55% (63)
Selection of products	52% (59)
Sense of community	51% (58)
Family activities	23% (26)
Specific vendor	17% (19)*
Other	31% (35)**

\*Vendors specified included Aki, Dale's Delicious Eggs, Hennepin County Library, Willow Creek Ag, Mau, M & M Agate, Bee Happy Honey, Picha, Randall's Best, Craft & Vine Picklery, Joshua Sells Kettle Corn

\*\*Other includes Power of Produce, quality and value, community feel, Music in the Park, Medica's Healthy Savings Reward program, WIC

**How often do you attend market?**

Every week	25% (29)
2-3 times	41% (47)
1x/month	18% (21)
1x/season	12% (14)
Didn't come this year	2.5% (3)

**Did you stay after the Market to attend any Music in the Park events?**

Yes	20% (23)
No	80% (90)

**How would you rate the overall quality of products at the market?**

Excellent	77% (88)
Fair	21% (24)
Poor	1.8% (2)

**What are some things that prevented you from attending?**

Market Hours	34% (31)
Not enough food options	25% (23)
Can't find what I'm looking for	14% (13)
Parking	8% (7)
Location	5% (5)

**What else would you like to see at the Market?**

Food trucks or other ready to eat foods	43% (40)
More food options	33% (31)
More artisans	13% (12)
More activities for kids	7% (7)
More community organizations	3% (3)

Other:

- Food trucks
- Open later in season - 12
- More organic options
- Wider variety of food options
- Bigger inventory – often sold out when we arrived
- More gardeners – plant sale more than twice/season
- More summer fruits



# Farmers Market Recommendations for 2018

## **Logistics:**

1. Review and revise set-up and take-down expectations and process
2. Automate the token process to improve vendor and finance processes
3. Establish Wi-Fi in the market so we aren't dependent on wiring

## **Market Enhancements:**

1. Increase diversity of products – more food choices including ready to eat options
2. More food trucks with meals
3. Highlight City of Minnetonka programs and services (host new mayor and/or council members)
4. Add more structured kids activities
5. Offer health screenings (blood pressure checks, etc.)
6. Continue to expand musician selection
7. Strengthen community partnerships
8. Increase employee participation through Healthy Rewards program
9. Expand community sponsorships

## **Administrative:**

1. Simplify application process
2. Diversify volunteers (create a rotating schedule)
3. Evaluate 2017/2018 winter markets

## **Some additional tactics:**

1. ½-page flier available for market guests
2. Improve use of social media highlighting food trucks, specific vendors and events

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 5A  
Meeting of Feb. 7, 2018**

<b>Subject:</b>	Mountain biking report
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	To renew and maintain parks and trails
<b>Park Board related objective:</b>	Renew, expand and maintain a trail system to encourage outdoor recreation and improve the connectivity and walkability of the community
<b>Brief Description:</b>	Review the report for potential mountain biking trails and hear public comment.

### **Background**

Interest in mountain bike trail development was first expressed by residents through the communitywide *Imagine Minnetonka* visioning process the city conducted in 2016. During that strategic planning effort interest in mountain biking was brought forward to the Park Board by a group of resident students associated with the Minnetonka High School VANTAGE Program. Staff worked with interested residents and Trail Source Inc. to provide and present a possible concept to the park board. That grassroots effort focused primarily on only two of Minnetonka's 51 parks, Big Willow and Civic Center. Since that time, city staff heard from many residents regarding the potential creation of mountain biking trails. While many residents support the idea of trails, others have voiced concern over the potential project.

Therefore, staff decided to take a step back and engage with the community through a more in-depth, targeted process. The city of Minnetonka engaged with the consulting firm WSB and Associates to assist in the community outreach and engagement for the prospective mountain biking trails project. At the October 2017 Park Board meeting the park board directed staff to the population-based outreach option, consisting of two focus groups and two public meetings.

### **Community Engagement Process**

Between November 2017 and January 2018, the city of Minnetonka hosted four engagement events to discuss proposed new mountain bike trails in Minnetonka parks. The events occurred on Nov. 8, Nov. 16, Dec. 13, 2017 and Jan. 8, 2018. Each event used a specific format.

- The first two meetings were designed as focus groups meant to get feedback on concerns and priorities from people who were concerned or interested in the trails.
- The third event was a large community conversation on three potential outcomes of the engagement process: the construction of trails in Big Willow Park, the construction of trails in a different city-owned location, and no construction of trails. Community members discussed the pros and cons of each option.
- The final meeting was a large community meeting that delved into more detail about the trail proposal, asking residents to comment on specific issues surrounding adequate space, environmental protection, and user conflict.

The engagement process highlighted key resident concerns and showed that there is enthusiasm behind the trail proposals. All feedback will be considered as this process moves forward and it is attached for review.

### **Discussion Points:**

- **Does the park board have any questions regarding the community engagement process?**

### Site Evaluation Criteria

At the Jan. 8 general public meeting, attendees were presented with a list of criteria established based on feedback to determine if Minnetonka's parks could support mountain bike trails. The public used a worksheet (see attachment) to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with the criteria and provided comments. The public overwhelmingly agreed with the proposed criteria as a whole. Based on the feedback, staff made some minor adjustments/additions (shown in blue) to the criteria.

#### ADEQUATE SPACE

A trail system should be able to sustain a minimum of 4 miles of single track trails. This could include a single park on its own or a circuit of parks in close proximity to one another. Staff believes that less than 4 miles would not be utilized.

If a circuit of parks is considered, a given park within the circuit should be able to support a minimum of 2 miles of mountain bike trails on its own.

If a circuit of multiple parks are needed, the parks should be located within 1 mile of another *and provide safe, easy and navigable travel between each location.*

A mountain bike trail system should be within 1 mile of a regional bike trail *and provide safe, easy and navigable travel between.*

A park must contain a minimum of 20 usable acres to be considered. *Usable Acreage is undeveloped acreage that could be used to build mountain bike trails. Acreage does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.*

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Trails should be built using the highest standards for development and pursuant of sustainable trail guidelines. This would limit erosion, vegetation loss and water quality problems.

Areas containing uncommon plants and high quality restoration areas (per city natural resources staff) should be avoided.

Generally, narrow trails (approximately 24") should be built to reduce the total area of intensive tread disturbance, slow down trail users and minimize vegetation and soil compaction.

Site should be designed to minimize tree impact and removal.

#### MINIMIZE USER CONFLICT

The majority of existing mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are one-way to avoid head on interactions. If built in Minnetonka, trails should also be one-way.

Mountain bike trails should be built to minimally intersect existing maintained trails and high-use informal foot paths. *(High-use informal foot paths are trails that receive similar use as maintained trails and have experienced significant widening, erosion and impact as a result).*

Mountain bike trails should not displace existing maintained trails and high-use informal foot paths. (High-use informal foot paths are trails that receive similar use as maintained trails and have experienced significant widening, erosion and impact as a result)
Mountain bike trails should be designated as multi-use (open to runners, bird watchers, hikers, snowshoers, bikers, etc.). Ninety-two percent of all mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are multi-use.
Adequate parking should be available at each proposed park.

**Discussion Points:**

- Does the park board agree with the proposed criteria?

**Matrix**

The following matrix shows a list of Minnetonka’s parks that have over 20 undeveloped acres and how they match with the proposed criteria.

Parks	Adequate Space					Environmental Protection				Minimize User Conflict/Maximize Safety				
	4 miles of trail total	If circuit, 2 miles per location	If circuit, 1 mile from another	2 miles from regional bike trail	Park must have 20 usable acres	Sustainable trail guidelines	Avoid uncommon plants/restoration	Trail width approx. 24"	Minimize tree impact and removal	One way trails	Minimally intersect maintained/high traffic footpaths	Do not displace maintained/high traffic footpaths	Multi-use	Adequate parking
Lone Lake	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
494 Corridor		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Purgatory		X	X		X	X	*	X	X	X	X		X	
Hilloway		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Victoria-Evergreen		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Big Willow		X	X	X	X	X	*	X	X	X			X	
Civic Center			X	X		X	*	X	*	X	X	*	X	X
Jidana			X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	
Meadow			X			X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Covington			X			X	X	X	X	X			X	
Mooney				X		X	X	X	X	X			X	
Lake Rose						X		X		X			X	
Crane Lake						All wetland remove from list				X			X	

\*To be determined. If selected, would require further research.

**Location Summaries:**

**Big Willow Park**

Big Willow is a designated community preserve and athletic complex. While it is large in acreage, many of those acres have already been developed or are undevelopable. It has connectivity with the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail. Parking is a concern at Big Willow Park. While there is parking for the six ball fields and one soccer field, these parking lots are at max capacity during high use times (weekends and evenings, April through October). Adding mountain bike trails would inevitably bring in bikers who wish to drive to the destination.

Big Willow is highly utilized by patrons. In addition to the maintained trails, a number of high-use informal trails that span up to six feet wide are located throughout the park. It would be difficult to create a safe trail concept that does not displace or minimally intersect the maintained and high-use informal trails. Usable acreage within the park consists of land north and south of the railroad. Bikers would have to use the maintained trail that parallels the Minnehaha Creek and crosses under the train tracks. This trail is frequently flooded during the year because of high creek levels. This leads to potentially unsafe passage between the north and south sections of the park and could potentially encourage bikers (and walkers) to cross the train tracks, trespassing on the BNSF Railway property.

With only 29 usable acres to build mountain bike trails, the ratio of acres-per-mile would be too dense to support four miles of trail. The southern half of the park contains high quality natural areas. Potential trails would put pressure on the restored woodland in this area. Big Willow is not recommended as a potential stand-alone site or circuit of trails.

\*On January 30, 2018 staff received a petition regarding 'Mountain Bike Trails being considered at Big Willow Park'. This petition is attached.

### **Hilloway Park**

Hilloway is a medium sized community preserve that is tucked back into a secluded neighborhood. This park is relatively undeveloped and while it could provide mountain bike trail opportunities, it has a number of limitations. A network of high-use informal trails have been created throughout the park by walkers. These trails are up to six feet wide in locations and it would be difficult to avoid intersections with a mountain bike trail system. Further, very limited parking is available. There is no designated parking lot for this park. Adding mountain bike trails would inevitably bring in bikers who wish to drive to the destination. This would increase the number of cars parking on neighborhood streets. Patrons removing bikes from cars and gearing-up on the street would create safety concerns. Lastly, Hilloway could not sustain four plus miles of mountain bike trails on its own. In theory, it could be part of a circuit and support approximately two miles of trail.

### **Civic Center Park**

Civic Center is a special use community park that is host to large scale facilities, hiking trails and soccer fields. Civic Center has connectivity to the regional trail system, ample parking and opportunity to connect with other potential trail systems. However, with only 15 usable acres and environmental concerns, a trail of two miles or more would not sustainably fit within this small footprint. Also, it would be difficult to create a safe trail concept that does not displace or minimally intersect the maintained and high-use informal trails. A park with less than 20 useable acres should not be considered.

### **I-494 Corridor**

The I-494 Corridor is a parcel of city land on the west side of I-494 that narrowly stretches between I-394 and McGinty Road W. There is currently a maintained paved path that runs parallel to I-494. A mountain bike trail system could potentially run north on the east side of the maintained trail and turn back heading south on the west side of the maintained trail. It would be difficult to build a sustainable trail within this narrow footprint due to the topography. There are a few areas where slope gain could cause erosion issues and passage through low-land could be problematic. There are also areas where bikers would be detoured onto the maintained paved path before reentering a mountain bike trail. There is insufficient parking at this location.

### **Victoria Evergreen Park**

Victoria Evergreen is a relatively undeveloped community preserve tucked back in a quiet residential neighborhood. It has good topography to support mountain bike trails. However, there is already a network of maintained trails that circumnavigate the park. If mountain bike trails were built, it would be difficult to avoid intersecting the maintained trail. Parking is a concern with only 8 spots. The addition of trails would bring in more cars and lead to an increase of users parking on residential streets. Further, this park has limited usable acreage for trail development and could not sustain a trail system on its own. It is within close proximity of the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail, yet over a mile from another adequate park.

### **Purgatory Park**

Purgatory Park is a community preserve that stretches and intertwines within a number of neighborhoods between Excelsior Boulevard and Townline Road. While this park is rich in acreage, much of that acreage is low-land that would not be suitable for mountain bike trails. Four plus miles of mountain bike trail in 37 usable acres is too dense of an acres-per-mile ratio. Staff recommends a minimum 10:1 ratio (usable acres per mile). The 37 usable acres in the most southern section of the park could not support four plus miles of mountain bike trails on its own and there is not a viable park in close proximity to create a circuit.

Purgatory does not have adequate parking. There is a small lot in the northern section of the park that would require bikers to ride over a half mile on the maintained walking paths in order to access potential mountain bike trails in the southern section of the park. And Purgatory Park is more than two miles from a Minnesota River Bluffs regional trail.

There are also environmental concerns with building mountain bike trails in Purgatory Park. The ridges and hilly knolls that are desirable for bikers contain the high quality woodland areas south of the creek and the remnant prairie on the east side of the park. About 10 acres of hilly land located south of the high quality woodland areas could be utilized without compromising the restoration efforts, however this amount of land area is inadequate for a trail system.

Lastly, Purgatory Park is used heavily by off-leash dog walkers which poses a safety concern with bikers.

### **Lone Lake Park**

Lone Lake Park is a community park and preserve that has a soccer field, playground, tennis courts, picnic shelter, maintained trails and the addition of pickleball courts in 2018. A 0.6 mile paved path connects the park with the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail. With over 52 usable acres and ample parking, it is foreseeable that Lone Lake could support four plus miles of mountain bike trails on its own. This acres-per-mile ratio is similar to other mountain bike trail systems in the twin cities.

While there is a network of maintained trails throughout portions of the park, the usable land to be considered is located away from maintained trails. There are some low-use informal trails within the usable land that would require further research for possible displacement or intersection. Lastly, restoration projects have taken place throughout the years in Lone Lake and should be evaluated when aligning a potential trail system.

Lone Lake was evaluated once prior for the addition of mountain biking trails beginning in 2000. The Park Board supported the staff recommendation to deny the proposed mountain biking plan for reasons of cost, natural resource management and budget at the April 2001 regular meeting. Since that time Lone Lake has undergone other changes.

In 2007/8 Lone Lake Park underwent the Park Renewal Process as a result of the 2001 voter-approved Park and Open Space referendum. After an involved neighborhood and park board review process, changes were made to the park infrastructure resulting in an updated basketball court, dock structure, picnic shelter modifications, trail improvements, water quality investments, parking lot changes, entrance realignment to Shady Oak Road, athletic field improvements and erosion control improvements from the water tower. Mountain biking was not brought up during that input process.

In 2009 Lone Lake Park was evaluated as a potential location to establish a dog park in the south east corner of the park adjacent to Shady Oak Road and Bren Road. This would have established an off-leash area north of the parking lot accessed via Rowland Road, east of Whitewater Dr. This area was an old homestead north and east of the walking trail, approximately 500 feet into the park. During the March 9, 2009 park board review of an off-leash dog park, the board voted 3-1 to “exclude Lone Lake Park from consideration for a dog park location and continue to support the concept of adding a dog park to the park system by identifying alternative locations with reduced impacts on residential properties.”

As noted, over time Lone Lake Park has been a focal point for the addition of new amenities to the park and trail system. Construction of six to eight (depending on bids) pickleball courts is scheduled for 2018. The addition of this amenity will increase the number of park patrons as well as parking demands in this high-use community park.

### **Staff Recommendation**

By using the established criteria, staff recommends that Lone Lake Park be further studied as the site for potential mountain bike trails. Staff does not recommend any other park or open space be considered for mountain bike trails at this time.

If the park board recommends moving ahead with studying Lone Lake Park, the next steps in the process include:

- Establish a communication/notification plan
- Evaluate areas of environmental concern
- Create trail concept(s)
- Conduct community and neighborhood meeting(s) for public input
- Present study and concept(s) to the Park Board

### **Discussion Points:**

- **Does the park board agree with staff’s recommendation?**

**Recommended Park Board Action:** Receive and discuss the mountain biking report. Allow for public input. Provide staff direction on mountain bike trails in Minnetonka.

### **Attachments:**

Feedback provided to Staff

Feedback from Minnetonka Matters

Community Engagement Summary from WSB & Associates

Community Engagement Results from WSB & Associates

Twin Cities Mountain Bike Trails and Minnetonka Parks Comparison

Proposed Core Criteria Worksheet  
Park Board reports and minutes – 2000/2001 Lone Lake Park Mountain biking study  
Mountain Bike Trails being considered at Big Willow Park petition



## Mountain Biking Feedback

**May 25, 2017**

**From:** Haider, Lisa  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 25, 2017 6:58 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park and possible mountain bike trail

Hello,

I just learned about this proposed trail today in the Minnetonka Memo. I walked in Big Willow park daily all year long. This park is heavily trafficked by pedestrians. There are many casual trails throughout the park. I don't believe there is anywhere in the park where a bike trail wouldn't cross these trails. People regularly walk these trails often with their dogs and young children. In the summer, the line of sight on the trails is reduced greatly by the foliage. Occasionally, bike use these informal trails. Usually they are respectful of pedestrians, but several times I have seen bikers come off them at a high speed onto the formal trails nearly running down pedestrians. This park is used by small children and senior citizens. The new apartment development across the street has increased foot traffic.

Aside from the threat mountain bikes would pose to pedestrians, I am highly concerned about the impact on the wildlife in the park. In the park I have seen: mink, Kingfishers, Bald Eagles, Turkeys, woodchucks, Pileated Woodpeckers, Barred Owls, deer, snakes and several species of ducks. This park is on the woodland corridor that extends along the Minnehaha. There are also rare plant species in the park. I believe this area should be protected.

A further concern would be the railroad tracks that cross the park. There is only one trail that crosses under the railroad bridge. Encouraging further bike traffic on that trail would be a hazard to pedestrians.

Thank you,

Lisa Haider  
2550 Cedar Hills Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**June 7, 2017**

**From:** Jason Hicks  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 07, 2017 12:06 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Mtn Bike Trail Project

Hello Kelly,

Unfortunately my wife and I can not make the meeting tonight but we would like to express our support for mountain bike trail systems in Minnetonka. Our understanding is that the meeting tonight will provide information for trails at the civic center area and Big Willow. Please know that we very much enjoy mountain biking as a family (3 kids age 16, 14 and 11, all attend Mtk schools), as do many in the greater Minnetonka schools community. Mountain bikers and cyclists in general care very much about our natural resources and as a group, in general, are strong stewards of protecting the natural environment we bike past, through and around. Therefore, it is rare in my experience, that someone MTB riding single track through a wild area would ever consider disrespecting the natural environment he/she is biking through. It is also a motorless sport, therefore sound pollution is not a concern. Clearly this sort of recreation has been successful in many locations (Theo Wirth, Lebanon Hills, Murphy-Hanrehan, Elm Creek, Lake Rebecca, Cayuna, etc., etc, with minimal environmental impact.

We also look forward to being involved in this process in the future, to whatever extent we as a family are able and allowed. For years we've been hoping for some mountain biking terrain in the Minnetonka area. Often, Carver Park in Victoria/St. Bonifacius has been discussed by many as the ideal location further west, however a location in Minnetonka would be fantastic. It seems that both locations could vastly serve the local economy well, also. Please include us in the "very much in support" camp at the meeting tonight, and I'm sorry we will have to miss-out.

Kind Regards,

Jason and Nicole Hicks  
5565 Harding Ln  
Shorewood, MN 55331

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**From:** Pamela Anderson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 07, 2017 2:31 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** proposed off road bike trails in Big Willow

Dear Kelly,  
I read in the Sun Sailor that the city of Minnetonka is considering adding off road bike trails to Big Willow Park.

We have lived in Minnetonka since 1980, when the walking/bike trails were trail lines. We formed a group of concerned citizens requesting a bike/walking trail for those lines once they were no longer being used for trains. We succeeded in getting approval from the county and the city for the wonderful trail that many now use. We have always been in favor of a safe place away from traffic for people to get out and exercise and enjoy nature at the same time.

Big Willow Park is one of the most beautiful treasures left in the city of Minnetonka. It is one of the few places that you can go and not have speeding bikes or cars next to you. When you walk the narrow trails off the main trails within the park, you can actually imagine that you are no longer in the suburbs. It's nice to have a place where you can slow down in such a hectic world and be with nature.

Now with the large senior complex that was built right across the street from the parking lot for Big Willow, there is increased foot traffic and an increase in people walking with pets.

It would be a tragedy to have off road biking in that particular park. I know of many other walkers/joggers in the area that are not happy with the idea of changing Big Willow. We all use those narrow paths in addition to the main paths. Sometimes you don't want to walk or jog on a big wide path with others, but need to have some solitude.

There are a lot of Big Willow trail users that are not aware of the plan to include off road biking in the park. If you were to survey people in the area, you would find that many people would be against it.

Please consider the uniqueness of Big Willow before making any decisions to change it.

Thank you so much!!!

Pam and Brad Anderson

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Sent from [Outlook](#)  
**From:** Ari Tapper  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 07, 2017 9:37 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** New mountain bike trails

Mr. O'dea, I was at the meeting this evening pertaining to the construction of the mountain bike single track trails in civic center and big willow parks and I would like to comment on a few points made against the construction of trails during the meeting. I am a local resident who is involved with the Minnetonka High School MTB team and I completed my Eagle Project for the Carver Lake Park trails. In response to the issue of invasive species, I would like to point out that creating these trails draws in a community with a vested interest in keeping the area clear of invasive species such as Buckthorn. Mountain Bikers also like to keep our bikes clean and looking nice; keeping the bike clean is also a maintenance task that is done to preserve the life of many parts of the bike, this means that seeds being stuck to tires are not an issue. On the issue of wildlife, I have been forced to stop short on the LRT several times because of wildlife, despite the incredible number of users on those trails. I have also seen plenty of wildlife on existing trails and even at races where there are almost a thousand people in the area around the trail during the event. On the issue of the suggested alternate locations, the 494 corridor is a poor spot to place a trail because it is hard to access by car and because it is a poor area to build a mountain biking loop. The other suggestion brought up in absentia in a horse pasture is poor because it is flat and uninteresting to ride and the scenery is boring. On the issue of length, a half mile trail of a high-quality trail will draw in more riders than 10 miles of poor trail. Finally, I would like to address the specific issues related to the mountain bike teams, riding to an easily accessible off-road trail would be extremely helpful to the teams because there is a significant difficulty in coordinating the logistics of getting all of our riders out to trails, such as Theodore Wirth, during rush hour and when many parents are working.

I would urge you to consider these points and bear in mind of what these trails would do for the community.

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Ari Tapper

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**June 8, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From: Elizabeth Glover  
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2017 11:07 AM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: Off Road bike trails in Big Willow Park

Hello,

I am a resident of Minnetonka and an avid leisure bicyclist. I enjoy biking on the many trails that are available to me throughout the metro area (and beyond). I am not, however, interested in the city of Minnetonka expanding its trails to include off road mountain bike trails. I think there are other options off-road bikers can access and use. I have no interest in watching the degradation of the park and trails that citizens have worked to hard to restore.

I ask that you continue to preserve and protect the current ambience, tranquility and beauty of Big Willow Park by keeping the park as it is.

Best regards,  
Liz Glover

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**From:** Gayle Werner

**Sent:** Thursday, June 08, 2017 9:57 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Proposed mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park

Dear Councilman Wagner, Recreation Service Director O'Dea, and Mayer Schneider,

I learned this week of the proposal to turn Big Willow into a mountain biking park. As a frequent walker in the park, I oppose this proposal as it appears that it would change this beautiful park in ways that would threaten the landscape, the native plants, and the wildlife in the park.

Big Willow was recognized by the Jaycees International and named the best environmental project in the United States back in the '70s after restoration of this land. This pristine natural area is still a gem, and a wonderful retreat at the end of a busy day.

I saw the proposed trail map and was shocked at how much of the park the trails would cover. My worry is that mountain bike trails would be hard on the native plants in the park, and could cause serious erosion problems. The wildlife in the park would also be threatened by bikers whizzing through the park. I noticed, too, that the proposed bike trails share and cross the walking trails in many spots. I have walked through the meadows to the south of the creek many times; it appears that the bikes would go through that area, too. Parents bring their kids, and many residents bring their dogs on walks along the Big Willow trail. Bike traffic on and across the trails would be very disruptive.

I hope that the city council will see that allowing Big Willow to be changed in such a fundamental way is a major threat to one of the best parts of our city.

Regards,  
Gayle Werner

2745 Meadow Place  
Minnetonka, MN

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-----Original Message-----

From: Janet  
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2017 10:59 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: Big willow biking

Hi Kelly, I have been a resident in the big willow area since 1977, and have enjoyed the area, I do not agree with put in mountain biking in the big willow park, it is very nice to walk along in the quite and not worry about biking that would not be good for the environment, we have a great park area and would like it to stay that way,

Janet Edwards  
Orchard Road

Sent from my iPad

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-----Original Message-----

From: Patricia Herbert  
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2017 11:55 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: Big Willow

I've been a resident of Mtka since 1963 and raised my family here. Big Willow is the only peaceful place to walk. When my husband died we knew that the one place we wanted a bench was in Big Willow overlooking the Creek where he took morning strolls birding in Big Willow. Years ago, I don't remember how many, I was active in the Trails for Tonka group. Now there are plenty of trails but I think there has to be better organization for the ones we have. For instance, bikers consistently hold up traffic on Minnetonka Blvd when there are bike trails on the sides. i know this is because the walker/runners don't like them whizzing by but I think with better planning we can better organize what we have. I have

witnessed two near accidents with bikers on Mtka. Blvd. Do we have to wait for someone to be killed? But the last thing we need is bikes zooming through Big Willow. Please keep that parkland the peaceful treasure it is. Sincerely, Trish Herbert (and keep me informed)

.....  
**June 9, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Friday, June 09, 2017 11:38 AM

To: Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Mountain Biking in Big Willow

Hi:

I urge you to turn down the proposal to turn Big Willow Park into a mountain biking park.

I have lived in Minnetonka for 38 years; and always walked - and continue to walk - in Big Willow. I appreciate the natural, beautiful, and serene quality of the park. I fear that increasing the bike traffic in that park would change the quality of the park significantly.

Also I am concerned from a safety standpoint. From the proposed map, it appears there are places where the walking paths and bike paths would be in common. Because of the difference in speed, and potential unawareness, I feel there could be injuries.

Please vote no on this proposal.

Sincerely

Mary Jo Bartos

12201 Minnetonka Blvd Unit 206

Minnetonka MN. 55305

.....  
-----Original Message-----

From: Joyce Mundahl

Sent: Friday, June 09, 2017 12:00 PM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Bike trails proposal for Big Willow

Dear Kelly,

I am writing in opposition to the proposal to put off-road bike trails in Big Willow Park. We have lived near Big Willow for 25 years and love walking on the trails. It is a gem with beautiful sounds of nature - singing birds, the babbling creek and the rustling of the leaves on trees. It so tranquil and peaceful - an ideal place to enjoy Mother Nature. This place needs to be protected from the intrusion of fast loud mountain bikes, and the crowds of bike clubs that will likely steal the ambience of such a unique and special place.

Please leave it alone. Once you change it, there won't be any going back. Please consider another location in Minnetonka that can provide for the bikers without upsetting the delicate balance of nature at Big Willow.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Joyce Mundahl

3601 Prestige Lane

Minnetonka, MN 55305

Sent from my iPad  
.....

-----Original Message-----

From:  
Sent: Friday, June 09, 2017 12:39 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: Big Willow

I feel strongly that Big Willow should be left as it is. It is one of the treasures that make Minnetonka a special place to live!

Sent from my iPhone

.....  
**From:** Carol Allis  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 12:51 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Proposed mountain biking park

Hello -- I am a new constituent of yours; my husband and I just moved into Applewood Pointe across from Big Willow. I have lived in Minnetonka for more than a decade. We are absolutely opposed to turning Big Willow into a mountain biking park. A huge factor influencing our decision to move here (besides finding decent, affordable senior housing in Minnetonka) is the park. We go almost daily to walk there. The vision of undoing decades of restoration of native plants; damaging the woody, natural setting; and creating distress to wildlife is unthinkable.

We have enough trouble not being mowed down by bikers on the county bike path behind us. I am a biker myself (a hybrid trail bike, BTW). We are an active senior living community (there are approximately 148 seniors here), and you'll find at least one bike in almost every car stall. There are avid bikers here. But we are also avid walkers. The last thing we want is for high traffic by bikers -- often at high and reckless speed -- destroying the beautiful park across the road.

What on earth are you all thinking?!

This is the first we have heard of this plan -- you can count on us to be attending any future meetings. How do we receive notification? (I do currently get the Minnetonka newsletter -- assume hearings will be listed there?)

.....  
**From:** Holly Bayer  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 1:30 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Bike Trails

Hi Kelly,

Emailing you to voice my opinion about the proposal to add off-road bike trails to Big Willow park.

While I am a huge fan and advocate of biking opportunities I agree with those in opposition to this proposal. Big Willow is a very small park, with few parking opportunities. The increased use of this park for off-road biking would be impactful to the few residential streets and the tiny parking lot. Further, I know a lot of time and resources have been spent in caring for the wildlife and vegetation in this park. To add off-road bike trails here seems like a waste of those resources and the impact they've had in restoring Big Willow.

Additionally, it's a great place, close to home to run or walk in nature. We're spoiled with hundreds of miles of biking opportunities. Let's use those instead...

Thanks for reading!

Holly

**Holly Bayer, ASID**

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**From:** Niedorf, Marcia E.  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 1:45 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** PLEASE KEEP BIG WILLOW

We live in Minnetonka and my son played baseball at Big Willow for years. It is a beautiful and special area that hopefully will be preserved!!

Thank you,

Marcia Niedorf

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Carolyn Carpenter  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 2:25 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow park

Please reconsider your plan for biking in Big Willow. It wouldn't add a thing and would be quite detrimental. (We have a Wayzata address but are actually in Minnetonka.)

Carolyn Carpenter  
2220 Springwood Rd.  
Wayzata 55391

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Linda Bauchwitz  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 2:32 PM  
**To:** Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Willow Park/Mountain Bike trail

Good afternoon,

My husband and I live at Applewood Pointe of Minnetonka which is directly across from this park. We were very upset to hear that these trails may be turned into a mountain bike trail. We frequent this trail often for the specific reason that there are fewer bikes than most trails and for the natural beauty and quiet of these trails. It was one of the reasons we chose this location to move to from our previous home in Maple Grove of 26 years.

We truly hope that you preserve this oasis of beauty and tranquility in the heart of our neighborhood. Our residence houses about 150 people and we see many of them utilizing this gorgeous environment and the comments are always about how peaceful, beautiful and natural it is.

Thank-you for your time,

Linda and Dennis Bauchwitz  
12201 Minnetonka Blvd. #216

[Linda Bauchwitz](#)

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**From:** gregandmaryellen  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 2:54 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Big Willow

We are residents of the new Applewood Pointe condo across from Big Willow park. We utilize the trails there on an almost daily basis in good weather. It provided a safe walking area for the over 150 residents of Applewood. There presently are few bikes using the trails, as opposed to the bike path south of Minnetonka Blvd. On that trail, Bikes travel at high speeds -- not good for older walkers !!! Big Willow is for us, good trails and no fast bike traffic.

There are plenty of trails for bikers, Mountain bikes would go off the trails and destroy much of the beauty and serenity of Big Willow.

Help " SAVE BIG WILLOW"

Sincerely

Greg/Maryellen Lee

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**From:** Christopher Magnine  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 3:28 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow MTB trails

Hi Kelly

There seems to be a big to-do regarding the proposed mountain bike trails at Big Willow Park. I just wanted to write you a note to let you know I fully support the proposal. If there's any other opportunity to voice my opinion, please let me know.

Thanks,

Chris Magnine

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Sandra Lewandowski  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 4:13 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Proposed bike trails in Big Willow Park

I am writing this email to express my strong negative feelings about the proposed bike trails in Big Willow Park. As a 40 year resident on 12523 Creek Road West with 3.5 acres that adjoin the park, I cannot tell you how upset I am about this proposition. It is already difficult as the days warm when bicycles speed by pedestrians without voice signals to indicate that they are passing. I have nearly collided with bikes many times when their speeds exceed 10-2- miles per hour. It is a nature park with many years of effort going into removing buckthorn and expanding wildflowers. Now the possibility of having excessive bike traffic (mountain or trail), I am certain that quiet natural atmosphere will be significantly diminished.

In addition, I have worked with the city to divert the current bike traffic off my property. And yet, I still have bikes and dogs running through my property on occasion.

It isn't that I don't support multiple recreational opportunities. However, is a natural parkland the correct spot for this type of activity? And where will these bikers park. We have a small cut out for cars at the end of Creek Rd West. It is often full. Where will the additional cars park?



Please re-consider this proposal.

Sandra Lewandowski  
12523 Creek Rd West  
Minnetonka, Mn 55305

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**From:** Weiser, Elizabeth  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 4:28 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park

Please, please keep Big Willow Park as is...it's beautiful and it means a lot to residents in the area.

**Elizabeth Buie**  
**Rutledge Circle**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 4:30 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow

Hi Kelly,

I walk at Big Willow all the time.

Hard to see how the area and the parking would accommodate biking.

Who should I contact to make my concerns known.

Thanks

Kathleen Kennedy

3508 Arbor Lane

Minnetonka, Mn 55305

(How about Purgatory. It is larger and has many more parking spots)

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**From:** Alpha Beta  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 4:40 PM  
**To:** Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain Biking proposal for Big Willow Park

Mr. Ellingson and Mr. Wagner,

We have become aware of a proposal to create a mountain bike park in Big Willow Park, and are strongly opposed to this plan.

We are residents of Applewood Pointe of Minnetonka, located across the street from Big Willow Park. As you may know, this is a senior co-operative with approximately 150 residents. One of the main reasons we chose to move to Applewood was because of its location across from Big Willow, and we (and dozens of other Applewood residents) frequent the park many times a week. This is a beautiful amenity for the city of Minnetonka, and we have been pleased to see that so many people take advantage of this opportunity to be in nature. We have been further pleased to see so many native wildflowers within the

park. Clearly, much work has been done in the park to diminish invasive plants, allowing native plants to return to the landscape.

Putting mountain bike trails throughout the park, would create a great deal of plant disruption and erosion. It would certainly disrupt the peacefulness of the park, which would also adversely affect wildlife. Additionally, much dust would be produced by fast moving bikes, that those of use trying to enjoy a walk would have to endure. We feel strongly that we must protect and maintain these natural forest areas within our city that give us places to escape the noise and clamor of city living.

We are not opposed to establishing a mountain biking area in Minnetonka. Indeed, we are happy to see people being active and getting out in nature; however, **we strongly believe that this type of activity does not belong in one of the jewels of Minnetonka's park system.**

We understand that this proposal is currently working its way through the Park Board and have voiced our concerns to Kelly O'Dea, Recreation Services Director (whom we have copied on this email). As residents of Ward 1, and regular users of Big Willow Park, we also wanted you to understand our concerns.

Thank you,

Mary and Dave Goehle

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**From:** Kelly Rogers  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 4:56 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big willow park

I oppose a mountain bike trail at big willow park. The park isn't made to handle that type of use. We all know that there are bikers that will stay on the trail, but a lot won't. The erosion this will cause will destroy the natural beauty and all the efforts that have been made to keep the erosion under control. I would agree that a mountain bike trail would be great for the community, I am just not sure that Big Willow is a park that can handle this type of activity.

Thank you,

Kelly Rogers

Minnetonka resident

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-----Original Message-----  
**From:** Nancy Rauen  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 5:03 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain biking

Dear Kelly,  
I would like to comment on the feasibility study to allow mountain biking at Big Willow Park. I walk my dog there quite often and believe that having riders popping onto the main trail from the off trail paths would be very dangerous for walkers....especially now that there is a new senior residence across the street. Walking and mountain biking in the same area is definitely not compatible. Off trail biking has been discouraged at Purgatory park, why would it be allowed in a much smaller park?  
Nancy Rauen

Sent from my iPhone

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**June 10, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From: Nancy

Sent: Saturday, June 10, 2017 11:03 AM

To: Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Mountain biking at Big Willow Park

I have been walking the trails at Big Willow for over 30 years and definitely do not think mountain biking trails are a good idea. Over the years the only trouble I have encountered is with bikers going too fast on the trails. They have narrowly missed running into me several times. In one instant the biker had to slam on the brakes and ending up falling right in front of me. Also, the amount of foot traffic has been steadily increasing. There are many dog walkers, mothers with children, groups of children from the nearby daycare, and elderly people besides just walkers. Since Applepoint has opened on Minnetonka Boulevard there has been a significant increase in elderly walkers. I know bikers would ruin Big Willows' peaceful trails for the walkers and significantly increase dangerous encounters between walkers and bikers. Finally, I have noticed significant trail erosion due to bikers. In several places there are bike ruts which make walking more difficult. Please do not approve mountain biking at Big Willow Park!

Nancy Fremont

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-----Original Message-----

From: Karen

Sent: Saturday, June 10, 2017 11:08 AM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Big Willow Park path

Dear Kelly,

After recently learning that Minnetonka is considering adding several miles of off-road bike paths to Big Willow Park path, I knew I needed to write to you.

This greatly concerns me as I view that path as a real gem of solace in Mtka. It is one of the only areas as you can truly get some peace and quiet and connect with nature in this area. In addition I know they are trying to preserve and grow native plants there.

I do not think it would be a good use of taxpayer money to put biking paths in there. But more importantly, I believe it would completely ruin the tranquility of that area. I'm really hoping the city does not move forward with this.

Thank you for your consideration of my input in this matter.

Sincerely,

Karen Frothinger

.....

-----Original Message-----

From: Laurie Rashedi

Sent: Saturday, June 10, 2017 2:32 PM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Big willow park

I am not in favor of making the changes to support the bike trails and I certainly hope you will consider the impact it will have to those of us that are walkers and feel like the bikes have taken over.

I appreciate your consideration and hope that you will not support these changes. Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Brent Erickson  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 10, 2017 3:31 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Biking Park?

I'm writing to express my feelings about a proposed bike park in Big Willow park.

My feeling is that this dramatic change in the existing use of the park will be a big negative for the Minnetonka community. The park currently caters primarily to citizens of Minnetonka. A change to a bike park would bring in many people outside the city who are not paying taxes in Minnetonka. Also, the tenor and character of the park would change dramatically for the worse. The park is used by citizens who are walking/running/dog walking/bike with families - and this use is not sparse or infrequent. Changing the use would deprive the citizens of the current usage of the park, and would create an overcrowded mixture of uses. That would be an extremely bad outcome.

I'm in favor of expanding the uses of land in Minnetonka, but not at the significant expense of the current use and users. Trying to add a bike park seems to be the classic situation of - lets find a solution when there really isn't a problem.

Please don't allow Big Willow to be converted to a bike park - it's not in the character of the park or the ideals of Minnetonka citizens. Thanks...

Brent Erickson

11590 Cedar Pass

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**From:** Gayle Middlestaedt  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 10, 2017 4:04 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park

We were just made aware of the proposal to make Big Willow into a Mountain Bike Park. We would like to be counted among those who strongly oppose this idea.

We are residents of Applewood Pointe on Minnetonka Boulevard. Applewood is a large community of seniors and many of us walk regularly for exercise and to enjoy the beauty that surrounds us. Although we have the walking trail behind our building and use it often, the bicycle traffic on that trail requires that everyone be very careful not to get mowed down by a fast-moving bike. We use the paths across the street in Big Willow Park because it is beautiful and because it is essentially bicycle-free.

Please do everything possible to discourage this new plan. Don't let the bicyclers ruin one of the significant perks of living in our beautiful new home.

Thank you

Jack & Gayle Middlestaedt

12201 Minnetonka Boulevard, Unit 214

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**June 11, 2017**

**From:** Claudia Gundlach  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 11, 2017 11:52 AM

**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnettonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnettonka.com>  
**Subject:** Proposed Mountain Bike Trails

Hi, I got a note from a neighbor about the Mountain bike trails proposal, I have attached a letter with my concerns. if you can not open it let me know, I can send another way.

thanks,

Claudia Gundlach

June 10, 2017

Dear Tony Wagner, Kelly O'Dea and others concerned,

In regard to the proposed Mountain Bike Trails in Big Willow Park, in this must be the beginning phase of planning I hope the city will actively pursue input from park users and those who live adjacent to Big Willow since such a large change of use will affect us, I found out about this proposal from an anonymous note.

As I look at the map of proposed Mountain Bike trails I am struck by the amount of park area these new trails will use and that the proposed area to be developed into a sport trail will only use the Natural area of Big Willow Park and none of the developed area. The entire park is only 95 acres; (very small compared to other Minnesota parks with mountain bike trails). This trail system appears to use over 40 acres of land and leaves no more than 50 to 150 feet between trails, leaving only the wetland of the park untouched.

I believe the trails will interfere with established current uses. Big Willow Park is a beautiful, sensitive natural wetland area with multiple uses, softball and soccer fields play equipment, service buildings, and 40 acre or so area of natural habitat along Minnehaha Creek, the LTR bike trail runs through it and it welcomes many walkers, runners and bicyclists, the occasional equestrians, as well as birders and people who just like to enjoy being in nature, and catching a glimpse of wildlife. I think this proposal asks too much of the land, and the park does not have the space for the conflicting use of an extreme sport.

If we develop the land between the existing bike trails we will lose the habitat needed to support the diverse wildlife living in Big Willow now. Most animals are proximity sensitive, that is when they sense the presence of people they flee to safety, and are not likely to return after a couple encounters.

What will the impact be for wildlife? Great Herons and Bald Eagles nest in Big Willow Park as well as, egrets, owls, and many other birds, deer, mink, river otters, and many water reliant mammals use this land. The trails can alter the existing fauna and flora, chasing away the quiet beauty in this park.

There is also a concern for the conservation of the land and soil next to a wetland, mountain biking or any new trails will degrade the soil and vegetation leading to erosion.

Has the park board considered other less ecologically sensitive environments for this sport? Perhaps a park with more developed areas, and not adjacent to wetlands.

What are the safety implications for pedestrians?

Given the likelihood of vegetation damage, soil compaction, possible damage to structures culverts, etc., and erosion of creek banks, from slightly off trail riding, who pays for repairs?

What are the costs of maintenance?

There is probably a code of desired behavior for the sport but who will enforce it?

What are number of people who participate, will formal races be held, or just informal? Will there be other activities? How will this impact parking at park entrances.

How many people will use these trails? What time of day? Which seasons?

Can the new trails be used by other sports?

What percentage of the population participates in this sport? Is it a good use of resources?

What is the expected lifespan of this sport( longer than jazzercise, but shorter than golf), could an old golf course be used since golf is losing popularity?

How easy will it be to restore the land when users have moved on? It is a fact that once the resource is gone it is nearly impossible to regain natural space.

Thank you for your attention,

Claudia Gundlach

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**From:** Ruth Abbott  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 11, 2017 1:26 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park Proposal

Dear Kelly,

I am a senior resident of Applewood Pointe which is a senior coop across the street from Big Willow Park. I purchased my home solely because of the beautiful Big Willow park. When I lived in Plymouth, I would drive there just for the beautiful walk.

I have a 4 lb Maltese dog. I have tried walking the bike path behind me but find it is just too dangerous, especially on the weekends. The bikes come through at such a rapid pace and without notice. I could easily be hit.

I am extremely concerned about the park board proposal to turn Big Willow Park into a Mountain Biking Park. Maybe it's about time walkers are given consideration.

There are 88 other residents of my building who feel the same way. I don't think it is fair to take a park meant for the enjoyment of all and make it into a special interest park.

For these reasons, I strongly protest making Big Willow Park into a Mountain Biking Park.

Ruth Abbott, #122  
Applewood Pointe  
12201 Minnetonka Blvd  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**June 12, 2017**

**From:** Marsha Wiest-Hines  
**Sent:** Monday, June 12, 2017 10:33 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** About the proposed bike trails In Big Willow

Big Willow is a unique and valuable resource. Quiet and calm. I fear the proposed off-road biking trails would turn it into the mayhem of Wirth. If you have not been there on a Sunday, visit for yourself. It's dangerous, loud, and fast, and exacts a toll on the terrain. Please preserve the beauty we have. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Marsha Wiest-Hines

2201 Windsor Lake Drive

Minnetonka, MN

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-----Original Message-----

From: Bill & Ginny Burgart

Sent: Monday, June 12, 2017 2:55 PM

To: Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Mountain biking in Big Willow

Hi Bob Ellingson and Kelly Odea,

Please oppose the use of Big Willow for mountain biking.

We moved to Applewood Pointe from Rochester, MN in March. One of the reasons we chose to move here was having Big Willow park across the street from us. We love walking in the park and seeing the birds, wildflowers and the natural habitat. It is peaceful and we feel safe walking there. We don't want to lose this and hope to continue enjoying the park for many years to come.

We feel that mountain biking would cause erosion and destroy some of the plants and beauty of the park.

Thank you,  
Bill and Ginny Burgart  
12201 Minnetonka Blvd. #419  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**June 13, 2017**

**From:** Patrick Nigon

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 13, 2017 7:41 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Proposed Mountain Bike Trail

Hello Kelly and Tony,

I am writing in regards to the proposed mountain bike trail at Willow Park.

I see that this topic is already becoming heated and I've seen arguments against the trail such as massive amounts of bike traffic, wildlife fleeing for calmer environs, introduction of invasive species due to seeds carried by mountain bike tires, erosion problems, and undoing the large amount of volunteer work that has been performed at the park over years - all of these leading to the destruction of the peaceful setting of Willow Park.

I ask that you weigh the evidence more than the emotions when it comes to these claims. I feel the invasive species argument is no more valid against mountain biking than it is against hiking boots or shoes. Bike tires are made to shed mud and it's also in the best interest of bikers to clean tires when they

become built up with mud - tires don't have traction when they are clogged and it also adds unnecessary weight to the bike. I believe it is common practice to clean dirty bikes between rides.

Erosion can happen on improperly constructed trails. Area trails like Lebanon Hills in Eagan, Murphy Hanrehan in Savage, Elm Creek in Maple Grove, Theodore Wirth in Minneapolis and Lake Rebecca in Rockford all used to be mostly cross country ski trails and other multi use trails that mountain bikes were allowed on. I grew up mountain biking in the metro area in the early 90s and these trails used to get rutted and washed out often. However, MORC (Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists) has reconstructed these trails using proper trail building techniques and it is a much smaller issue than in the past. To prevent erosion these trails are closed during times when trails are the most fragile such as during the spring thaw and after heavy rains. Proper trail construction and usage policy can drastically reduce erosion problems.

I believe that you will also find that mountain bikers make great volunteers and are mostly a good group of environmental stewards. All of the trails I mentioned above and several more in the metro area were built and are maintained by volunteers. These volunteers are taught about proper trail construction and maintenance and have also helped with causes such as removing invasive species. Mountain bikers want to bike in beautiful wooded areas and do not wish to destroy our city's peaceful settings.

I am no longer an active mountain biker but I would like the opportunity for my children to be if they so choose. I think that having mountain bike trails in our beautiful city would enhance livability and provide yet another reason for the younger generations to get outside and experience the joy of playing in the woods. Mountain biking added a great deal to my life - I traveled to beautiful areas of our country that I otherwise wouldn't have seen and it made me more interested in things like preservation, geology, ecology and wildlife

Maybe Willow Park isn't the best place for a mountain bike trail in Minnetonka, but maybe it is - I believe that there are people more knowledgeable about feasibility than I. There are people against the trail that seem to be basing most of their arguments on emotions, which means they love their park but it does not mean that they have open minds about this topic. I ask that you listen to the knowledgeable folks and weigh the facts, please look past claims based on fear and emotion.

Best Regards,

Patrick Nigon

10209 Kingman Lane

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**From:** Tracey Svoboda

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 13, 2017 9:24 AM

**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow Preserve

Kelly and Tony,

I've been a resident of Minnetonka since 2004 and enjoy my daily walks through the preserve. It saddens me that there is a proposal to turn Big Willow into a mountain bike park. I can understand why the bikers would like to enjoy this as well, its a wonderful preserve.

My concern is that once Big Willow is turned into the biking trail it will loose much of the beauty of the native plants not to mention the volunteer work that goes along with maintaining the park in removing invasive plants.

I will also contact my council person to voice my concern to them as well. Thank you for your time in letting me voice my opinion.



Kindest Regards,

Tracey Svoboda

11314 Minnetonka Blvd

Minnetonka

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**June 14, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeff Muus

Sent: Wednesday, June 14, 2017 8:41 AM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: NO to Big Willow Mountain Bike Trail

Hello

Erosion, litter, noise, people coming from miles around to tear up a rare quiet wooded multi-use area. Out walking with friends or your dog and having bikes racing downhill toward you. Each trail to become a ever widening washed out gully with a dirt delta at the bottom. Initial Cost? Upkeep? Liability? Who pays 5 years from now? Rules? Enforced by whom?

Please NO

Jeff Muus

2211 Windsor Lake Drive

Minnetonka, MN 55305

Sent from somewhere at sometime with something in the usual manner

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**June 15, 2017**

**From:** Kim Nelson

**Sent:** Thursday, June 15, 2017 10:30 AM

**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Proposed Mountain Biking Park

Dear Tony and Kelly,

I recently found out about the proposal to turn Big Willow Park into a mountain biking park and I would like to urge you to stop it. It's quite unbelievable to me that such a proposal would even be considered. The park was set aside for preservation for the entire city, not a special interest group.

It is one of the best preserved and pristine parks in the entire area and it should continue to be available for all residents. (My husband and I have been walking those paths for 20 years.) The city bought up the land and houses along the creek to beautify and pull together that entire strip, and I don't understand why the city would then take that beautiful park away from the majority of residents. The park should first serve the citizens of Minnetonka, and not the mountain bikers from surrounding communities.

**Please don't do this!!!**

Sincerely,

Kim Nelson

3430 Robinwood Terrace  
Minnetonka

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-----Original Message-----

From: Hilary Cheeley  
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2017 1:43 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: In favor of mountain bike trail - Big Willow

Hi Kelly,

I just wanted to voice my opinion that I am IN FAVOR of a mountain bike trail at Big Willow.

Thanks for all you do,

Hilary Cheeley  
19175 Rutledge Road  
Deephaven, MN 55391

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**From:** Haider, Lisa  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 15, 2017 8:55 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; jdurbin@eminnetonka.com;  
nevenrud@eminnetonka.com; cgabler@eminnetonka.com; ckist@eminnetonka.com;  
pkvan@eminnetonka.com; Mseveland@eminnetonka.com; cwalick@eminnetonka.com; Perry Vetter  
<pvetter@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Big Willow Park and possible mountain bike trail

Below is a copy of the email I sent regarding the proposed mountain bike trail at Big Willow Park. I continue to be highly concerned about the environment and social impact of this proposed trail. I use this park daily along with many other people. We walk the trails, both the formal and informal trails. Over the years, I have come to know this park quite well and because it is on the Minnehaha creek corridor, it is home to many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. I have seen mink, bald eagles, pileated woodpeckers, king fishers, song birds, various grass snakes and several species of frogs along with the more commonly found species. The proposed trail impacts the natural environments of all of these species and repeated crosses the animals trails within the park. The trail supporters anticipate between 40 to 50 riders daily through this area with higher use when teams practice. This use would have a significant detrimental effect on the wildlife and environment of the park.

I'm also very concerned about the safety of the pedestrians who visit the park daily along with the formal trail, there are many informal walking trails in the park which are used daily. The proposed trail crosses these trails repeatedly. Pedestrians and bikers don't mix well and will lead to liability issues for the city. The following is a statement by Ben Marks from the Sun Sailor article, "The trails will be narrow, well-maintained dirt paths that follow the contours of the natural geography, designed exclusively for mountain bike use. Marks said the single-track trails will not only provide interesting terrain for riders but also help manage traffic from other sources, such as joggers, families, or pets. "These trails will be built specifically for mountain bike use. Frankly, they're more fun to ride and safer that way. And there's less conflict with other user groups. If mountain bikers are on the trail with hikers or dog walkers, etc., there can be some problems with mixed use." The proposed trail crosses all of the trails currently used by pedestrians in the park daily, so you will be taking away access to areas currently regularly used by residents. Along with this issue, there are many times when the proposed trail comes very close to the established formal trail and/or uses or crosses it. How can you guarantee the safety of pedestrians either through the natural wooded areas or on the trail? The trail is currently used by people of all ages including senior citizens, small children and pets.

Have you considered the impact on neighbors of the park? There are several apartment buildings and single family residences which would be impacted by this traffic. How will you keep bikers from trespassing on private property? Are these proposed bikers actual taxpayers in Minnetonka? The people currently adjacent to the park and using the park on a regular basis are. Have you considered the rights of these people? I have lived in Minnetonka since 1988. I have owned a house here since 1994.

As a neighbor and patron of the park, I ask you not to locate a mountain bike trail here. I respect the value of a bike trail, but I feel the environmental impact and the residential impact on this particular park is too great.

Thank you,

Lisa Haider

2550 Cedar Hills Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55305

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Haider, Lisa

**Date:** Thu, May 25, 2017 at 6:58 PM

**Subject:** Big Willow Park and possible mountain bike trail

**To:** [kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)

Hello,

I just learned about this proposed trail today in the Minnetonka Memo. I walked in Big Willow park daily all year long. This park is heavily trafficked by pedestrians. There are many casual trails throughout the park. I don't believe there is anywhere in the park where a bike trail wouldn't cross these trails. People regularly walk these trails often with their dogs and young children. In the summer, the line of sight on the trails is reduced greatly by the foliage. Occasionally, bike use these informal trails. Usually they are respectful of pedestrians, but several times I have seen bikers come off them at a high speed onto the formal trails nearly running down pedestrians. This park is used by small children and senior citizens. The new apartment development across the street has increased foot traffic.

Aside from the threat mountain bikes would pose to pedestrians, I am highly concerned about the impact on the wildlife in the park. In the park I have seen: mink, Kingfishers, Bald Eagles, Turkeys, woodchucks, Pileated Woodpeckers, Barred Owls, deer, snakes and several species of ducks. This park is on the woodland corridor that extends along the Minnehaha. There are also rare plant species in the park. I believe this area should be protected.

A further concern would be the railroad tracks that cross the park. There is only one trail that crosses under the railroad bridge. Encouraging further bike traffic on that trail would be a hazard to pedestrians.

Thank you,

Lisa Haider

2550 Cedar Hills Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55305

.....  
**From:** Haider, Lisa

**Sent:** Thursday, June 15, 2017 9:13 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park and possible mountain bike trail

I continue to be highly concerned about the environment and social impact of this proposed trail. I use this park daily along with many other people. We walk the trails, both the formal and informal trails. Over the years, I have come to know this park quite well and because it is on the Minnehaha creek corridor, it is home to many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. I have seen mink, bald eagles, pileated woodpeckers, king fishers, song birds, various grass snakes and several species of frogs along with the more commonly found species. The proposed trail impacts the natural environments of all of these species and repeated crosses the animals trails within the park. The trail supporters anticipate between 40 to 50 riders daily through this area with higher use when teams practice. This use would have a significant detrimental effect on the wildlife and environment of the park.

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Have you considered the impact on neighbors of the park? There are several apartment buildings and single family residences which would be impacted by this traffic. How will you keep bikers from trespassing on private property? Are these proposed bikers actual taxpayers in Minnetonka? The people currently adjacent to the park and using the park on a regular basis are. Have you considered the rights of these people? I have lived in Minnetonka since 1988. I have owned a house here since 1994.

As a neighbor and patron of the park, I ask you not to locate a mountain bike trail here. I respect the value of a bike trail, but I feel the environmental impact and the residential impact on this particular park is too great.

Thank you,  
Lisa Haider  
2550 Cedar Hills Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55305

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A further concern would be the railroad tracks that cross the park. There is only one trail that crosses under the railroad bridge. Encouraging further bike traffic on that trail would be a hazard to pedestrians.

Thank you,

Lisa Haider

2550 Cedar Hills Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55305

Lisa Haider

On Fri, May 26, 2017 at 7:58 AM, Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Thank you Lisa. I will make sure the park board receives your comments at their June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Kelly

**From:** Haider, Lisa

**Sent:** Thursday, May 25, 2017 6:58 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park and possible mountain bike trail

Hello,

I just learned about this proposed trail today in the Minnetonka Memo. I walked in Big Willow park daily all year long. This park is heavily trafficked by pedestrians. There are many casual trails throughout the park. I don't believe there is anywhere in the park where a bike trail wouldn't cross these trails. People regularly walk these trails often with their dogs and young children. In the summer, the line of sight on the trails is reduced greatly by the foliage. Occasionally, bike use these informal trails. Usually they are respectful of pedestrians, but several times I have seen bikers come off them at a high speed onto the formal trails nearly running down pedestrians. This park is used by small children and senior citizens. The new apartment development across the street has increased foot traffic.

Aside from the threat mountain bikes would pose to pedestrians, I am highly concerned about the impact on the wildlife in the park. In the park I have seen: mink, Kingfishers, Bald Eagles, Turkeys, woodchucks,

Pileated Woodpeckers, Barred Owls, deer, snakes and several species of ducks. This park is on the woodland corridor that extends along the Minnehaha. There are also rare plant species in the park. I believe this area should be protected.

A further concern would be the railroad tracks that cross the park. There is only one trail that crosses under the railroad bridge. Encouraging further bike traffic on that trail would be a hazard to pedestrians.

Thank you,

Lisa Haider

2550 Cedar Hills Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**June 16, 2017**

**From:** Sarah Klous

**Sent:** Friday, June 16, 2017 11:34 AM

**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park

Dear Tony Wagner and Kelly O'Dea,

I am writing because I just recently heard about a proposed mountain bike project for Big Willow Park. Upon hearing of this proposal, I was very disappointed. I have been spending time at Big Willow since about age 4, or in other words, for 30 years. I have lived in the cities surrounding Minnetonka (Hopkins, Deephaven, Excelsior, Minneapolis, Minnetrista, Eden Prairie) and now am a resident of Minnetonka. In all of these years, I have still driven to Big Willow to walk because it is such a unique place. I currently live next to Purgatory Park (my backyard literally backs up to this park), yet my husband and I still drive to Big Willow because of our love of its uniqueness.

I believe the proposed mountain bike project would fundamentally change Big Willow and strip it of all it has to offer. It is quiet and peaceful, and full of all sorts of animals and greenery that really make it feel like a magical place. After looking at the map of the proposed trails for bikes, it looks like it wouldn't even be close the same park it is today (award winning park, I might add). It is truly one of a kind, and in all our travels, my husband and I have yet to find something that comes close to matching the beauty of Big Willow year round, and so close to home. My husband loves mountain biking and rides all the trails in Minnetonka, and feels this project would be a big mistake, and take something very special away from Minnetonka.

If these changes are made, we would most likely not come to Big Willow any more, and would greatly mourn the loss of such a gem in the midst of this bustling city.

I truly appreciate your time in reading this, and hope you take my words into consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Klous

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**From:** Marilyn Bix

**Sent:** Friday, June 16, 2017 4:52 PM

**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Cc:** Marilyn Bix >; Nate Wolk Marcia Cherniack

**Subject:** Mountain Biking in Big Willow

Hello Tony and Kelly,

I am a resident of Minnetonka and live off of Cedar Lake Road. I received notice that the city is thinking of turning Big Willow into mountain bike paths.

This is very concerning to me. I walk the paths of Big Willow every day as do so many people. The paths are used by families, St David's School (field trips), bird watchers, casual bikers, and many walkers and runners. I am concerned about the congestion and speed that mountain trail/bikers could cause. It would be difficult for people to get out of the way and I envision many accidents. I am also concerned that the serenity of Big Willow will be compromised.

I don't know the status of this project or where the idea ever came from. But I think it is a bad idea, as do so many of my neighbors.

Thanks for listening to my concerns and please let me know how residents will be updated on this project.

Marilyn Bix

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**June 17, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Durene Jackson

**Sent:** Saturday, June 17, 2017 3:11 PM

**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trail on Big Willow Park.....

We are opposed to the consideration & possibility of constructing above mentioned trail @ Big Willow Park for the following reasons:

1. Increased auto,bike & pedestrian traffic. Auto traffic at present time is already unsafe.
2. Bicycles go way too fast as it is.
3. Increase rain water runoff adds pollution to Minnehaha Creek
4. Lots more litter!
5. Destroys more wetlands.
6. Destroys more wild life habitat.
7. I think a more appropriate area for this type of bike trail could be found.

Durene Jackson & Donald Ackerman

12201 Minnetonka Blvd., #220

Minnetonka, Mn. 55305

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**June 18, 2017**

**From:] On Behalf Of** Jack McCann

**Sent:** Sunday, June 18, 2017 9:08 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trail

Kelly -

I saw the information about the proposed trail in Big Willow park and I couldn't find in the meeting minutes or reporting on conversations or proposed trail maps anything about the number of crossings the proposed trail would have with the existing trails.

It appears that the proposed trail would take out the ability to use the hiking/running trails that zig-zag through the woods, is that correct? While I like the idea of additional bike trails, I enjoy walking on those trails and being off the busy main trails, it would be disappointing to lose those.

I am concerned if the mountain bike trail also would zig-zags across the regular path, I think that could be a significant safety issue. We have little kids (3 and 5) who are often biking ahead of us while we run behind on the main trail. If another bike trail crosses their path, there is bound to be accidents.

Could you let me know about how these issues have been considered by the city staff?

Thanks

-Jack

---

**From:**

**Sent:** Sunday, June 18, 2017 11:32 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park

Hi Kelly. With all due respect, I'm completely against the proposed Mt. Biking Park at Big Willow. I'm a walker and my ability to enjoy walking with the dog is becoming limited. For 30 years I walked the Trail that begins in downtown Hopkins and runs past Lunds into Mtka. I can only walk there now in the Winter time. The bikers have taken over the Trail. Helmeted groups and individuals speeding pell mell past me. Most attempt some courtesy. Others don't. I've come within inches of being hit at least a half dozen times. On one occasion a female biker brushed my dog. An argument ensued. I wear headphones. She told me that if I or the dog got hit it was my fault, because I could not hear her coming. The volume now needs to be turned very low in order to hear the bikers who come up behind us and YELL at the last moment, scaring the crap out of me. Some of them think that's funny. So now I've switched to walking at Big Willow and appreciate the peace and quiet. Even if the proposed bike trail only intersects occasionally with the walking path, I don't want the noise and hassle of the bikers, who mostly think they own the road. Millions of tax dollars have built many bike trails all over the county. They even have bike lanes in the streets now. Bikers have plenty of other options. So please pretty please leave Big Willow to us walkers and their dogs. Thanks for listening. B. Bob Rabinovitz. Mtka, Mn. 55305.

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**From:** Jim Fremont

**Sent:** Sunday, June 18, 2017 9:55 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Bike Proposal for Big Willow Park

To: Kelly O'Dea and Tony Wagner:

For the past 30+ years, I have been a regular and frequent user of Big Willow park, walking with my dog as well as jogging through the park. I would like to say that **I am NOT in favor of converting any part of the Big Willow Park into Mountain Biking trails.** I believe this would create a very significant negative impact for the park and would have a significant adverse impact on the large number of people who currently enjoy the natural beauty and peacefulness of Big Willow.

I have seen a proposed map that shows mountain biking trails taking over all the space on either side of the Minnehaha Creek between Minnetonka Blvd and the Railroad track, leaving only the space between Cedar Lake Road and the Railroad track for walkers. This would seem to take this beautiful section of the park which is currently enjoyed by residents of all ages for all seasons, and section it off just for the smaller group of people who want to participate in mountain biking for a portion of the year.

Having seen how other mountain biking developments create ruts and scar the land, developing any areas of Big Willow with mountain biking trails would harm this beautiful and prestigious section of Minnetonka. Additionally, with lots of bikes racing around, it would have to be more dangerous for walkers.



I believe Big Willow park currently adds a lot of value to those of us living in this area, and has a positive impact on our house values. Having nearby mountain biking trails would detract from the value of this area.

If the community believes it's important to spend tax dollars to invest in mountain biking trails, please find a place other than Big Willow, and preserve Big Willow for its natural beauty and serenity.

Please let me know if there are any community meetings being scheduled to discuss this. Thank you.

Jim Fremont

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**June 19, 2017**

Super. But I would still like to know if it was a recognized group or individual? I think this is great. So does this mean that I could simply attend a park board meeting and request that Big Willow be turned into a trailer park, and the park board might actually take a vote and authorize staff to do further research? I'm being facetious, of course. But I would like to suggest that your research include a full marketing study, polling, and assessment as to whether the residents in the area and or the citizens of Mtka. would support constructing a Mt. Bike Path at Big Willow. So far I have not found one person, who utilizes the park, that desires any changes. I will continue to do my own poll. At no charge to the city. Yours. b.

-----Original Message-----

From: Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

To:

Sent: Mon, Jun 19, 2017 11:01 am

Subject: RE: Big Willow Park

Bob,

The park board received a request for Mountain Biking trails at their September 7, 2016 meeting. The park board gave staff direction to conduct further research into the possibility of adding mountain biking trails in the Minnetonka park system, including possible partnerships to design, construct and maintain trails, and report back to the park board prior to discussions on projects to be included in the 2018-2022 Capital Improvements Program.

Kelly

**From:**

**Sent:** Monday, June 19, 2017 8:17 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park

Thank you Kelly for responding. One last question. Why do we need a Mt bike trail here in Mtka? I'd like to see the marketing data that clearly shows that the majority of the people in Mtka are demanding a Mt. Bike trail. Why does the Park board want to fulfil an unnecessary need that may not even exist? Oops. That's two questions. Why not just put it on the ballot this Fall? That's three. Yours. b.

-----Original Message-----

From: Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

To:

Sent: Mon, Jun 19, 2017 8:02 am

Subject: RE: Big Willow Park

Hi Bob,

Thank you for your email and feedback regarding mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. Your feedback is appreciated as the city explores this topic. We are only in the very early stages of exploring the feasibility of adding mountain biking trails. Here is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- We will add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project updates.
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your interest in our wonderful parks.

Kelly

**From:**

**Sent:** Sunday, June 18, 2017 11:32 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park

Hi Kelly. With all due respect, I'm completely against the proposed Mt. Biking Park at Big Willow. I'm a walker and my ability to enjoy walking with the dog is becoming limited. For 30 years I walked the Trail that begins in downtown Hopkins and runs past Lunds into Mtka. I can only walk there now in the Winter time. The bikers have taken over the Trail. Helmeted groups and individuals speeding pell mell past me. Most attempt some courtesy. Others don't. I've come within inches of being hit at least a half dozen times. On one occasion a female biker brushed my dog. An argument ensued. I wear headphones. She told me that if I or the dog got hit it was my fault, because I could not hear her coming. The volume now needs to be turned very low in order to hear the bikers who come up behind us and YELL at the last moment, scaring the crap out of me. Some of them think that's funny. So now I've switched to walking at Big Willow and appreciate the peace and quiet. Even if the proposed bike trail only intersects occasionally with the walking path, I don't want the noise and hassle of the bikers, who mostly think they own the road. Millions of tax dollars have built many bike trails all over the county. They even have bike lanes in the streets now. Bikers have plenty of other options. So please pretty please leave Big Willow to us walkers and their dogs. Thanks for listening. B. Bob Rabinovitz. Mtka, Mn. 55305.

.....  
**June 20, 2017**

**From:** Cathy Matrejek

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 20, 2017 1:23 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park Bike Trails

Hello Kelly,

Big Willow Park is an amazing and peaceful place to walk. I have been walking in the park for 15 years and I would not like to see biking trails added in the park. The Luce Line is so close to the park with ample parking in the Lunds Parking lot. This is a great place to park if people are looking to bike in the area.

Please leave additional bike trails out of Big Willow Park.

With warm regards,

Cathy Matrejek, Managing Partner

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**From:** Marsha Courtnage  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 20, 2017 1:42 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park

Hi Kelly,

I am a Minnetonka resident and frequent user of the Big Willow trails. It makes me very sad that people are thinking of turning this park into a Mountain Bike Park. I walk on both the large and smaller trail. If this proposal passed, I would constantly looking behind me anticipating and fast moving bike. The serenity of the area would be lost. The flora and fauna would suffer. I am totally against this proposal!

Marsha Courtnage

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**From:** Robert Numrich  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 20, 2017 2:08 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park

Please vote against turning Big Willow Park into a mountain Biking Park. The park is a gem how it is. Why would anyone want to destroy it?

I live next to the park. It was very important in my decision to buy a house in this neighborhood.

-bob

---

**From:** Sent: Tuesday, June 20, 2017 6:55 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Bike Trails

Hi Kelly,

I just became alerted to the request for mountain bike lanes in/around Big Willow park. I don't really know much about all the details so I am concerned that the peaceful up north feeling could be disturbed by the trails.

Would the trails be by/on the existing trails or would new ones be made? Would this increase traffic/people activity in the park? I go for walks there and it would be sad to change the current character/feeling of the park.

Thank you for any information.

Carolyn Clements

Minnetonka resident

From: Shirley Buehler

Sent: Tuesday, June 20, 2017 9:27 PM

To: Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Big Willow Park Mountain Bike Proposal

Bob and I have lived at 2908 Cedar Knoll Ct., Minnetonka for almost 30 years and we have seen Big Willow grow. We remember when hikers/walkers and dog walkers shared the park with horses but they had mostly their own trails and shared some walking trails. There were not as many bikers in the park then, but bike traffic has steadily increased. It's difficult as it is, so I cannot envision having increased mountain biker traffic. I also see it ripping up the existing paths with big wheels. When I think of mountain bikes, I think of open country and hilly terrain. Can't we find a less congested area for these enthusiasts?

Tony, please vote no on this proposal.

Shirley Buehler

2908 Cedar Knoll Ct.

Minnetonka, MN 55305

**June 21, 2017**

**From:** Terry Danielson

**Sent:** Wednesday, June 21, 2017 8:45 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park a Mountain Biking Park? No Thanks

Please, please, please do not allow Big Willow to become a Mountain Biking park. This would destroy what has been a wonderful natural resource for decades and something that many of us have cherished in our neighborhood. Allowing biking of this type would ruin our ability to walk the various paths and enjoy the serenity of the park as it has been for years. Do not take this from us. Please!

From: Pete Windahl

Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2017 8:43 PM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Cc: T. Windahl

Subject: Big Willow off-road bike trails

Dear Kelly,

My family has become aware of the proposal to add off-road mountain bike trails to Big Willow Park. I would like to voice our opposition to this idea.

Big Willow is a very unique and precious resource to those of us in Minnetonka. It is a peaceful and beautiful set of trails and we don't want to see it destroyed through widened trails and misuse. Bicyclists have been given many, many privileges in the Twin Cities. Please allow the trail walkers to have similar privileges.

It would be a tragedy for our idillic community.

Sincerely,

Peter Windahl and family

**From:** Kathy Burgeson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 21, 2017 9:41 PM  
**To:** Kathy Burgeson  
**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trail

As residents of Applewood Pointe, we are opposed to a mountain bike trail in Big Willow Park. We are concerned about pedestrian safety, destruction of wildlife habitat and wetlands, litter and pollution of the creek. This is a favorite walking area for us seniors in the building, a big plus for our community. The trail behind the building already has quite a bit of bike traffic, and we feel mountain bike trails in Big Willow would be unsafe to walkers and destructive to the environment. Hopefully, you will find a better area for the bikers.

Thank you,

Kathy and Bob Burgeson

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June 22, 2017

**From:** Sara Woeste  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 22, 2017 11:10 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** FW: Message from Morris Martha

I talked to Martha Morris so you don't have to call her back. She would like to be added to the email list for the project:

Same concerns as others:

- Doesn't want bikers to take over the park and see signs and gates up everywhere
- Keep it serene and quiet
- Thinks mountain biking is a fad and will fade

I told her I would fill you in on her concerns so you don't have to call her.

## **SARA WOESTE**

RECREATION SERVICES ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

CITY OF MINNETONKA

952-939-8316 | [swoeste@eminnetonka.com](mailto:swoeste@eminnetonka.com)

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**From:** Kathleen Nelson  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 22, 2017 4:58 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Potential mountain bike trail at Big Willow Park

As a resident of Minnetonka, I use BWP to walk my dog and enjoy the natural habitat there. I am very concerned about discussions regarding the addition of mountain bike trails in the park.

Currently, dogs are not allowed off-leash on the maintained trails. My dog cannot get adequate exercise walking only on-leash because I have physical restrictions that slow me down.

We use the non-maintained trails as a way for her to run, sniff, and generally, kick up her heels on our outings. I have trained her to sit if a bike rider approaches so as not to interfere with the rider or hurt herself. I am very leery of the introduction of mountain bikers within this unmaintained area.

Another consideration that I do not think has been addressed is the recent opening of a senior living complex across Minnetonka Blvd. If I were to consider living there, the existence of Big Willow Park would be a big draw. I can't imagine how mountain bikers and seniors can coexist in that area.

I have also considered that this site is at the extreme east end of Minnetonka. It seems to me that use by many people not in our community has not been taken into account. The Civic Center site is at least more centrally located and could potentially connect into the use of the 494 corridor.

There is no place within city parks that dogs can swim without doing so in violation of the ordinance. I believe that our pets, who in ways, ARE city residents, should be considered before altering the use of existing parkland. There are some areas of the city that are isolated and in a sense have their own private little park. Libbs Lake Beach is such an example. For those of us without a major park within walking distance, the ability to safely use existing parks is important. I must drive to Big Willow, Jidana, Purgatory and Lone Lake. As preliminary studies have mentioned, the small parking area at Big Willow would become an issue if it is opened up to mountain bikers.

This mountain bike trail issue does not seem to be widely known throughout the community. I hope that through the city newsletter or other means, you can inform many who use the parks now about any proposed changes. I also do not think that the existence of mountain biking teams at either High School in the city should factor into your decision-making process. Since these teams organized without Minnetonka facilities in place, they should be responsible for finding their own trails and transport there. Just because there is a downhill skiing team does not require Minnetonka to build a practice site for those athletes.

I look forward to hearing back from you about my concerns and also getting an idea of the timeline for decision-making on this issue. Thank you for your time in reading and responding to my concerns.

Kathleen Nelson

4717 Forest Circle

Minnetonka, MN

55345

.....  
**June 23, 2017**

**From:** Ed Friedman

**Sent:** Friday, June 23, 2017 5:18 AM

**To:** Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Dick Allendorf <dallendorf@eminnetonka.com>; Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Perry Vetter <pvetter@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park Mountain Biking

**Importance:** High

To all involved:

Unfortunately, I cannot find contact information for Park Board Members.

I am asking you to please reject a proposal to incorporate a mountain bike park within Big Willow.

I, and many other senior residents of the city use Big Willow Park for our quiet daily health walks with nature, and often with our dog friends. The northeast corner of Big Willow between the St Albans Mills bridge and the northern parking lot and between the Minnehaha Creek and Cedar Lake Rd is the only park area in the NE quadrant of the city where we are allowed to enjoy our animals off-lead. Eight years ago the Park Board was considering eliminating all off-lead access within the city park system. The result

was overflowing attendance at Park Board meetings that had to be moved to the council meeting room which also experienced overflowing attendance in support of maintaining our access. The citizens and the park board worked these issues hard for over two years. Please don't take those agreements away. We lost Lone Lake (with the proximity of the Three Rivers Off Lead Park a mile away). Big Willow is the only area in the NE quadrant of the city.

The second reason to reject this proposal is parking on the north side of the park. There is only space for 5 or 6 cars and they are often full, resulting in people parking on the side of a narrow road. This will only get worse, especially as such a mountain biking area attracts users from beyond the city of Minnetonka.

Third, erosion has always been stated as a concern in our parks natural areas. There is already signs of erosion on the dirt paths on the north side of Minnehaha Creek near the St Albans Mills Bridge from bike traffic. The tracks are there to be seen and there are not supposed to be any bikes on those paths according to current regulations.

Most, not all, of us that walk on those dirt paths are seniors, often bringing our grandchildren along to enjoy nature. We walk slow, and aren't as agile as we once were. We have encountered young men and women on bikes riding through the area that we were expected to make way for the bikes by the riders, often being brushed or hit when we weren't fast enough for them. Please don't increase this hazard. Please don't take our safety away. Please don't take our piece of nature away. Please allow us to pass this piece of nature on to our grandkids and theirs. Where else in the city can we get that close to Minnehaha Creek and watch the water flow in peace, see the varied wildlife that live there? Show our children and theirs the beauty of nature.

If you open this area to the bikes, the erosion will accelerate, the wildlife with leave, the peace and quiet will give way to competition and noise of the bikers, the safety of our seniors will be endangered.

Ed Friedman

2700 Crestwood Circle

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**From:** Ed Friedman

**Sent:** Friday, June 23, 2017 9:40 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** RE: Big Willow Park Mountain Biking

Kelly,

Good to hear back from you and I look forward to meeting you. I am also glad the planning is in the early stages. From the map I saw of proposed trail in Big Willow, a fair amount of work has gone into this location.

I was surprised to find out about this activity. I attended every Park Board meeting for a two year period when Park regulations and off lead dogs were being discussed. When it appeared that activity had concluded, I did slack off on my attendance, however I do check the agenda on line every month. I believe that Perry Vetter will probably remember me. I did not see this in any of the agendas that I reviewed. However, my interest has been raised, and I will be attending meetings again

After I make my assessment of where this may be going, I might have to re-energize the previous group that filled the Board meeting room and later the Council Chambers. There are a lot of us with deep loyalty to our parks.

Ed

**From:** Kelly ODea [<mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 23, 2017 8:59 AM  
**To:** Ed Friedman  
**Subject:** RE: Big Willow Park Mountain Biking

Hi Ed,

Thank you for your email and feedback regarding mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. Your feedback is appreciated as the city explores this topic. We are only in the very early stages of exploring the feasibility of adding mountain biking trails. Here is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The board directed staff to look at additional locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research additional locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- We will add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project updates.
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your interest in our wonderful parks.  
Kelly

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**From:** Jane Bond

**Sent:** Friday, June 23, 2017 5:31 PM

**To:** tbergstet@minnetonka.com; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; twagner@Minnetonka.com

**Subject:** Please. No mountain bike trails at Big Willow Park

I strongly oppose turning Big Willow Park into a mountain bike park! Mountain biking is enjoyed by a much smaller group than trail walking. My husband and I are in our 80s. We can no longer ride bikes safely. We and many other seniors regularly walk all the trails in Big Willow Park. It is one of the largest and forested walking areas in the Twin Cities. Over the years much work has been done to create this high quality complex of beautiful hiking trails. Wildlife, an active fast running creek, stream side walking, restored native species would all be threatened by turning this area into mountain bike trails. It seems unnecessarily prejudicial against the elderly who can no longer ride bikes. There are many others who regularly walk these trails too. Please let the mountain bikes find another area.



Jane Bond  
9700 Waterstone Place  
Minnetonka

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**June 24, 2017**

**From:** Donna Schimunek  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 24, 2017 1:15 AM  
**To:** Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** FW: Mountain Biking proposal for Big Willow Park

Hello,

We have become aware of a proposal to create a mountain bike park in Big Willow Park, and are strongly opposed to this plan.

As long time residents of Minnetonka we have enjoyed walking in Big Willow Park for over 30 years. We enjoy the peace and serenity of the natural surroundings, and especially appreciate the work that has been done to clear invasive plant life and reintroduce native plants.

Putting mountain bike trails throughout the park would cause a great deal of disruption to this natural habitat. It would diminish the peacefulness of the park, adversely affect plant and wildlife, and cause safety issues for hikers due to fast moving careless bikers. We feel strongly that we must protect and maintain these natural areas within our city that give us opportunities to enjoy the health benefits that come from exercise and connecting with nature.

We hope you will consider a more suitable location for a mountain bike trail so that we can continue to enjoy Big Willow Park. It is truly one of the jewels of our park system that is an important part of our quality of life in Minnetonka.

Thank you for your consideration,

Donna & Warren Schimunek

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**From:** John Dyer  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 24, 2017 10:42 AM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Proposed Big Willow Mtn. Bike Park Comment

Dear Minnetonka City and Park Representatives Wagner and O' Dea,

My spouse and I are bike commuters, as well as mountain bikers, living in St. Louis Park, MN. We have been members of MORC and IMBA biking organizations, and have both been involved in the development of mountain bike parks in Minneapolis' Wirth Park and Elk River.

We also are hikers and dog walkers, who use Big Willow Park for recreational walking on a regular basis year-round. In our opinion, Big Willow is a quiet, natural area for walking, through biking on the Mtka. Loop Trail, and a place for native animals and plants to thrive in.

We don't think that a Mtn. Bike Park is a good fit at Big Willow. In both Wirth Park and Elk River, people like myself were biking there on trails that were not regularly walked on. There was room for both walkers and bikers, and it made sense to develop a nice biking trail system.

In the 20 years of using Big Willow, it has been rare to see mountain or BMX bikes using the park.

We use many of Minnetonka's retail services as Big Willow draws us into your community. It would be a pity, at least for us, to not have this access to this wonderful walking opportunity.

Sincerely,

John Dyer and Sandy McAllister

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**June 25, 2017**

**From:** Paul Kubic  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 12:35 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Bike Oval Singletrack

As a four decade bike rider, and pediatrician, you have been mad to consider a mountain bike track in this smallish park! Walkers, runners, dog walkers, and street bike riders, will be in danger. The Mtkka HS lobby should be ignored. Word of this proposal has spread to E Prarie, Wayzata, and other suburbs, who will wish to train here. These bikers ride FAST!! Send them to large parks, like Murphy, or Lebanon, and the Mn River Valley or have them develop a park in their own neighborhood. Problems will occur, potentially injuries, and, sadly, fall on the taxpayer. Take up road biking, a lifetime sport!

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Dan Bernhard  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 7:17 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Mountain Bike Park

Good Evening-

My name is Dan Bernhard and I am a seven year Minnetonka resident living near the Big Willow area. I am an avid outdoor enthusiast and enjoy many such activities including bird watching, hiking, camping and mountain biking. One factor in my decision to purchase a home in Minnetonka was its longstanding reputation for environmental preservation and the availability of green space for community enjoyment. Indeed, Minnetonka has lived up to this reputation.

Dan Bernhard

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**From:** Dan Bernhard  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 7:30 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Big Willow Mountain Bike Park

Sorry - I hit send on accident. Small buttons on these phones. Anyway, what I was saying was that the proposed bike park would further Minnetonka's reputation and bring more community together to enjoy its great outdoors. Environmental impact is minimal when trails are properly built, as I have seen and personally helped build during my youthful years with the Boy Scouting organization. In addition, the Minnesota mountain biking community is largely respectful of trails and aware of inappropriate use (e.g riding when muddy). Further, the animals inhabiting the area would likely grow accustomed to increased traffic without incident, as they typically do (indeed the deer have had no problem eating my recently planted dogwoods only 5 feet from my front door). So in the end, I support the new and exciting addition to what is already a wonderful Minnetonka. Thank you-

Dan Bernhard

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**From:** Kevin and Carrie Mandler  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 8:10 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Mountain Bike trail

Kelly O'Dea,

As a wildlife and outdoor recreation enthusiast, I am writing with some concerns about the proposed mountain bike trails at Big Willow Park. Big Willow is a highly used passive recreation area and mountain biking is active and aggressive. This kind of traffic could change the landscape of an area used by many for quiet walks/jogs and peaceful rest.

To start, I don't think all those memorial benches were placed with the idea of aggressive bike riders tearing through the area. It is already somewhat conflictive with pedestrians, dogs and bicycles (although not as common) all on the same trail. I even like to ride my bike on that trail occasionally but it is narrow and has sharp curves that can be hard to navigate between other bicycles, dogs on leashes and nature enthusiasts out for a stroll.

I respect the apparent need for space for mountain bikes but the Minnehaha Creek Watershed and the surrounding area is a safe haven for many different kinds of wildlife and folks looking for natural beauty along a **creek with a rich history**. I would rather see the need to improve and enhance this area and trails then bring a whole different kind of aggressive activity into the area.

I understand this will be a difficult decision no matter where the mountain bike trail is built. I am curious what the other options are.

I am excited to hear about trail improvements along Plymouth Road. This will open up even more flow of pedestrian and bicycle use in the Big Willow area. Because of this I prefer any mountain bike trail funding, instead, be used to enhance the natural area at Big Willow and create improvements to the existing trails. There are organizations to partner with to restore this area even more. Great River Greening as well as the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (which I am sure you are well aware) are organizations who can help with the trail and native plant improvements.

In addition to restoring the natural area, the trail along Minnetonka Boulevard between the ballfields and the trail parking lot should be raised or perhaps a boardwalk built so pedestrians don't have to walk/jog along the very busy street when the marsh floods (as it will naturally do) across the trail. Improvement is still needed to keep the trail open underneath (or around?) the train trestle when the creek overflows in that area as well.

Perhaps with some modifications of the mountain bike trail and thoughtful vision, an area can be created that will not only improve the beautiful passive recreation area along the creek, but also accommodate the needs of the active mountain bike riders as well. It is my hope that whatever plan is developed pedestrian safety and peaceful natural enhancements are the primary focus.

Carrie Mandler

Minnetonka Resident

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**From:** Sherri Quick  
**Date:** June 19, 2017 at 11:14:31 AM EDT  
**To:** <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Please, no bike park at Big Willow Park

Tony,

Thank you for taking the time to speak to me this morning on the issue of mountain biking in Big Willow Park.

I've enjoyed many years of strolling peacefully through Big Willow with my pooch, and I'm relieved to hear there's support to keep this little wildlife gem protected.

Erosion caused by enthusiastic bikers would be irreversible. Destruction of native wildflowers would be swift.

Please help preserve Big Willow.

Many thanks,

Sherri Quick

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**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 6:38 PM  
**To:** Randi Birk  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow

Randi ...

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 21, 2017, at 7:26 PM, Randi Birk wrote:

Hi Tony,

I am writing to implore you to preserve the magnificent trail system as it currently exists. I walk my dog there for 2 hours every day and lose myself in the beauty and quiet of the woods. It's a gift to have this natural wonder right in the middle of the city. At present, walkers and bikers coexist and most (though not all) bikers are courteous and respectful. However, turning Big Willow into a mountain biking park would change the dynamics, potentially destroy the carefully tended ecosystem, and risk ruining the best respite any of us in the area currently have. Please vote against this proposal.

Thank you

Randi Birk

2812 Breckenridge Rd.

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 7:36 PM

**To:** Marcy Lundquist

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park

Roger and Marcy --

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove. If you do, note that having a home address included increases the weight of your comments.

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Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 19, 2017, at 5:52 PM, Marcy Lundquist wrote:

Hello and thank you for your work representing the citizens of Minnetonka!

My husband and I are senior citizens and walk in Big Willow Park almost every day. Last year we had two frightening experiences with unannounced bikers riding too fast and too close to us in Big Willow Park. Now we find that there is a proposal to turn Big Willow into a Mountain Biking Park! This is of great concern to us -- as we're sure it is to other senior citizens, families with small children, dog-walkers and ANYONE who wishes to avoid startling animals and "leave no trace".

Additionally, Big Willow trails are often soft and damp -- wet and muddy trails are very vulnerable to damage. While visiting friends in Tucson we walked a shared mountain bike trail which even in their dry climate was severely degraded and dangerous even for experienced bikers wearing their helmets.

Who in their logical mind would have built Applewood Pointe Senior Cooperative across from a Mountain Biking Park? Big Willow is surrounded by seniors, families and close-by condos/apartments with residents who, in our experience, value nature's calmness and healing.

Adding a mountain biking track would be a fundamental change to the nature of our park. After the two bad experiences with the bikers last year I contacted Steve Pieh who also put me in touch with other city workers to express concerns. It was weeks before I felt safe to walk in Big Willow again.

We ask that mountain bikers find a more appropriate track. A track in a dryer, more sustainable area that avoids conflict with existing users and ecosystem. Your help is very appreciated. Roger & Marcy Lundquist

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**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 8:10 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Fwd: Please, no bike park at Big Willow Park

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Sherri Quick

**Date:** June 19, 2017 at 11:14:31 AM EDT

**To:** <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Please, no bike park at Big Willow Park

Tony,

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I've enjoyed many years of strolling peacefully through Big Willow with my pooch, and I'm relieved to hear there's support to keep this little wildlife gem protected.

Erosion caused by enthusiastic bikers would be irreversible. Destruction of native wildflowers would be swift.

Please help preserve Big Willow.

Many thanks,

Sherri Quick

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**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 8:10 PM

**To:** Sarah Klous

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park

Sarah --

Apologies for my response delay.

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

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- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 16, 2017, at 12:34 PM, Sarah Klous wrote:

Dear Tony Wagner and Kelly O'Dea,

I am writing because I just recently heard about a proposed mountain bike project for Big Willow Park. Upon hearing of this proposal, I was very disappointed. I have been spending time at Big Willow since about age 4, or in other words, for 30 years. I have lived in the cities surrounding Minnetonka (Hopkins, Deephaven, Excelsior, Minneapolis, Minnetrista, Eden Prairie) and now am a resident of Minnetonka. In all of these years, I have still driven to Big Willow to walk because it is such a unique place. I currently live next to Purgatory Park (my backyard literally backs up to this park), yet my husband and I still drive to Big Willow because of our love of its uniqueness.



I believe the proposed mountain bike project would fundamentally change Big Willow and strip it of all it has to offer. It is quiet and peaceful, and full of all sorts of animals and greenery that really make it feel like a magical place. After looking at the map of the proposed trails for bikes, it looks like it wouldn't even be close the same park it is today (award winning park, I might add). It is truly one of a kind, and in all our travels, my husband and I have yet to find something that comes close to matching the beauty of Big Willow year round, and so close to home. My husband loves mountain biking and rides all the trails in Minnetonka, and feels this project would be a big mistake, and take something very special away from Minnetonka.

If these changes are made, we would most likely not come to Big Willow any more, and would greatly mourn the loss of such a gem in the midst of this bustling city.

I truly appreciate your time in reading this, and hope you take my words into consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Klous

---

**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 8:10 PM

**To:**

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park

Bob --

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove. If you do, note that having a home address included increases the weight of your comments.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
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Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 18, 2017, at 12:45 PM, wrote:

Hi Tony. With all due respect, I'm completely against the proposed Mt. Biking Park at Big Willow. Please vote against it. I'm a walker and my ability to enjoy walking with the dog is becoming limited. For 30 years I walked the Trail that begins in downtown Hopkins and runs past Lunds into Mtka. I can only walk there now in the Winter time. The bikers have taken over the Trail. Helmeted groups and individuals speeding pell mell past me. Most attempt some courtesy. Others don't. I've come within inches of being hit at least a half dozen times. On one occasion a female biker brushed my dog. An argument ensued. I wear headphones. She told me that if I or the dog got hit it was my fault, because I could not hear her coming. My volume now needs to be turned very low in order to hear the bikers who come up behind us and YELL at the last moment, scaring the crap out of me. Some of them think that's funny. So now I've switched to walking at Big Willow and appreciate the peace and quiet. Even if the proposed bike trail only intersects occasionally with the walking path, I don't want the noise and hassle of the bikers, who mostly think they own the road. Millions of tax dollars have built many bike trails all over the county. They even have bike lanes in the streets now. Bikers have plenty of other options. So please pretty please leave Big Willow to us walkers and their dogs. Thanks for listening. B. Bob Rabinovitz. Mtka, Mn. 55305.

.....

**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 8:10 PM

**To:** Pamela Anderson

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Proposed off road bike trails in Big Willow Park

Pam & Brad --

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

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Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 19, 2017, at 11:36 AM, Pamela Anderson wrote:

Dear Mr. Wagner

I read in the Sun Sailor that the city of Minnetonka is considering adding off road bike trails to Big Willow Park.

We have lived in Minnetonka since 1980, when the walking/bike trails were trail lines. We formed a group of concerned citizens requesting a bike/walking trail for those lines once they were no longer being used for trains. We succeeded in getting approval from the county and the city for the wonderful trail that many now use. We have always been in favor of a safe place away from traffic for people to get out and exercise and enjoy nature at the same time.

Big Willow Park is one of the most beautiful treasures left in the city of Minnetonka. It is one of the few places that you can go and not have speeding bikes or cars next to you. When you walk the narrow trails off the main trails within the park, you can actually imagine that you are no longer in the suburbs. It's nice to have a place where you can slow down in such a hectic world and be with nature.

Now with the large senior complex that was built right across the street from the parking lot for Big Willow, there is increased foot traffic and an increase in people walking with pets.

It would be a tragedy to have off road biking in that particular park. I know of many other walkers/joggers in the area that are not happy with the idea of changing Big Willow. We all use those narrow paths in addition to the main paths. Sometimes you don't want to walk or jog on a big wide path with others, but need to have some solitude.

There are a lot of Big Willow trail users that are not aware of the plan to include off road biking in the park. If you were to survey people in the area, you would find that many people would be against it.

Please consider the uniqueness of Big Willow before making any decisions to change it.

Thank you so much!!!

Pam and Brad Anderson

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**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 8:12 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Big Willow Park

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad  
Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Marcy Lundquist  
**Date:** June 25, 2017 at 8:53:53 PM EDT  
**To:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park

Thank you for your response. Our address is 10451 Greenbrier Rd #301, Minnetonka, MN 55305.

---

**From:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 7:36:27 PM  
**To:** Marcy Lundquist  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park

Roger and Marcy --

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

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Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 19, 2017, at 5:52 PM, Marcy Lundquist wrote:

Hello and thank you for your work representing the citizens of Minnetonka!

My husband and I are senior citizens and walk in Big Willow Park almost every day. Last year we had two frightening experiences with unannounced bikers riding too fast and too close to us in Big Willow Park. Now we find that there is a proposal to turn Big Willow into a Mountain Biking Park! This is of great concern to us -- as we're sure it is to other senior citizens, families with small children, dog-walkers and ANYONE who wishes to avoid startling animals and "leave no trace".

Additionally, Big Willow trails are often soft and damp -- wet and muddy trails are very vulnerable to damage. While visiting friends in Tucson we walked a shared mountain bike trail which even in their dry climate was severely degraded and dangerous even for experienced bikers wearing their helmets.

Who in their logical mind would have built Applewood Pointe Senior Cooperative across from a Mountain Biking Park? Big Willow is surrounded by seniors, families and close-by condos/apartments with residents who, in our experience, value nature's calmness and healing.

Adding a mountain biking track would be a fundamental change to the nature of our park. After the two bad experiences with the bikers last year I contacted Steve Pieh who also put me in touch with other city workers to express concerns. It was weeks before I felt safe to walk in Big Willow again.

We ask that mountain bikers find a more appropriate track. A track in a dryer, more sustainable area that avoids conflict with existing users and ecosystem. Your help is very appreciated. Roger & Marcy Lundquist

.....  
**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 8:55 PM  
**To:** Lorraine LaRoy  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow mountain biking park

Lorraine & Jim --

Apologies for my response delay.

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

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Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony  
Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 13, 2017, at 10:52 AM, Lorraine LaRoy wrote:

Dear Tony,

My family has lived in Minnetonka for 25 years and used the bike trails in the Big Willow park area for years both with young children and now as adults. We treasure this calm oasis of nature and quiet in our busy lives. I am writing to strongly oppose the proposal to turn this area into a mountain biking area. These trails are well used as they are now by bikers, small children, dog walkers and joggers. The addition of mountain bikes and additional trails would destroy the serene quiet and beauty of this unique area. Please find another location for this project.

Thank you very much,

Lorraine and Jim LaRoy

---

**From:** Carol Allis [mailto:

**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 10:12 PM

**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Proposed mountain biking park

Tony, I apologize as well -- I realized, to my embarrassment, after I wrote you (in a tizzy) that I believe Bob Ellingson is actually our Council Member (I didn't look closely at the ward lines after we moved). However, I know you represent the area the park is in. We will be following this with great interest -- the park is one of the main reasons we chose Applewood -- we love walking there; we love the feel of being in a protected, quiet woods. We want to be clear -- we are not opposed to mountain biking trails -- we just don't think this is the right place.

You certainly may include my comments in the discussion records. Thank you for responding!

On Sun, Jun 25, 2017 at 9:25 PM, Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Carol ---

My sincere apologies for my response delay.

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

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Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

[612-382-5212](tel:612-382-5212)

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.

On Jun 9, 2017, at 1:51 PM, Carol Allis wrote:

Hello -- I am a new constituent of yours; my husband and I just moved into Applewood Pointe across from Big Willow. I have lived in Minnetonka for more than a decade. We are absolutely opposed to turning Big Willow into a mountain biking park. A huge factor influencing our decision to move here (besides finding decent, affordable senior housing in Minnetonka) is the park. We go almost daily to walk there. The vision of undoing decades of restoration of native plants; damaging the woodsy, natural setting; and creating distress to wildlife is unthinkable.

We have enough trouble not being mowed down my bikers on the county bike path behind us. I am a biker myself (a hybrid trail bike, BTW). We are an active senior living community (there are approximately 148 seniors here), and you'll find at least one bike in almost every car stall. There are avid bikers here. But we are also avid walkers. The last thing we want is for high traffic by bikers -- often at high and reckless speed -- destroying the beautiful park across the road.

.....  
**June 26, 2017**

**From:** Michael Goodman [mailto:  
**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2017 10:16 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Status



Hi Kelly,

Thank you for sending this to me.

I am impressed with the extent to which the people most potentially affected by this proposed initiative have not even heard about it. People in the neighborhoods adjacent to this area are largely unaware of the proposal. I have been asking and everyone I have spoken to is upset and shocked. Please pass this along to city planners. The initiative may or may not be good for our community but regardless, lets make certain that the people are made aware of it and can have a voice.

Thank you,

Michael

Michael Goodman

On Mon, Jun 26, 2017 at 9:12 AM, Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Hi Michael,

Based on a great deal of advocacy from residents, the council did include funds in our 5 year capital improvement plan to support development of some mountain biking trails; however, no proposal is being considered at the City Council level. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject, working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

At this time, we do not have any community meetings planned. Here is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.

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Kelly

**From:** Michael Goodman [mailto:  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 25, 2017 7:53 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Status

Hi Ms O'Dea,

Can you please tell me what the status is of the mountain bike path? There is disagreement in the community as to whether it has already been approved. If not when are more community meetings planned?

Thank you

Michael--

Michael Goodman

---

**From:** Sarah Klous [mailto:  
**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2017 10:18 AM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park

Hi Mr. Wagner,

I appreciate your response, and all the info you provided.

I will attach my email to the list to stay updated.

I will also include my address below, if it could be beneficial to my previous comment.

Thanks!

Sarah Klous

5517 Kipling Ave

Minnetonka, MN 55345

On Sun, Jun 25, 2017 at 8:10 PM, Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Sarah --

Apologies for my response delay.

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

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Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 16, 2017, at 12:34 PM, Sarah Klous wrote:

Dear Tony Wagner and Kelly O'Dea,

I am writing because I just recently heard about a proposed mountain bike project for Big Willow Park. Upon hearing of this proposal, I was very disappointed. I have been spending time at Big Willow since about age 4, or in other words, for 30 years. I have lived in the cities surrounding Minnetonka (Hopkins, Deephaven, Excelsior, Minneapolis, Minnetrista, Eden Prairie) and now am a resident of Minnetonka. In all of these years, I have still driven to Big Willow to walk because it is such a unique place. I currently live next to Purgatory Park (my backyard literally backs up to this park), yet my husband and I still drive to Big Willow because of our love of its uniqueness.

I believe the proposed mountain bike project would fundamentally change Big Willow and strip it of all it has to offer. It is quiet and peaceful, and full of all sorts of animals and greenery that really make it feel like a magical place. After looking at the map of the proposed trails for bikes, it looks like it wouldn't

even be close the same park it is today (award winning park, I might add). It is truly one of a kind, and in all our travels, my husband and I have yet to find something that comes close to matching the beauty of Big Willow year round, and so close to home. My husband loves mountain biking and rides all the trails in Minnetonka, and feels this project would be a big mistake, and take something very special away from Minnetonka.

If these changes are made, we would most likely not come to Big Willow any more, and would greatly mourn the loss of such a gem in the midst of this bustling city.

I truly appreciate your time in reading this, and hope you take my words into consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Klous

---

**From:** Virginia Kubic [mailto:  
**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2017 10:57 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park

Hello,

We purchased our home in Minnetonka in 1992. One of the primary reasons for choosing this location was ready access to green space. We hike in Big Willow or Meadow Parks on a daily basis. We recently learned of a plan to turn Big Willow into a mountain bike park. I am **strongly opposed** to this plan for the following reasons:

The vast majority of people who utilize Big Willow are pedestrians, which is fortunate. The trails twist and turn and bikers often heed neither reasonable speed limits nor pedestrian traffic.

The age range of pedestrians in Big Willow is broad. There are often families with small children, people walking dogs, and increasingly, elderly people, some in wheelchairs, who utilize the park. The latter group has appeared since the construction of a senior housing complex on Minnetonka Blvd. Mountain bikers on a race course are incompatible with continuing safe use of the park by these groups of people.

There is a huge amount of wildlife in the park. Mountain bike racing and wildlife interests are not compatible. What happens to the frogs, toads, snakes, ducklings and other creatures living in the park when their habitat is destroyed to build a race course? Will the intermittent floods that engulf Big Willow deter mountain bike racing or will they continue to use the park and further tear up muddy trails as they do in Meadow and Hilloway parks? Minnetonka needs to preserve what green space it has, not destroy it for a small special interest group.

Mountain bikers are a small special interest group. The idea that the City of Minnetonka would cater to this group by converting a heavily utilized and loved community resource to a mountain bike park that would serve the interests of mountain bikers and no one else is inconceivable. Equally disturbing would be the almost certain influx of mountain bikers from all over the area, not just Minnetonka, with its attendant increased traffic, parking issues, and destruction of additional green space through overuse.

It's our understanding that this plan has been spearheaded by a high school mountain bike racing team at Minnetonka High School. It's also our understanding that the community around Purgatory Park, a park in much closer proximity to Minnetonka High School, rejected the notion put forward by this same group to

convert Purgatory Park into a mountain bike race course. Why should people in our neighborhood donate our local park to the interests of a group of high school students who couldn't find support to build this race course in their own community?

I am a physician and value the concept of exercise. Bike riding is a great sport. However, Big Willow is a small park and not the place for a mountain bike race course. Please do not destroy our local resource with this plan. Please take some time and walk around Big Willow for a few days. You'll learn why people in our neighborhood love this park and are opposed to this plan.

Thank you.

Virginia L. Kubic, M.D.  
Street

2410 Lorien  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

---

**From:** Michael Goodman [mailto:  
**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2017 11:58 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** More details

Kelly,

I think people are waking up.

We want to see the following:

Number of Trees proposed to be cut

Erosion studies

Run-off studies

Studies regarding the effect on sensitive vegetation

Studies related to the effect on food sources for animals

Studies regarding the effect on Deer and small animals

Studies related to the effect on the general ecosystem

Studies regarding the effect on migrating birds

Details regarding systems and processes to keep bikes on prepared paths

Details regarding systems and processes to maintain widths of paths over time

Studies regarding ingress and egress of police and fire in the event of emergency

Details/opinions from the police chief regarding potential for loitering

Thank you,

Michael

---

**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2017 1:50 PM  
**To:** Tamra Segal

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Mountain bikes

Tamra -

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove. FYI ... Adding your address does aid in the weight of your comments.

Separately, the Council has authorized both a trail on Plymouth Road from Holloway to Minnetonka Blvd and asked staff to develop a enhanced plan to speed trail construction along county roads and key, busy city streets to aid in connectivity and improve safety. I am a very strong advocate of this improvement, as the current pace is not acceptable.

Related to the mountain biking proposal, below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### **1. Project Timeline**

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### **2. Communication**

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.  
On Jun 26, 2017, at 2:31 PM, Tamra Segal wrote:

I was so sad to hear about the possibility of a mountain bike trail through big willow park. My family and I do not want it or support it. Why would you even consider it? Minnetonka residents already have the bike trails and have run the walkers off those paths. It saddens me. We don't need more bike trails. Why not add side walks from cedar lake road to hopkins crossroads or from Plymouth road to ridgedale area. Two busy road with no way for walkers to walk. Minnetonka area is not safe for walkers and the one area we have you want to take away.

I have been a Minnetonka resident for 23 years and the bikers have the roads, trails and do not need this As well. We are very much against it.

Thank you,  
Tami Segal

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**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2017 2:42 PM  
**To:** Dan Bernhard <  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Mountain Bike Park

Dan --

No worries on the double email ... I've been there!

Thank you for your well written and thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. As you indicate, a number of the concerns have been brought up by Minnetonka residents on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites. Your points below are well founded, and I will definitely take such information into my decision making should a proposal reach the council.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove. Finally, just a note that providing your address does add a bit of weight to your comments (if you want to, just respond to Kelly)

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to

mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.

- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

## 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
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- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.

On Jun 25, 2017, at 8:30 PM, Dan Bernhard wrote:

Sorry - I hit send on accident. Small buttons on these phones. Anyway, what I was saying was that the proposed bike park would further Minnetonka's reputation and bring more community together to enjoy its great outdoors. Environmental impact is minimal when trails are properly built, as I have seen and personally helped build during my youthful years with the Boy Scouting organization. In addition, the Minnesota mountain biking community is largely respectful of trails and aware of inappropriate use (e.g riding when muddy). Further, the animals inhabiting the area would likely grow accustomed to increased traffic without incident, as they typically do (indeed the deer have had no problem eating my recently planted dogwoods only 5 feet from my front door). So in the end, I support the new and exciting addition to what is already a wonderful Minnetonka. Thank you-

Dan Bernhard

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Dan Bernhard

**Date:** June 25, 2017 at 7:17:12 PM CDT

**To:** [twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)

**Cc:** [kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)

**Subject:** Big Willow Mountain Bike Park

Good Evening-



My name is Dan Bernhard and I am a seven year Minnetonka resident living near the Big Willow area. I am an avid outdoor enthusiast and enjoy many such activities including bird watching, hiking, camping and mountain biking. One factor in my decision to purchase a home in Minnetonka was its longstanding reputation for environmental preservation and the availability of green space for community enjoyment. Indeed, Minnetonka has lived up to this reputation.

Dan Bernhard

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**From:** Julie Wischnack

**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2017 4:10 PM

**To:**

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Email List

I have checked with our webmaster and indeed you are listed on that webpage to be notified if new meetings or information is added. At this time, there are no scheduled meetings.

There was Minnetonka Memo article, which arrives late May, that announced the park board meeting (if your residence is not receiving the Minnetonka Memo, please let us know and we can address that). Because the Minnetonka Memo has such strong readership (over 90%), we feel it is a great way to get information out to folks:

## Park Board to review mountain biking trails at Civic Center, Big Willow Park

A desire for mountain biking trails was a common theme discovered by the *Imagine Minnetonka* community-wide visioning process. In an effort to make the vision a reality, Minnetonka High School VANTAGE program students researched options to add trails as part of their business class curriculum, and presented their findings to the park board earlier this year. Those findings included a recommendation to add mountain biking trails to the city's civic center campus and Big Willow Park.

Following the students' presentation, the park board directed staff to complete a feasibility study to assess the proposed trail routes and identify maintenance plans, use assessments and costs.

### Offer feedback at a public meeting

The park board is holding a public meeting to review the feasibility study on Wednesday, June 7 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd. Residents are invited to attend and offer feedback.

For more information, visit [eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking) or contact Recreation Services Director Kelly O'Dea at [kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com) or 952-939-8360.

That is the only meeting that has been scheduled, therefore, no new emails would have come your inbox. Thank you for your interest in this important topic.

I have copied Kelly O'Dea on the email to let him know that we have visited.

Julie



---

**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2017 6:29 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: mountain biking at Big Willow

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad  
Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Carrie & Kevin Mandler  
**Date:** June 26, 2017 at 4:57:33 PM CDT  
**To:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: mountain biking at Big Willow

Thanks for your quick response. don't know if you need it now, but for the record, my address is: 10451 Greenbrier Rd #311. I will make sure to include it in any future correspondence.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 26, 2017, at 2:37 PM, Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Carrie -

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment

during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove. Also ... adding your address to your comments provides extra weight to your feedback and input.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### **1. Project Timeline**

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
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- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### **2. Communication**

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city. And ... happy to hear of your support for the Plymouth Road trail ... I've been pushing for it and others on busy county and city roads.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.

On Jun 25, 2017, at 9:06 PM, Kevin and Carrie Mandler wrote:

Council Member Wagner,

As a wildlife and outdoor recreation enthusiast, I am writing with some concerns about the proposed mountain bike trails at Big Willow Park. Big Willow is a highly used passive recreation area and mountain

biking is active and aggressive. This kind of traffic could change the landscape of an area used by many for quiet walks/jogs and peaceful rest.

To start, I don't think all those memorial benches were placed with the idea of aggressive bike riders tearing through the area. It is already somewhat conflictive with pedestrians, dogs and bicycles (although not as common) all on the same trail. I even like to ride my bike on that trail occasionally but it is narrow and has sharp curves that can be hard to navigate between other bicycles, dogs on leashes and nature enthusiasts out for a stroll.

I respect the apparent need for space for mountain bikes but the Minnehaha Creek Watershed and the surrounding area is a safe haven for many different kinds of wildlife and folks looking for natural beauty along a **creek with a rich history**. I would rather see the need to improve and enhance this area and trails then bring a whole different kind of aggressive activity into the area.

I understand this will be a difficult decision no matter where the mountain bike trail is built. I am curious what the other options are.

I am excited to hear about trail improvements along Plymouth Road. This will open up even more flow of pedestrian and bicycle use in the Big Willow area. Because of this I prefer any mountain bike trail funding, instead, be used to enhance the natural area at Big Willow and create improvements to the existing trails. There are organizations to partner with to restore this area even more. Great River Greening as well as the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (which I am sure you are well aware) are organizations who can help with the trail and native plant improvements.

In addition to restoring the natural area, the trail along Minnetonka Boulevard between the ballfields and the trail parking lot should be raised or perhaps a boardwalk built so pedestrians don't have to walk/jog along the very busy street when the marsh floods (as it will naturally do) across the trail. Improvement is still needed to keep the trail open underneath (or around?) the train trestle when the creek overflows in that area as well.

Perhaps with some modifications of the mountain bike trail and thoughtful vision, an area can be created that will not only improve the beautiful passive recreation area along the creek, but also accommodate the needs of the active mountain bike riders as well. It is my hope that whatever plan is developed pedestrian safety and peaceful natural enhancements are the primary focus.

Carrie Mandler

Minnetonka Resident

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**June 27, 2017**

**From:** John Richards [mailto:  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 27, 2017 11:09 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trails

Hi Kelly:

I heard you speak last week at the Applewood Pointe Cooperative regarding proposed mountain biking adjacent to Big Willow Park.

First you should know that I was an active mountain biker at one time. Racing around corners, jumping over obstacles, going 'airborne' over anything was great fun. I would imagine going 'airborne' over the steep wooden bridge crossing Minnetonka Creek would be a blast.

Hence my concern. These same paths need to be shared with walkers, hikers, dog walkers and us slow seniors and visiting grandkids from Applewood Pointe. Very dangerous. Numerous blind spots could cause serious injuries to walkers and groups of bikers. There may also be a concern about impacts to wildlife.

When I was a mountain biker, my favorite trail was closed. Why? Too many close calls with other users of Nine Mile Creek Trail in Bloomington.

My family (yes, grandkids) and I live right next to the Minnetonka Trail. We do not walk there. Why? - Speeding bikers. So, we cross Minnetonka Blvd to Big Willow Park. Please do not shut down this peaceful place for us to walk in safety.

I am sure there are mountain bike groups supporting the Big Willow Trail. However, I feel they are outnumbered by those opposed, if they only knew about the plans.

So...put my name in the opposed column. Yes, I signed up for the email updates.

Good luck in your new job!!!

JOHN

John Richards

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**From:** Nancy Lange [mailto:  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 27, 2017 11:13 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park - Applewood Pointe

Good Morning:

Last Friday I made an honest attempt to send you an email and discovered that I had your email address wrong. So I decided to send what I intended last Friday.

I am a resident of Applewood Pointe and attended last week's coffee gathering - you as well as Julie Wischnack attended. You were here to welcome us to the community and to answer questions.

There were several questions regarding Big Willow Park. Well, in reading the morning paper there was an article regarding the earmark of funds for the off-road bike trails. As of the 12th of June the article states that Minnetonka City Council earmarked \$130,000 for the off-road bike trails in Civic Center Park and Big Willow Park to begin construction in 2018. Well I don't understand why you did not let us know this information at the coffee meeting. Also, you were asked the question regarding the sign at the entrance to Big Willow Park that states it is a Conservancy and would it then be protected land? You stated that you did not know and would get back to Jeanne. It is my understanding that a Conservancy is the preserving of natural resources. It certainly appears that Big Willow Park is full of natural resources.

If Mr. Ben Marks, the mountain bike advocate, is insisting on having a mountain bike trail in Big Willow, I suggest he take a walk in the park and enjoy the quiet and peaceful beauty of nature.

As of this morning I have the email from Jeanne regarding your answers to emails you received. I would appreciate being added to the email contact list.

Respectfully,

Nancy Lange

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**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 27, 2017 2:14 PM  
**To:** Julia Lofness  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Keep Big Willow Park as it is

Julia --

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share the concerns / impact that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites. In addition, I've received and shared with staff & the Park Board numerous comments of concern and consideration by residents.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
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- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
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Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Councilman, Ward 2

01-612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 27, 2017, at 12:31 PM, Julia Lofness wrote:

I live at St. Albans Mill Condos, directly across the tracks from Big Willow. I enjoy hearing the sound of kids playing ball. I enjoy walking through the quiet woods. I would hate to see Big Willow turned into a mountain bike park, with destruction of natural habitat and loss of a playground.,

Julia Lofness

3030 St Albans Mill Rd, #305

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**From:** Tamra Segal

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:22 PM

**To:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Mountain bikes

Thank you for your thoughtful email back. I feel bad now that I didn't take more time in writing mine out. Please feel free to add my name and comments. My address is

11658 meadow lane west

Minnetonka,

Also I appreciated knowing you advocating for improvements. There is no way to walk safely from my home off cedar lake road up hopkins crossroads or Plymouth road towards ridgedale safely.

Again I can't thank you enough for your response, updating me on improvements and working hard for our city. I really do appreciate it.

Tami Segal

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 26, 2017, at 1:49 PM, Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Tamra -

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

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Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove. FYI ... Adding your address does aid in the weight of your comments.



Separately, the Council has authorized both a trail on Plymouth Road from Holloway to Minnetonka Blvd and asked staff to develop an enhanced plan to speed trail construction along county roads and key, busy city streets to aid in connectivity and improve safety. I am a very strong advocate of this improvement, as the current pace is not acceptable.

Related to the mountain biking proposal, below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

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Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.

On Jun 26, 2017, at 2:31 PM, Tamra Segal wrote:

I was so sad to hear about the possibility of a mountain bike trail through big willow park. My family and I do not want it or support it. Why would you even consider it? Minnetonka residents already have the bike trails and have run the walkers off those paths. It saddens me. We don't need more bike trails. Why not add side walks from cedar lake road to hopkins crossroads or from Plymouth road to ridgedale area. Two busy road with no way for walkers to walk. Minnetonka area is not safe for walkers and the one area we have you want to take away.

I have been a Minnetonka resident for 23 years and the bikers have the roads, trails and do not need this. As well. We are very much against it.

Thank you,  
Tami Segal



**From:** Tracey Svoboda  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:25 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Preserve

Thank you Tony for the information. This was very helpful and I will sign up to receive the updates.

Kindest Regards

Tracey Svoboda

On Sun, Jun 25, 2017 at 8:56 PM, Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Tracey --

Apologies for my response delay.

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites.

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Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove.

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- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

[612-382-5212](tel:612-382-5212)

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 13, 2017, at 10:24 AM, Tracey Svoboda wrote:

Kelly and Tony,

I've been a resident of Minnetonka since 2004 and enjoy my daily walks through the preserve. It saddens me that there is a proposal to turn Big Willow into a mountain bike park. I can understand why the bikers would like to enjoy this as well, its a wonderful preserve.

My concern is that once Big Willow is turned into the biking trail it will loose much of the beauty of the native plants not to mention the volunteer work that goes along with maintaining the park in removing invasive plants.

I will also contact my council person to voice my concern to them as well. Thank you for your time in letting me voice my opinion.

Kindest Regards,

Tracey Svoboda

11314 Minnetonka Blvd

Minnetonka

---

**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 27, 2017 6:06 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Fwd: Mountain Biking proposal for Big Willow Park

FYI

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Councilman, Ward 2

01-612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Alpha Beta

**Date:** June 27, 2017 at 5:53:15 PM CDT

**To:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Mountain Biking proposal for Big Willow Park

Hello Tony,

Thank you for your response and this additional information. We would be happy to have our comments placed in the official public record; our address is 12201 Minnetonka Blvd, Minnetonka, 55305.

We would like to reiterate that we are not opposed to mountain biking in Minnetonka; we believe there is room for a variety of recreation opportunities in our city. However, we are opposed to locating those trails in Big Willow Park for the reasons stated in our original email.

Thank you again,

Mary and Dave Goehle

Mary & Dave -

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city, and the points you raise. I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up on the initial site that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternative sites (outside of Big Willow).

Based on a great deal of advocacy from residents, the council did include funds in our 5 year capital improvement plan to support development of some mountain biking trails; however, as you indicated no proposal is being considered at the City Council level. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject, working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove. If you do, note that having a home address included increases the weight of your comments.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.

## 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

## 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 9, 2017, at 5:40 PM, Alpha Beta wrote:

Mr. Ellingson and Mr. Wagner,

We have become aware of a proposal to create a mountain bike park in Big Willow Park, and are strongly opposed to this plan.

We are residents of Applewood Pointe of Minnetonka, located across the street from Big Willow Park. As you may know, this is a senior co-operative with approximately 150 residents. One of the main reasons we chose to move to Applewood was because of its location across from Big Willow, and we (and dozens of other Applewood residents) frequent the park many times a week. This is a beautiful amenity for the city of Minnetonka, and we have been pleased to see that so many people take advantage of this opportunity to be in nature. We have been further pleased to see so many native wildflowers within the park. Clearly, much work has been done in the park to diminish invasive plants, allowing native plants to return to the landscape.

Putting mountain bike trails throughout the park, would create a great deal of plant disruption and erosion. It would certainly disrupt the peacefulness of the park, which would also adversely affect wildlife. Additionally, much dust would be produced by fast moving bikes, that those of use trying to enjoy a walk would have to endure. We feel strongly that we must protect and maintain these natural forest areas within our city that give us places to escape the noise and clamor of city living.

We are not opposed to establishing a mountain biking area in Minnetonka. Indeed, we are happy to see people being active and getting out in nature; however, **we strongly believe that this type of activity does not belong in one of the jewels of Minnetonka's park system.**

We understand that this proposal is currently working its way through the Park Board and have voiced our concerns to Kelly O'Dea, Recreation Services Director (whom we have copied on this email). As residents of Ward 1, and regular users of Big Willow Park, we also wanted you to understand our concerns.

Thank you,

Mary and Dave Goehle

.....  
**June 28, 2017**

**From:** Kathy Burns

**Sent:** Wednesday, June 28, 2017 9:12 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Biking at Big Willow Park

Ms. O'Dea,

I understand there is a proposal to create mountain bike trails throughout Big Willow Park. I am OPPOSED to this idea. I believe it would destroy the peaceful nature of this beautiful park and disturb the wildlife living there. On a recent birding walk through the park I noticed that even regular bike traffic (and dogs being walked off leash) was disruptive. I don't believe that most mountain bikers have an interest in the nature they are riding through and therefore could be accommodated by trails in another location not already being enjoyed by those that do.

Thank you,

Kathy Burns

3614 Steele St

Minnetonka, MN 55345

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**From:** christopher meyer  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 28, 2017 9:34 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Park

I am opposed to putting mountain bike trails in Big Willow Park. Mountain bikes are very destructive to the terrain by riding over it but more importantly, the destruction leads to significant erosion. It would ruin the park, disturbing trees, plants, wild flowers and wild life. Please consider the full impact of mountain biking and reject the idea. Thank you. Chris Meyer, Minnetonka resident.

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**From:** Michael Goodman  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 28, 2017 11:34 AM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Mountain Bike Trail

Thank you Mr. Wagner.

My address is 2601 Crescent Ridge Rd.

Michael Goodman

On Wed, Jun 28, 2017 at 10:21 AM, Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Michael ...

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share the need to assess the impact and concerns that have brought up by numerous residents on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternative sites. Note, I've shared with staff & the Park Board the numerous comments of concern and consideration I've received from residents.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us) and can respond related to the questions you will raise below. If you prefer not to have your comments in the record, please let me know and I will have our staff remove. Note, adding your address does add weight to your comments.

Although it sounds like you are up to speed on the process, below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

[612-382-5212](tel:612-382-5212)

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.

On Jun 28, 2017, at 9:04 AM, Michael Goodman wrote:

Good Morning Mr. Wagner,

I am coming late to this issue as I only heard about it last week. I will be attending all meetings going forward and I'll make certain to be on the automated announcement list.

I am obviously a resident of Minnetonka and have experience with these mountain bike trails and designated areas while living elsewhere. While the park board is in favor of this initiative, they don't have much more than the advocates arguments to rely on.

While brief reports were already presented, when I and the residents of the surrounding areas arrive at the next meeting, we will want to see prepared, detailed reports provided by experienced engineers related to the items below.

- Number and types of trees proposed to be cut
- Studies regarding changes to erosion following construction
- Studies regarding changes to water run-off following construction
- Studies regarding the effect on sensitive vegetation
- Studies related to the effect on food sources for animals
- Studies regarding the effect on deer, small animals and their habitats
- Studies related to the effect on the general ecosystem of the area
- Studies regarding the effect on migrating birds and their sensitive hatcheries
- Details regarding systems and processes to keep bikes on prepared paths
- Details regarding systems and processes to maintain widths of paths over time
- Noise studies
- Studies regarding ingress and egress of police and fire in the event of emergency
- Opinion from the police chief regarding potential for loitering and how it will be addressed
- Opinion from the fire chief regarding risk of fire and fire prevention methods

I look forward to meeting you, Mayor Schneider and Ms. O'Day at the next meeting.

Thank you,

Kind regards,

Michael Goodman

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**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Wednesday, June 28, 2017 8:03 PM

**To:** Julia Gelardi

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park - Proposed Mountain Bike Trail

Julia & Alexander -

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share the concerns / impact that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites. In addition, I've received and shared with staff & the Park Board numerous comments of concern and consideration by residents.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.



- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

## 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Councilman, Ward 2

01-612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 28, 2017, at 1:37 PM, Julia Gelardi wrote:

Dear Mr. Wagner,

As residents of Minnetonka (living opposite Big Willow Park), we wish to express our concerns regarding the proposed Mountain Bike trail. We believe that the proposed trail will be detrimental for the following reasons amongst others:

- 1) Increased traffic (motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian) along Minnetonka Blvd. which will lead to greater accidents and congestion.
- 2) Harm to the local environment and habitats of flora and fauna.
- 3) Conflicting use of Big Willow Park between walkers and bikers will be dangerous to walkers.

We feel that there are other areas more suited to the proposed Mountain Bike trail and hope that the council will take our concerns into account.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Alexander and Julia Gelardi

12201 Minnetonka Blvd., Apt. 311

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**June 29, 2017**

**From:**

**Sent:** Thursday, June 29, 2017 10:15 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Hello my name is Martha Morris address is 3000 St Albans Mill Road. Minnetonka 55305

I have spoken to you about my strong feelings against developing trails in Big Willow Park.

I walk through the park at least twice a day. There are many regulars who I have gotten to know. Most did not know about the plans to develop the trails and are strongly opposed also.

I realized the people that want the trails are very well organized. And those of us who use the trails now are not only not organized but totally uninformed about the project.

I cannot State strongly enough how special this park is. It has taken many many years to be as wild and as beautiful as it is.

For the first time in all my years walking the trails I actually encountered a mountain biker.

He had his two young children with him. My fears were confirmed as one of the children ran over tree roots and plants. I told him to be careful where he rode.

His father came back and asked if he could have a civil conversation with me. Answered yes. I can't go through the whole conversation here. Two things stood out in my mind and I want to say them.

\*He said he liked mountain biking and wanted trails closer to his house. He didn't care much about the park.

\* I asked him if he had ever seen the erosion that mountain biking had done to the Theodore Wirth Park?

His answer is the one I so fear. He said, " well that's because the park had never been used for mountain biking before."

I have never spoken to one person who wants the trails or is for the trails in the park. Please tell me what I should do to organize those against it I have no idea. If it's money I think we could probably raise just as much as the Minnetonka parents have raised.

This project was started because of the Minnetonka High School mountain biking Club why can't they use Purgatory Park or someplace close to the high school? Where is the parking going to be? How many trees will be taken down. Will it be patrolled by police? Will the graffiti be taken down by the mountain bikers?. There are so many questions. So many people are livid when they hear about the project. Could you please call me

Thank you

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I am writing to protest the decision to turn the nature trail area at Big Willow Park into a mountain bike trail. The nature trail area west of the main park is currently a quite natural area that is peaceful and provides quality habitat for urban wildlife. There is an established wetland with active water fowl nesting areas (the wetland area is likely protected under law). Minnehaha Creek flows through the natural area, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District regulates this water body and mountain bike trails will almost certainly create erosion which will pollute the creek. All types of wild life live in this natural area, waterfowl, wild turkey, song birds, deer, fox, all manner of small mammals and reptiles; the destruction of their

habitat by building trails is unacceptable. This area is already heavily used by walkers/hikers some would argue over used especially given the recent development of Apple Wood Pointe; adding mountain bike trails would only increase this over use. Aside from the obvious safety concerns of having pedestrians and mountain bikers occupying the same trail system area; has the council given any concern to the fact that an active railroad runs through the area at speeds I would estimate around 45 mph; putting a lot of mountain bikers in the area greatly increases the possibility of a serious/fatal accident?

The simple fact is this natural area at Big Willow is not suitable for a mountain bike park in size (it's simply not big enough) or character (it's a quite natural area currently). Some proponents have dismissed opposition by superciliously stating: opponents either misunderstand what mountain biking is or "think it's their park." Those in favor of the project far outnumber those opposed. I disagree; I along with many other Minnetonka residents (probably a majority) oppose this plan; and it is precisely that I do understand mountain biking and its culture that I oppose this project. I used to live in the mountain west and was an avid mountain biker; the population density in the Minnetonka urban area and the metro area in general is too dense to support mountain biking (at this site) in a way that does not damage the environment. I would argue that it is some proponents and the mountain bike group that selfishly think it's "their Park", as well as well as \$130,000 in tax payer money that could be better spent; such as more community service officer patrols to enforce littering ordinances, and better maintenance of existing facilities. A far better option would be to team up with the Three Rivers Park District and build mountain bike trails at one of their far larger parks.

Sincerely;  
Peter Svebakken; MS  
9611 Oakridge Trail  
Minnetonka, MN

---

**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 29, 2017 2:50 PM  
**To:** John Klinger  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park

John ...

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share the concerns / impact that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites. In addition, I've received and shared with staff & the Park Board numerous comments of similar concerns and consideration by residents on this subject.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

## 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

**2. Communication**

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Councilman, Ward 2

01-612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 29, 2017, at 12:48 PM, John Klinger wrote:

Dear Tony,

I have never written an email before but here goes..... Please consider leaving big willow park as it is. We walkers have few places we don't have to dodge bikes. To make Big Willow park into a mountain bike trail would be a terrible idea. I am a devoted walker. I see trails all over where they involve bikes and walkers. I, being someone who was run down by a fast biker, object to spending the money to make one of Minnetona's parks into a mountain bike trail. We have many trails bikers can use. Why make another? I object to the trail. Sincerely, John R. Klinger 12109 Robin Circle Minnetonka Minnesota

.....  
**June 30, 2017**

**From:** Kristen Heimerl

**Sent:** Friday, June 30, 2017 7:09 AM

**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow Mountain Bike Proposal

My family and I are vehemently opposed to the proposal to convert Big Willow Park into a Mountain Biking Park. Four generations of our family have enjoyed the nature, wild life and peace Big Willow offers over several decades residing in Minnetonka. High octane biking will ruin a community gem. Video, Internet, hyper-active child "programming," .... Priorities have shifted. But will shift again as we become increasingly disconnected from each other and from our sources of peace and balance. Increasingly, families simply don't have easy access to nature. And we're ruining our natural spaces at an ever-increasing pace. We don't think about the long term implications of our actions – we just move ahead to fulfill our short term self-interests. The amount of development going on in our community and surrounding TC area is staggering. When we don't protect our sacred spaces we create impersonal, crowded, soulless, nature-less environments where the only greenery grows on our kitchen window sill or the fabricated, "plastic" small gathering spaces we create. Ever been to Beijing? Every experienced one of those massive multiuse residential/commercial/retail 70+ story high behemoths? They're horrific, cold, impersonal, lonely. This is becoming the model for the future of our nation. And whether you think it or not, it starts here. It starts now in our own tiny community. The decisions we make today impact our people, our community, and our ability to connect with what's real and matters in this world decades, centuries to come. Maybe you don't give a darn about that because you need to deliver results today and you'll be dead tomorrow. But you should, you are charged with caring for our limited resources—our land and our planet—for your ancestors and mine.

It would be harmful to erode the park, the nature and the wild life in the heart of our community.

Sincerely,

Kristen Heimerl

---

**July 1, 2017**

**From:** bjwiersum@gmail.com [mailto:bjwiersum@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Saturday, July 01, 2017 9:40 PM

**To:** TERRY

**Cc:** Geralyn Barone <gbarone@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow proposal

Dear Ms. & Mr. Petrik:

Thank you for your note. I appreciate knowing your point of view. It is true that there is a proposal for mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. It is also true that Big Willow Park is one of the possible locations, but other locations are being considered as well. No decisions regarding location have been made. That determination will be part of a public process. I urge you to stay involved. Your voice can make a difference. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Brad J. Wiersum

Minnetonka Ward 3

On Jun 29, 2017, at 7:27 PM, TERRY wrote:

Brad,

We are responding to the proposal to add biking trails to Big Willow.

We have lived in Minnetonka for over 25 years. We have enjoyed our multiple nature parks, but Big Willow is one of our favorites because of Minnehaha creek. We have enjoyed taking our dog on walks on and "off the trail".

We feel that the beauty of this park should not be destroyed for mountain biker's trails. Surely, there are more challenging trails for bikers to use.

This is an expense Minnetonka could spend somewhere else, while preserving a beautiful area that multiple walkers enjoy.

Thank you,

Terry and Merlene Petrik

3869 Vandan Rd  
Minnetonka, MN

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**July 2, 2017**

**From:** Ali Ling

**Sent:** Sunday, July 02, 2017 10:12 AM

**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Cc:** Matt Haggerty

**Subject:** Neighbors against Big Willow mountain bike trails

Hi Tony and Kelly,

I am writing regarding the mountain bike trails proposed for Big Willow Park. My husband and I live on Westridge Lane near the park and we have a one-year old daughter. We use the Big Willow trails once or twice a week, and the quiet, safe nature of the park is one of our favorite things about the neighborhood. We look forward to taking our kids on walks and bike rides in the park for many years to come.

We oppose the proposal for the following reasons:

- 1.) Mountain biking trails in the park will make it unsafe to take small children walking or biking on the trails. If I am out walking with my kids and mountain bikers are riding past at 10+ mph, then I can't let my kids explore the trails and enjoy the woods as they should, because I have to make sure they don't get hit by bikers.
- 2.) The trails create a sense of community in our neighborhood. Many of the trail users are local residents out for a walk with their families. Mountain biking trails would discourage families from using the trails and reduce the opportunity to connect with neighbors.
- 3.) The Twin Cities area has an abundance of excellent mountain biking trails in regional parks, such as Elm Creek, Theo Wirth, and Murphy-Hanrehan. Mountain bike enthusiasts have many existing options. In contrast, local residents looking for park trails they can easily walk to, Big Willow is the option.

Thanks for reading and for your consideration,

Alison Ling & Matt Haggerty

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**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Monday, July 03, 2017 8:59 PM

**To:** Newstrom, Cherie K.

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Councilman, Ward 2

01-612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 3, 2017, at 11:14 AM, Newstrom, Cherie K. wrote:

Please do not turn Big Willow Park into a Mountain Biking Park!!!!

.....

**July 4, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From: JP Klinger  
Sent: Tuesday, July 04, 2017 4:28 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: no mountain bikes in Big Willow

Good Afternoon,

As a long-time resident of the eastern part of Minnetonka and someone who really treasures nature and serenity, I beg you to oppose destroying Big Willow with mountain biking!!!

Mountain biking is loud and wild and would completely prevent anyone wanting to walk in nature in Big Willow or have a quiet family picnic. It will completely destroy that wonderful resource.

Thank you,

Paula

.....  
**July 5, 2017**

**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 05, 2017 7:20 AM  
**To:** adrienne baldwin  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Nelson Evenrud <nelsevenrud@gmail.com>; Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Geralyn Barone <gbarone@eminnetonka.com>; Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>; chriswalickminnetonka@gmail.com; james.durbin@gmail.com; Cynthia Kist <cckist02@hotmail.com>; Madeline Seveland <bansc002@umn.edu>; Chris Gabler <cgabler@wwdb.org>; peggykvam@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Re: BIG WILLOW

Adrienne & Jack -

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share the concerns / impact that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites. In addition, I've received and shared with our staff numerous comments of similar concerns and consideration by residents on this subject.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let Kelly know and he can remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

· At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.



- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

## **2. Communication**

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Councilman, Ward 2

01-612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 4, 2017, at 4:10 PM, adrienne baldwin wrote:

We are writing with our concerns for the proposal to build a mountain biking trail in the Big Willow Park.

It is inconceivable that that would even be a consideration!

Big Willow is a quiet, beautiful park that is a perfect nature trail for many residents of the area.

The mountain bikes would introduce a hazard to the many adults, children and dogs who walk these paths on a daily basis.

There would be a direct destruction of wildlife habitat and the wetland area!

Add to that the increased litter and the pollution of Minnehaha Creek .

The compaction of the soil would kill mature trees.

The fast moving traffic on Minnetonka Blvd, (40 MPH - way too fast - it should be 30) is already unsafe! Add to that increased automobile, bike and pedestrian traffic and it would be very dangerous!

We are certain that there would be more appropriate and safer areas in which to build a mountain bike trail.

We are users of the park and tax paying citizens of Minnetonka.

Jack and Adrienne Baldwin  
12201 Minnetonka Blvd.  
#203  
Minnetonka, Mn 55305

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Karin Margolis  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 05, 2017 1:01 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** mountain bike trail Big Willow

We are so fortunate to have a park like Big Willow. Why destroy this lovely sanctuary? Let Minnetonka be a leader in conservation not desecration.

Thank you.

Karin Margolis  
3916 Avondale Street  
Minnetonka, MN 55345

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**From:** Ann Peterson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 05, 2017 2:44 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Mountain Bike Issue

As residents of St. Albans Mill Condominiums for 33 years, we were alarmed to learn that there is a proposal for mountain bike trails to be placed in the Big Willow Park area. This would greatly increase bike traffic and cause damage to our beautiful marshland, which is a refuge for wild animals and nature lovers who enjoy the natural environment.

Bringing in mountain bikers will increase the noise level of our community, damage foliage, eliminate wildlife, and harm natural habitat. Our complex already endures the noise of softball games in Big Willow Park and train traffic that runs next to our property. Plus we have constant graffiti sprayed under the bridge crossing Minnehaha Creek at our entrance. How much damage can some bikers do as they congregate on parkland around us when they want more excitement and challenges? Who will patrol and monitor them?

Mountain biking has its place but NOT in beautiful parkland that's enjoyed by walkers, runners and dog walkers who leave our environment unharmed and pristine. This parkland must be preserved and protected for all of us - not cater to one sport!!!

Russ & Ann Peterson  
St. Albans Mill Condominiums

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 05, 2017 4:47 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Perry Vetter <pvetter@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow MTN Biking

Hello Kelly,

Glad to see the city is communicating about the proposed mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park.

I'm just communicating to be counted as being opposed to this idea. I understand that the final proposal (if it is even approved) is well down the road.

But any change of this nature will change the nature off Big Willow Park.

Just a few points:

- Many volunteers have worked to restore this beautiful park by eliminating invasive plants. Mountain biking will essentially "undo" much of this work. **Allowing this type of activity in this particular park will have a chilling effect on future volunteers.**
- 
- I use the park almost daily to walk our two dogs and to just enjoy the natural beauty of the park. The ONLY issue we ever have is the occasional biker that fails to let us know they are coming. Proponents say that the lack of parking will be mitigated by bikers riding in. That sets up pedestrian - rider problems especially at the pinch points at the two bridges.
- Proponents say there are no other mountain biking options in the west metro. So our beautiful pristine park will become a magnet for not just Minnetonka residents, but west metro bikers as well. Is that what we want?

Surrendering this gem to a special interest group is just wrong! This land was set aside 40 years ago to preserve it's character and allowing a special interest group to substantially change it's nature is unacceptable in my view.

I support any activity that does not require a motor or burn gas and that includes mountain biking. In fact I ride to work n Chanhassen on occassion.

But Big Willow is the wrong place to set up this activity!

Chris Klug  
12817 Burwell Dr.  
Minnetonka

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**July 6, 2017**

**From:** Carlson, Andrew W  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 06, 2017 8:04 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Willow Biking trails

Thanks for the information. I look forward to hearing more about what will happen.

I lean on the side of adding the trails as I mountain bike everywhere, but I live in Minnetonka so it would be great to have some here.

**Andrew W Carlson**

**From:** Kelly ODea [<mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 05, 2017 4:28 PM  
**To:** Carlson, Andrew W  
**Subject:** RE: Big Willow Biking trails

Hi Andy,

We are only in the very early stages of exploring the feasibility of adding mountain biking trails. Here is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.

## 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The board directed staff to look at additional locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research additional locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

## 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- We will add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project updates.
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your interest in our wonderful parks.

Kelly

**From:**

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 05, 2017 2:14 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Big Willow Biking trails

I understand you are the person to contact about the proposal to add mountain bike trails to the park?

Can you provide more information about that plan?

Thanks

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**From:** bruce honnigford

**Sent:** Thursday, July 06, 2017 9:16 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Mountain bikes in the parks

The proposed mountain biking trails that have been aggressively promoted to the city council appear to be invasive and dangerous to the many residents that use the park regularly for peaceful recreation.

I am afraid that if there is not an organized counter effort to oppose this special interest soon, Big Willow Park and Civic Center will become very unattractive to the residents of Minnetonka Mills.

Last year when I criticized the idea of M-biking trails in the city, I was told by their leader Ben Marks, that I should to move to another city. I moved to Minnetonka from St. Paul in 2012 to be closer to nature and now a few want to destroy it.

Bruce Honnigford

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**From:** Susan Jerome

**Sent:** Thursday, July 06, 2017 1:48 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park Mt. Biking?

Good Afternoon Rec. Director Kelly!

My husband Matt & I moved from SW Minnetonka to now NE Minnetonka within the last year. We love the new change & all the area has to offer!

I recently discovered Big Willow Park's gorgeous trails the other day with my dog & noticed the metal Mtka city signs regarding the potential to become a mountain biking park. I believe this would be a huge mistake for the city. It would change the whole area by increasing traffic, altering the wildlife/wetland environment and permanently changing the peaceful, pristine area! Could it lead to mountain biking events? Where would the users of the bike trails park their vehicles with bike racks, etc.? The majority of current park trail users are walkers & recreational bikers. Let's keep it this way for all humans & wildlife to enjoy.

Thanks for your time & thoughtful attention to all citizen input. I've also contacted my Ward rep. re: this issue.

Susan Jerome

2336 Nottingham Ct.

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**From:** Christopher Spargo

**Sent:** Thursday, July 06, 2017 2:38 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** I wanted to email and voice my strong support for the bike trails at Big Willow Park

I'm surprised to see that this is creating controversy. I'm strongly in favor of this, in spite of being in the mostly-walk-my-dog-there camp.

Any opportunity to encourage kids, adults, and families to enjoy an activity together outside is a good thing. The clubs that manage these seem to be VERY earnest about keeping them well maintained - it would probably be a net benefit to the general state of the park.

Thanks for listening!

Christopher Spargo

3736 Plymouth Road

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**From:** Jack Barbier

**Sent:** Thursday, July 06, 2017 4:35 PM

**To:** Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Biking at Big Willow Park ???

Oh, boy, here we go again.

Now its the bikers that are exerting pressure.

Build a new series of biking trails through this little oasis in the city? The last vestige of peace and serenity for miles around?

**NO! NO! NNNNOOOOOOOO!!!**

Why on earth would you destroy the last quiet place in the area??? Big Willow was simply not designed for that type of use.

I know the biking lobby has grown lately, and is now a powerful lobbying force. And mountain biking trails were a big deal on the recent resident survey. OK...I get that.

*But what about the rest of us (and there are MANY) who simply want a little peace and quiet in our daily lives?*

Living nearby-- for over 25 years now-- I have come to rely on Big Willow Park as my daily exercise / zen destination. I am over there several times a week, all year long, day or night. You start getting bikers ripping through there Pell-Mell,..shouting, whizzing, crashing through the brush, and really, from my point of view... "there goes the neighborhood".

If the bikers simply can't take "no" for an answer, please work hard to find them someplace else where they won't be destroying others' quality of life. Lord knows there are certainly plenty of other trails all over the place NOW for their use. The same cannot be said for wildlife/walking trails that wind through woods, along the Creek, away from the noise and disruption of city streets.

Converting Big Willow Park from a walking to a biking destination is a really bad idea. Please don't do it. Put that idea to bed right now.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to give you MY input.

Yours, Jack Barbier, ChFC

13001 St. David's Road

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**From:** Molly S

**Sent:** Thursday, July 06, 2017 11:44 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Cc:** Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>; Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Brad Wiersum <bwersum@eminnetonka.com>; Tim Bergstedt <tbergstedt@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow mountain bike proposal

Hello.

I'm writing regarding the proposal to add mountain bike trails in Big Willow. I've lived in Minnetonka for over 5 decades now. I love walking on the natural trails, especially at Big Willow Park. I frequently visit my father's dedicated bench overlooking Minnehaha Creek. This spot was selected for it's low traffic and peaceful view.

I've struggled with the concept of adding miles of mountain bike trails - I love biking, too. I just don't believe Big Willow is big enough for this activity. Bikes are for traveling distances, whether via paths, trails or roads.

I appreciate the fact that this proposal was initiated by teens. We need more engaged youth in city government. I ask you to seek input from more local residents, many are unaware of this plan. I imagine the new occupants at Applewood Point would be concerned about this proposal.

In summary, I have decided I do not support mountain biking trails in Big Willow. There's got to be more open prairie or wilderness to the south or west of here for biking in more expensive natural surroundings.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Molly Snuggerud

3619 Croftview Terrace

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**July 7, 2017**

**From:** Ed Friedman  
**Sent:** Friday, July 07, 2017 7:17 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Big Willow Park Mountain Biking

Hi again Kelly, I thought I might be able to contribute a few additional ideas regarding any plans to add mountain biking to Big Willow.

At the same time to possibly draw your attention to some discussion going on at Nextdoor Westnesse a neighborhood website that you may or may not be aware of.

As I saw the map of the trails, it appeared that the bike trails would take over all the trails in Big Willow north of the creek/railroad tracks. Isn't that a little overkill? Can't that plan be scaled back to leave the Northeast corner still native and allowable for off lead dogs under voice control. We worked hard with the Park Board 8 years ago, and it seems that now we will have to fight for a place in the northeast quadrant of the city again. There was talk of a dog park that has never materialized.

We lost the offlead area at Lone Lake because of the proximity of the county dog park. How about exploring that area for the mountain bikes? How about expanding into other portions of Lone Lake. It is a large park, and has more parking available at the Tennis courts which is adjacent to the now eliminated off lead area. Or how about the Evergreen Park where I never see anyone in the center area and is closer to the Minnetonka High School where this idea apparently originated.

My concern is that those riding bikes through the area where many of us walk our dogs have been hit or pushed off the trails by those riding their bikes there and they aren't even supposed to be there now. There is already erosion from the bikes.

I guess that we will meet at future Park Board meeting as we start to get the community involved.

Ed Friedman

**From:** Kelly ODea [<mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 23, 2017 8:59 AM  
**To:** Ed Friedman  
**Subject:** RE: Big Willow Park Mountain Biking

Hi Ed,

Thank you for your email and feedback regarding mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. Your feedback is appreciated as the city explores this topic. We are only in the very early stages of exploring the feasibility of adding mountain biking trails. Here is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The board directed staff to look at additional locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research additional locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board.

- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

## 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- We will add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project updates.
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your interest in our wonderful parks.  
Kelly

**From:** Ed Friedman

**Sent:** Friday, June 23, 2017 5:18 AM

**To:** Terry Schneider <[tschneider@eminnetonka.com](mailto:tschneider@eminnetonka.com)>; Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>; Dick Allendorf <[dallendorf@eminnetonka.com](mailto:dallendorf@eminnetonka.com)>; Patty Acomb <[pacomb@eminnetonka.com](mailto:pacomb@eminnetonka.com)>; Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>; Perry Vetter <[pvetter@eminnetonka.com](mailto:pvetter@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park Mountain Biking

**Importance:** High

To all involved:

Unfortunately, I cannot find contact information for Park Board Members.

I am asking you to please reject a proposal to incorporate a mountain bike park within Big Willow.

I, and many other senior residents of the city use Big Willow Park for our quiet daily health walks with nature, and often with our dog friends. The northeast corner of Big Willow between the St Albans Mills bridge and the northern parking lot and between the Minnehaha Creek and Cedar Lake Rd is the only park area in the NE quadrant of the city where we are allowed to enjoy our animals off-lead. Eight years ago the Park Board was considering eliminating all off-lead access within the city park system. The result was overflowing attendance at Park Board meetings that had to be moved to the council meeting room which also experienced overflowing attendance in support of maintaining our access. The citizens and the park board worked these issues hard for over two years. Please don't take those agreements away. We lost Lone Lake (with the proximity of the Three Rivers Off Lead Park a mile away). Big Willow is the only area in the NE quadrant of the city.

The second reason to reject this proposal is parking on the north side of the park. There is only space for 5 or 6 cars and they are often full, resulting in people parking on the side of a narrow road. This will only get worse, especially as such a mountain biking area attracts users from beyond the city of Minnetonka.

Third, erosion has always been stated as a concern in our parks natural areas. There is already signs of erosion on the dirt paths on the north side of Minnehaha Creek near the St Albans Mills Bridge from bike traffic. The tracks are there to be seen and there are not supposed to be any bikes on those paths according to current regulations.

Most, not all, of us that walk on those dirt paths are seniors, often bringing our grandchildren along to enjoy nature. We walk slow, and aren't as agile as we once were. We have encountered young men and women on bikes riding through the area that we were expected to make way for the bikes by the riders, often being brushed or hit when we weren't fast enough for them. Please don't increase this hazard. Please don't take our safety away. Please don't take our piece of nature away. Please allow us to pass this piece of nature on to our grandkids and theirs. Where else in the city can we get that close to Minnehaha Creek and watch the water flow in peace, see the varied wildlife that live there? Show our children and theirs the beauty of nature.



If you open this area to the bikes, the erosion will accelerate, the wildlife with leave, the peace and quiet will give way to competition and noise of the bikers, the safety of our seniors will be endangered.

Ed Friedman

2700 Crestwood Circle

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**July 8, 2017**

**From:** Sandy Johnson

**Sent:** Saturday, July 08, 2017 12:59 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Biking issue

Kelly, we just wanted to add our concern about the potential of having mountain biking in Big Willow. We live at Applewood Pointe of Minnetonka and are very concerned about this issue as are probably all of the residents who live in our complex. If mountain biking is so important to some of those who ride these bikes, there needs to be another location to allow that to happen. We trust that you will ensure a very complete study of this issue so that Big Willow will not be impacted.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sandy and Jerry Johnson

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**July 9, 2017**

**From:** Jack Barbier

**Sent:** Sunday, July 09, 2017 2:14 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Mountain Biking at Big Willow Park ???

Kelly, thanks for your response. I certainly DO want to be put on the e-mailing list. Thank you.

And I'm glad to hear that this proposal is still in its early stages. And that other locations are being examined. All good.

And it's great that future meetings will be listed in the Minnetonka memo. But.....a whole lot of people don't read the Memo front-to-back. Nor, for that matter, spend their days online.

If the City truly wants to solicit input, why not send some people over to the park itself, armed with a survey (hopefully designed by someone with no interest in the outcome, i.e. unbiased) to garner input from all the many people who now use the park? Ask the dog-walkers, the seniors, the bird-watchers, the exercise folks, the romantic couples, the families w/ toddlers, etc. for their input directly. I would willingly volunteer for such duty, and I bet I could recruit many more.

Do you plan to post any park-user "comment" notices at the entrances to the Park itself? If not... don't you think you should?

The biking contingent is large and well-organized, whereas the park users are not. I've seen this type of thing happen before, ... and it gives me a bad feeling.

I took another nice long walk over in Big Willow just today. You are right....it is wonderful.

Let's keep it that way, shall we?

Yours, Jack Barbier

On Fri, Jul 7, 2017 at 7:49 AM Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Hi Jack,

We are only in the very early stages of exploring the feasibility of adding mountain biking trails. Here is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.

## 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The board directed staff to look at additional locations, including the 494 corridor.
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- We will add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project updates.
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your interest in our wonderful parks.

Kelly

**From:** Jack Barbier

**Sent:** Thursday, July 06, 2017 4:35 PM

**To:** Bob Ellingson <[bellingson@eminnetonka.com](mailto:bellingson@eminnetonka.com)>; Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>; Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Mountain Biking at Big Willow Park ???

Oh, boy, here we go again

Now its the bikers that are exerting pressure.

Build a new series of biking trails through this little oasis in the city? The last vestige of peace and serenity for miles around?

**NO! NO! NNNNOOOOOOOO!!!!**

Why on earth would you destroy the last quiet place in the area??? Big Willow was simply not designed for that type of use.

I know the biking lobby has grown lately, and is now a powerful lobbying force. And mountain biking trails were a big deal on the recent resident survey. OK...I get that.

*But what about the rest of us (and there are MANY) who simply want a little peace and quiet in our daily lives?*

Living nearby-- for over 25 years now-- I have come to rely on Big Willow Park as my daily exercise / zen destination. I am over there several times a week, all year long, day or night. You start getting bikers ripping through there Pell-Mell,...shouting, whizzing, crashing through the brush, and really, from my point of view... "there goes the neighborhood".

If the bikers simply can't take "no" for an answer, please work hard to find them someplace else where they won't be destroying others' quality of life. Lord knows there are certainly plenty of other trails all over the place NOW for their use. The same cannot be said for wildlife/walking trails that wind through woods, along the Creek, away from the noise and disruption of city streets.

Converting Big Willow Park from a walking to a biking destination is a really bad idea. Please don't do it. Put that idea to bed right now.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to give you MY input.

Yours, Jack Barbier, ChFC

13001 St. David's Road

.....

**From:** Ed  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 09, 2017 3:28 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain Biking Plan

I would like to add my support to thi writer and support a park board effort to find another location for a mountain bike trail. Mountain bike trails can not coexist with pedestrian traffic. Mountain biking is a competitive sport activity and pedestrians will get knocked down if the trails are shared with mountain bikers. I have been knocked down once and hit multiple times over the years by bikers on the natural paths within Big Willow and they are not even supposed to be there. Please consider areas such as next to the civic center which is used for no other purpose, The center of Evergreen Park where I have never seen anyone using that area over the past 10 years, Lone Lake which has much more available parking, is not as close to as many residences. If this proposal moves forward, it will generate a lot of activity not only from Minnetonka residents, but from the broader western suburbs. Maybe the city should consider approaching Three Rivers Parks about incorporating such an activity at their locations.

Ed Friedman

'To all of my walking buddies and those who appreciate a quiet place to be with nature! I saw an article in the Sun Sailor (see attachment) recently stating that Minnetonka was adding 2 new bike trails in 2018. As I love biking, I read the article only to discover that they are considering putting 3 miles of off road

mountain bike trails in Big Willow Park. I was devastated. Big Willow is the only place you can walk/jog on the east end of Mtka. without being next to cars or fast bikes. It is such a beautiful treasure in the middle of suburbia – the Minnehaha Creek flows through it and there is an abundance of wildlife and natural resources. Brad and I attended the community meeting at Mtka. City Hall last night where the Vantage Group presented their proposal to the park board and city council. Of course, there were many people who got up to speak in favor of the project as they were the reason the meeting was called in the first place. Many residents of Minnetonka are not even aware that these bike trails are being proposed for Big Willow. Supporters were complaining that Theodore Wirth was the closest park with off road biking and it wasn't always convenient to get there/drive their kids there. It sounded like the board was agreeing that this would be a good addition to our park system. Finally, toward the end of the meeting a few residents got up and expressed their concerns about changing the ambience and tranquility of the park, along with doing damage to restoration efforts that are being done in Big Willow. One botanist had written a very factual letter that was read at the meeting stating the reasons that off road biking would be very detrimental to the work that they are doing in Big Willow. There are some bike clubs that would like to have trails in Mtka. – which led to the parking issue as there are only about 6-8 parking spots for Big Willow Park. There were suggestions made by opponents of other areas in the city that would not be negatively impacted and were not areas that Minnetonka was working to restore natural vegetation. The 494 corridor and areas around city hall were brought up for consideration. Brad and I talked to a few park board members who were changing their tune about support of the project after listening to some of the residents speak. They were beginning to understand that we see Big Willow as a very unique environment within a suburb that needs to be protected. They recommended that we contact as many people as possible and have them send an e-mail or call: Kelly O'Dea Recreation Services Director [kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com) 952-939-8360 If the beauty and tranquility of Big Willow are important to you, please contact Kelly and let your voice be heard. Obviously, it's close to my heart as I have been walking in Big Willow since 1980 and love having a nature area so close to home. Michael did his Eagle project of soil erosion control along the creek in Big Willow. Nicole worked for the city of Mtka. 2 summers ago as a tree inspector and frequently worked in Big Willow. She taught us so much about the importance of the natural plants in that area. Mountain bikes are loud and fast – and unfortunately, many mountain bikers don't stick to the path or widen the path, destroying more of the natural landscape and causing problems such as erosion and opportunity for invasive species to take over.

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**From:**

**Sent:** Sunday, July 09, 2017 10:09 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Bike trails in Big Willow

I am not in favor of the proposed addition of off road bike trails in Big Willow. I feel that the bike trails would jeopardize the safety of those who walk on the existing trails. I expect there would be pedestrian/biker collisions wherever any of the trails intersect. If the bike trails can be laid out so there is no likely possibility of accidents, then I would not object. Considering the acreage available, I don't see how this would work. It would not greatly affect me as I don't visit Big Willow on a daily basis but I felt I should express my concern.

Thank you,

Bob Koelbl

2424 Plymouth Rd S

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**July 10, 2017**

**From:** Dan Bernhard

**Sent:** Monday, July 10, 2017 7:26 AM

**To:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Mountain Bike Park

Thank you both for the info and including me. My address is:

2937 Merlen Dr.

Minnetonka, MN. 55305

Dan Bernhard

On Jun 26, 2017, at 2:42 PM, Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Dan --

No worries on the double email ... I've been there!

Thank you for your well written and thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. As you indicate, a number of the concerns have been brought up by Minnetonka residents on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites. Your points below are well founded, and I will definitely take such information into my decision making should a proposal reach the council.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove. Finally, just a note that providing your address does add a bit of weight to your comments (if you want to, just respond to Kelly)

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### **1. Project Timeline**

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### **2. Communication**

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.

On Jun 25, 2017, at 8:30 PM, Dan Bernhard wrote:

Sorry - I hit send on accident. Small buttons on these phones. Anyway, what I was saying was that the proposed bike park would further Minnetonka's reputation and bring more community together to enjoy its great outdoors. Environmental impact is minimal when trails are properly built, as I have seen and personally helped build during my youthful years with the Boy Scouting organization. In addition, the Minnesota mountain biking community is largely respectful of trails and aware of inappropriate use (e.g riding when muddy). Further, the animals inhabiting the area would likely grow accustomed to increased traffic without incident, as they typically do (indeed the deer have had no problem eating my recently planted dogwoods only 5 feet from my front door). So in the end, I support the new and exciting addition to what is already a wonderful Minnetonka. Thank you-

Dan Bernhard

**From:** Dan Bernhard  
**Date:** June 25, 2017 at 7:17:12 PM CDT  
**To:** [twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)  
**Cc:** [kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)  
**Subject:** Big Willow Mountain Bike Park

Good Evening-

My name is Dan Bernhard and I am a seven year Minnetonka resident living near the Big Willow area. I am an avid outdoor enthusiast and enjoy many such activities including bird watching, hiking, camping and mountain biking. One factor in my decision to purchase a home in Minnetonka was its longstanding reputation for environmental preservation and the availability of green space for community enjoyment. Indeed, Minnetonka has lived up to this reputation.

Dan Bernhard

.....  
**From:** Sara Segwick  
**Sent:** Monday, July 10, 2017 12:07 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** feedback about Big Willow Park

Good Morning,

I would like to voice my concerns about allowing Mountain Biking in Big Willow Park. The park is a treasure that has already taken on a large increase in use with the addition of the condo complex across the street. I have experienced sharing the trails with bikes and it is a stressful situation between the space on the trails and the speed at which they travel. I am guessing that there would be designated trails....that being said, we know that "spillover" happens. I stopped walking on the streets by my home because of overall traffic and the search for a more serene environment.

I walk my dogs there almost every day as do so many others. In the past year I have seen an increase the parking lot being full, broken glass on the trails, graffiti on the bridges and walkways and dogs off leash.

Please preserve this Minnetonka treasure.

Thanks so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Sedgwick

3408 Elmwood Place

---

**July 14, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From: JP Klinger

Sent: Friday, July 14, 2017 8:34 AM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Re: no mountain bikes in Big Willow

Hi, Kelly.

Thanks for the response.

I actually visited such a park this past week, and I have renewed and very strong concerns about destroying that park and putting in mountain biking trails. The property I saw was absolutely nothing but dirt and full of noise, racing bikes, and it attracted way too much traffic and people parking everywhere, spilling into areas that should not have had to experience the added issues with traffic and parked vehicles. There was no chance for anything to grow, and there was no possibility for any wildlife to survive.

Also, if anyone would believe that those motorized bikes and ATVs would not show up and use the area, that is just wrong.

Doing this will compromise the quality of life on this side of Minnetonka and reduce the value of properties. I actually think that the people buying into that new construction across from the park should be allowed to be released from their leases and paid back for their purchases with no penalties.

Please DO NOT DESTROY THIS PORTION OF MINNETONKA.

Thank you,

Paula

On Jul 5, 2017, at 8:13 AM, Kelly ODea wrote:

> Hi Paula,

>  
> Thank you for your email and feedback regarding mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. Your feedback is appreciated as the city explores this topic. We are only in the very early stages of exploring the feasibility of adding mountain biking trails. Here is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.  
>  
> 1. Project Timeline  
> \* At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The board directed staff to look at additional locations, including the 494 corridor.  
> \* Staff will research additional locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board.  
> \* The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.  
> 2. Communication  
> \* Staff has created a project page for information and updates:  
[www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)  
> \* We will add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project updates.  
> \* Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.  
>  
> Thanks again for your interest in our wonderful parks.

> Kelly

> -----Original Message-----  
> From: JP Klinger  
> Sent: Tuesday, July 04, 2017 4:28 PM  
> To: Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
> Subject: no mountain bikes in Big Willow

> Good Afternoon,

> As a long-time resident of the eastern part of Minnetonka and someone who really treasures nature and serenity, I beg you to oppose destroying Big Willow with mountain biking!!!

> Mountain biking is loud and wild and would completely prevent anyone wanting to walk in nature in Big Willow or have a quiet family picnic. It will completely destroy that wonderful resource.

>  
> Thank you,

> Paula

.....  
**July 16, 2017**

**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2017 2:19 PM  
**To:** BARBARA MYERS  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow

Barbara --

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. I share the concerns / impact that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to



look at alternatives sites. In addition, I've received and shared with our staff numerous comments of similar concerns and consideration by residents on this subject.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let Kelly know and he can remove. Note, that adding your address does provide a bit more weight to your comments.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 15, 2017, at 11:39 AM, BARBARA MYERS wrote:

**Please preserve the trails leading to Big Willow as is. Do not turn it into a Mountain Biking Park. It is so beautiful on those trails.  
Thanks.**

**Barbara Myers**

**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2017 4:54 PM

**To:** Jack Barbier

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Mountain Biking at Big Willow Park ???

Jack ...

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city. Apologies for my delay in responding as I swore I did last weekend, but found the note today unsend in my drafts.

I share the concerns / impact that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternative sites. In addition, I've received and shared with our staff numerous comments of similar concerns and consideration by residents on this subject.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let Kelly know and he can remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### **1. Project Timeline**

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### **2. Communication**

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- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.

On Jul 6, 2017, at 4:35 PM, Jack Barbier wrote:

Oh, boy, here we go again.

Now its the bikers that are exerting pressure.

Build a new series of biking trails through this little oasis in the city? The last vestige of peace and serenity for miles around?

**NO! NO! NNNNOOOOOOOO!!!**

Why on earth would you destroy the last quiet place in the area??? Big Willow was simply not designed for that type of use.

I know the biking lobby has grown lately, and is now a powerful lobbying force. And mountain biking trails were a big deal on the recent resident survey. OK...I get that.

*But what about the rest of us (and there are MANY) who simply want a little peace and quiet in our daily lives?*

Living nearby-- for over 25 years now-- I have come to rely on Big Willow Park as my daily exercise / zen destination. I am over there several times a week, all year long, day or night. You start getting bikers ripping through there Pell-Mell,..shouting, whizzing, crashing through the brush, and really, from my point of view... "there goes the neighborhood".

If the bikers simply can't take "no" for an answer, please work hard to find them someplace else where they won't be destroying others' quality of life. Lord knows there are certainly plenty of other trails all over the place NOW for their use. The same cannot be said for wildlife/walking trails that wind through woods, along the Creek, away from the noise and disruption of city streets.

Converting Big Willow Park from a walking to a biking destination is a really bad idea. Please don't do it. Put that idea to bed right now.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to give you MY input.

Yours, Jack Barbier, ChFC

13001 St. David's Road

---

**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2017 5:47 PM

**To:** Susan Jerome

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park Mt. Biking?

Susan -

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city ... and welcome to the NE part of the city! :) I apologize for my response delay. Yours and one other response were sitting unsent in my outbox from last weekend.

I share the concerns / impact that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites. In addition, I've received and shared with our staff numerous comments of similar concerns and consideration by residents on this subject.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let Kelly know and he can remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### **1. Project Timeline**

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.
- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

### **2. Communication**

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.

On Jul 6, 2017, at 1:27 PM, Susan Jerome wrote:

Good Afternoon Tony!

I understand you are my new Ward rep. My husband Matt & I moved from SW Minnetonka to now NE Minnetonka within the last year. We love the new change & all the area has to offer!

I recently discovered Big Willow Park's gorgeous trails the other day with my dog & noticed the metal Mtka city signs regarding the potential to become a mountain biking park. I believe this would be a huge mistake for the city. It would change the whole area by increasing traffic, altering the wildlife/wetland environment and permanently changing the peaceful, pristine area! Could it lead to mountain biking events? Where would the users of the bike trails park their vehicles with bike racks, etc.? The majority of current park users are walkers & recreational bikers. Let's keep it this way for all humans & wildlife to enjoy.

Thanks for your time & attention to this. Please share with your fellow council members & mayor. Let me know when this will further be addressed at the next council meeting. I will directly contact Rec Services director. Thanks.

Susan Jerome

2336 Nottingham Ct.

.....  
**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2017 5:48 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Willow Park  
Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Councilman, Ward 2

01-612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad  
Begin forwarded message:

**From:**  
**Date:** July 16, 2017 at 5:28:08 PM CDT  
**To:** <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Willow Park

Yes, please. Lucie

Sent from XFINITY Connect Mobile App

-----Original Message-----

From: [twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)

To:  
Cc:  
Sent: 2017-07-16 4:49:01 PM  
Subject: Re: Willow Park

Appreciate the feedback. Would you like me to forward your comments to staff so the Park Board has for their consideration?

Tony Wagner

Council Member, Ward 2

Minnetonka, MN

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse my brevity.  
On Jul 16, 2017, at 3:13 PM, " wrote:

Thanks for the info, Tony. I have seen trails for mountain biking in other locations and their impact. If put in Big Willow it would destroy the habitat and the runoff would degrade Minnehaha Creek. Not something we should be doing.

Lucie

Sent from XFINITY Connect Mobile App

-----Original Message-----

From: [twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)  
To:  
Cc:  
Sent: 2017-07-16 2:41:41 PM  
Subject: Re: Willow Park

Lucie ...

Yes, there is a discussion - at the early stages - at the Park Board related to mountain biking options in the city, but no proposal is being considered yet at the City Council level

The initial site that has been explored was Big Willow, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternative sites. As you can imagine, I've received and shared with our staff numerous comments (over 80 with all but two against) of concerns and consideration by residents on this subject; and frankly I share many of the same concerns.

The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### **1. Project Timeline**

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in

Minnnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.

- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

## 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Hope the above helps!

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 13, 2017, at 4:26 PM, " wrote:

Hi Tony, hope this finds you well and enjoying the summer.

A friend mentioned that she heard Minnetonka was considering a proposal to put an off-road bike track in Willow park. Have you heard anything about it?

Lucie Taylor

---

**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2017 8:00 PM

**To:**

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Perry Vetter <pvetter@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow MTN Biking

Chris -

Thanks for taking time to share you thoughts on the proposed project. As you indicated, the Park Board is in the very early stages of evaluating this proposal. If you haven't already, I'd encourage you to sign up for updates @ [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)

I've received a number of emails and voicemails with similar position and thoughts such as yours. I've shared all with the staff so they can provide to the Park Board as part of their packet.

In the event this proposal makes it to the City Council, I will definitely keep your thoughts top of mind.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 5, 2017, at 4:47 PM, " wrote:

Hello Kelly,

Glad to see the city is communicating about the proposed mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park.

I'm just communicating to be counted as being opposed to this idea. I understand that the final proposal (if it is even approved) is well down the road.

But any change of this nature will change the nature off Big Willow Park.

Just a few points:

- Many volunteers have worked to restore this beautiful park by eliminating invasive plants. Mountain biking will essentially "undo" much of this work. **Allowing this type of activity in this particular park will have a chilling effect on future volunteers.**
- 
- I use the park almost daily to walk our two dogs and to just enjoy the natural beauty of the park. The ONLY issue we ever have is the occasional biker that fails to let us know they are coming. Proponents say that the lack of parking will be mitigated by bikers riding in. That sets up pedestrian - rider problems especially at the pinch points at the two bridges.
- 
- Proponents say there are no other mountain biking options in the west metro. So our beautiful pristine park will become a magnet for not just Minnetonka residents, but west metro bikers as well. Is that what we want?
- 

Surrendering this gem to a special interest group is just wrong! This land was set aside 40 years ago to preserve it's character and allowing a special interest group to substantially change it's nature is unacceptable in my view.

I support any activity that does not require a motor or burn gas and that includes mountain biking. In fact I ride to work n Chanhassen on occassion.

But Big Willow is the wrong place to set up this activity!

Chris Klug  
12817 Burwell Dr.  
Minnetonka

---

**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2017 8:02 PM

**To:** Ann Peterson

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Mountain Bike Issue



Russ & Ann --

Thank you for your note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city.

I share the concerns / impact that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites. In addition, I've received and shared with our staff numerous comments of similar concerns and consideration by residents on this subject.

**No proposal** is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will continue working with staff on reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let Kelly know and he can remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

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- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board. Your input is very valuable to that.
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### 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 5, 2017, at 2:43 PM, Ann Peterson < wrote:

As residents of St. Albans Mill Condominiums for 33 years, we were alarmed to learn that there is a proposal for mountain bike trails to be placed in the Big Willow Park area. This would greatly increase bike traffic and cause damage to our beautiful marshland, which is a refuge for wild animals and nature lovers who enjoy the natural environment.

Bringing in mountain bikers will increase the noise level of our community, damage foliage, eliminate wildlife, and harm natural habitat. Our complex already endures the noise of softball games in Big Willow Park and train traffic that runs next to our property. Plus we have constant graffiti sprayed under the bridge crossing Minnehaha Creek at our entrance. How much damage can some bikers do as they congregate on parkland around us when they want more excitement and challenges? Who will patrol and monitor them?

Mountain biking has its place but NOT in beautiful parkland that's enjoyed by walkers, runners and dog walkers who leave our environment unharmed and pristine. This parkland must be preserved and protected for all of us - not cater to one sport!!!

Russ & Ann Peterson  
St. Albans Mill Condominiums

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**July 17, 2017**

**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2017 10:32 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Geralyn Barone <gbarone@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Big Willow

FYI ...

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Councilman, Ward 2

01-612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Date:** July 17, 2017 at 11:24:52 AM EDT  
**To:** "  
**Cc:** "  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow

Bob ...

Thanks for the note and happy to hear of the passion and organization you describe below.

A couple items ... first on communication:

- 1) I had sent you previously the online page to sign up for regular alerts on the status of the project. Let me know if you'd like me to resend.
- 2) I think you may be reading something into the text angle. From feedback the city has received from residents, text updates have moved to the top of resident most favored method across all age groups for

project updates. As you can imagine, we rely on various communication means which users can choose (email, text, social media) via the above sign up page to receive updates through; and of course, many have reached out to me on their views which have been passed on (see below).

Second, on the potential project:

1) City staff, based on feedback, is conducting a feasibility study - which includes various locations and additional sites - for delivery to the Park Board **this fall**. If the Park Board recommends moving forward post that review, a formal proposal will be developed detailing trail location. After that step, the council will review the project and specific proposal.

2) As previously stated, I share many of the same concerns that you and numerous residents of the city have written and talked to me about. I've forwarded the 80 plus notes I've received for inclusion in the record and for staff/park board consideration, which I know will be considered in their analysis & study.

Happy to chat further over coffee or the phone.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Councilman, Ward 2

01-612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 15, 2017, at 12:16 PM, " wrote:

Hello Tony. I'm hoping for an update on the Mt. Bike proposal. Where do you stand? No waffling please. I met a nice couple today on the trail. They reported that opposition was running 85 to 1 against the Mt. bikers. If so, why would the City of Mtka. post a big professionally produced metal sign on Burwell Dr. asking for TEXT messages? I'm on the trail most days. The patrons of the trail are not TEXT users. Texting is done mostly by the under 35 crowd. Could the Rec Dept be attempting to solicit help from the Mt. Bike path folks by appealing for support amongst the many younger well organized Biking organizations? Or am I reading too much into this? Why else would the city post a sign asking people to TEXT instead of calling or writing or e-mailing? I usually only encounter the kids from the church or seniors on the trail. Very strange. 98% of them don't TEXT.

Tony. Let me just recapitulate. On one side we have the older home owning, tax paying, residents of Mtka.who always VOTE(There is an election coming up on 11/7. It's an off year contest. So low participation is normal. A dozen votes either way can decide an issue) On the opposite end is a big outside corporate donor,organized biking clubs from out of the area(Average age of participants about 22),and possibly sympathetic elements within the non elected Rec Department.

The passionate opposition grows daily. We are slowly organizing. My advice again to the City of Mtka. is to let SENIOR sleeping dogs lie. We enjoy the beauty and serenity of Big Willow. Leave us in peace. Please. I really don't think your average "Mn. Nice" citizen, once informed, would take kindly to the idea of the City of Mtka. kicking Mtka. seniors(Across the street you have a huge senior complex. I wonder how the residents and ownership feel?)off an old very popular walking path? Plus your liability exposure would be staggering. So again, I politely ask that the city take the Mt Bike Path of "Least resistance" somewhere else. Sincerely. Bob. Robert Rabinovitz. Mtka. 55305.



**July 23, 2017**

**From:** c\_carlson  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 23, 2017 9:45 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** proposed mountain bike trails

Hi Kelly

I am a Mn Master Naturalist volunteer who leads a group restoring the Mills Oak Wood area, and participated in many other restoration projects in the city. I have been volunteer with the city WHEP program, monitoring wetlands for about 15 years. I am also a biker, a member of the Minnetonka bike club steering committee.

I am concerned about the building of mountain bike trails in Big Willow Park, also near Minnehaha Creek by the Civic Center. The proposed biking sites will do much harm to the restored areas in Big Willow Park and the Civic Center area, also have potential for runoff damage to the wetlands and creek as it flows through the parks. I believe there are other areas in the city that could be used for this project, that will cause much less damage to the restored areas. I believe the area along the 494 corridor, could be used as a challenging course for this purpose.

I am not opposed to the project, just the proposed locations.

Thanks

Christopher Carlson

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**July 24, 2017**

-----Original Message-----  
**From:** Jackie Heilicher  
**Sent:** Monday, July 24, 2017 12:42 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Mtn Biking in Willow

Hi Kelly,

I'm a Mtnka resident on Snowmass Circle. I use the walking paths in Willow Park almost daily. When I moved to Mtnka 5 years ago, it was the availability of a quiet, wooded pathway walking distance from my home that prompted the purchase of my home. I use the small, non-paved winding trails for meditative walks with my little dog (always on leash and always with 'pick-up bags'). Willow Woods is a treasure and has been a place of much healing, insight and restorative energy during difficult times. I have tried to pay-back my gratitude by volunteering a few times with buckthorn removal and garlic mustard removal after attending the cities workshops. During the flowering and seed forming season for garlic mustard, my meditative walks include spotting and removing these invasive plants while also deeply appreciating the variety of native wildflowers still present and thriving along the smaller trails. In the evenings, I have been blessed with hearing and seeing the "Who-cooks-for-You" Barred Owl, as well as the classic "Hoo-hoo-hoo" of the Great Horned. And of course there is also the Night Herons, the Bald Eagles and the multitude of woodpeckers and song birds, as well as the deer that silently share these pathways with me.

When the main trail is not blocked by flooding, I also use the paved trail for biking to access the Regional Trail. I am not a Mtn Biker though. But I can appreciate that this is a fun sport for many. In the past, I have come across a group using the back trails for this purpose. I have observed their skill, focus and enjoyment of the challenge involved in maneuvering gully, hill, root and rock. From that, however, I can tell you that mtn biking and walking the trails are NOT compatible. I am writing to tell you, them, and the Park Board, to make sure it is understood that just because a trail is narrow, unpaved and off the main route, does not mean it is not already used by other residents.

I strongly and respectfully ask that the staff look for a different location for the mountain biking trails as this usage would displace and disrupt it's current usage by wildlife and local residents.

Thank you,

Jackie Heilicher  
2643 Snowmass Circle  
Mtnka, MN 55305

.....  
**August 7, 2017**

**From:** Jessy Meyer/Olson  
**Sent:** Monday, August 07, 2017 11:01 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Mountain Bike Trail

Hi Kelly - My name is Jessy Olson and I am writing this email to explain my position regarding the Mountain Bike Trail going through Big Willow Park.

1. I feel that the trails are already an established and peaceful place for the community to walk and enjoy nature at its best. Minnetonka is so privileged to have such amazing acreage along Minnehaha Creek, it is truly a treasure; to add mountain bike trails to this area that has become a respite to so many of us is really hard to imagine. As I walk these paths, which my family and I have enjoyed for 26+ years, I see moms with their children picnicking on the arched bridge. I see joggers enjoying their runs through the shaded paths. There are new moms strolling their babies and folks walking their dogs. I see grandparents with their grand kids exploring nature and spotting caterpillars and frogs and turtles. I meet people I know and whose friendships I have formed while out on the paths. There are people with their elderly parents taking a stroll together. On rare occasions there are even people on horseback, enjoying a place for their horses to roam. I can't begin to imagine the chaos and craziness that adding mountain bike trails would add to this serene setting. Mountain biking has its place, but not here, not when cyclists would be tearing along paths at high speeds, focused only on the trail immediately in front of them. Would they even appreciate what they are surrounded by? - it would be like putting mountain bike trails in at the arboretum, or at Minnehaha Falls Park - it just doesn't belong. This leads me to my second point:
2. Given that mountain bikers are usually going fast, and that the paths of walkers and bikers will intersect at several points, and because it is doubtful that you will be able to keep walkers off the biking trails and bikers off the walking paths, there is a high likelihood that there are going to be accidents...with elderly people, with dogs, with moms pushing strollers, with young kids...it seems inevitable! Which leads to point 3:
3. Lawsuits! Is Minnetonka prepared to pay out money to resolve lawsuits of those injured? I don't think it can be avoided!
4. Parking. Where in the world would there be parking for a Regional Mountain Biking Trail? Hopefully not on our street!

I know that the council was impressed by the Minnetonka High Schooler's work on this proposal. I am sure they did a great job - but truly, how many of them have been regular users of the paths winding along the creek? Would they even utilize the mountain bike trails once they graduate and move on? Big

Willow has St. David's school to the west; I have often seen staff taking the kids down our street and into the paths on walks and explorations. There is the new senior Coop to the south along Minnetonka Boulevard, full of elderly people who I'm sure will come to love and utilize these walking paths. There are neighborhoods surrounding the park with families and dogs and kids, many of whom love and enjoy and regularly use this little bit of country in the city. I have heard that you may consider looking into using the 494 corridor instead, which would be so very much appreciated. That area has lots of hills, has plenty of space, and seems like it would be much more suitable for mountain bike trails. I know if you surveyed those of us who regularly use these Big Willow Trails, you would find a huge majority who feel like I do, and so I deeply hope you will consider checking out other areas besides Big Willow as you conduct your feasibility study. I am not against mountain biking, just not on these trails already established, valued and loved as hiking/walking trails.

Thank you for considering my concerns!

Jessy Olson  
12811 Burwell Drive, Minnetonka

.....  
**August 8, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From: Tanni  
Sent: Tuesday, August 08, 2017 2:46 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: Mountain bike trial

Dear Kelly,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposal to designate trails in minnetonka for the use of mountain bikes. The trails near my home (between Minnetonka Blvd and Cedar lake road, and across and along Minnetonka Blvd) are a precious resource, treasured by me and many of our neighbors. They are currently (mostly) successfully shared by pedestrians, many of whom have dogs, strollers, or young children in tow, and bikers alike. However, I would hate to see an increase in the number of bikers, which would certainly adversely affect both the safety and enjoyability of the trails for pedestrians. I therefore strongly urge the city not to proceed with the proposed mountain biking designation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Tanni Stone-Dorshow, MD  
2805 Ella Lane

.....  
**August 14, 2017**

**From:** Jodi Alter  
**Sent:** Monday, August 14, 2017 3:48 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Proposed Mountain Bike Park

Dear Councilman Wagner, Recreation Service Director O'Dea, and Mayer Schneider,

I learned of the proposal to turn Big Willow into a mountain biking park. As a frequent walker in the part, I oppose this proposal as it appears that it would change this beautiful park in ways that would threaten the landscape, the native plants, and the wildlife in the park.

Big Willow was recognized by the Jaycees International and named the best environmental project in the United States back in the '70s after restoration of this land. This pristine natural area is still a gem, and a wonderful retreat at the end of a busy day.

I saw the proposed trail map and was shocked at how much of the park the trails would cover. My worry is that mountain bike trails would be hard on the native plants in the park, and could cause serious erosion problems. The wildlife in the park would also be threatened by bikers whizzing through the park. I noticed, too, that the proposed bike trails share and cross the walking trails in many spots.

I have walked through the meadows to the south of the creek many times; it appears that the bikes would go through that area, too. Parents bring their kids, and many residents bring their dogs on walks along the Big Willow trail. Bike traffic on and across the trails would be very disruptive.

I hope that the city council will see that allowing Big Willow to be changed in such a fundamental way is a major threat to one of the best parts of our city.

Regards,  
Jodi Alter

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**August 16, 2017**

**From:** Diana Houston  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 16, 2017 1:26 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain Biking

Hi, Kelly. I appreciate your quick response to the mountain biking packets that were delivered to the Minnetonka Park Board members last week. I also appreciate having my email added to the project to receive project updates. I recognize this is a big project that requires more research and community feedback. I look forward to being updated on the project.

All the best,

Diana Houston

Note: Below is your email to me.

Hi Diana,

Thank you for submitting your packet of information on mountain biking. Your feedback is appreciated as the city explores this topic. We are only in the very early stages of exploring the feasibility of adding mountain biking trails. Here is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.

#### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The board directed staff to look at additional locations, including the 494 corridor.

- Staff will research additional locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

## 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- We will add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project updates.
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

The information you provided (dated August 8, 2017), will be included with other feedback we have received and distributed to the park board and city staff. The concept plan presented at the June 7 park board meeting was just that, a concept. City staff will prepare a report on mountain biking and present that to the park board at a later date. The park and trail locations are still to be determined. We will conduct a public input process to address concerns such as safety, trail design and environmental impacts. Please visit the project page for updates.

-

**KELLY O'DEA | RECREATION SERVICES DIRECTOR**

**CITY OF HOPKINS | CITY OF MINNETONKA**

**[952-939-8360](tel:952-939-8360) | [kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)**

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**August 25, 2017**

**From:** Janet VanSloun  
**Sent:** Friday, August 25, 2017 8:26 PM  
**To:** bruce honnigford  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Your comments about mountain bikes in the parks

Hi Bruce,

I'm sorting through my emails and see that I missed yours back in July. I am sorry for this. I regret that this happened during the crazy invasive species control season.

Since you wrote, you're likely aware that signs about the proposed mountain bike trails were posted in the parks and the city has heard from residents in response.

I am aware of the mountain bike groups that are involved. They are well organized good people. In fact, they have already organized to assist with habitat restoration, and we've received assistance from two groups so far.

The city has slowed down the approval process somewhat to allow more input from the public and for considerations made by staff. Three city managers know more than I do: Kelly O'Dea, Darin Ellingson



and Jo Colleran. It is my understanding that it is fairly certain that mountain bike trails will be added to our parks at some point. Two of us from the natural resources division (me and Jo Colleran) submitted our concerns to the recreation division, and they were well received.

If you haven't already, do voice your concerns to Kelly O'Dea. I've copied him on this email.

Thank you for your comments.

**Janet Van Sloun** | 952.988.8423 | **Natural Resource Restoration Specialist**

City of Minnetonka Public Works | 11522 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka, MN 55305

**From:** bruce honnigford  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 06, 2017 9:04 AM  
**To:** Janet VanSloun <[jvansloun@eminnetonka.com](mailto:jvansloun@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Mountain bikes in the parks

Janet,

Are you aware that an Mountain Biking special interest group is trying to turn Big Willow and Civic Center Parks into a mountain biking track?

Last year we got involved with the Imagine Minnetonka project and noticed there were a bunch of people pretending that there is overwhelming support for this and were quite defensive to criticism about the idea - in fact I was told to move to another city by one of these people.

They did not show up at the town hall focus meeting that fall, and there seemed to be strong support for preserving the our wooded spaces.

Since then, a special interest group backed by some businesses, a high school recreation group and a national mountain biking organization has been promoting their agenda and raising money to turn these parks into a Mountain Biking recreation area.

They claim that it would be shared with walkers but when you look at the proposed trail system they have fronted, one can see that this would be highly invasive and hazardous for anyone not on a mountain bike.

Big Willow and Civic Parks are under threat right now.

The public is probably not yet aware of what is being sold to the council and if this goes through, the residents of Minnetonka Mills will have less options for walking in a forested space despite increasing need.

Funding for this has been added to the city budget and a feasibility study is under way.

The project was given a glowing write-up in the Sun Sailor.

<http://sailor.mnsun.com/2017/05/23/minnetonka-to-add-two-new-bike-trails-in-2018/>

Unless there is an organized counter group, this thing is going to happen very soon.

Bruce Honnigford

.....  
**September 2, 2017**

**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 02, 2017 12:44 PM  
**To:** Jackie L Heilicher  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Park Biking?

Jackie --

Thank you for your thoughtful note related to the discussion the Park Board is having related to mountain biking options in the city.

I share a number of the concerns that you have brought up in your note below on the initial site (Big Willow) that has been explored, and I know the staff has been instructed by the Park Board to look at alternatives sites. I've received numerous emails and phone calls on the subject, each with passion for our natural resources.

No proposal is being considered at the City Council level at this time. Rather the Park Board is in the early stages of discussing the subject which was raised by an advocacy group and public comment during the Minnetonka Matters discussions last year. The Park Board will be receiving a feasibility study which includes reviewing sites, impacts & maintenance. Once vetted by the Park Board, any recommendation will then be discussed and reviewed by the council.

Kelly will ensure that your comments are placed in the official public record for park board and/or council (if/when it comes before us). If you prefer this not to occur, please let me know and I will have our staff remove.

Below is a look at anticipated next steps & ways to stay connected:

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations.

The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The Park Board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.

As highlighted above, staff will present a feasibility report this fall.

### 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- I'd recommend that you sign up and add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project update
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your feedback and comments on this potential project in the city, and for your passion on this issue and the 'gem' that our wooded areas are, especially Big Willow.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Aug 31, 2017, at 2:46 PM, Jackie L Heilicher wrote:

Dear Council Member Wagner,

I am writing to express deep concerns that Minnetonka is even considering integrating Mountain Biking trails into the woodland walking paths of Big Willow Park. This park is treasured and used by many of us in your ward. Much research has begun showing how important it is to connect quietly to nature to preserve & gain mental creativity, emotional balance and physical health. I have always felt since moving to Minnetonka, that this city has been well ahead of it's time in preserving these large areas of wooded and water retreats. Please do not allow this conversion of a treasured and valued wildlife area into yet another 'sport court'. Mountain Biking is no doubt a fun and exciting activity for many. But it does not belong in Big Willow.

Unlike other cities along Minnehaha Creek that did not have the foresight, Minnetonka has set aside these wild and diverse habitats for quiet, contemplation and native plant and wildlife restoration. This is why I live here. This is why I have encourage others to move here. Let us not risk damaging this asset by jumping on the latest trend.

Sincerely,

Jackie Heilicher

2643 Snowmass Circle

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**September 8, 2017**

**From:** Bert Dannemiller

**Sent:** Friday, September 08, 2017 2:04 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Bike project

Kelly

I wanted to weigh in on the proposed mountain biking project.

I am hoping that there is a way to create a mountain bike trail that does not significantly reduce the experience of Big Willow Park as it stands today.

My husband and I both enjoy biking - and - I take my dog for several walks per day on the intricate trail system as it exists today.

Big Willow offers the opportunity to allow well behaved dogs off leash on the trails that are not paved, which is a big plus. It is a beloved sanctuary for me in the quiet of the morning, and I have also biked the trails as well. The serenity of the park is something that brings me back time and again.

Some of my biggest fears are:

- That my access to trails will be restricted (converting the "rustic" portion of Big Willow into a mountain biking thoroughfare)
- Loss of serenity - that traffic on the trails will change and increase - but not in a good way.
- Rude Bikers - even on the trails as they exist today, only about 1/3 of those on the trail will slow for pedestrians or give the "on your left" (or right) signal that they are approaching from behind. A friend of mine was even run into by a biker with headphones on.
- Diminished foliage - one of the most beautiful aspects of the trail is that of the greenery and the beautiful changing of the seasons. I fear that mountain biking on some portions of the trail system could damage the greenery.
- Loss of wildlife - I have seen turtles, wild turkeys, owls, and deer. I worry that mountain bikes would drive them away.

I respect the desire of mountain bikers to have a place to enjoy their sport - and - I cringe and the prospect of losing a well-loved sanctuary.

I am also aware of the fact that several senior apartment buildings have been built near this park recently. It will be important to weigh the needs of the entire community.

Please make your decisions carefully.

thank you

Bertha Dannemiller

3056 Cedar Crossing

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**September 9, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From: Sue Mahle

Sent: Saturday, September 09, 2017 12:43 PM

To: Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>

Cc: tbergstedt@eminnetonks.com; bwiersma@eminnetonka.com; Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Dick Allendorf <dallendorf@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Mountain Biking in Big Willow is BAD idea- here's why

Tony, and other council members,

I have lived in your ward for 36 years, within walking distance of Big Willow Park. We walk in this great park 3-4 times/week, in all seasons, with our two dogs. We appreciate the wildlife and quiet nature of the park and the minimally disturbed creek environment. Bike paths invariably lead to destruction of natural areas and would fundamentally change the nature of this park!

I have volunteered with many others, to help remove invasive species in the park (garlic mustard and buckthorn) in attempt to restore native species. Multiple paths through this sensitive natural area would certainly bring in unwanted species on the bike tires and also trigger erosion around overused trails. I

have seen this first hand in Theodore Wirth park where biking trails have destroyed much of the natural plant habitat and caused erosion.

If the city feels compelled to create mountain biking paths, we urge you to do this in some other location which may not face these same issues. We request that you notify us when this issue will next be discussed at a council meeting.

Thank you,  
Susan K Mahle and Beth A. Friesen  
3251 E. Eldorado Trail  
Minnetonka, Mn 55305

.....  
**September 11, 2017**

**From:** John Ziegenhagen  
**Sent:** Monday, September 11, 2017 4:20 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Proposed mountain biking trail

Dear Director O'Dea,

I am writing to oppose the development of mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park. (Mayor Schneider and Council Member Wagner are also receiving this email.) Walking the current trails several times each week, my wife and I enjoy the park's natural beauty, serenity, and the abundant wildlife present there. As city-trained volunteers for invasive species removal, we appreciate Minnetonka's long-term commitment to Big Willow's restoration and preservation. The introduction of mountain biking trails would severely and irredeemably compromise the park's precious attributes. I urge you to explore other venues to serve the city's mountain bikers.

John Ziegenhagen

10039 Cove Drive  
.....

**September 12, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Elise Lieberthal  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 12, 2017 9:36 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow park

Hi Kelly - I am a frequent visitor to Big Willow Park with my dog Annie. We love, love, love the walking trails in this park, and I am sad to learn that it might be converted to a bike trail park. Please do not let this happen - there are so many of us who walk and hike through the park and enjoy the wildlife there. Please preserve this gem!

Elise Lieberthal  
.....

**September 13, 2017**

**From:** James Fallon  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 13, 2017 10:35 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow proposed Mountain Bike Park?

James W. Fallon

Good Morning Kelly O'Dea

My wife received a leaflet that shows a proposed mountain bike park and the routes it would build in the park. She walks in that park several times a month. The proposal seems to eliminate the walking paths. We have lived in Minnetonka since 1979 and have helped keep areas like Big Willow in their natural state or as close to that as possible.

I would like to go on the recorder as opposing the use of Big Willow Park for mountain biking. I am a cyclist myself and have been on many committees advantaging cycling, such as the Midtown Greenway, that was back in the 1970's. The use of abandoned land for recreation is a wonderful use however Big Willow is not in that category. I wish I would have known about this sooner but I did not so hear are my objections.

- 1.) This is a nature area with plants and animals where people can walk and observe.
- 2.) Many people have worked to preserve this park over the years by cleaning it up and removing invasive plants.
- 3.) The use of any type of wheeled vehicle will erode the area and chase away the wild life there.
- 4.) This area was set a side some time before I was a resident and I see no reason to change it.
- 5.) The town is known for its parks and nature areas

I understand the desire by some to have a place to practice their chosen activity, I myself am a inline skater and there is no place in Minnetonka to in line skate. The idea of building a mountain bike park may be better explored with a number of communities where there maybe parcels of land in adjoining communities which would be more suited for this use.

I do understand your situation with planning and meetings as I worked in government for over 25 years and if you have another meeting I would like to be invited to it.

.....  
**September 14, 2017**

**From:** ED

**Sent:** Thursday, September 14, 2017 8:39 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow / Mountain Biking

Good morning gentlemen,

I enjoy Big Willow Park almost every day, and have some concerns regarding what will happen to the basic atmosphere of the natural beauty of Big Willow should the city decide to open it up to an organized Mountain Biking Group. I also believe enough has been said about potential environmental impact, social impact, and safety of the walkers.

This past Sunday, it happened to register with me that parking will probably become a significant issue should the park become open to this activity. I believe that it is reasonable that such accommodation would become a regional attraction, not just a Minnetonka resident attraction. And the parking available there will effectively prevent many Minnetonka residents from enjoying the park, because there is no place to park their car. I took a photo of the parking lot off Cedar Road, just off Cedar Lake Road on the north side of the park. This is not an unusual occurrence at this parking area. I believe that opening this park to an activity like Mountain Biking will effectively lock out the many residents that currently enjoy the peaceful natural environment.

Ed Friedman

2700 Crestwood Circle

Minnetonka, MN 55305-2758



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**September 18, 2017**

**From:** Luke Van Santen

**Sent:** Monday, September 18, 2017 9:39 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Support for Mountain Bike Trails in Minnetonka

Mr. O'Dea -

I am writing this email to express my strong support for the construction of mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. While I understand that only trails in Big Willow Park and in Civic Center park are being considered now, I feel that the addition of similar trails in the 494 area (west of the highway along the existing paved trail that runs from the Oakland bridge to McGinty Rd W (and possibly beyond?), as well as in other areas) would be beneficial as well, and urge their consideration.

I feel that construction of trails in these two (three!) areas is for the public good, for the following reasons:

- Easier, safer access to training opportunities for Minnetonka, Hopkins, and potentially other area high school mountain bike teams. I understand that the Minnetonka team continues to grow, and that mountain biking is being offered in the middle schools as well. Having a place nearby (instead of having to practice on multi-use trails or on area roads) would quite certainly be a good thing.
- Access to local mountain biking trails for the general public.
  - Time savings - Currently, people wishing to engage in singletrack riding (mountain biking) in the west Metro have several quality options (in order of travel time): Theo Wirth (15 minutes), Elm Creek (25 minutes), Murphy-Hanrehan (26 minutes), and Lake Rebecca

- (29 minutes). There are additional singletrack trails through out the Metro, but these additional trails are all further away than the four previously mentioned. Having mountain bike trails that could be accessed via bike instead of via driving.
- Increased desirability of Minnetonka - in addition to all the wonderful amenities that lead to the excellent quality of life we currently enjoy in Minnetonka,
  - Larger customer base for local businesses - easy accessibility from the mountain bike trails (both by car AND bike, by road and by trail) will could increase the likelihood of these villages thriving
    - The Minnetonka Mills area (People's Organic, Station Pizza) is identified in Minnetonka's 2030 Comprehensive Plan as a "Special Purpose Village"
    - The area at Highway 7 & Hopkins Crossroad (Lund's, etc) is identified in that plan as a "Neighborhood Village"
    - The area at Cedar Lake Road & Hopkins Crossroad (Aldi, Crossroads, etc) is also identified in that plan as a "Neighborhood Village"
    - The area at Minnetonka Blvd & County 101 is identified in the plan as higher density residential as well as a "Community Village" (one of only three in the entire City).
  - Larger customer base for businesses outside the Minnetonka City limits
    - As I mentioned in the July meeting, LTD Brewing is a short 10 minute bike ride from Big Willow. So is the rest of downtown Hopkins, with several quality restaurants.
    - Tonka Cycle & Ski could become the de facto LBS (Local Bike Shop) for mountain biking.
  - Increased awareness of bicyclists along an important bike corridor (Minnetonka Blvd). It is well documented in the literature that when numbers of bicyclists increase, safety for the bicyclists increases as well, due largely to the fact that the more people in cars see and safely interact with bicyclists, the more familiar they are with them resulting in fewer collisions.

I also understand there are several concerns about mountain bike trails in Minnetonka parks. I would like to try to address those concerns below.

- Destruction of the unique natural setting of Big Willow Park.
  - While it is true that bringing more people to an undeveloped area like Big Willow will undoubtedly lessen the feeling of being in nature that one can feel in Big Willow, the times I have been in Big Willow somewhat put the lie to it being undisturbed nature. Even on early weekend morning walks, the traffic noise from Minnetonka Blvd to the south and from Cedar Lake Road to the north, as well as airplane noise from above serve as a regular and undeniable reminder that you are in the middle of a city. In addition, there is a train track that runs directly through Big Willow (while there may not be many trains on those tracks, their presence illustrates that the park is NOT purely natural). Yet, many types of wildlife continue to be present in Big Willow (as they are in Minnetonka in general) - adding mountain bikers will not noticeably change this.
  - I have to note that this concern is not generally mentioned for Civic Center Park, and certainly not for the potential 494 location, even though those two areas also support numerous types of charismatic, larger wildlife (deer, turkey, water birds, etc).
  - The proposed mountain bike trails are only proposed for the southern portion of the park. There would be no impact to the northern portion.
- Parking
  - It sure seems that there would be adequate parking at Civic Center? Given the proximity of that location to Civic Center and Big Willow (as well as to the potential 494 location), parking could be easily accommodated there.
  - A significant portion of mountain bike trail users may not even need to park, instead accessing the trails by biking.
  - Some parking could be handled at the villages mentioned above. Park at Spasso, bike off for some singletrack fun, return to dinner - a nice neat package!
- Unsafe encounters between bicyclists and walkers



- On mountain bike trails - I believe the plan as currently proposed makes efforts to minimize areas where both user types would interact, and within those areas, lessen the likelihood of adverse interactions (makes slower speeds at crossings). From my experiences at places where mountain bike trails are also used as hiking trails (primarily Cuyuna), the relatively slower speeds of mountain biking minimize these risks. Since the proposed mountain bike trails are not intended to be used for hiking, and because of the level of attention paid to this concern in the proposed plan, this concern seems to be largely unfounded.
- On other trails - it is certainly possible that people (walkers) could feel that other trail users are moving at unsafe speeds. It is also possible that people (mountain bikers) could feel that other trail users are allowing children and pets to act in an unsafe manner along the trails. Both and neither are right - the trails leading to Big Willow, and to mountain bike trails within Big Willow, are ultimately multi-use paths. As such, there will always be the perception of conflict and/or misuse, from BOTH "sides".
- Negative impact to the restoration effort underway at Big Willow
  - From general observations during visits to Big Willow, and from more detailed observations while assisting in ongoing invasive removal from Big Willow, the restoration effort has a LONG way to go.
  - The impact to restoration will likely be enhanced when mountain bike users volunteer to maintain the trails and do so after receiving invasive recognition training from City staff.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share my thoughts on this matter with you! Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Luke Van Santen

2148 Sheridan Hills Road, Minnetonka

PS - Might Cargill and / or MnDOT have any properties that could serve as additional sites? I don't know what development plans there are for the Cargill Research center, but there seems to be a small amount of upland available there? And the highway rights-of-way through the City are quite large (large enough to still maintain safe roadway operations while also allowing some alternate use)?

.....  
**September 20, 2017**

**From:** Sue Hanson

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 19, 2017 10:46 AM

**To:** Minnetonka Mike <[mike@eminnetonka.com](mailto:mike@eminnetonka.com)>; Bob Ellingson <[bellingson@eminnetonka.com](mailto:bellingson@eminnetonka.com)>

**Cc:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>; Terry Schneider <[tschneider@eminnetonka.com](mailto:tschneider@eminnetonka.com)>;

Dick Allendorf <[dallendorf@eminnetonka.com](mailto:dallendorf@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Big Willow

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of Minnetonka since 1980, I have seen many changes to our beautiful city some good and some very disappointing. One of the best things has been the preservation of Big Willow Park. I use the park several times a week at all times of the year. It is truly a special place. I regularly see deer, bunnies, and of course all the water fowl coexisting in this beautiful place. This is where I would take my daughter for her first walks in her stroller 24 years ago. It's where I walk my dog. I even bike through the park. While in this park I see people of all ages and fitness levels. I see young families, I see seniors, I see young runners – everyone sharing the park peacefully and quietly.

When returning from my walk on Sunday I found a flyer on my car advising of a possible change to make this a mountain bike park. My first thought – “SERIOUSLY?” ARE YOU KIDDING ME?” this park is not the place for mountain biking. This is a sanctuary for all to use. This is a quiet place. Please do the right

thing and preserve this park as it is. This park is for everyone. By making it a bike park it you would be catering to a pretty small population that would change the fundamental beauty of what it is now.

Please, I urge you do not do this!

Sue Schafer Hanson

3500 Hopkins Crossroad

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**September 24, 2017**

**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, September 24, 2017 3:56 PM

**To:** Sue Hanson

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow

Sue --

Thank you for your note related to the Mountain Biking proposal currently in front of the Park Board. As you can imagine, I've heard from many Minnetonka residents with similar concerns as you've outlined, as well as those in support. Making your views known is appreciated.

The Park Board is currently expected to receive a feasibility report/study this fall related to Mountain Biking, which includes alternative site review. Any council action is not expected (at least by me) until late 2017 / early 2018 and after a Park Board recommendation.

If you haven't, I'd encourage you to sign up for project updates on the city website (<https://eminnetonka.com/current-projects/other-projects/1782-mountain-bike-trails-project>) so that you can stay up-to-date on this issue.

Hope all is well ... and thanks for your note!

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Sep 19, 2017, at 10:46 AM, Sue Hanson wrote:

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of Minnetonka since 1980, I have seen many changes to our beautiful city some good and some very disappointing. One of the best things has been the preservation of Big Willow Park. I use the park several times a week at all times of the year. It is truly a special place. I regularly see deer, bunnies, and of course all the water fowl coexisting in this beautiful place. This is where I would take my daughter for her first walks in her stroller 24 years ago. It's where I walk my dog. I even bike through the park.

While in this park I see people of all ages and fitness levels. I see young families, I see seniors, I see young runners – everyone sharing the park peacefully and quietly.

When returning from my walk on Sunday I found a flyer on my car advising of a possible change to make this a mountain bike park. My first thought – “SERIOUSLY?” ARE YOU KIDDING ME?” this park is not the place for mountain biking. This is a sanctuary for all to use. This is a quiet place. Please do the right thing and preserve this park as it is. This park is for everyone. By making it a bike park it you would be catering to a pretty small population that would change the fundamental beauty of what it is now.

Please, I urge you do not do this!

Sue Schafer Hanson

3500 Hopkins Crossroad

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**September 24, 2017**

**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, September 24, 2017 3:58 PM

**To:** ED

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Big Willow / Mountain Biking

Ed --

Thank you for your note related to the Mountain Biking proposal currently in front of the Park Board. As you can imagine, I've heard from many Minnetonka residents with similar concerns as you've outlined, as well as those in support. Making your views known is appreciated, and your point on parking is indeed a key one.

The Park Board is currently expected to receive a feasibility report/study this fall related to Mountain Biking, which includes alternative site review. Any council action is not expected (at least by me) until late 2017 / early 2018 and after a Park Board recommendation.

If you haven't, I'd encourage you to sign up for project updates on the city website (<https://eminnetonka.com/current-projects/other-projects/1782-mountain-bike-trails-project>) so that you can stay up-to-date on this issue.

Hope all is well ... and thanks for your note!

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Sep 14, 2017, at 8:39 AM, ED > wrote:

Good morning gentlemen,

I enjoy Big Willow Park almost every day, and have some concerns regarding what will happen to the basic atmosphere of the natural beauty of Big Willow should the city decide to open it up to an organized Mountain Biking Group. I also believe enough has been said about potential environmental impact, social impact, and safety of the walkers.

This past Sunday, it happened to register with me that parking will probably become a significant issue should the park become open to this activity. I believe that it is reasonable that such accommodation would become a regional attraction, not just a Minnetonka resident attraction. And the parking available there will effectively prevent many Minnetonka residents from enjoying the park, because there is no place to park their car. I took a photo of the parking lot off Cedar Road, just off Cedar Lake Road on the north side of the park. This is not an unusual occurrence at this parking area. I believe that opening this park to an activity like Mountain Biking will effectively lock out the many residents that currently enjoy the peaceful natural environment.

Ed Friedman

2700 Crestwood Circle

Minnetonka, MN 55305-2758

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**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Sunday, September 24, 2017 4:11 PM

**To:** Sue Mahle

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Mountain Biking in Big Willow is BAD idea- here's why

Sue (& Beth) --

Thank you for your note related to the Mountain Biking proposal currently in front of the Park Board. As you can imagine, I've heard from many Minnetonka residents with similar concerns as you've outlined, as well as those in support. Making your views known is appreciated.

The Park Board is currently expected to receive a feasibility report/study this fall related to Mountain Biking, which includes alternative site review. Any council action is not expected (at least by me) until late 2017 / early 2018 and after a Park Board recommendation.

The best way to keep up to speed on the proposal/project is to sign up for project updates on the city website (<https://eminnetonka.com/current-projects/other-projects/1782-mountain-bike-trails-project>). You should be able to sign up for both email and text message alerts.

Also, I've copied Kelly O'Dea so that your comments can be placed in the public record for the park board. If you prefer not to have them listed, just reply to Kelly.

Hope all is well ... and thanks for your note!

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Sep 9, 2017, at 12:43 PM, Sue Mahle wrote:

Tony, and other council members,

I have lived in your ward for 36 years, within walking distance of Big Willow Park. We walk in this great park 3-4 times/week, in all seasons, with our two dogs. We appreciate the wildlife and quiet nature of the park and the minimally disturbed creek environment. Bike paths invariably lead to destruction of natural areas and would fundamentally change the nature of this park!

I have volunteered with many others, to help remove invasive species in the park (garlic mustard and buckthorn) in attempt to restore native species. Multiple paths through this sensitive natural area would certainly bring in unwanted species on the bike tires and also trigger erosion around overused trails. I have seen this first hand in Theodore Wirth park where biking trails have destroyed much of the natural plant habitat and caused erosion.

If the city feels compelled to create mountain biking paths, we urge you to do this in some other location which may not face these same issues. We request that you notify us when this issue will next be discussed at a council meeting.

Thank you,  
Susan K Mahle and Beth A. Friesen  
3251 E. Eldorado Trail  
Minnetonka, Mn 55305

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September 28, 2017

**From:** Bryant Johnson  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 28, 2017 2:02 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fw: Mountain Biking Park??

Fixed address.

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Bryant Johnson  
**To:** [kodea@minnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@minnetonka.com) <[kodea@minnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@minnetonka.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 28, 2017, 10:11:50 AM CDT  
**Subject:** Mountain Biking Park??

I see where the park dept is considering making Big Willow park into a Mountain Biking Park, what, why?

I do realize that biking is a good pastime and is increasing in popularity, but it seems like the "Bike Lobby" is taking over the city and the state, see the article in the Mpls Star from this morning.

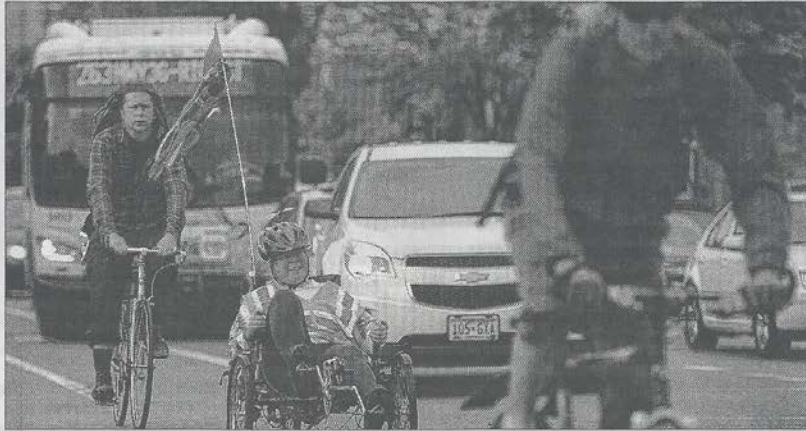
Before the city goes and spends extensive money on a biking park there, they should invest in raising the trail under the railroad bridge so that it does not flood and become impassible every Spring and sometimes for the whole Summer!!

It would be nice too if the signage for the crossing of the trail on Cedar Lake Road would be changed to a Pedestrian crossing rather than a bike crossing so that the cars would follow the law and stop for walkers. There are a lot of us Walkers out there too, so don't forget to support us sometime.

Thanks for listening,

Bryant Johnson

## Readers Write



RICHARD TSONG-TAATARI • Star Tribune

Even with a bike lane, rush-hour traffic can be nerve-racking as shown here on Portland Avenue in Minneapolis. The city recently added bike lanes on 26th and 28th streets.

### BICYCLING IN MINNEAPOLIS

## Enough with bike lanes already

I ride a bike. But now, all the bike lanes popping up on streets everywhere in Minneapolis are being imposed upon the citizenry in a most draconian manner. Minneapolis has not yet developed suitable enough public transportation needed to allow compromising our city's car lanes. Considering our seasons and the fact that not everyone can ride a bike, these street conversions border on the absurd. On 26th and 28th streets the bike lanes make no sense since bikers can easily take the 29th St corridor in both directions. In much of Europe, you can get almost anywhere with public transportation, but that is not the case in Minneapolis. So, please, city of Minneapolis, use some common sense. Remove some of those bike lanes and get our public transportation system in place first.

ROSELYN REZAC, Minneapolis

**From:** Matthew KEOHEN [mailto:  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 30, 2017 4:51 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** PROPOSED OFF ROAD BIKE TRAIL BIG WILLOW PARK

Dear Tony:

My name is Matt Keohen, I live at 12425 creek road west in Minnetonka. I am here to display my formal opposition to the proposed off road bike trail.

Big Willow park is full of wildlife, its a virtual wonder with its deer, fox, coyote, hawks and owls. Its hard for me (and my neighbors) to imagine the impact of this many people and bikes tearing through here. ( I saw the study numbers).

I live just off cedar lake road and creek road west, next to the parking lot for walking. This parking lot is full every single day, often overloaded with cars as it is. I know this because I live right next to it.

Also in this mix is the issue of invasive plants that have been removed from the park, this is a big problem with thousands of bikes bringing seeds to the park.

I don't know where the trail is being proposed, because so far it seems to be a big secret. Nonetheless this park should not be demeaned by a few bikers looking for off road trails. That is not the purpose of such a beautiful place.

Anyway, I'm looking forward to your response and once again, me and my neighbors are in complete opposition of this silly off road bike trail. KEEP OUR NATURE PARK NATURAL.

Thank you for your time.

Matt Keohen 12425 Creek Road West

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**October 5, 2017**

**From:** Carl Hedberg  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 05, 2017 4:14 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** proposed mountain bike trail

Were can I get a copy of the propose trail map?

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**From:** Polston, Chris  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 05, 2017 4:42 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** MTB trails

I sure hope this happens!

Maybe even a trail in Lone Lake Park?!

Cheers,

Chris Polston

145 20<sup>th</sup> Ave N

Hopkins

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-----Original Message-----

From: Anne Hooton  
Sent: Thursday, October 05, 2017 10:09 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: MTB Park



I unfortunately was unable to attend the meeting on the 4th. I just wanted as a resident of Minnetonka to let you know that I am in support of off road mountain biking in Minnetonka. I also would consider joining MORC to help maintaining the trails as a volunteer. I can see this as only a positive for our community.

Thanks- Brett Hooton

.....  
**October 6, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From: Miriam Goodman

Sent: Friday, October 06, 2017 11:35 AM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: bike trails - Big Willow woods

Hi Kelly,

I am late to weigh in and it looks like I missed a meeting the other night.

Please know that my family that lives near to the park all vote to have the big willow woods remain as is, a peaceful retreat for walking and biking in the neighborhood.

Thank you,

Miriam Goodman  
2601 Crescent Ridge Rd  
Minnetonka

.....  
-----Original Message-----

From: John Piepkorn

Sent: Friday, October 06, 2017 9:54 PM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Mountain Bike Trails

Kelly-

Please add me to the list of individuals who is in favor of adding mountain bike trails in Minnetonka Parks.

If I wasn't composing this message on my phone, I would go into a lengthy list of reasons why I am for them.

In a nutshell:

The parks belong to all of us.

Bikers are not anti-hiker or anti-dog walker.

We wouldn't need to park because we could ride to the park from our house.

I've posted multiple times to next door on the topic and attended the last park board meeting. It promises to be an interesting process.

Thanks,

John Piepkorn  
Minnetonka

.....  
**October 7, 2017**

**From:** Nancy Cheney

**Sent:** Saturday, October 07, 2017 3:14 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow

I've been a Minnetonka resident for 30 years & live on the edge of Big Willow Park. Please don't add to the traffic in our neighborhood by allowing a Mountain Biking Trail. Thank you for your consideration.

---

**October 8, 2017**

**From:** Duke Ritchie  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 08, 2017 11:07 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Please add my name to the interest list for mountain biking trails?

I'm a Minnetonka resident who is very interested in having mountain biking trails ("single tracks") here in our city! So if there is a survey or study, please let me know how I can help.

Thanks!

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 08, 2017 1:07 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Mountain Biking in Big Willow

Hi:

I attended the park board meeting this past Tuesday. I do think that gathering more public input is a good plan. However, I think it needs to be clarified what input is being requested. There are several possibilities...

- Should there be mountain biking in Minnetonka
- Should there be mountain biking trails(in Big Willow or the Civic Center) as originally presented
- Should there be mountain biking trails at other locations within Minnetonka.
- ??????

To get the most benefit out of the input gathered, it needs to be clear what input is being requested.

Let me know if you have questions

Mary Jo Bartos

On Jun 9, 2017, at 3:35 PM, Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)> wrote:

Hi Mary Jo,

Thank you for your email and feedback regarding mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. Your feedback is appreciated as the city explores this topic. We are only in the very early stages of exploring the feasibility of adding mountain biking trails. Here is a look at anticipated next steps and our communication plan.

### 1. Project Timeline

- At the June 7 park board meeting, a concept plan was presented to the board, which included two park locations. The board received feedback both in support of and opposed to mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. The board was supportive of mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other locations, including the 494 corridor.

- Staff will research other locations, while assessing community feedback, and will present findings to the park board.
- The project remains at the park board level and could be presented to the city council if the park board endorses a plan.

## 2. Communication

- Staff has created a project page for information and updates: [www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://www.eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking)
- We will add your email address to the contact list to ensure you receive project updates.
- Future park board or city council meetings will be listed on the project page and in the Minnetonka Memo.

Thanks again for your interest in our wonderful parks.

Kelly

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Friday, June 09, 2017 11:38 AM

To: Bob Ellingson <[bellingson@eminnetonka.com](mailto:bellingson@eminnetonka.com)>; Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

Subject: Mountain Biking in Big Willow

Hi:

I urge you to turn down the proposal to turn Big Willow Park into a mountain biking park.

I have lived in Minnetonka for 38 years; and always walked - and continue to walk - in Big Willow. I appreciate the natural, beautiful, and serene quality of the park. I fear that increasing the bike traffic in that park would change the quality of the park significantly.

Also I am concerned from a safety standpoint. From the proposed map, it appears there are places where the walking paths and bike paths would be in common. Because of the difference in speed, and potential unawareness, I feel there could be injuries.

Please vote no on this proposal.

Sincerely

Mary Jo Bartos  
12201 Minnetonka Blvd Unit 206  
Minnetonka MN. 55305

.....  
**October 9, 2017**

**From:** Tom Olson

**Sent:** Monday, October 09, 2017 2:34 PM

**To:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>; Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Mountain Bike Project

Tony/Kelly,

I want to let you know that I want you to consider the impact of the proposed bike trail usage in Big Willow. While I no longer am able to ride due to back issues, I spent a few years riding in Big Willow

(which is my backyard). I loved riding due to its convenience. The problem that I encountered was that there was constant interaction with the pedestrian users. The bikes came upon the walkers so quickly it often scared them....often frightening folks with headsets, etc. I do not think that it can work as a dual use area given the narrow trails and lack of sufficient space for the kind of use that bikers would need. The old horse trail system is not adequate to prevent bikes from constantly crossing over the pedestrian trails. The current "horse trails" cross at right angles to the walking path and often intersect at the bottom of hills (read high speeds and blind spots). It is a recipe for liability issues.

Converting it to a bikes only park would be a reasonable concept...but I would loose my current walking paths to a questionable volume of bike users. I so know the park is heavily used and has beautiful trails following the Creek and its relationship to the City Hall and adjoining Creek related themes.

Tom Olson  
12627 Creek Road West  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

.....  
**From:** Tom Olson  
**Sent:** Monday, October 09, 2017 3:27 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Mountain Bike Project

I would add that some of my neighbors have had considerable problems with trespassing on their properties (making unauthozed trails and jumping platforms). Their properties adjoin the trail that heads south from the parking lot on Cedar Lake Road...Tom Olson

---

**From:** "Kelly ODea" <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**To:** "Tom Olson"  
**Sent:** Monday, October 9, 2017 2:48:03 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Mountain Bike Project

Hi Tom,

Thank you for your feedback regarding the potential addition of mountain biking trails to Minnetonka's park system. Your input is appreciated. We continue to research location options, safety concerns, parking needs and environmental impacts as we explore this topic.

It is important to note that several things need to happen before the city council will vote on whether or not to add mountain biking trails to the city's park system:

1. City staff must present the results of their research to the park board.
2. If the park board would like to move forward after reviewing the results of the study, a formal proposal, detailing trail location and length, will be developed.
3. Once a formal proposal is developed, the city council will vote on whether or not to move forward with the project.

**Stay in Touch With Us**

I will add your email address to our contact list to ensure you are notified each time the park board or city council is set to discuss this topic. To find more information about this potential project, visit [eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking).

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback. I hope you continue to enjoy our wonderful parks!

Kelly

**From:** Tom Olson  
**Sent:** Monday, October 09, 2017 2:34 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <[twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com)>; Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Mountain Bike Project

Tony/Kelly,

I want to let you know that I want you to consider the impact of the proposed bike trail usage in Big Willow. While I no longer am able to ride due to back issues, I spent a few years riding in Big Willow (which is my backyard). I loved riding due to its convenience. The problem that I encountered was that there was constant interaction with the pedestrian users. The bikes came upon the walkers so quickly it often scared them....often frightening folks with headsets, etc. I do not think that it can work as a dual use area given the narrow trails and lack of sufficient space for the kind of use that bikers would need. The old horse trail system is not adequate to prevent bikes from constantly crossing over the pedestrian trails. The current "horse trails" cross at right angles to the walking path and often intersect at the bottom of hills (read high speeds and blind spots). It is a recipe for liability issues.

Converting it to a bikes only park would be a reasonable concept...but I would loose my current walking paths to a questionable volume of bike users. I so know the park is heavily used and has beautiful trails following the Creek and its relationship to the City Hall and adjoining Creek related themes.

Tom Olson  
12627 Creek Road West  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

.....  
**October 12, 2017**

**From:** Marilyn Nelson  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 12, 2017 2:34 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Mountain Biking proposal

Dear Park Board Member O'Dea,

Our property backs up to Big Willow Park, and we are terribly upset about the proposal to create mountain biking trails in Big Willow.

**We bought our property based on the knowledge that Big Willow was created for a wildlife preserve, NOT mountain biking trails!!** We enjoy the quiet beauty of Big Willow and do not wish to see it destroyed!

Mountain biking trails would completely alter the whole purpose for which Big Willow was created. It would bring in an atmosphere of speed and competition, destroying the serenity and relaxed environment which attracts people from many different neighborhoods. Many walk there regularly in order to be closer

to nature and to unwind from the fast pace of daily life. Big Willow restores our sense of being connected to nature in all its forms. Mountain biking trails would destroy all of that.

Please, please do not allow the proposal for mountain biking trails to go any further. Please vote "no".

Sincerely,

Doug and Marilyn Nelson  
12475 Creek Rd. West  
Minnetonka, MN. 55305

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**October 13, 2017**

From: John Drewitz  
Sent: Friday, October 13, 2017 12:30 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: Big Willow Bike Track

Good afternoon Kelly,

I want to send you a letter on this topic and need your mailing address.

Thank you,

John Drewitz  
2600 Sylvan Road

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**From:** moira donovan  
**Sent:** Friday, October 13, 2017 7:24 PM  
**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Mt. Biking Proposal

Good Evening,

I am writing as Big Willow is my neighborhood park where I go to walk my dog at least once, if not twice, a day. I love living in the city, but what makes my neighborhood better than others, is living so close to Big Willow. We often joke that its our own "little state park". A place where you can go to leave the sight and sound of the city for a half hour or so.

Speaking on Rowdie's behalf (my golden retriever), his most favorite thing is to be let off leash on one of the off-trails to monitor the squirrel population, followed by a quick dip in the river.

I know that people already ride their bikes on the off-trails. And this works well already! We share the trails quite nicely:) Would it really be a "rule" that walkers would not be allowed to use the off-trails? Thats where I have the most engaging conversations with other dog walkers who are out there enjoying their own "family time".

I understand that bicyclists would also enjoy their sport at Big Willow, and actually I think its an OK idea...with a little more consideration for the people who made and maintain the off-trails with their daily dog-walks:)

Accommodation of change and growth is a marvelous thing, and I believe that we "Big Willowians" would love to bring a new population of park lovers into our folds. Just not at our expense, please.

Thank you so much for time and consideration,

Moira Donovan

Ryan Nordell  
and  
Rowdie Donovan

October 14, 2017

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**From:** Tony Wagner  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 14, 2017 5:08 PM  
**To:**  
**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Big Willow Mt. Biking Proposal

Moira, Ryan, and Rowdie --

Thanks for your note related to the Mountain Biking proposal that is front of the Park Board at this time. As you may be aware, the Park Board heard a proposal for adding mountain biking trails within our park system, and Big Willow was an early candidate. During the June meeting (and based on feedback to staff and myself from many passionate residents), the Park Board and staff have planned to conduct a feasibility study and community engagement option prior to any formal proposal. Note, a Park Board recommendation to and review/action by the City Council is not expected until Q1 2018 or later.

Last week, the Park Board voted to approve Community Engagement option 1, with the addition of a second general community meeting. The four meetings would be project advocates, project opponents, and two general public meetings. Kelly has updated the project page (below) and is currently working on the implementation schedule to get the engagement process started.

If you haven't, I'd encourage you to sign up for project alerts using this link (text and / or email) as this is the best way to keep up to date. <https://eminnetonka.com/current-projects/other-projects/1782-mountain-bike-trails-project>

Thanks again for you comments below and as any proposal makes its way to council, I will definitely keep them in mind!

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnetonka City Council, Ward 2

612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Oct 13, 2017, at 7:25 PM, moira donovan wrote:

Good Evening,

I am writing as Big Willow is my neighborhood park where I go to walk my dog at least once, if not twice, a day. I love living in the city, but what makes my neighborhood better than others, is living so close to Big Willow. We often joke that its our own "little state park". A place where you can go to leave the sight and sound of the city for a half hour or so.

Speaking on Rowdie's behalf (my golden retriever), his most favorite thing is to be let off leash on one of the off-trails to monitor the squirrel population, followed by a quick dip in the river.

I know that people already ride their bikes on the off-trails. And this works well already! We share the trails quite nicely:) Would it really be a "rule" that walkers would not be allowed to use the off-trails? Thats

where I have the most engaging conversations with other dog walkers who are out there enjoying their own "family time".

I understand that bicyclists would also enjoy their sport at Big Willow, and actually I think its an OK idea...with a little more consideration for the people who made and maintain the off-trails with their daily dog-walks:)

Accommodation of change and growth is a marvelous thing, and I believe that we "Big Willowians" would love to bring a new population of park lovers into our folds. Just not at our expense, please.

Thank you so much for time and consideration,

Moira Donovan

Ryan Nordell

and

Rowdie Donovan

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**From:** Tony Wagner

**Sent:** Saturday, October 14, 2017 5:16 PM

**To:** Tom Olson

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Mountain Bike Project

Tom -

Thanks for your note related to the Mountain Biking proposal that is front of the Park Board at this time. I definitely appreciate you taking time to make your thoughts known and the insight you provided below (helpful for me).

As you may be aware, the Park Board heard a proposal in June 2017 for adding mountain biking trails within our park system, and Big Willow was an early candidate. During the June 2017 meeting, the Park Board directed staff to review additional locations and since then -- based on feedback to staff and myself from many passionate residents -- city staff has planned to conduct a feasibility study and community engagement process prior to any formal proposal. Note, a Park Board recommendation to and review/action by the City Council is not expected until Q1 2018 or later.

Last week, the Park Board voted to approve a Community Engagement Plan (option 1, with the addition of a second general community meeting) which can be found online @eminnetonka.com. The four meetings would be project advocates, project opponents, and two general public meetings. Kelly O'Dea (City Staff Lead) has updated the project page (below) and is currently working on the implementation schedule to get the engagement process started.

If you haven't, I'd encourage you to sign up for project alerts using this link (text and / or email) as this is the best way to keep up to date. <https://eminnetonka.com/current-projects/other-projects/1782-mountain-bike-trails-project>

Thanks again for you comments below and as any proposal makes its way to council, I will definitely keep them in mind! Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can be of any other assistance.

Tony

Tony Wagner

Minnnetonka City Council, Ward 2



612-382-5212

Sent from my iPad

On Oct 9, 2017, at 2:34 PM, Tom Olson wrote:

Tony/Kelly,

I want to let you know that I want you to consider the impact of the proposed bike trail usage in Big Willow. While I no longer am able to ride due to back issues, I spent a few years riding in Big Willow (which is my backyard). I loved riding due to its convenience. The problem that I encountered was that there was constant interaction with the pedestrian users. The bikes came upon the walkers so quickly it often scared them....often frightening folks with headsets, etc. I do not think that it can work as a dual use area given the narrow trails and lack of sufficient space for the kind of use that bikers would need. The old horse trail system is not adequate to prevent bikes from constantly crossing over the pedestrian trails. The current "horse trails" cross at right angles to the walking path and often intersect at the bottom of hills (read high speeds and blind spots). It is a recipe for liability issues.

Converting it to a bikes only park would be a reasonable concept...but I would lose my current walking paths to a questionable volume of bike users. I so know the park is heavily used and has beautiful trails following the Creek and its relationship to the City Hall and adjoining Creek related themes.

Tom Olson  
12627 Creek Road West  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

.....  
**October 18, 2017**

**From:** Darin Ellingson

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2017 12:35 PM

**To:**

**Cc:** Tom Dietrich <tdietrich@eminnetonka.com>; Jo Colleran <jcolleran@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** RE: Big Willow Park Trail Project

Hi Katherine,

The city is in the planning stages to build mountain bike trails, potentially in Big Willow, Civic Center, and/or Hilloway parks (and possibly other parks that are outside of the MCWD). The trails will be dirt, not aggregate or paved. Our intent is to avoid wetlands and flood plain such that we do not need to do any permitting or mitigation, and ideally no delineation. Building a mountain bike trail in low areas would not give us good results in the long term for maintenance. Once we have a better idea of a preliminary layout, we will want to meet with you to see what kind of setbacks will need to have to keep this project as simple as possible from an environmental resources perspective.

We hope to have something to discuss with you sometime in December.

If you have any questions or need more information, please let me know.

Thanks,

Darin

**Darin Ellingson, PE** | Operations Manager | City of Minnetonka |

11522 Minnetonka Blvd. Minnetonka, MN 55305 | **Direct: 952-988-8414** | **Cell: 612-328-3799**

[dellingson@eminnetonka.com](mailto:dellingson@eminnetonka.com) | [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com)

**From:** Katherine Sylvia

**Sent:** Monday, October 16, 2017 9:24 AM

**To:** Tom Dietrich <[tdietrich@eminnetonka.com](mailto:tdietrich@eminnetonka.com)>

**Cc:** Heidi Quinn Elizabeth Showalter

**Subject:** Big Willow Park Trail Project

Good Morning Tom!

Hope you are doing well and that you're having an enjoyable fall! I wanted to reach out and let you know that we have received a message from a resident who is concerned with the proposed trail project at Big Willow Park. Their concerns are focused on the impact to wildlife habitat and water quality. Not sure if you are familiar with this project, so please pass along to the appropriate person. Depending on what stage the project is in it might be worth to coordinate a pre-application meeting, feel free to forward my contact info to the project manager.

Give me a call if you have any questions.

Thanks!

Katherine Sylvia

Permitting Program Lead

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

15320 Minnetonka Blvd, Minnetonka, MN 55345

[www.minnehahacreek.org](http://www.minnehahacreek.org)



*John Drewitz  
2600 Sylvan Rd S  
Hopkins, MN 55305-2818*

### Mountain Biking Big Willow

Dear Kelly,

I attended the Park Board meeting last week and was impressed and encouraged by the attention that staff and volunteers are devoting to this increasingly divisive proposal.

We have lived on Sylvan Road since 1983. I have been running in **Big Willow since 1988 and consider it a refuge from the cacophony that surrounds it.**

The challenge that you, your colleagues and elected officials face is the fundamental question: What is this park about, who is it for really and is multiple use a viable compromise.

I am undecided but skeptical. The consulting group will, no doubt, organize people's preferences and the possibilities but as the recipient of many viewpoints there are no surprises in the offering.

The lack of plan, as discussed in the meeting, makes it impossible for the stakeholders to formulate an informed judgement that leads to civil discourse and a negotiated outcome.

The consultants stated timetable is probably unrealistic given the lack of plan and the number of focus groups and general meetings in the offering.

Someone suggested that you look closely at recent precedent in surrounding communities **and personally visit these projects** to witness the real outcomes.

I, satirically, suggested through Next Door that we should propose a go-kart track to emphasize that a group of advocates will form around just about any idea; loudly proclaiming the legitimacy of their stated goals.

My checklist for contemplating this project:

- How many mountain bikers will use this resource and what impact

will this number have on parking, safety and preserving the nature and tone of this park.

- Will there be long term environmental impact
- What liability does Minnetonka inherit with a mix of sport minded cyclists and pedestrians.
- What calculus will the decision makers use to make this decision?
- How will the maximum number of residents be informed? (I don't recall seeing anything in the excellent Minnetonka monthly newsletter.)
- Poll the residents via the internet.
- Decision makers should walk through **Big Willow** on the main trail and its single track tributaries.
- Decision makers might consider signing up for Next Door. The city has teamed with this resource but **cannot** see the member posts. Individual members, of course, can.

I am undecided due to lack of specific data including cost, maps, environmental impact study, potential liability and poll results. I am confident, however, that you and your colleagues will carefully consider the long-term consequences of each option.

Minnetonka is a well managed community. We are grateful for the effort that staff and elected officials exert on our behalf.

Best regard,

John Drewitz

From: Robert Numrich  
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 1:18 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: Big Willow Park

Kelly,

Please, please, please do not destroy Big Willow Park by putting mountain bike trails in the park.

I live on the edge of the park and use the trails often; it is my peaceful refuge.

Last evening, I was walking my dog in the park. I was overcome by a loud group of about a dozen mountain bikers. They came up behind me and started to pass me on both sides. I was frightened, my dog was frightened, and they almost hit my dog. When I told them to be careful because there were many people walking in the park, they just sneered at me.

The park is not big enough for both pedestrian trails and bike trails. Please don't do it.

There is no need to hire a consulting company to study the issue. Those of us who live around the park and use it frequently are against the idea. Those who don't live around the park don't care one way or another.

I bought my house because of the easy access to the park. You may force me to move.

Please make sure that you send me notification of future meetings and forums on this topic.

Robert Numrich  
12510 Creek Road west  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

.....  
**October 23, 2017**

**From:** Jo Colleran  
**Sent:** Monday, October 23, 2017 5:26 PM  
**To:** 'Mary Mckee' **Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Bike Trails

Hi Mary,

Thank you for your inquiry.

Kelly O'Dea, the city's Recreation Services Director is the main contact for this project. Kelly can be reached by email at [kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com) or by phone at 952-939-8360. I have also copied him on this email.

Jo Colleran | Natural Resources Manager | City of Minnetonka

11522 Minnetonka Boulevard | Minnetonka, MN 55305

952.988.8415 | [jcolleran@eminnetonka.com](mailto:jcolleran@eminnetonka.com)

**From:** Mary Mckee  
**Sent:** Monday, October 23, 2017 4:02 PM

**To:** Jo Colleran <[jcolleran@eminnetonka.com](mailto:jcolleran@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Bike Trails

I just read the article in the LakeShore Weekly about Mika Bike Trail **mountain** bike path planning. I was at many Imagine Mika meetings and do not recall hearing about the need for mountain bike trails. The focus was on bike paths and not destructive mountain bike paths where nature is torn up. Who should I contact about my concerns?

Thank you.

Mary McKee

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**From:** Mary Mckee  
**Sent:** Monday, October 23, 2017 5:32 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Mountain bike trails

10/23/17

As you could see by my earlier message, **I am concerned about mountain biking trails in Minnetonka**. I think the vision for Minnetonka is to "respect nature and protect woodlands." Developing mountain bike trails within our city does not meet those values or vision. Mountain biking is hard on the environment, disruptive to others not involved and would also invite a negative crowd to our area.

I was at all Imagine Minnetonka visioning meetings from the start and at **no** time did I hear the citizens requesting mountain bike trails. It was only for bike trail connections and protecting our woodlands. Where is this mountain bike trails idea coming from?

Regards,

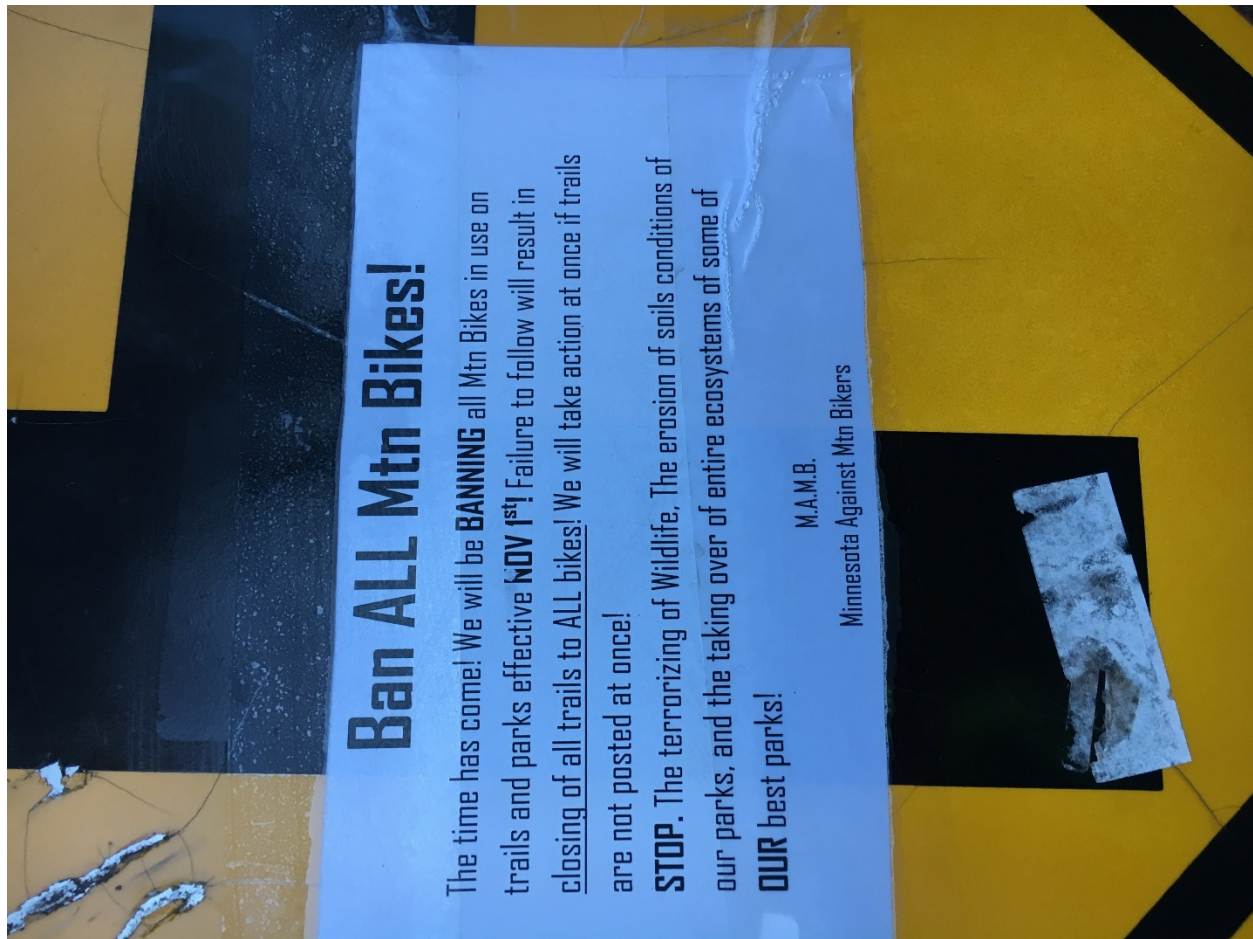
Mary McKee

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**From:** Leanne Steinbrunn  
**Sent:** Monday, October 23, 2017 9:46 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>; Sara Woeste <[swoeste@eminnetonka.com](mailto:swoeste@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Minnesotans Against Mountain Bikes????!!!!

Hello-

I saw this on the LRT trail yesterday afternoon. Can I please ask if this is a legit, city authorized thing? I hope not, hopefully it is just a cranky local. I live in the area and would love dedicated space for mountain biking. I deliver mail to many of the condos and apartments in the area of Big Willow and there are many signs on their bulletin boards hating on the mountain bikers.



October 24, 2017

**From:** Mary Mckee

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 24, 2017 9:00 AM

**To:** Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Biking

10/24/017

Mayor Schneider-

I was surprise to hear about the study being done for purposed mountain bike trails in Minnetonka public areas.

I attended all Imagine Minnetonka meetings and at **no** time did I hear the public requesting mountain bike trails. There was a strong feelings for bike trails and connecting them all, but not mountain bike trails.

The value statement of Minnetonka Park Board is to **respect natural environment and protect woodlands**. ....mountain bike trails are destructive and dangerous to our environment and non-biking residents. One only has to visit the mountain bike trails up north to see the damage done by them.

Minnetonka environment is for families, not extreme sports. Please do not accept mountain bike trails in our community.

Please forward this to others who are considering adding mountain bike trails to Minnetonka.

Sincerely,

Mary McKee  
3842 Baker Road  
Minnetonka 55305

---

**From:** Ken Schindler

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 24, 2017 9:01 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big willow bike trails

Hi Kelly,

I was dissapointed to hear that the mountain bike trail project has been temporarily put on hold, but I also understand the need for due diligence seeking public comment and involvement.

Let me share my relatively simple views regarding the big willow issues:

1. One user group should not arbitrarily be given preference. Comments taken under advisory should be focused on compatible uses, safety, and long term goals and objectives of the city.
2. Investment in a senior living apartment does not include an inherent right for exclusive or favored access and use of public spaces. See comments by Carol Allis in the oct. 29 lakeshore weekly. Mrs. Allis purchased into the retirement development and has a disingenuous agenda.
3. Residents, including the youth mountain biking clubs, must take priority over canines in any discussion of city park use. Dogs are great and there is a demand for a dog park, which is a different agenda.
4. Environmental impact. My background is in construction, landscape architecture and restoration ecology. I have used well developed trail systems in high value ecosystems and I have no concerns over the impact of this trail development which will concentrate use to the dedicated areas. This is under the assumption that with the project budget there is some thought, direction and resources going into the construction, if it proceeds. The benefits of the active volunteerism of the mtb community should also be weighed. Bikers will work to earn the privledge to ride.

I would like to be informed of the pending meetings regarding this topic as I am concerned that the supporting side may be under represented due to school, work and activity schedules.

You are most likely aware of nextdoor and what it is, but if not, I am a lead on the nextdoor site, and I need to express that the nextdoor platform should not be used for official communications. It is an advertising platform that relies on the squeaky wheels (and coyotes) to drive page views. Just my personal opinion on social media platforms and warnings to public agencies not to go down that rabbit hole. Amber alerts are great. Public concensus - Good luck!

Best,  
Ken Schindler

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Ms O'Dea-

Just wanted to weigh in on the mountain biking proposal.

While we are proponents of bike paths and enjoy the many options we have in the western suburbs, we do not feel that there is the need or space for this in Big Willow park.

Thank you for your time-

Irv Hershkovitz

Kate Amendt

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**October 26, 2017**



**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 26, 2017 6:03 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mt bike trail focus group

Well Kelly. Sometimes you luck out. 11/8 is election day and I'm an election judge, so I'll be working till 9p that night. I cannot attend. Question? is this an actual focus group? I've attended a few in front of the two way mirror and also behind it. Since we know that over 80% of the tax paying residents Of Mtka do not want the Mt. Bike trail at Big Willow(via Tony Wagner)I'm hoping you are proposing an alternative idea. Please advise or send me an update. Thanks. Bob Rabinovitz

.....

**October 27, 2017**

**From:** Irv Rosenberg  
**Sent:** Friday, October 27, 2017 2:01 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Fw: proposed mountain bike trail

Kelly, my name is Irv Rosenberg and I am president of the St Albans Mill Homeowners Association (Master Association) I am at 3020 St Albans Mill Road #305 and phone is  
I would appreciate your putting my name on the mailing list for issues dealing with the Mountain Bike Trails and anything else that may impact our area.

Email:  
Thank you  
Irv Rosenberg

----- Forwarded Message -----  
From: Carl Hedberg  
To:  
Sent: Thu, 26 Oct 2017 17:19:07 -0400 (EDT)  
Subject: Fw: proposed mountain bike trail

FYI----Kelly is a Park Board member and Rec. Services Director for MINNETONKA

**From:** Carl Hedberg  
**Sent:** Friday, October 06, 2017 1:24 PM  
**To:** Bob Shiff  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Fw: proposed mountain bike trail

**From:** Kelly ODea  
**Sent:** Friday, October 06, 2017 7:55 AM  
**To:** 'Carl Hedberg'  
**Subject:** RE: proposed mountain bike trail

Good morning,

The [June 7 park board meeting](#) included concepts maps completed by a contractor, Trailsource, LLC. Since then, staff has taken a step back and decided to do a more robust mountain biking trail study. At this time, we do not have a proposed trail map.

We continue to research location options, safety concerns, parking needs and environmental impacts as we explore this topic (staff has not created a trail map).

It is important to note that several things need to happen before the city council will vote on whether or not to add mountain biking trails to the city's park system:

1. City staff must present the results of their research to the [park board](#).
2. If the park board would like to move forward after reviewing the results of the study, a formal proposal, detailing trail location and length, will be developed.
3. Once a formal proposal is developed, the [city council](#) will vote on whether or not to move forward with the project.

### Stay in Touch With Us

I will add your email address to our contact list to ensure you are notified each time the park board or city council is set to discuss this topic. To find more information about this potential project, visit [eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking](http://eminnetonka.com/mountainbiking).

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback. I hope you continue to enjoy our wonderful parks!

Kelly

**From:** Carl Hedberg  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 05, 2017 4:14 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** proposed mountain bike trail

Were can I get a copy of the propose trail map?

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**October 28, 2017**

**From:** D.J. Oeltjenbruns  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 28, 2017 4:12 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <[kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)>  
**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trails

Hi Kelly,

Wondering how we get involved with the focus groups for the proposed MTB trails? We are in full support of these!

Thanks,

DJ Oeltjenbruns  
13400 McGinty Rd E  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

---

**November 9, 2017**

**From:** Ed Friedman

**Sent:** Thursday, November 09, 2017 1:17 PM

**To:** Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>; Brad Wiersum <bwiersum@eminnetonka.com>; Dick Allendorf <dallendorf@eminnetonka.com>; Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Tim Bergstedt <tbergstedt@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Perry Vetter <pvetter@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park: Mountain Bile Trails potential

Good morning.

Too many names to list.

I would have sent this to the ark Board, but I cannot find contact information for any of them that are not city employees.

I would like to suggest / request that council members and those participating in Park Board activities find the time to browse through the discussions on the subject potential change to Big Willow Park. Much discussion can be found on the public NextDoor website.

The following is a link to the specific discussion on MTKA Mountain Bike Trails

[https://nextdoor.com/news\\_feed/?post=68534583](https://nextdoor.com/news_feed/?post=68534583)

Again, I suggest that the entire discussion be reviewed. I believe that you will find it interesting and possibly enlightening on the views of your neighbors and residents of Minnetonka. If there is a way to get the Park Board made aware of these discussions, I would like to request that be done. I cannot find contact information for them.

I am including one of the most recent posts following a meeting held last night 11/8/17 facilitated by an outside firm the city is paying to be involved in this subject. I found the views of this resident enlightening and it raises a lot of questions in my mind.

I attended the meeting last night. My impressions: People in the room, generally, don't trust the city on this one. The Mountain Bike trail proposal began with the City's future survey OR with a group of students who raised money to fund a study, or both. The facilitator for the focus groups works for a company that designs trails. See trust above. No design plan or map was made available to the participants. See trust above. The city has not used Minnetonka Memo to focus on this topic but will in the December issue; more than a year after this all began. See trust above. The "concerns" stuck to the wall included, Safety, liability, parking, traffic, utilization conflict, environmental degradation, cost. Kelly, in charge of parks, was asked if any of the concerns were new given the 100's of emails and letters he received. His answer was no. This whole exercise, therefore, seemed to be a waste of time since all the concerns have been expressed. Several people said they felt like they were being placated; that this was a diversionary tactic. See trust above. When city staff was asked for an estimate on the number of Mountain Bike users they couldn't/ wouldn't answer the question. The facilitator was determined to use standard focus group protocol beginning with big post-it notes stuck to a wall. Efforts to ask questions were initially thwarted but participants finally succeeded in changing the direction; resulting in abandonment of "breakout" groups who, presumably, would mull over the post-it notes that contained no new information. Suggestions from the audience included: Decision makers should walk the trails in Big Willow. Decision makers should

obtain data from nearby cities who have opened Mountain Bike trails in their parks. In general this was a civil, well-intended, effort to advance the process but represented little progress in my view. Next Door has provided me with the best information but many in the room don't know what Next Door is. I suggested that city staff who live in the area join Next Door to obtain a wealth of comments on this matter. Inviting neighbors to join might broaden awareness in the community.

---

**November 10, 2017**

**From:** Ed Friedman

**Sent:** Friday, November 10, 2017 7:02 PM

**To:** Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>; Brad Wiersum <bwiersum@eminnetonka.com>; Dick Allendorf <dallendorf@eminnetonka.com>; Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Tim Bergstedt <tbergstedt@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Perry Vetter <pvetter@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** ig Willow Park: Mountain Bile Trails

Hello to our leaders,

Please let me know if you would prefer that I not address this issue with you anymore. I received no response from anyone on my last message to you. Below is most of the interchange that has taken place on NextDoor over the past 24 hours. I think you may find it interesting to read how some of the resident of Minnetonka feel on this issue. Just to be clear, I feel that if this plan as currently laid out for Big Willow goes forward, Big Willow as a treasure of the city and to those of us living near it, will be destroyed.

Forest Hills · 1d ago

I signed up to get text updates about the trails proposed for Big Willow- but where was my text about the meeting last night? I don't read Nextdoor every day, so it's very frustrating to find out about a meeting the day AFTER! Does anyone have any updates about how the focus meeting went. And, to John P., I don't think this is necessarily a "fact-based" issue. Mountain bikers may think they will have no impact on the quiet little park in question, but those of us who use it know how it will affect us and our use of the park. One or two neighborhood residents biking through on trails is really not a big deal, but if this becomes a destination "mountain biking park", all that we love about Big Willow will be gone. It's small, but even if the lot is full, I rarely run into other walkers. There is one bridge- will all share it? I teach my dog to sit when bikers approach- will she be able to walk an unmaintained trail at all? So, John, I get your sarcasm, but don't think that a comment is uninformed just because there are not statistical studies behind it.

McGinty E · 1d ago

It is surprising these separate focus group meetings for promoters and resisters were not mentioned in the Minnetonka Memo or other public mode of communication. If you want to be kept up to date contact Kelly O'Dea with the Minnetonka Park Board, he will get you on the list to receive emails about upcoming meetings. I have a feeling more facts will come out about how this project got so much traction.

Westernesse · 1d ago

I believe the issue has been distorted to be for or against mountain bike trails. I don't think that is the issue. I believe the issue is mountain bikes at Big Willow, and the change to the environment there. My

position is that the Park Board should find another location. A few weeks ago I had to step off the trail I was walking to let a line of 30-40 bikers pass. This had to be an organized activity, guessing by the mountain bike group. An activity that meant ignoring existing ordinances that exclude bikes from the unimproved trails. I also believe that wherever such a bike trail facility is established, it will not remain a local Mtka park. It will attract mountain bike fans from the region. This needs to be done at a location that is not currently being used by so many for peaceful walks on these trails to enjoy nature.

Bent Tree·1d ago

I attended the meeting last night. My impressions: People in the room, generally, don't trust the city on this one. The Mountain Bike trail proposal began with the City's future survey OR with a group of students who raised money to fund a study, or both. The facilitator for the focus groups works for a company that designs trails. See trust above. No design plan or map was made available to the participants. See trust above. The city has not used Minnetonka Memo to focus on this topic but will in the December issue; more than a year after this all began. See trust above. The "concerns" stuck to the wall included, Safety, liability, parking, traffic, utilization conflict, environmental degradation, cost. Kelly, in charge of parks, was asked if any of the concerns were new given the 100's of emails and letters he received. His answer was no. This whole exercise, therefore, seemed to be a waste of time since all the concerns have been expressed. Several people said they felt like they were being placated; that this was a diversionary tactic. See trust above. When city staff was asked for an estimate on the number of Mountain Bike users they couldn't/ wouldn't answer the question. The facilitator was determined to use standard focus group protocol beginning with big post-it notes stuck to a wall. Efforts to ask questions were initially thwarted but participants finally succeeded in changing the direction; resulting in abandonment of "breakout" groups who, presumably, would mull over the post-it notes that contained no new information. Suggestions from the audience included: Decision makers should walk the trails in Big Willow. Decision makers should obtain data from nearby cities who have opened Mountain Bike trails in their parks. In general this was a civil, well-intended, effort to advance the process but represented little progress in my view. Next Door has provided me with the best information but many in the room don't know what Next Door is. I suggested that city staff who live in the area join Next Door to obtain a wealth of comments on this matter. Inviting neighbors to join might broaden awareness in the community.

Williston·1d ago

Who are the ultimate decision makers on this proposal? City staff? City council? Park board?

Westerness·1d ago

Park Board will choose to make a recommendation to the City Council (or not). City Council will make the ultimate decision.

Fairhills Road·1d ago

I didn't receive notification about the meeting, despite having registered on the Minnetonka website and with the city contact person listed in previous threads on this matter (can't remember her name). Oh well, maybe next meeting.

Cedar Crossing·20h ago

This was discussed quite a bit. It was labeled "the process." This process was not transparent which resulted in distrust.

Williston·20h ago

What exactly do you all think is going to happen if those crazy nutty mountain bikers are allowed to enjoy their healthy outdoor exercise?

Williston·20h ago

leave Libbs alone. It's the one place around here where my kids can enjoy the beach without 10000 people. I don't mind dog use after peak hours (I have a springer, I get it) but that's an awesome beach for many.

West Hopkins·Edited 5h ago

leave Big Willow alone. It's the one place where I can enjoy nature without hoards of extreme sports enthusiasts destroying tranquility. I don't object to mountain bikes (I have a bike, I get it), but it's an awesome peaceful nature spot for many.

Spring Lake·5h ago

An honest question. Please keep your snarky answers to yourself. For those who do not want single track bicycling trails in Big Willow or any of the other proposed Minnetonka parks, where do you suggest they get built, or do you suggest they don't get built at all, or can you provide an alternate solution ?

Westerness·4h ago

you apparently want someone to suggest alternatives. For alternatives to Big Willow, I would suggest that the following be evaluated. The first two are already on the list. There is property on the 494 right of way that has possibilities, as well as the property east of the Civic center, west of McGinty, north of Mtka Blvd. Since wherever such a facility is built, it will probably become a regional attraction and these may be more appropriate and suitable for the activity,

Clifton E. French Regional Park

Elm Creek Park Reserve

Medicine Lake

Crow Hassen Park

Fish Lake Park

Bryant Lake Park

Hyland Lake Park

Spring Lake·3h ago

why are bikers described by words like, "hoards", "extreme", "destroying". I like to bike. I'm 52. I consider myself to be someone who cares about the environment. I've never been part of a hoard in my life, I'm

not out destroying anything, and have never been considered extreme. I ride responsibly and teach my kids to do the same. I'd just like to say that not all bikers, like walkers, hikers or dog-lovers fit a specific profile.

Westerness-3h ago

you got a 10 on this one from me. Does mean much, I'm not that important.

Fairhills Road-1h ago

Forgive them , for they speak ignorantly. Well, it's either ignorance as the result of very effective Mountain Dew ("extreeeeeme!") commercials, or willful demonization of those who don't share their same pursuits. I'm hoping for the former. So I also happen to prefer trail running over pavement pounding. There, I admit it - I like technical terrain (again, "extreeeeeme"! ). Time to lump me in with destructive hoards! If I judged all naturists and dog walkers based on some of the attitudes here, I'd refer to them as the "legions of grumpy geriatrics". But I'm way above generalizing an entire population based on the ramblings a small subset, even if that's the image those few seem determined to project. Also, I happen to also be a nature-loving dog walker myself. But gee... (sarcasm mode = on) someone with such varied pursuits defies easy labeling! Is he friend or foe? One of us or one of them? Destructive hoard or peaceful nature lover? How can he possibly like walking his dog AND mountain biking? MIND=BLOWN! Well, since I also prefer technical terrain to run my dog, I guess I'm... "extreeeeeme"!

<http://m.quickmeme.com/img/26/26bbda32ce82aea0cd90f3ebc60f227bbcdc11e5888d30451a8286cf1442542.jpg> (Sarcasm mode=off). My request here, primary to the "anti" side of this discussion, since that's where the suggestive name-flinging is coming from: please stop it. It's immature, distracts from the real substance of this discussion, and convenient and petty categorizing can work both ways. To the extent that I poke at this attitude, it's simply to (hopefully) satirically show that when one engages in this pettiness, they themselves become caricatures.

Williston-50m ago

There are already extensive single-track mountain biking trails in the Twin Cities! We are fortunate that they already exist in many regional parks and recreation areas. Some of the existing trails I know of include the following:

1. Lebanon Hills, Eagan
2. Elm Creek Park, Maple Grove
3. Baker Park, Maple Plain
4. Battlecreek Park, St. Paul
5. Bloomington Ferry Trail, Bloomington
6. Brownie Lake, Minneapolis
7. Lake Harriet, Minneapolis
8. Theodore Wirth Park, Minneapolis

9. Valley View Park, Minneapolis
10. Buck Hill, Burnsville
11. Carver Lake Park, Woodbury
12. Cottage Grove Bike Park, Cottage Grove
13. Eagan Bike Park, Eagan,
14. Ice Cream Run, Roseville
15. Lake Elmo Park, Lake Elmo
16. Lake Rebecca, Rockford
17. Louisville Swamp, Jordan
18. Lucy Line, Plymouth
19. Mammoth Trail, Chaska
20. Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area, Chaska
21. The Farm, Chaska
22. Mendota/Ft. Snelling, Mendota
23. Minnesota River Bottoms, Bloomington
24. Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Bloomington
25. New Bridge Trail, Bloomington
26. Reservoir Woods, Roseville
27. Salem Hills Trail, Inver Grove Heights
28. Sochacki Park, Robbinsdale
29. Terrace Oaks East Park, Burnsville
30. Valley View Park, Oak Park Heights
31. West Lake Marion, Lakeville

Many of these are regional parks (e.g. operated by Three Rivers Park District) and so get extra funding from beyond the city in which they are located because they draw users from a larger area.

West Hopkins · 42m ago

To , see comment from a day ago: "I had to step off the trail I was walking to let a line of 30-40 bikers pass." Can't you understand that if Big Willow becomes a mountain biking destination, that this is likely to increase???? There's been so many posts in the last months about how great it is "to get the kids out to exercise." I have a teenage son. He's a little lazy, but does enjoy biking. We stay on paved routes. There are SO MANY ways to "exercise". Hundreds!!! How many small nature paths are there????



Williston·38m ago

Mostly people who own mountain bike are not extreme bikers. If the terrain is moderate the extreme cyclists will look elsewhere. Mountain bike or fat tire bikes are useful and necessary on non paved surfaces.

Westerness·27m ago

: in the post I made about having to step off the path to allow 30-40 mountain bikes pass, I did not say that they were behaving badly in any way, other than riding a bike were they are not allowed by ordinance. However they definitely changed the environment, probably by the size of the group. If it were one or three, it probably would not have even registered in my memory.

Fairhills Road·25m ago New

the point of having single-tracks in Minnetonka is precisely so we don't have to drive 20-30 minutes (at best) to use them. Don't get me wrong, Elm Creek is awesome, as is Lebanon Hills. But given the choice to spend that time locally or drive half an hour, I'd rather not make the commute. If there's enough demand from Minnetonka residents, I don't see a problem accommodating this pastime if it can be done cost-effectively.

Fairhills Road·13m ago New

I'm assuming you didn't read it up in the previous thread about how single-tracks are implemented. So I guess this should be re-stated for general understanding: we (and yes, I'm confident I speak for most mountain bikers) don't want to ride on your walking trails. We don't want to risk running into/over people and pets and such trails offer no challenge. It would be a waste of money and effort. A proper single-track is not simply the sharing an existing walking trail. That's boring and dangerous. And if that ended up being the proposed implementation, I would definitely be against that. So does that address your (understandable) concern about ruining nature trails? I'm not sure what Ed was referring to when he had to step aside for 40 bikers, but these were not mountain bikers (they might be riding mountain bikes, sure, but that was not mountain biking). Never in my life have I see anywhere near that many mountain bikers on a single-track. Was he on a single-track? I didn't think there were any in Minnetonka. And if he was walking on a designated single-track, then he shouldn't have been doing so. If he wasn't on a single-track, then that's a total red-herring. Unrelated to the matter at hand. We all want safety, and we don't want to ruin your existing trails. I hope that can put you a little more at ease.

[Thank](#)

Just now

, I do not want to get into an argument with you, but I know what happened and where. You are right, there are no single-tracks in Mtk. There are no single-tracks in Big Willow Park. There were 30-40 individuals riding bikes that I have seen called mountain bikes in bike shops. I do not know how many passed me when I started counting, but I counted 23 and think about 10 passed me before I started counting. I was on one of unimproved trails in Big Willow that I walk almost everyday for many years. These are what were probably originally deer trails. Two people can't walk side by side. Almost every one of these trails were mapped out in the presentation made to the Park Board by the group promoting the Mountain Bike Trails.(And those maps also included the improved paths as part of the Mountain Bike path

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**November 13, 2017**

**From:** Irv Rosenberg  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2017 3:39 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Focus meeting Nov 8th

Kelly, Thank you for organizing the focus group meeting held Nov 8th. I know the meeting didn't go as planned but I believe it was productive in that your working group got a good sense of the primary concerns of those attending. My appreciation to the presenter who obviously put in considerable time in planning and suffered the frustration of not being able to work the session as planned. Many of the residents attending the "Focus Group" who are concerned about the impact of a Mountain Bike Trail are those same residents who suffered through the effect of the lights and noise from the ball-park complex. As requested, I am sending this email to you of issues I discussed with you after the meeting. The issues of concern of the attendees were well covered with the written notes and their voiced concerns.

**Communications: Keeping residents up to date of status and decision via email along with your normal process (for starters the list of attendees that provided the email address).**

**Motorized Bikes: The addition of the word "motorized bike trail" replacing "bike trail" as it read before in the City's Park Regulations** is particularly bothersome. The motion included 2 other items with all three (3) approved by the City Council at the April meeting. Although the meeting leader said that motorized bikes will not be permitted, the door is open and that could come into play in the future. I think my concern is because adding the word "motorized" came up at the time this project is under consideration.

**Map of proposed Mountain Bike Trail: Made available when location is finalized and trail design is established.**

**Map of Big Willow Park and what part of the park would the trail is under consideration.**

**Notification of scheduled meetings of the Park Board dealing with the Mountain Bike Trail with details relevant to the issue to be discussed.**

**Why Bid Willow: Is there not a better location with less impact on residential areas where a Mountain Bike trail could be built? (everything cannot and need not be "centrally located" **What other locations are under consideration?****

There were a number of attendees that voiced their lack of trust in the system and have concerns that the Mountain Bike Trail project will work its way through and come before the City Council before concerns can be raised and resolved. I would hope that is not the case. That's why moving forward with transparent communication is so important so affected residents will understand better what is happening and have the opportunity to respond and be heard.

My impression at the end of the meeting was that two meetings are planned with the second in January 2018 and at that time a decision would be made and that a target date has been set for early 2018. This to allow time for more in depth research by the Park Board and more community involvement. Is there a reason that early 2018 has to be the target?

***Will the upcoming meetings be in a focus group format or a meeting open to the public?***

***Kelly, I look forward to your response and thank you for your cooperation***

Irv Rosenberg  
3020 St Albans Mill Rd

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**November 14, 2017**

**From:** Ed Friedman  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2017 12:24 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** RE: ig Willow Park: Mountain Bile Trails

Kelly,

Thank you, very much. I appreciate the reply, and even more that the comments and position of several Minnetonka residents will move forward to the Park Board. I didn't think that would happen based on your earlier response. I read between the lines incorrectly. I apologize for that.

I wont try to flood you with daily emails. When I see something that I think is significant, I will likely forward that to you with the intent of it ge4tting to the Park Board.

Ed Friedman  
2700 Crestwood Circle  
Minnetonka, MN 55305-2758

**From:** [Kelly ODea](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2017 10:22 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** RE: ig Willow Park: Mountain Bile Trails

Hi Ed,

I did read through every comment in the email below. Unfortunately, when I clicked on the NextDoor link, I was unable to join the group. Your email will be included in the public record and be presented to the park board. I do have to work with appropriate city staff to help determine what information within the email may need to be redacted for the public record.

Kelly

**From:** Ed Friedman  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2017 7:15 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** RE: ig Willow Park: Mountain Bile Trails

Kelly,

Your comment, 'The NextDoor platform does not allow city staff to view, moderate or comment on any posts.'

Does that mean that you, specifically you, did not read the email I sent and included below? Does that mean that the communication I sent will not be forwarded by you to the Park Board members? Does that mean that the information will not be included in the public record?

I seriously expect and answer to my questions.

Ed Friedman

**From:** Kelly ODea [<mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2017 5:53 PM  
**To:** 'Ed Friedman'  
**Subject:** RE: ig Willow Park: Mountain Bile Trails

Hi Ed,

Thanks for the email. The NextDoor platform does not allow city staff to view, moderate or comment on any posts. We will continue to use our project page as an information resource and will hold two general public meetings in December and January. Hav-e a nice evening.

Kelly

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**November 20, 2017**

**From:** Luke Van Santen  
**Sent:** Monday, November 20, 2017 7:45 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Ben Marks ; Jake Saewert  
**Subject:** Additional Item Related to Trail Advocate's meeting, and a question

Good evening Kelly!

Another priority occurred to me over the weekend regarding the items we were asked to prioritize at Thursday's trail meeting. There was an item we were asked to rank the priority of titled something like "Proximity / Connection to other facilities" and my thought is related to that. Specifically, I would like to request that a new idea be added to the overall list and that it be titled "Extensibility of the / a trail system".

What I mean by that is how easy would / should it be to add to the overall system? I seem to recall some discussion of criteria for locating trails to be interconnectivity, and it seems that the ability to grow the overall network should be considered as well. Could you forward that to Brianne for inclusion in her summary?

Also - a question. I don't know what format the City received the report from Trail Source in, but if it was possible to share a shapefile of their "proposed" trail layout, or possibly a .KML file, that sure would be cool! Then I could drop it into Google Earth and maybe play around with it some.

Thank you very much - please let me know if you have any questions?

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**November 21, 2017**

**From:** Tremel, Anne  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 21, 2017 12:18 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park mountain bike trail

Hi Kelly,

I understand you are the contact person for the Big Willow Mountain Bike Trail proposal. I want to officially register my opposition to this proposal. I think Big Willow is too small to accommodate additional trails specifically for mountain bikes and I am concerned that there will not be room for walkers, runners, skiers, etc. if mountain bike trails are also built.

I wanted to let you know, too, that I have signed up for email notifications about this proposal and have not received any. I have had this issue in the past with the City website's alert or notification system. I don't think it works.

Hope all is well with you & thanks for your work!

**Anne Tremel |**

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**November 26, 2017**

Dear Kelly,

I have been hearing quite a bit about the proposed mountain bike trails. Some say that there is a proposal to put some at the civic center. Is there a map of where this would go? They are currently paving an 8 foot wide trail east of the lower hockey arena (seems very short to be worth the time and money). As neighbors, we were told there would be another paved/boardwalk trail between there and Minnetonka Blvd, but that it was later cancelled because of a possible new fire station.

My question is where mountain bike trails would go in the civic center area? It seems even smaller than Big Willow, to me. And it seems that most of the undeveloped land is actually wetland. I am neither for or against mountain bike trails, but I am very frustrated with the way the city plans its projects - case in point the very short trail being paved that I mentioned above.

Please let me know where the trails would go in the civic center area and when the next community meeting about this project will take place.

Thanks very much!

Sincerely,

Amy Morsman  
330 Hazelwood West  
Minnetonka

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**November 28, 2017**

**From:** Alex

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2017 9:30 PM

**To:** Minnetonka Mike <[mike@eminnetonka.com](mailto:mike@eminnetonka.com)>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park

Hello,

I've heard about a proposal of conversions of Big Willow Park into Mountain Biking Park.

This is a very bad idea, which would practically destroy the park that is loved by my family and so many people we know.

I hope that the Minnetonka City Council would reject this proposal all together based on the common sense and wishes of Minnetonka residents.

Thanks,

Alex Maly

Minnetonka Resident since 1995

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**December 3, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Elena Imaretska

**Sent:** Sunday, December 03, 2017 12:04 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain bike trail support

Greetings!

I am writing to declare my support for mountain bike trails in Minnetonka! Our family thinks it's a great idea! If you are tracking comments please add our voice to the "pro" group. ;-)

Elena Imaretska AND Bryan Jacobson

3932 Tonkawood RD

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December 11, 2017

**From:** Paul Jenson

**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2017 2:43 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** willow park mtn bike trails

I live in Minnetonka...3940 willmatt hill

I support the Mtn bike Trails at Willow Park

Go to it!

Paul Jenson

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December 12, 2017

**From:** JOE [mailto:blackjoep@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2017 2:30 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Minnetonka Mtn Bike Trails

Kelly,

I have been to two of the meetings and have reviewed the comments from the meetings back for the past two years and looked at the trail feasibility study.

I would like to see mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. I think adding single-track trails to the existing system of crushed limestone and paved trails would be a great benefit to the city. Since Minnetonka has the ordinance not allowing off trail riding, any amount of designated trails would be a plus.

I understand there is resistance to adding trails to the parks [especially vocal for Big Willow]. Considering the limited size of the parks in Minnetonka and the different users all trying to keep things status quo I think it will be more feasible to plan limited designated mountain bike trails in several of the parks so there is riding available to residents of Minnetonka within the city.

I think 1.5 - 2 mile trails could be made within Purgatory Park and Lone Lake Park that would only use a portion of the off trail areas. That way there are areas for walkers, dog walkers, etc. that are separate from the designated mountain bike trails. See the green boundary areas on the attached maps. I don't think the entire area in the boundary would be needed. These areas don't cross any of the major existing maintained trails [paved or crushed limestone] and avoid the wetlands. May need a "dock" crossing at a couple points, but those are used within the other MORC trail areas. The Purgatory area is across the main trail from the creek and wetlands and is not close to the area that the dog walkers use [the prairie area to the east].

Others have looked at the Civic Center park and Big Willow park more closely than I have, and I would think similar compromise layouts could be developed for those parks that provides some trail for mountain bike and leaves some space and trails for the existing walkers and dog walkers.

As far as location, we only can work with what Minnetonka has available and these are the three biggest parks in the city. Purgatory is the best located for Minnetonka HS team use by far. There are trails that nearly connect to MTKA HS already.

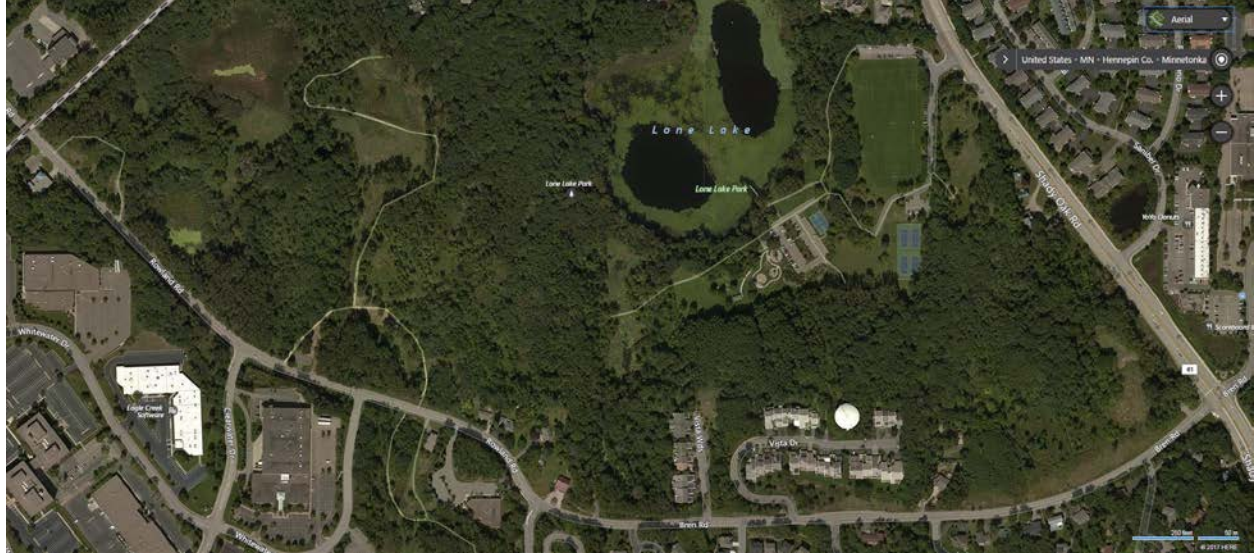
Each location may only have 1 - 2 miles of trails, but in conjunction with the existing paved/crushed limestone trails these trails could benefit the city residents. There are possibilities to add additional segments along the 494 corridor area, Jidana Park, Hilloway and perhaps other city land over the years to add trail opportunities.

Thanks,

Joe Black

6087 Scenic Road, Minnetonka

Lone Lake Park, Minnetonka  
City of Minnetonka property per Hennepin County Property interactive map.







Purgatory Park, Minnetonka  
City of Minnetonka property per Hennepin County Property interactive map.



**December 12, 2017**

**From:** Mark Broin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2017 9:56 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Minnetonka Mountain Bike Parks Trail Proposal

For your information.

Thank you.

Mark Broin

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mark Broin**

Date: Tue, Dec 12, 2017 at 8:55 PM

Subject: Minnetonka Mountain Bike Parks Trail Proposal

To: [tschneider@eminnetonka.com](mailto:tschneider@eminnetonka.com), [dallendorf@eminnetonka.com](mailto:dallendorf@eminnetonka.com), [pacomb@eminnetonka.com](mailto:pacomb@eminnetonka.com), [bellingson@eminnetonka.com](mailto:bellingson@eminnetonka.com), [twagner@eminnetonka.com](mailto:twagner@eminnetonka.com), [bwiersum@eminnetonka.com](mailto:bwiersum@eminnetonka.com), [tbergstedt@eminnetonka.com](mailto:tbergstedt@eminnetonka.com), [gbarone@eminnetonka.com](mailto:gbarone@eminnetonka.com), [lgordon@eminnetonka.com](mailto:lgordon@eminnetonka.com)

For those of you who may be attending the Mountain Bike Trail Meeting tomorrow, Wednesday evening, I offer you this perspective as a property owner and supporter of ecologically sensitive respect for the beautiful parkland areas Minnetonka has chosen to provide its residents. The following are my assessment comments posted to the "Minnetonka Matters" comment site provided for interested party discussion:

"I apologize for my late entry into this forum. As an introduction, I own two properties on the north side of Timberhill Road, and a few years ago sold nearly 600 feet of property along the south shore of Minnehaha Creek, consisting of approximately 6 acres of buildable land off Timberhill Road, to the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. My reasons for doing so, and foregoing the profits of development, included assuring the property would be restored to its natural state, and remain preserved for the enjoyment of the public, and the benefit of the creek's environmental integrity, for generations to come.

I have been educating myself concerning this "single track" mountain biking trail being proposed, and am somewhat fortunate to have had some experience with similar efforts in Lake County, MN, where I own a home on the shores of Lake Superior.

A dedicated group of mountain biking folks are working with St. Louis County, Lake County and Cook County to build/create a contiguous mountain biking trail along the area of the North Shore of Lake Superior. Time spent evaluating the pros and cons of this effort, I believe, has provided me a basis for a reasonable and independent perspective on the project's background, and it's claimed potential for a variety of economic, recreational, environmental and social outcomes.

Before commenting further, I am working hard to gather and understand information about a similar, but smaller scale, local proposal, which has been provided to the City of Minnetonka. At this juncture, I can say I am concerned about the suitability of the proposed "intensity" of the development with regard to the land characteristics that are an integral part of the attributes of most of Minnetonka's parks...including the Civic Center and Big Willow.

As I post more comments, I appreciate the efforts others on this forum may make to help address/clarify any viewpoints/concerns I may offer for discussion."

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"After hours and days of researching, reading and looking for common threads amongst the available information, it appears to me the proposed intensity and specialized "single track" trails of the project are simply demographically inconsistent with the intent, character and layout of the Minnetonka park system. I can, however, visualize some additional expansion of "bike/walking" trails to reasonably accommodate the maximum number of potential park users. If pursued, how to do this responsibly is my fundamental concern.

Many of the claimed positive aspects of the proposal discussion make sense when viewed from the perspective of a large land area Crosby-Ironton (MN), Oregon (Oakridge), Canadian and other expansive areas of diverse land characteristics, expansive views and low population density. The only perspective that became clear to me is too many of these comparisons do not make common sense when looking at the characteristics of the currently delineated Minnetonka park system and its associated demographic profiles. The housing density, the pressured/encroached characteristics of the bounded natural environment, and the need to address, in fair balance, the desires of a very physically capable diverse city population and many similar visitors to the city, simply don't support the practical implementation of the proposed plan for adding mountain biking trails.

I'm trying not to complicate the issue with all the pro and con details that have been thrown back and forth. Just take a simple look at the land profile, and address your natural reactions about what makes common sense.

To me, this plan, as proposed, or even with modest adjustments, in many ways, just doesn't pass the "smell" test.

Let's take the claim for increased economic benefit. C'mon folks. The existing eating establishments can only handle so much business, and most have limited parking and seating for those that now use them. Lodging income? A regularly occurring multi-day trip to Minnetonka for mountain biking? I don't think so. Significant spending on other local products and services over any extended period of time? What are the proponents thinking about? Minnetonka is part of a large metropolitan area. Significant economic activity occurring in Minnetonka because of mountain biking? Its not going to happen, and this claim may as well be shelved.

However, valuable and scarce natural land resources and habitat will be affected. Maintenance needs will increase. Crowding may increase. All the other established issues with generating higher visitor density to limited areas of suburban park land will get more difficult and time consuming to manage. And to what advantage?

Support exercise and a healthy life style? Again, I think our park system already does this without promoting more extreme and more widened utilization of existing parkland footprints. I, for one, don't want an entertainment center, I want what prudent, balanced and reasonable use of naturally focused parklands are supposed to deliver to the largest segments of our population.

So, at this juncture, I do not see what adding these specialized or additional mountain bike trails would add to Minnetonka's already carefully managed and well planned mix of natural and reasonable recreational opportunity for the vast majority of its residents and visitors.

After all the reading and research I have diligently focused upon, It all seems pretty straightforward and simple to me."

Respectfully submitted:

Mark Broin  
14814 Timberhill Road  
Minnetonka, MN 55345

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**December 13, 2017**

**From:** Jack Barbier

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2017 2:38 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Cc:** Deb Calvert Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Important safety notes re: Mountain Biking at Big Willow park

Kelly:

I cannot attend tonight's meeting due to a schedule conflict.

However I want to convey a few more thoughts, pursuant to the prior meeting that took place on Nov. 8.

I stood up that night and voiced some concerns. You may remember me as the one who has worked on the BNSF Railway, whose main line bisects Big Willow Park. That experience brings a perspective that may otherwise be lacking in your planning process. My purpose here is to flesh out those "railroad safety concerns" for further consideration by the Park Board and our city leaders.

Background: I have lived near Big Willow for 25 years now. There is not a week that has gone by over that quarter-century that I haven't taken walks in the park at least 2-3 times....winter, spring, fall, summer, all hours of the day. I have spent thousands of hours enjoying the park's serenity and beauty. It is my recreation. I consider the park to be a treasure, and one of the nicest things about living in this community.

However, as a railroad worker, I have witnessed things that make me shudder.

BNSF is a member of a movement called "Operation Lifesaver." That is a national safety-outreach program which seeks to educate the public about the dangers of trespassing on railroad property. Fact: every year, about 1,000 people are killed in this country while "trespassing" on railroad property. Several thousand more are injured, many severely.

The railroad company is keenly aware of the pedestrian hazard that currently exists in Big Willow park. Indeed, they have prominently posted "danger/ no trespassing" signs on the creek bridge at the east end of the park, as well as at a couple places where park-goers consistently use pathways to cross the tracks.

People, of course, do what they're gonna do...the signs don't really deter anyone.

Fact: on an average day, the railroad runs anywhere from 8 to 12 heavy, long freight trains through Big Willow each 24 hours. They can show up at any time. The speed limit is currently 40 mph, and 60 mph for passenger trains (e.g. the occasional 'special').

Fact: coming west out of Minneapolis, the trains go through a deep cut behind the ball fields, before curving into view and crossing the creek bridge on the east side of the park. When the wind is in the trees, and the creek is gurgling below, and the jets are flying overhead, those trains can easily sneak up and barrel around that curve with little or no warning. I have personally witnessed people on the bridge scattering in all directions to get out of the way. It is a wonder no one has been killed there already.

The railroad crews live in constant fear of these situations. Having operated trains as a conductor, in the lead locomotive with the engineer, I could easily foresee coming around that curve at 40+ mph and seeing a bunch of kids from the local biking team scrambling to schlep their bikes over the tracks as we bear down on them. All it would take is one little slip, and bam. We'd be on them in seconds. Catastrophe. I doubt you (or anyone) would like to have that on your conscience.

Key/problematic fact: the ONLY way for people to now go from the north side of the park to the south side-- without trespassing on RR property and putting their lives in danger-- is on the path that does a 180-degree hairpin turn along the creek under that same bridge. That path has a tendency to be flooded and under water for a long stretch each summer. So how on earth are you going to allow bikers to get from the north side to the south side ... build a bridge over, or tunnel under, the tracks? I'm pretty sure the railroad would take a very dim view of those options. And they certainly wouldn't pay for them.

I have no qualm with bikers wanting to pursue their sport. But for the reasons stated above, in addition to the long, long list of other reasons you have heard from other concerned residents... I continue to believe that *developing mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park is a **very bad idea**.*

Thank you for your consideration of these details. I am open to further communication, should you see fit.

Yours, Jack Barbier  
St. David's Road

.....  
**December 14, 2017**

**From:** ED

**Sent:** Thursday, December 14, 2017 9:33 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Perry Vetter <pvetter@eminnetonka.com>; Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>; Dick Allendorf <dallendorf@eminnetonka.com>; Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Tim Bergstedt

<tbergstedt@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trails Focus Groups (Frustration and Mistrust)

To those addressed:

I would send this message to the Park Board members, however, I cannot locate email addresses for any of them. I am going to apologize for the tone of this message before you read it. I am finding the process being executed regarding potential Mountain Biking Trails in Minnetonka frustrating and potential intentionally misleading to the residents of Minnetonka. Below is a post I made on the MinnetonkaMatters website on this subject and two responses to same.

at December 14, 2017 at 8:05am CST

I attended the Dec 13th meeting at the Civic Center and found it disappointing from the very start. This was, as I understand it, an attempt to gather input from city residents on the establishment of Mountain Bike trails in Minnetonka Parks or not. Resident input to the city Park Board, and then potentially to the City Council. At no time was I asked for my full name, or address to establish myself as a city resident. We are talking about city property and city \$s. It is a Minnetonka issue. There were a lot on non-residents in attendance. There was even a failed attempt to determine how many were Mtka residents, non-resident but within the metro, and beyond the metro. But of course that survey tool from the paid consultants on this issue did not work. The subject was Mountain Biking and a question got ask about the size of Big Willow. A question clearly aimed at the size available for the trails. The answer provided was of the total park area including ball fields and wetland. When challenged because the area of the park available for these trails is less that 1/4 of the total, the challenger was reprimanded. Not what I would have anticipated verses an acknowledgement of the correction. This makes me wonder if the money being spent for this external information gathering from residents is not total waste of city resources to try to justify a decision that has already been made and this is nothing but an attempt to suppress public input into the decision. I have asked several times of different people involved if this mountain bike trails if established in Big Willow, would remain accessible to pedestrians, or would become dedicated to the single track bike trails. The answer provided last night was that these trails, which based on a previously published map, would include most if not all of the existing deer trails and not be available to pedestrians. This is not acceptable to the estimated 1500 daily visitors to this park. Was this answer provided accurate?

1 Vote [Hide Replies](#) [Vote](#)



at December 14, 2017 at 8:27am CST

none of the "single track" trails would be on the existing deer trails. Instead, WSB & Associates (which also happens to be a general contractor, among other things) would create brand new trails for mountain biking ONLY. This means they would bring in some sort of equipment to create new paths through

Minnetonka's natural habitat areas. The fact that on Fox 9 News last night said that this wouldn't effect anything is utterly ridiculous. Facts state, NEW trails would be created, and unfortunately that would be at the cost of the existing natural habitat and wild life.

1 Vote [Hide Reply](#) [Vote](#)



at December 14, 2017 at 9:09am CST

: Thanks for your reply. I believe that it supports my comment that this current effort is somewhere between meaningless and a fraud upon our intelligence. Okay, that was a nasty way to state it. So, you are telling me/us, that the company being paid to 'study' this issue has a bias to come up with an answer that will generate business for themselves. Interesting! I have to question your assumption that none of the 'single track' would be on existing deer trails. My reason for questioning that statement is that the map that was published in the Mtka Park Board minutes showed trail lines that basically traced every one of the deer trails existing in Big Willow. Maybe they aren't official maintained trails so they don't exist and anything constructed would be new trails on not on anything officially existing. Sorry, but I have gotten very pessimistic on this whole effort. I am not against Mountain Bike Trails in Minnetonka. I would prefer they find a location other than Big Willow. I would appreciate some honesty and open communication on what is actually in the minds of the planners wherever this is going to land. I don't think we are being provided a true status and true intent. Everything is hiding behind, 'No decisions have been made.' Unfortunately I believe there are plans well defined somewhere and not being shared with the public.

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**From:** Mark Broin

**Sent:** Thursday, December 14, 2017 10:38 AM

**To:** Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>; Dick Allendorf <dallendorf@eminnetonka.com>; Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Brad Wiersum <bwiersum@eminnetonka.com>; Tim Bergstedt <tbergstedt@eminnetonka.com>; Geralyn Barone <gbarone@eminnetonka.com>; Loren Gordon <lgordon@eminnetonka.com>

**Cc:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: Minnetonka Mountain Bike Parks Trail Proposal

Hello, Everyone:

I understand you had a large turnout at the meeting last night regard the mountain bike trail proposal. I am sorry I was not able to attend. I am "stuck" up on the North Shore of Lake Superior working, and could not get away.

I enclose the following more fact-based research into the national picture of bicycling, including the mountain biking subgroup of the national marketplace. It was the latest data I could find, and do expect updates to this to appear when available. The information does have an interesting story to tell, and you may find my perspective on it valuable as you continue your involvement in the mountain biking proposals before you. I also posted this information on the "Minnetonka Matters" discussion site

Thank you for the attention you are willing to commit to this topic.

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"This comment is a follow-up to my original assessment on December 12, 2017, and a response to who implied I should review the last 20 years of mountain biking in Minnesota. So, let's take a look at the facts surrounding some of Joshua's comments, and his references to the changes in the last 20 years in Minnesota. I present this with all due respect, understanding his and other proponent's passion for the mountain bike and related bicycling industry:

The bicycle industry in Minnesota over the past 20 years, which Joshua referenced, to be clearly understood, must be viewed in terms of national trends regarding bicycles and interest in bicycling.

The 2015 (the latest data I could find) NBDA (National Bicycle Dealers Association) bicycle sales statistics, going back to 1992, in which projected sales volumes of two categories of bike sales are available (bikes sold with 20+ inch wheels, and the total of all bikes of all wheel sizes sold) is available. The number of 20+ inch wheel bikes going back to approximately 1973 is outlined in this report, but total sales of all bikes earlier than 1992 are not shown.

1973 was the record year for sales of bikes with 20+ inch wheels. The year 2000 was the highest projected sales year for all bikes combined. There is no data presented for total bikes during the years previous to 1992.

The total number of **all bikes sold in 2015 (17.4 million) was some 3.5 million bikes fewer than in 2000 (20.9 million)**. In general, it appears bike sales of all kinds have consistently been remaining stable between 15.3 million and 19.4 million total bikes sold per year. In fact, according to Streets.MN (7/29/2015), "... sales have been flat, and declining per capita, for 15 years".

In 2015, nearly 69% of all bike sales were of bikes with wheel diameters of 20+ inches or larger. In 2000 (the high sales year for all types of wheel size unit sales), approximately 57% of bikes sold had wheel diameters of 20+ inches or more.

Between 2004 and 2012, "specialty market" share sales of mountain bikes dropped from about 29% to around 25%, a decrease of 4%. In 2010 mountain bike sales were as low as 22% of bikes classified as "Specialty". The "Specialty" portion of the total Bicycle Market comprised approximately 13% of the total bicycle units sold in 2015. **So, in 2015, mountain bike sales reflected around 3.25% of the total national bicycle marketplace.**

Although I don't have the latest sales data, one can only presume Minnesota's bike sales, at best, mirrored aspects of the national mix of types and volume percentages. However, when taking state climate patterns, particularly winters, one might expect Minnesota's per capita biking patterns are even more fundamentally challenging than the national trends.

What the numbers do show is that mountain biking, as part of the relatively stable but per-capita declining biking experience, represents a minority of biking activity. This should cause any government body considering biking amenities in their local planning processes, to pay close attention to the fact **roughly 96% or more of public biking activity does not include an interest in mountain biking.**

There are other facts in the referenced materials outlining the general state of bicycling and marketing of bicycles in the United States. This information does not support the oft repeated claims by mountain biking advocates that bicycling interest, and the related commercial market, is or has been growing dramatically over the years, or that mountain biking interest is a major concern of the vast majority of the public-at-wide bicycling community. The data simply do not support many of the mountain biking claims.

So, with this fact-based assessment of the general state of the bicycling industry, and mountain biking's participatory share of that industry, just what do supporters expect me, or the City of Minnetonka, to infer differently when it was suggested I "...Actually look at the facts and history. You might find many of your conclusions to be challenged by reality".

From what I read, I believe the aspect of the facts surrounding "reality" discussed in responding to Joshua is pretty clear, and may actually mitigate any tendency I might have considered for compromise to now be overly optimistic. I simply don't see my original conclusions adversely "challenged by reality". And, that "reality" is publically documented back many years.

So, no matter how I look at the information proponents are alluding to, regarding mountain biking in Minnesota and its demographic centers and other areas of concern in my initial comments, I don't see any overwhelming or driving factors to cause anyone to look at mountain biking as a priority in any way above other, and more far reaching, public parkland planning priorities.

And, there is no indication, as more recent data may become available, that the past trends in the bicycling marketplace are going to radically change and cause mountain biking to be any more of a priority or interest to the wider general public than it has been for years.

**Major public investment, in my opinion, therefore, should have much higher and wider-ranging priorities when looking at the best use of disappearing and valuable suburban natural resources, such as preserved parkland located in these higher population density areas."**

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Broin

14814 Timberhill Road  
Minnetonka, MN 55345



My name is Heather Holm, I am Minnetonka resident, biologist, landscape restoration professional, and former high school coach. My husband Brent and I are avid cyclists and fully support the growing sport of mountain biking both as a high school sport, and as a recreational activity for youth and adults. In all honesty, we spend more time on our road and trail bikes than we do on our mountain bikes, for likely the same reason many of you do, our community does not have a place to mountain bike.

I have to balance my support for mountain biking with my professional landscape restoration knowledge, however. And, it is my professional opinion that Big Willow, one of the three largest natural parks in Minnetonka, and a site that represents the dominant native plant community that once covered our City, is the last remaining example of this type of woodland. Restoration professionals and the public need these living examples or templates so we can recreate or successfully restore other sites. The City has spent a large portion of their natural resources restoration budget and focus on this park, and the other two largest parks, Purgatory and Lone Lake Park. These remnant parcels not only provide enjoyment for the public that visit them but are invaluable because of the critical wildlife habitat they provide, and biological diversity they support.

I absolutely, wholeheartedly agree that our community needs a place where people can mountain bike and I would put my time and efforts into finding the ideal site. I have personally noticed over the past 8-10 years, in many of the City's parks which I walk in daily, how unauthorized off-trail mountain biking is causing erosion and widening of the foot paths. Some exuberant bikers, likely youth, have been building jumps in the parks, blazing new trails through restoration areas, and even cutting down trees. For these reasons, we definitely need a destination for mountain biking so this trend does not continue, but it has to be a destination that is not a high quality restoration area, one that is adequate in size, and one that would not be degraded by the high frequency of use and the matrix of 18" wide trails.

My concern at Big Willow specifically is that the proposed trails and the potential for high use would result in the degradation of the current state of restoration, very likely contribute to the spread of invasive species, and disrupt nesting and breeding habitat for wildlife. The City of Burnsville recently installed mountain bike trails at Terrace Oaks Park and has since mapped the significant spread of garlic mustard, an invasive plant, along the installed mountain bike trails.

We are barely treading water in the City with the paid staff and volunteer restoration efforts. My husband and I volunteer over 200 hours of our personal time each year to help restore parks in our neighborhood in southern Minnetonka. Unless we have more volunteer commitment or funding, the current activities and frequency of use by the public in our parks is trending toward ecological degradation rather than enhancement. Big Willow park is simply not large enough to support the length or mileage of trails needed without having a negative impact on the ecological state of the park. I firmly believe that we need to continue to improve upon the ongoing restoration at this park so that we have this living example to show our children and grandchildren what the landscape used to look like, and we continue to conserve this space for wildlife which has very little remaining habitat. I also feel that Big Willow, due to its geographical size and division by the railway, is not an appropriate site to install mountain bike trails because of the conflict of the multiple types of use. With dog walkers, joggers, hikers, and mountain bikers all using the same trails, there is a very high risk of accidents occurring with each traveling at different speeds. Other concerns raised through the public online forums that I agree with is the lack of parking, and the impact that the increased use would have on neighboring residents, specifically the proposed trails at the Civic Center.

Mountain Bike Public Meeting

December 13, 2017

I commend the mountain bikers for their passion, advocacy, and on how well organized they are, and I understand the need to site trails near the Hopkins high school, but I suggest that you think even bigger. Take this momentum and organized opportunity and look for a site that would be dedicated to mountain biking only, that has adequate access and parking, and does not impact other types of trail users, or neighborhoods that don't want a change in frequency of traffic or cars parked on their residential street. The Hennepin County Home School next to the Glen Lake Golf Course could be an ideal location. It is slated to become the County's new medical examiners office but my understanding is that would still leave 80-100 acres of open space with the potential for public use. It has adequate parking, is connected to a regional LRT trail, and is larger in size than Big Willow park, and likely even Purgatory or Lone Lake park. What is different about this site? It is not being actively restored; there is former horse pasture which is quite degraded, some hilly areas with oaks and invasive species, so it is not in a high quality state like Big Willow Park. This site however, has the potential to provide a lengthy amount of trails, has significant elevational changes, and treed hills. The site could be combined in the winter with Glen Lake Golf Course ski trails providing opportunities for fat-tire riders to use the groomed ski trails.

The Hennepin County Home School site also has great potential for a partnership between the County, the City of Minnetonka, and the City of Eden Prairie to make this a regional mountain biking destination, one that could attract not only residents in the City but could be commuted to by bike or easily by car from outside the City. It would not only service the Hopkins high school team, but also the Minnetonka and Eden Prairie teams. There is potential that this project could be partially or fully state-funded through a grant such as a LCCMR grant or Nine Mile Creek Watershed grant that would fund the construction and development of trails, combined with the improvement and restoration of the site. I would be in full support of a project like this that resolved all of the concerns raised to date by the public regarding the installation of trails at Big Willow park and the Civic Center. Big Willow park is an inadequately sized site to support this growing sport and I implore the Park Board and the mountain biking community to explore other options.

On a final note, if the Park Board decides to approve the trails at Big Willow Park and at the Civic Center, I would strongly suggest that there is a contractual, binding agreement that the users must offset the ecological damage and potential spread of invasive species, either through funding, or a commitment of volunteer hours.

Thank you for your time,  
Heather Holm

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**From:** Mike Vandeman

**Sent:** Thursday, December 14, 2017 9:23 PM

**To:** Terry Schneider <tschneider@eminnetonka.com>; Dick Allendorf <dallendorf@eminnetonka.com>; Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Bob Ellingson <bellingson@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Brad Wiersum <bwiersum@eminnetonka.com>; Tim Bergstedt <tbergstedt@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Sara Woeste <swoeste@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Biking

Re: <http://www.startribune.com/off-road-bike-trails-may-be-in-minnetonka-s-future/430235083/> ,  
<http://minnetonkamatters.com/discussions/potential-mountain-biking-trails/topics/share-your-feedback#5a332b556c9d6f97e8005744>

I have been studying mountain biking and its impacts for about 25 years. In that time, I have never heard even one good reason to allow bicycles in natural areas. They are environmentally and medically destructive. Anyone who wants to see the area can walk or use a wheelchair. Bicycles are machines, not citizens! BICYCLES have no rights. And there is no right to mountain bike. There's nothing to debate. See <http://mjvande.info/mtbfaq.htm>.

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.info/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.info/scb7.htm> ). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video:  
<http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous: [http://mjvande.info/mtb\\_dangerous.htm](http://mjvande.info/mtb_dangerous.htm) .

For more information: <http://mjvande.info/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT,

which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

I am working on creating wildlife habitat that is off-limits to humans ("pure habitat"). Want to help? (I spent the previous 8 years fighting auto dependence and road construction.)

Wildlife must be given top priority, because they can't protect themselves from us.

Please don't put a cell phone next to any part of your body that you are fond of!

<http://mjvande.info>

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**December 15, 2017**

**From:** Ann Peterson  
**Sent:** Friday, December 15, 2017 1:10 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Big Willow Mountain Bike Trails

Constructing mountain bike trails on the small amount of acreage at Big Willow Park for young riders is incompatible with the age group of over 200 homeowners (seniors) who live across and right next to the park, and who use this woodland for serene walks and to enjoy the beautiful natural habitat that's always been there.

Although the mountain bike club is quick to assure everyone that their riders are respectful of rules, people & nature, bike trails will also put a spotlight on Big Willow as an attraction for unsupervised rule breakers, litterers & vandals who will not care whether they're riding on bike trails or walking paths. So if you build it they will come!!!

If this sounds like just a "negative opinion" or an exaggeration, please check out the ugly spray painting by vandals under the bridge crossing over Minnehaha Creek at Cedar Lake Road and St. Albans Mill Road. This problem has been ongoing for over 30 years now!

There is ENOUGH activity at Big Willow Park with just the softball field - the noise, the lights, the occasional loud speakers, etc. Please look elsewhere for placing mountain bike trails and keep this little bit of paradise untouched, not filling it with zigzag trails, signage and crowding it!

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**December 18, 2017**

**From:** Steve Wetzell  
**Sent:** Monday, December 18, 2017 4:31 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Opposed to Proposed Big Willow Park Mountain Bike Trail

Thank you for the opportunity to respectfully share my opposition to the proposed Big Willow Park mountain bike trail. My wife and I have been a residents living in the Elmo Road/Woody Lane neighborhood since 1986. We have long enjoyed peaceful walks through what is truly a gem for our city. Also being a frequent user to the shared bike/pedestrian trail in the area, I understand that a mountain bike trail requires a certain type of topography that exists in Big Willow Park, but I sincerely hope there are better alternatives to accommodate one. To have a park dedicated to non-vehicular

use nestled in an area of such historical significance to the community that is so quiet and pristine is truly a unique community asset. I am not opposed to bike trails, but there must be better locations than the premier nature preserve/park in the area.

Sincerely,

Steve Wetzell

3639 Elmo Road

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**December 21, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From: Alpha Beta

Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2017 10:23 AM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: a couple of questions re mountain biking

Hello Kelly,

As debate continues about the possibility of mountain biking in Big Willow or other Minnetonka parks, I have a couple questions. Perhaps this has been discussed, but I have not been able to attend the meetings that have been held.

1. If official mountain bike trails were installed, would those trails be off limits to walkers at all times? In Big Willow, my understanding is that many of the smaller, so-called "deer trails" trails would be used. Now that the foliage is down and we're past tick season, I really enjoy walking these trails.

2. If there is official mountain biking, what do you anticipate to be the number of bikes generally in a group/pack going over the trails. I don't know if it would be more in the 5-10 range or 20-30 or more. It would be helpful to know what the expectation is.

Thank you,

Mary Goehle

Big Willow neighbor

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**December 22, 2017**

**From:** Dian La Pointe

**Sent:** Friday, December 22, 2017 2:31 PM

**To:** Matt Higgins <mhiggins@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Cc:** Perry Vetter <pvetter@eminnetonka.com>; Geralyn Barone <gbarone@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Comments removed from MinnetonkaMatters discussion

Greetings. I recently discovered that the comments by Joshua Rebennack and all related discussions to/from Joshua have been removed from the mountain biking discussion. There was a lot of important information and comments posted with Joshua and now all the posts have all disappeared. While it's not clear as to the reason why this happened, it may be suspected that it had to do with Joshua's role in the discussion page. After a while, he seemed to be almost the only person responding to people who expressed concerns with mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. I'm suspect that Mr. Rebennack, given his background, might have been paid by a biking organization to handle all responses/concerns on MinnetonkaMatters.com. In any case, his responses were very informative and respectful and they contributed to an important conversation-- his comments should not be removed from the discussion page.

Thanks for your consideration and Happy Holidays.

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**December 25, 2017**

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Monday, December 25, 2017 7:57 PM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Mountain Biking Trails Requirements

Hi:

In reviewing the various documents on the city website for the mountain biking study, the following was listed in the March 1, 2017 Park Board Meeting Packet.

"Following the presentation, the park board directed staff to work with the Vantage program and others community mountain biking enthusiasts to complete a feasibility study to determine the requirements and challenges for adding mountain biking to the Minnetonka park system."

What requirements have been determined for the project and what "weight" is given to each requirement? I am assuming the requirements would include such items as

- Length of trail
- Difficulty of trail
- Location
- Parking availability
- Safety
- Environmental Impact
- ??????????

Would you please send me the requirements that have been determined?

Thanks

Mary Jo Bartos

-----  
**December 27, 2017**

**From:** Marry Lamb

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 27, 2017 4:40 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Bike Trails in Big Willow and Minntonka.

To Whom it concerns:

We, the older and elderly of Minnetonka have about had it with these mountian bikers! Just this last week my friends were walking in the park, Big Willow, and were rushed off the trail by some biker on there fat tired snow sled. This is the fifth time this has happened not only here but on other trails on other park in the area. these Mountain Bikers have no respect for the elderly or other trail users and would have nothing better on there minds than to drive out all the other and tear up the trails at Big Willow and other parks. Furthermore, my friend who attended this "meeting" which was biast to the mountain bikers about two weeks ago, said that bikers are not allowed on ANY of the trails even now, yet the signs stating that bike trail are being planned still remain up? What is wrong with you people?

We, the elderly and older folks are feed up with this whole thing and are now going to demand that signs are posted that prohibite bikers like I have seen in Purgatory and other areas at once. I mean this week! We want to see the city take action against the bikers on trail that are NOT for them and never will be for them. There rude and destructive riding has scarred off all the wildlife and caused massive washouts even on the main trails. We want to see actions taken on all trails on all parks in Minnetonka buy this spring. We want to see and set the example that mountain bikes and biking is not allowed in Minnetonka

and or any of the natural areas in the west sides of the cities. We have already been organized right here in Minnetonka and are willing to take action against mountain bikers if no action is taken soon. We are at the end of our ropes and tired of these "games" that some fools at the city are playing.

Ban all Mountain Bikes on all trails and stop cutting out the older generations RIGHT NOW, for our voice will be heard loud and clear for Minnetonka and all other areas.... otherwise these biker types will begin taking over the rest of our parks destroying them for good! Trails can not be unmaided, but they can and WILL be prevented!!

Marry Lamb, Represenative,

Minnetonka Agains Mountain Bikes M-A-M-B-18.

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**January 1, 2018**

-----Original Message-----

From: Darrell Sykes

Sent: Monday, January 01, 2018 4:22 PM

To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

Cc: Geralyn Barone <gbarone@eminnetonka.com>; Perry Vetter <pvetter@eminnetonka.com>

Subject: Mountain Biking feasibility study

As I understand it, the city staff was asked by the Park Board to conduct a facility feasibility study for mountain biking in various parks in Minnetonka. At this time I am unable to find the results of that study. Can you tell me where I can access that study and how I might have it posted on the Minnetonka web site or on the mountain biking discussion board. At this time it is almost impossible to make an intelligent comment on the subject without some hard facts as to what we considering as a city. Each time there has been a meeting on the subject conflicting information is discussed in open forum or in the small breakout groups. It would be helpful for meaningful discussion at the January 8 meeting to have this information in advance.

Thank you,  
Darrell Sykes  
12201 Minnetonka Blvd, #403  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**January 2, 2018**

**From:** Smith, David W

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 02, 2018 10:10 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Bike trails

Ms. Kodea,

Our family is in favor of mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. Please consider the open wooded/prairie area North of Minnetoga Lake and NW of Shady oak lake. This area would be

great for some of the concerns that residents have. It would have great access to the LRT trail, it would have good parking at Shady oak lake swim/park area. Some of the existing trails are

cleaned up by the local residents by clearing fallen logs, mowing/weed whacking, and building small bridges over drainage areas where the water runoff occurs. This area would not disturb any existing city kept trails. I would estimate 40-60 acres of available trails could be built here at low cost to the residents of Minnetonka. The last two years of heavy summer rains have made this area a touch swampy in a couple of areas, but this could be alleviated by a couple of board walks.

Thanks,

David Smith  
4909 Arlington Dr.  
Minnetonka

Please call or write,

Ps. Should I enter these comments on the forum web sight?

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**From:** Karin Pot  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 02, 2018 12:10 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain bike trails

Dear Kelly –

Since I am unable to attend the Jan 8 meeting re mountain bike trails, I would like to voice my opinion this way (sorry - Minnetonka Matters doesn't seem to allow me to post). I am 100% opposed to adding trails in Big Willow where I frequently walk. I moved to Minnetonka for the opportunity to stay close to the city while being surrounded by nature. Big Willow park is a lovely oasis where people can still find tranquility and peace by taking a stroll through the park.

An occasional biker certainly doesn't detract from this, but the bike trails would attract many people from all over the twin cities, and it would change the character of the park dramatically. I think that in our busy, fast-paced world it is crucial that people (esp. children) still have places "to get away" from it all.

That said, I am not necessarily opposed to any trails in Minnetonka. I think the city should find a suitable piece of land (not already a walking/hiking park) and convert that, instead of taking away a park from walkers as it is proposing to do so now.

Thank you.

Karin Pot  
2218 Sherwood Court  
Minnetonka 55305

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**January 4, 2018**

**From:** Jack Barbier  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 04, 2018 4:30 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Fw: Important safety notes re: Mountain Biking at Big Willow park

Kelly: I sent this to you on Dec. 13.  
Did you ever receive it?  
I never received any reply, so was just wondering. / Jack Barbier

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**From:** Jack Barbier  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2017 2:38 PM  
**To:** [kodea@eminnetonka.com](mailto:kodea@eminnetonka.com)



**Cc:** Deb Calvert; [bellingson@eminnetonka.com](mailto:bellingson@eminnetonka.com)

**Subject:** Important safety notes re: Mountain Biking at Big Willow park

Kelly:

I cannot attend tonight's meeting due to a schedule conflict.

However I want to convey a few more thoughts, pursuant to the prior meeting that took place on Nov. 8.

I stood up that night and voiced some concerns. You may remember me as the one who has worked on the BNSF Railway, whose main line bisects Big Willow Park. That experience brings a perspective that may otherwise be lacking in your planning process. My purpose here is to flesh out those "railroad safety concerns" for further consideration by the Park Board and our city leaders.

Background: I have lived near Big Willow for 25 years now. There is not a week that has gone by over that quarter-century that I haven't taken walks in the park at least 2-3 times....winter, spring, fall, summer, all hours of the day. I have spent thousands of hours enjoying the park's serenity and beauty. It is my recreation. I consider the park to be a treasure, and one of the nicest things about living in this community.

However, as a railroad worker, I have witnessed things that make me shudder.

BNSF is a member of a movement called "Operation Lifesaver." That is a national safety-outreach program which seeks to educate the public about the dangers of trespassing on railroad property. Fact: every year, about 1,000 people are killed in this country while "trespassing" on railroad property. Several thousand more are injured, many severely.

The railroad company is keenly aware of the pedestrian hazard that currently exists in Big Willow park. Indeed, they have prominently posted "danger/ no trespassing" signs on the creek bridge at the east end of the park, as well as at a couple places where park-goers consistently use pathways to cross the tracks.

People, of course, do what they're gonna do...the signs don't really deter anyone.

Fact: on an average day, the railroad runs anywhere from 8 to 12 heavy, long freight trains through Big Willow each 24 hours. They can show up at any time. The speed limit is currently 40 mph, and 60 mph for passenger trains (e.g. the occasional 'special').

Fact: coming west out of Minneapolis, the trains go through a deep cut behind the ball fields, before curving into view and crossing the creek bridge on the east side of the park. When the wind is in the trees, and the creek is gurgling below, and the jets are flying overhead, those trains can easily sneak up and barrel around that curve with little or no warning. I have personally witnessed people on the bridge scattering in all directions to get out of the way. It is a wonder no one has been killed there already.

The railroad crews live in constant fear of these situations. Having operated trains as a conductor, in the lead locomotive with the engineer, I could easily foresee coming around that curve at 40+ mph and seeing a bunch of kids from the local biking team scrambling to schlep their bikes over the tracks as we bear down on them. All it would take is one little slip, and bam. We'd be on them in seconds. Catastrophe. I doubt you (or anyone) would like to have that on your conscience.

Key/problematic fact: the ONLY way for people to now go from the north side of the park to the south side-- without trespassing on RR property and putting their lives in danger-- is on the path that does a 180-degree hairpin turn along the creek under that same bridge. That path has a tendency to be flooded and under water for a long stretch each summer. So how on earth are you going to allow bikers to get from the north side to the south side ... build a bridge over, or tunnel under, the tracks? I'm pretty sure the railroad would take a very dim view of those options. And they certainly wouldn't pay for them.

I have no qualm with bikers wanting to pursue their sport. But for the reasons stated above, in addition to the long, long list of other reasons you have heard from other concerned residents... I continue to believe that *developing mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park is a **very bad idea**.*

Thank you for your consideration of these details. I am open to further communication, should you see fit.

Yours, Jack Barbier  
St. David's Road

Thank you

.....  
**January 5, 2018**

**From:**

**Sent:** Friday, January 05, 2018 5:26 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trails.

Dear City Staff and or Park Board.

I meant to send this email out long ago but with my schedule and holidays I was not able to until now. I wanted to say my part, being a active outdoor enthusiast for all my life, and a local of the area and Big Willow for going on, well probably 20 years now--I first rode into Big Willow in the late 1990's. I know the area, the trails that were and the Big Willow and other areas very well. Over the years I have seen a lot of trail users, and a few 'abusers' as well as a host of others that have come and gone. I have always had a active passion for biking in Big Willow as well as take part in what I can do to help maintain trails and preserve the park for all users.

Getting to the main point: I went to the meeting on Dec 13th (i think that was the date) hoping to become more active in my community and to see what the city was planning to do. Naturally I was excited to see the city take a more active role in the trails at Big Willow and other parks in the area...as many of them need attention. However, what I saw was a bunch of older people who don't want anything on "their" trails. (Yes that's the feeling I got from the room and people at the table I sat at!). What followed was a hour of grinding out why we should not have bike trails in Big Willow (and a few other parks) and how it would cause lots of hazards and conflicts for the local residents. Just listening to the cards at the end of the meeting told me that more were against trails for bikes, especially at Big Willow.

Patently I listed to concerns and issues, trying to understand their view, but honestly I could not. Only to be broadsided by someone at our table who quite literally said: "Mountain Bikers need to get out of our park and leave us alone," and remained in a negative and very biast opinion that we were from some company or something.

I then have had lots of time to think about what was said and the issues that were brought up;

A. Trail Intersections: There was a strong support for trail intersections, or lack there-of. As in; no trails should intersect at any point anywhere in the park as it is very dangerous. Ok. I get it, when a biker crosses the hiker or other path there may be a conflict with other users. However, every trail I know of has multiple trail intersections all across the network or park its in. A good example of this is Lebanon Hills where the trails meet (not just the bike trails, the hiking trails there) in 21 spots! One should call down to Lebanon Hills and ask how much conflict they have had with trail intersections...but I am guessing I know what they will say.

B. Multi-Use trails: This was another issue, basically the same as above. They are worried about trail use conflict with walkers etc etc. Well again, looking at the maps for Theo Wirth ever single one of them have a bike/hike graphic on them. In fact, only Hillside was built for mountain bikes and it states that walkers are also welcome here... I don't think there is a park that I recall as being "bike-only" in the cities.

C. Environmental impact; This is a big one, but as I say below, it is being overlooked like much of the issues that are being brought forth. At our table we talked about just one area that was north of the creek and south of the tracks as a possibility for bike only (or multi-use) trails. We were shot down at once as the lady at our table showed us a hardwood forest habitat that existed there. Fearing that the trails would split up the habitat (never mind the trail there now already does that as it was not built as a sustainable trail) and would cause more issues there.... well there's a solution for that too, something that a park called Salem Hills where the trails were built around this issue. A look at the maps clearly shows this; on one side we have hardwood and the other prairie lands.

Now I know these were not the only issues, however, in looking at other areas around the area I feel as if most of the people who don't want to have trails at Big Willow or whatever other park are using the above "excuses" to pound their point in. Granted some of them are real issues, but as a community we need to come together on a solutions not come up with more reasons why we don't want a certain type of park user using the parks. After all what is the definition of a park? A public place for ALL to enjoy.

In the end I have two final thoughts; Maybe Big Willow is not the place for trails, but it most certainly is not a park that should be controlled by either party...and I feel that might happen. Regardless of what the final decision is, I feel that the most important thing for the city to do is to address the issues that were overlooked: the park is really overgrown with buck thorn (more trails would help reduce this issue) and the trails are very washed out and rugged, they need much work to their surface and sides etc etc.

Lastly, and the only memorial thing I got from the meeting was this: Lone Lake! Yes I was around in the days when Lone Lake had the best mountain bike trails in the cities (maybe the state then, some 20 years ago now!!) and while those trails need work like so many others, they are still there. In fact I think Lone lake would be a better choice as it has few if any traffic and has much more area for said tails. In fact i would volunteer without hesitation to help with the trails there as well as maintain them.

In the end I hope the city makes the right choice and I hope to be a the Jan 8th Meeting as well, if my schedule permits.... in any case I hope you heard and understand my own concerns as well. thanks again for listening.

Austin Fjerestad

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-----Original Message-----

From: Sherry  
Sent: Friday, January 05, 2018 2:14 PM  
To: Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
Subject: Mt bike trail mtka

Hi Kelly. I heard a rumor about the proposed trail being considered for Big Willow park and hope you can address it. Talk was about having trail use for mt. bikes only with no pedestrian/dog traffic allowed in the park. I certainly hope this is only gossip. Would you clarify please? Thanks. Sherry N

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**January 6, 2018**

**From:** Irfan Khan  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 06, 2018 1:10 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain bike trails

Kelly,

Where are they proposing to put these trails? I'm interested in helping. Thx.

Irfan

Irfan Khan

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**January 8, 2018**

**From:** Marcy Lundquist

**Sent:** Monday, January 08, 2018 11:24 AM

**To:** Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Two Concerns missing from Dec 13 Mountainbike Document

Just a heads-up. I am concerned that these issues were not addressed and am unable to attend the meeting tonight. The concerns were posted late last night on minnetonkamatters. Thank you for your attention. 'All the Best, Marcy Lundquist

I'm concerned because the Conversation Summary from December 13 did not include two important points -- liability and effect on our natural habitat/walkers.

**Liability -- (copied from a Mountain Bike Association)** Liability and risk management are some of the most daunting topics faced by trail managers today. In our litigious society, exposure to liability cannot be taken lightly, and the ability to manage risks appropriately can make or break an operation. It seems like every time you open the newspaper, another lawsuit is splashed across the pages. The number of civil cases filed in U.S. District Courts more than doubled from 1980 to 2000, climbing from 113,000 to more than 259,000. The increasingly litigious nature of society is having a significant effect on trails. Landowners are reluctant to allow recreation on their property, government agencies are wary of building new trails, and non-profit associations struggle to find affordable liability insurance. If someone is hurt riding trails in your community, who can be found liable? Generally speaking, every organization involved in the trail's design, construction, and maintenance could potentially be named as a defendant in a lawsuit. This would include the landowner, the trail management agency, and even related non-profit groups... potentially everyone involved in the trail.

**Nature --** a few years ago my husband and I were walking in Big Willow when a bike passed unannounced, too fast, and too close. I jumped and the biker glanced back and laughed. Traumatic experiences like that are probably very good reasons why the Minneapolis Park Board made bike and walking paths around the major lakes completely separate. The vast majority of BW trail use is walkers (many days we see no bikes at all). Walkers include families with strollers, children, teenagers, and a variety adults, young, middle-aged, and senior -- some with reduced mobility, eyesight, and hearing. Recently, a very large senior housing project opened at the entrance to BW. No one wants walkers to be scared like I was -- and not dogs or all of the wild animals or birds that can be both seen and hidden. BW is also very lush and green which would require tree/bush/plant removal and significant ongoing maintenance. We always think of BW as a nature park but mountain biking would completely change the character. Two friends are volunteer bike patrol at a National Park and they say the number one complaint is bikers going too fast.

I sincerely hope the mountain bikers can find an appropriate location without the added challenge of BW's soft moist soil (even the hardened main trails develop significant ruts). Maybe add a jump, too!

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**January 10, 2018**

**From:** Mary Jenkins

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 10, 2018 11:27 AM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Big Willow Park and Mountain Bikes

Dear Kelly,

I am a resident at St. Albans Mill Condominiums, and president of our homeowner association.

Our community of about 200 people lives in very close proximity to Big Willow Park, and are avid users of this beautiful community asset.

A number of our residents have been attending the meetings and remain concerned about the potential for significant change in the park if mountain biking trails are created in Big Willow.

I respect the city for its careful and studied evaluation of the potential sites and the significant impact on the property. The ability of residents to speak publically and be heard when a project of this nature is fair and useful.

At this time the details still remain vague, there are many unanswered questions. Big Willow already houses the ball fields, and the remaining portion is relatively small when compared to the other potential sites.

Understanding the potential changes in the tree canopy and the terrain, the parking issues and safety concerns I cannot support the development of the trails in Big Willow.

I will continue to stay informed of the process and will encourage our home owners to do likewise.

Sincerely,

Mary Jenkins

3000 St Albans Mill Rd #108

Minnetonka, MN 55305

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**From:** Amy Morsman

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 10, 2018 12:05 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Monday meeting

Dear Kelly,

I was out of town and thus unable to attend Monday's meeting. A neighbor shared with me the survey that was handed out but thought that it was only for those who attended the meeting. Is that true or can I still fill one out?

I am concerned as I saw multiple Facebook and Next door posts encouraging mountain bike enthusiasts to attend the meeting. It sounds like they were in the majority, although many of them, including the Minnetonka high students, live in Chanhassen, Shorewood, Deephaven, or other cities in that district. I live very nearby to the Civic center park and use the trails there daily. I am concerned about the portion of the Civic center park to be used for mountain bike trails for a few reasons. I walk and run there daily and would hate to have some of the trails become off limits to me if I am on foot. Yes, I even walk on the so called "deer trails." Just as bikers don't want to be restricted to wide paved Disneyland trails, neither do walkers. Second, I feel that in the areas particularly close to the creek, there is so much wildlife. The city appears to give little weight to wildlife and undeveloped wild areas for them to live. This is important to many residents. Recently a paved trail was put in on a peninsula jutting into the wetland. It was a completely unnecessary addition to the trail system as it takes only 4 minutes to walk it. We do not need to develop every square foot of the land. Third, I am concerned with safety on the bridge across the creek. There is a lot of foot traffic there now and a whole team of bikers zooming through does not seem very safe.

Our neighborhood was not invited to the sessions that you had for the Big Willow neighbors and so we only found out about this potential plan later. I am glad you are starting a fresh look on where to put the trails. If the Civic center ends up being one of the spots chosen, I hope that you will have a listening session for our neighborhood as you did for others. No signs were ever posted.

I am not opposed to mountain bike trails but I do think we need to retain some undeveloped acreage for the wildlife. The creek is a major draw for wildlife and so I would hope that another park could be more suitable.

Please let me know if I am able to provide input on a survey. It seems unfair if not, since many people were able to who do not even pay taxes in our city.

Thanks very much,

Amy Morsman

330 Hazelwood West

Minnetonka

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**January 19, 2018**

**From:** Luke Van Santen

**Sent:** Friday, January 19, 2018 10:04 PM

**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Cc:** Nelson Evenrud <nevenrud@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trails - High Use Informal Footpaths question

Hello Kelly!

At the most recent public engagement meeting, one of the Proposed Core Criteria in the Minimize User Conflict section mentioned high use informal foot paths ("Mountain bike trails should not displace existing trails and high use informal foot paths"). I am hoping you can clarify which paths are considered high use in Big Willow, or if you know if this will be discussed at the Feb 7 meeting?

As part of my trying to get a better understanding of what "high use" might mean, I looked at the Strava Global Heatmap for the area of Big Willow, and grabbed a couple screen shots (attached). The heatmap is a visualization showing relative use levels based on data collected by Strava from people who use it to track their fitness activities - the brighter the color, the more a certain trail / route has been used. The heatmap for all activities at Big Willow can be accessed at <https://labs.strava.com/heatmap/#16.00/-93.43811/44.94522/hot/all>.

As I expected, the heatmap shows the highest use within Big Willow along the three maintained trail segments (Minnetonka Blvd to the rail road (S), Cedar Lake Road to the railroad (N), and Burwell Drive to the bridge crossing Minnehaha Creek (W)). The heatmap also shows medium levels of use on the three "secondary" trails (not maintained, but clearly larger than "deer trails" - the loop east of the N trail segment, the branch that runs along the south side of the railroad tracks, and the branch that runs along the south side of Minnehaha Creek). Additionally, the heatmap shows small amounts of use along what seem to be the "deer trails".

So, given this information, it seems fairly clear that the maintained trails are high use, but are the secondary trails, or the "deer trails", considered high use? They seem not to be.

An additional point - the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail, immediately south of Minnetonka Blvd, is noticeably brighter on the heatmap than even the maintained trails in Big Willow.

Thank you for any information you can share!

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**From:** Luke Van Santen  
**Sent:** Friday, January 19, 2018 10:19 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Nelson Evenrud <nevenrud@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trails - Safety Observation

Hello again Kelly!

I hope my multiple messages are not clogging your inbox (yes, there are more coming!)? Please let me know if so!

One of the Proposed Core Criteria described at the most recent public engagement session stated that any trails should be multi-use. I agree with this statement, and agreed with it in writing via my submitted evaluation form at the meeting. I wanted to pass along an example of why I agree with that statement, and in support of the added statement in the Criteria that said "92 percent of all mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are multi-use."

As I described in my previous message, the Strava Global Heatmap shows relative use of trails / routes by people who use the Strava app/system to track their fitness activities. In addition, the heatmap allows the data to be visualized for all users, just bikers, just walkers / runners, and a couple other options. When I look at other mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities (the North Loop at Theo Wirth, for example) on the heatmap and toggle between the two primary uses (bike, walk/run), it is very easy to see that a significant number of people use the mountain bike trails there for walking or running.

I'm attaching a couple screen shots I took of the heatmap for the area of the North Loop at Wirth - one for biking and one for walking / running. I feel these clearly show and support the fact that mountain bike trails can be (and are currently used as) safe multi-use trails. You can also review the heatmap for the Wirth area here - <https://labs.strava.com/heatmap/#14.00/-93.32627/44.97929/hot/all>

Thank you for your time - please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further!

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January 20, 2018

**From:** Luke Van Santen  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 20, 2018 11:50 AM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Nelson Evenrud <nevenrud@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trails - Potential Additional Locations

Hello Kelly!

I was very glad to see that the first item listed in the Adequate Space section of the Proposed Core Criteria presented at the most recent public engagement session started out with the words "A trail **system**" (my emphasis). I think it is vitally important to view any potential mountain bike trails in Minnetonka from this perspective, for several reasons:

- Insufficient space in any one location
- Proven methodology (Theo Wirth is a system)
- Ability to access the system at many points (ease of parking and general access)
- Ability to provide more trail and thereby increase use & satisfaction
- Ability to provide numerous destinations where potential trail users may choose to visit after riding
  - Station Pizza / People's Organic (Minnetonka Mills)

- UnMapped Brewing / Gina Maria's / the new Copper Cow restaurant / Gold Nugget restaurant (Williston / Woodhill at Excelsior Blvd)
- Spasso / Kai's Sushi / Snuffy's / Mandarin Yang (Minnetonka Blvd & 101)
- Famous Dave's / General Store (Williston / Woodhill at 7)
- and others
- Ability to connect to other regional mountain bike trail segments (proposed mountain bike trail at Edina Braemar, etc)

With that in mind, here are several other potential locations (over and above Big Willow and Civic Center (as originally proposed)) that I found using the Hennepin County Property Interactive Map (parcel database), information from the final public engagement session, aerial photography, and a little bit of looking around. All parcels (except where noted in items 8, 9, & 15) are already owned by the City of Minnetonka.

Please note that I am not requesting that mountain bike trails be built at any or all of these locations now, or even necessarily in the future (although that would be ideal!). Rather, I am suggesting (based on the knowledge I have at this time) that these locations may be suitable for construction of mountain bike trails at some point in the future, as part of a more complete trail **system** in the City of Minnetonka. And, there may be good reason to build trails at some of these locations now - see discussion below.

I realize this is a very long email message, especially with the rough GIS map of potential sites attached! With that being the case, I would be very happy to meet with you and / or any of the Parks Board to discuss prior to the Feb 7 Parks Board meeting.

Thank you for your time!

**1. 494 West**

1. Pluses

1. Relatively close to BW & CC (better system)
2. Relatively good terrain
3. Less than one mile from regional trail
4. Low current utilization (?)
5. Easy access to off-site parking (at Civic Center) as well as small parking area at McGinty

2. Minuses

1. Long skinny configuration, harder to fit one-way trail in?
2. Limited on-site parking (at corner of McGinty)
3. Parts may be resisted (too close to back yards)
4. Perceived conflict on pedestrian bridge over Stone Rd / railroad

**2. Victoria-Evergreen Park**

1. Pluses

1. Close to CC (better system)
2. Good terrain (one BIG hill!)
3. Close to regional trail
4. Connects via regional trail to Steele Moorland & Bennett Field Woods (items 5 & 6 below)

2. Minuses

1. Visible from people's backyards
2. Existing trail & users
3. Limited parking

**3. Water Tower Hill** - Parcel 2111722440036 (4550 Woodhill Rd, Minnetonka, MN 55345) and Parcel 2111722440035 (4525 Williston Rd, Minnetonka, MN 55345) - behind The General Store / Famous Dave's at Williston / Woodhill & Highway 7

1. Pluses

1. Great terrain! Could serve as a more advanced segment in a system...



2. Close to destinations
3. Less than one mile from regional trail
4. Extends system to the south toward other potential components and destinations (UnMapped area)
5. Good parking, both on-site (gravel area off Woodhill) and at large lot behind General Store / Famous Dave's
2. Minuses
  1. Kind of off by itself
4. **Civic Center Southeast** - Parcel 1611722410001 (14500 Minnetonka Blvd, Minnetonka, MN 55345 - the area immediately east of the existing fire and police station) in conjunction with Parcel 1511722320014, Parcel 1511722320003, and Parcel 1611722410004
  1. Pluses
    1. Strong connection to originally proposed CC trail
    2. Good terrain
    3. Could be used instead of north portion at CC, thereby eliminating potential user conflicts at bridge crossing
    4. Very visible from Minnetonka Blvd (free advertising!)
  2. Minuses
    1. May be impacted by potential new fire station
    2. Currently a walking path planned in this area? But, if this area used for MTB trail instead, could enhance walking trail(s) north of bridge, especially near new peninsula trail, resulting in win-win for advocates & those concerned about CC north portion?
5. **Steele Moorland LRT Trail** - Parcel 1711722440049 (34 Address Unassigned, Minnetonka, MN 00000) - the area immediately adjacent to the Lake Minnetonka Regional LRT Trail on the north and between Steele St and Moorland Rd in conjunction with the eastern portion of Parcel 2011722120002, and several other Parcels to the west of 1711722440049
  1. Pluses
    1. Easy (direct!) access from regional trail
    2. Great parking (weekend, summer, and afternoons) at MME
    3. Connects to area behind Bennett with easy access from there to 101 & Minnetonka Blvd (destinations)
    4. Connects (via regional trail) to Victoria-Evergreen (item 2 above) and to Bennett Field Woods (item 6 below)
  2. Minuses
    1. Backyards
    2. Environmental (impacting pocket of undisturbed pocket)
6. **Bennett Field Woods** - The Northeastern portion of Parcel 1711722330002 (3717 Co Rd No 101, Minnetonka, MN 55345)
  1. Pluses
    1. Good parking (Bennett Field lot)
    2. Moderately challenging terrain
    3. Enhances utilization of Bennett Field
    4. Connects to Steele Moorland (item #5 above)
    5. Could serve as a "bike park" where mountain biking skills can be developed
  2. Minuses
    1. Small
    2. Possible removal of existing infrastructure (tennis court, etc)
7. **494 East**
  1. Pluses
    1. Enables better trails for 494 West (item #1 above)
    2. Great example of governmental coordination & cooperation in serving the public
    3. Enables parking access to system at Meadow Park
    4. Brings network closer to Ridgedale / Ridgehaven & all the destinations there
  2. Minuses
    1. Back yards

- 2. Governmental coordination
- 3. MnDOT likely very conservative about access to their right-of-way
- 8. **MHS** - The area behind (south and west of) Minnetonka High School
  - 1. Pluses
    - 1. Great spot for MTB team practice
    - 2. Proximity to Purgatory Park (item 13 below)
    - 3. Destinations (7-Hi area)
    - 4. Great parking (afternoons, summer, weekends)
    - 5. Great example of governmental cooperation in serving the public
  - 2. Minuses
    - 1. Greater than one mile from regional trail
    - 2. MHS may have plans for the area
    - 3. Governmental coordination
- 9. **Regional Trail & Lone Lake Park** - Parcel 2611722320014 (4912 Merilee Dr, Minnetonka, MN 55343) in conjunction with Parcel 2611722330018 (34 Address Unassigned, Minnetonka, MN 00000) and with the northern 11.7 acres of Lone Lake Park
  - 1. Pluses
    - 1. Close to regional trail
    - 2. Close to Shady Oak Beach (destination)
    - 3. Size (combined area ~ 70 acres)
  - 2. Minuses
    - 1. The middle parcel is not owned by Minnetonka, but City of Minnetonka is listed as taxpayer for parcel?
    - 2. Crossing of Jorissen Road
    - 3. Parking - plenty available in the area, just not public
    - 4. Terrain may not be most challenging
- 10. **Ann Cullen Smith** - Parcel 1011722310001 (2510 Oakland Rd, Minnetonka, MN 55305) - dedicated for bird watching
  - 1. Pluses
    - 1. Proximity to BW & CC
    - 2. Proximity to 494 West
    - 3. Good terrain
    - 4. Size
  - 2. Minuses
    - 1. Not available for trails
- 11. **Guilliam Field** - The area behind Guilliam Field
  - 1. Pluses
    - 1. Easy (direct!) access from regional trail
    - 2. Proximity to destinations (Minnetonka Mills, Hopkins)
    - 3. Parking already available at Guilliam & BW
    - 4. Slightly extends network toward Hopkins & destinations there
  - 2. Minuses
    - 1. Small
- 12. **Minnetonka Mills Park** - The area between Minnetonka Blvd & Minnehaha Creek from McGinty Rd E to 494.
  - 1. Pluses
    - 1. A great connector between BW & CC, especially if Civic Center East (item above) is realized - entire path could become known as Minnehaha Creek Bottoms, similar to the well-known Minnesota River Bottoms trail.
    - 2. Kind of a summer version of "riding the creek" that happens in the winter
    - 3. Minimal current user base
  - 2. Minuses
    - 1. Recognized by Sensible Land Use Coalition as one of 2017's Great Places, may discourage alteration
    - 2. Environmentally sensitive (Minnehaha Creek)
- 13. **Purgatory Park**

- 1. Pluses
  - 1. Good terrain
  - 2. Size
  - 3. Proximity to MHS (item 8 above)
- 2. Minuses
  - 1. Not close to regional trail
  - 2. Conflict with current user base
  - 3. Historical misuse?
- 14. **Cargill Road / Mooney Park**
  - 1. Pluses
    - 1. Opens access to Mooney & Jidana Parks, and Minnehaha Creek, especially in winter but potentially also in summer
  - 2. Minuses
    - 1. Will Cargill want to participate? (Can they prevent this?)
- 15. **Cargill Woods**
  - 1. Pluses
    - 1. Beautiful environment
    - 2. Increases access to boardwalk across Minnehaha Creek at the dam
  - 2. Minuses
    - 1. Will Cargill want to participate? (They can prevent this)
- 16. **Hilloway Park**
  - 1. Pluses
    - 1. Proximity to BW & 494 West (better system)
    - 2. Good terrain
    - 3. Proximity to destinations (Ridgedale)
    - 4. Proximity to new Plymouth Road bike trail / lane / path
  - 2. Minuses
    - 1. Size?
    - 2. More than one mile from regional trail?
    - 3. Current user base

.....

**From:** Luke Van Santen  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 20, 2018 1:18 PM  
**To:** Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>  
**Cc:** Nelson Evenrud <nevenrud@eminnetonka.com>  
**Subject:** Mountain Bike Trails - Big Willow Option?

Hello Kelly!

Another email - I'm very sorry if I am blowing up your inbox! And you too, Nelson!

Given the level of concern about potential mountain bike trails at Big Willow (BW), an option for compromise has kind of crept into my head (or maybe I heard it from Ben Marks?), and I wanted to share it with you and see what your impressions of it are. I can't say that I am entirely happy with the idea, but it may make sense for a broader set of perspectives than just mine.

At BW, there are three main "sections" to the park - the section south of the creek and north of Minnetonka Blvd (South), the section north of the creek and south of the railroad tracks (Central), and the section north of the railroad tracks (North). The originally proposed (now retracted) mountain bike trails at BW occupied the South and Central sections.

The idea is to place mountain bike trails in only the Central section. There should still be enough space to get over 1 mile of trail at BW (I know that is less than the 2 mile minimum described in the Proposed Core

Criteria). It seems there is adequate terrain in that section to support compressed trails as well, so maybe it could approach 1.5 miles? It should also minimize the potential for perceived adverse user interactions by removing the need to use the bridge over the creek to travel from South to Central sections. Of course, it would still be very possible, even likely, that people coming to use the mountain bike trails would enter BW from the south and still use the bridge to get to the Central section.

Placing MTB trails in only the Central section would also maintain the South section for walkers of all trail types (maintained, secondary, and "deer"), and would enable their more comfortable, continued use of the trail along the southern shore of Minnehaha Creek. It could make it easier for opponents to "lose" the "deer" trails in the Central section (even though they wouldn't actually be losing them, because they would gain access to a more robust set of trails via the MTB trails).

Placing mountain bike trails in only the Central section could also facilitate use of the bike trail being constructed along Plymouth Road starting summer 2018 by highlighting the entry to the Central section along Plymouth Road, thereby possibly minimizing entry from the south.

Lastly, reduction of scope in BW (MTB trail in only the Central section instead of in both Central and South sections) would seem to open up the possibility of adding scope elsewhere, perhaps in the 494 corridor or at Civic Center (the Civic Center East item in my previous email)?

What do you think? As I said above, I don't entirely like having less trail in BW, but, maybe it works best for all to do so?

Luke Van Santen

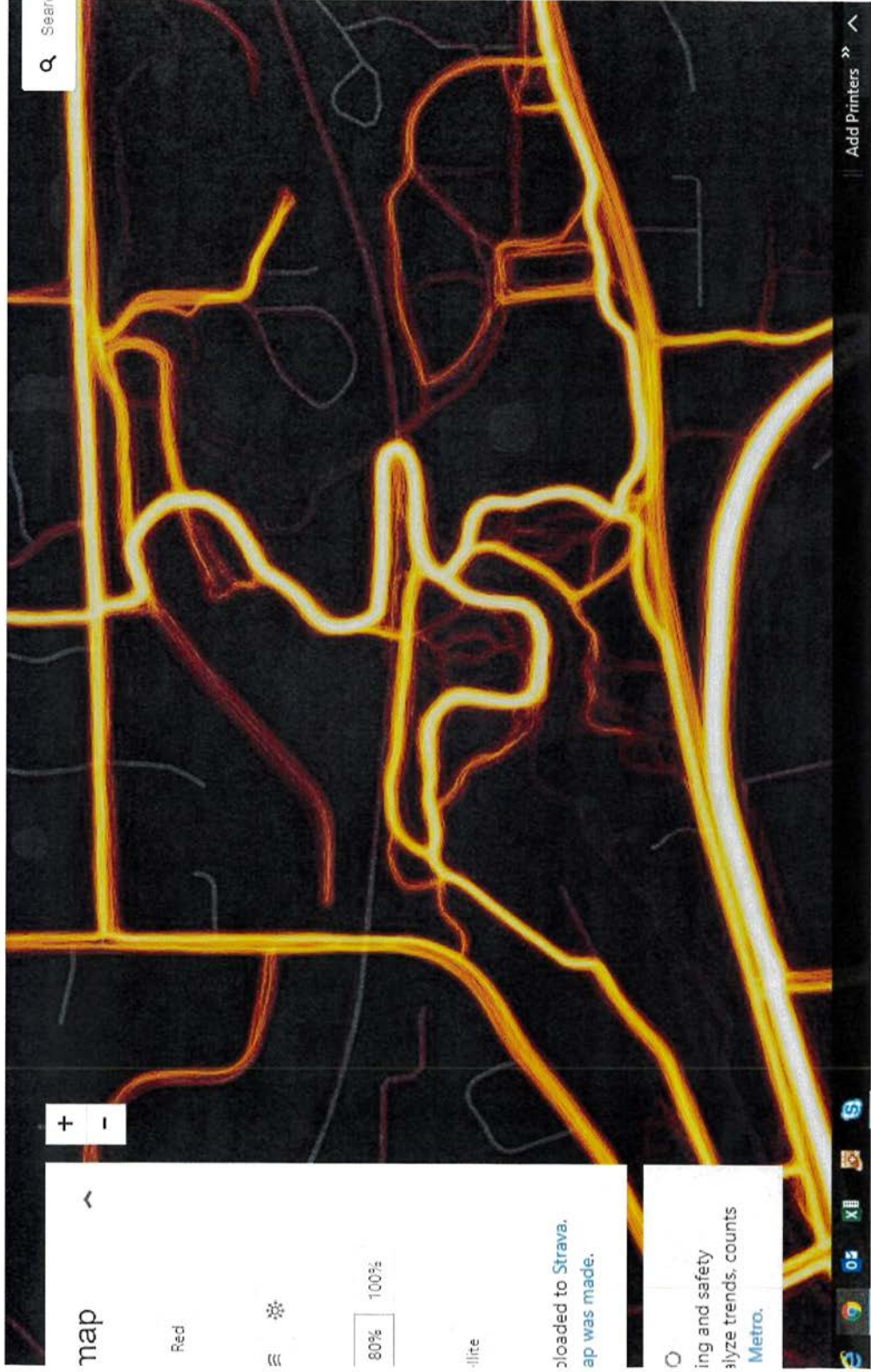
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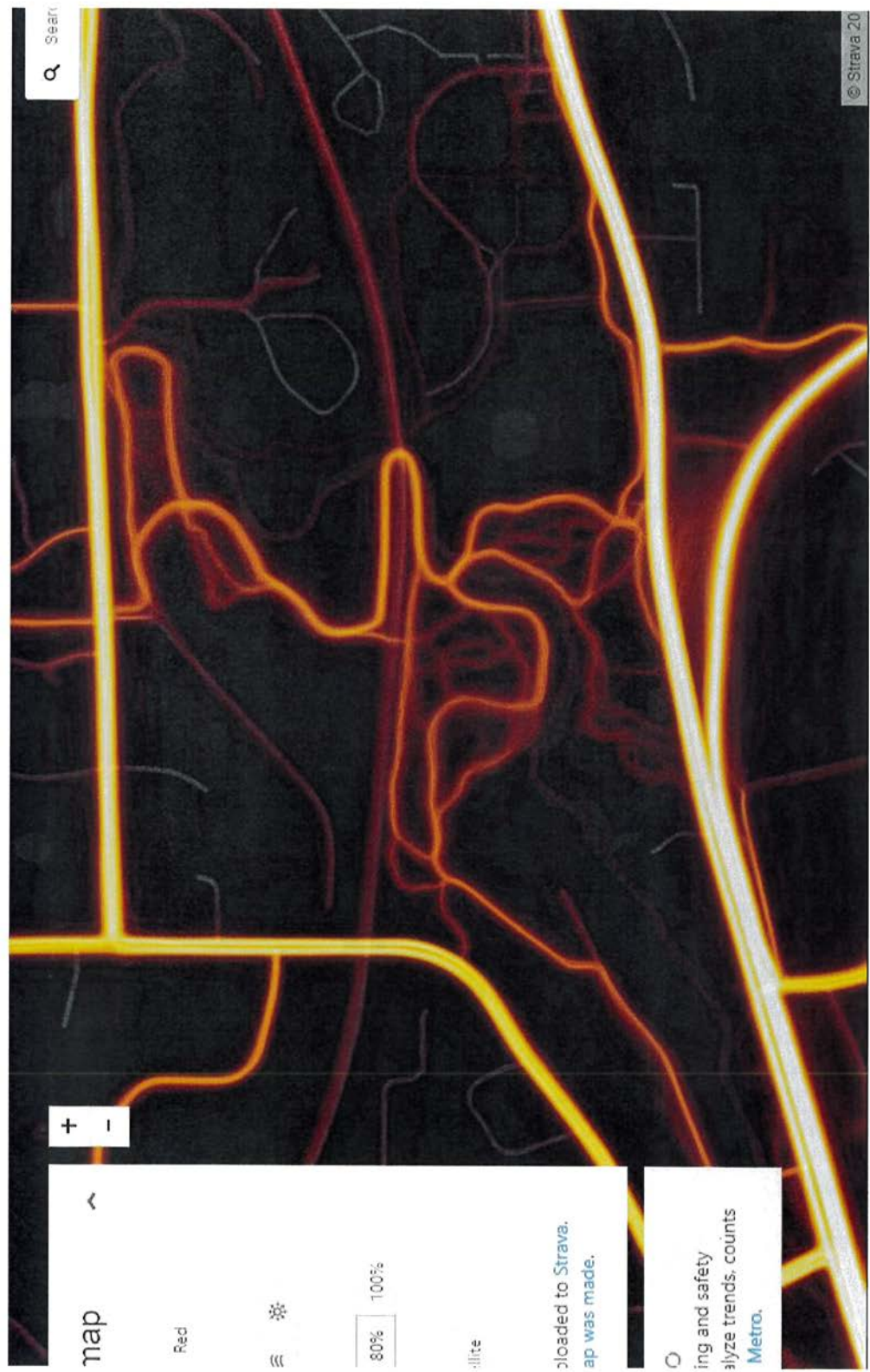


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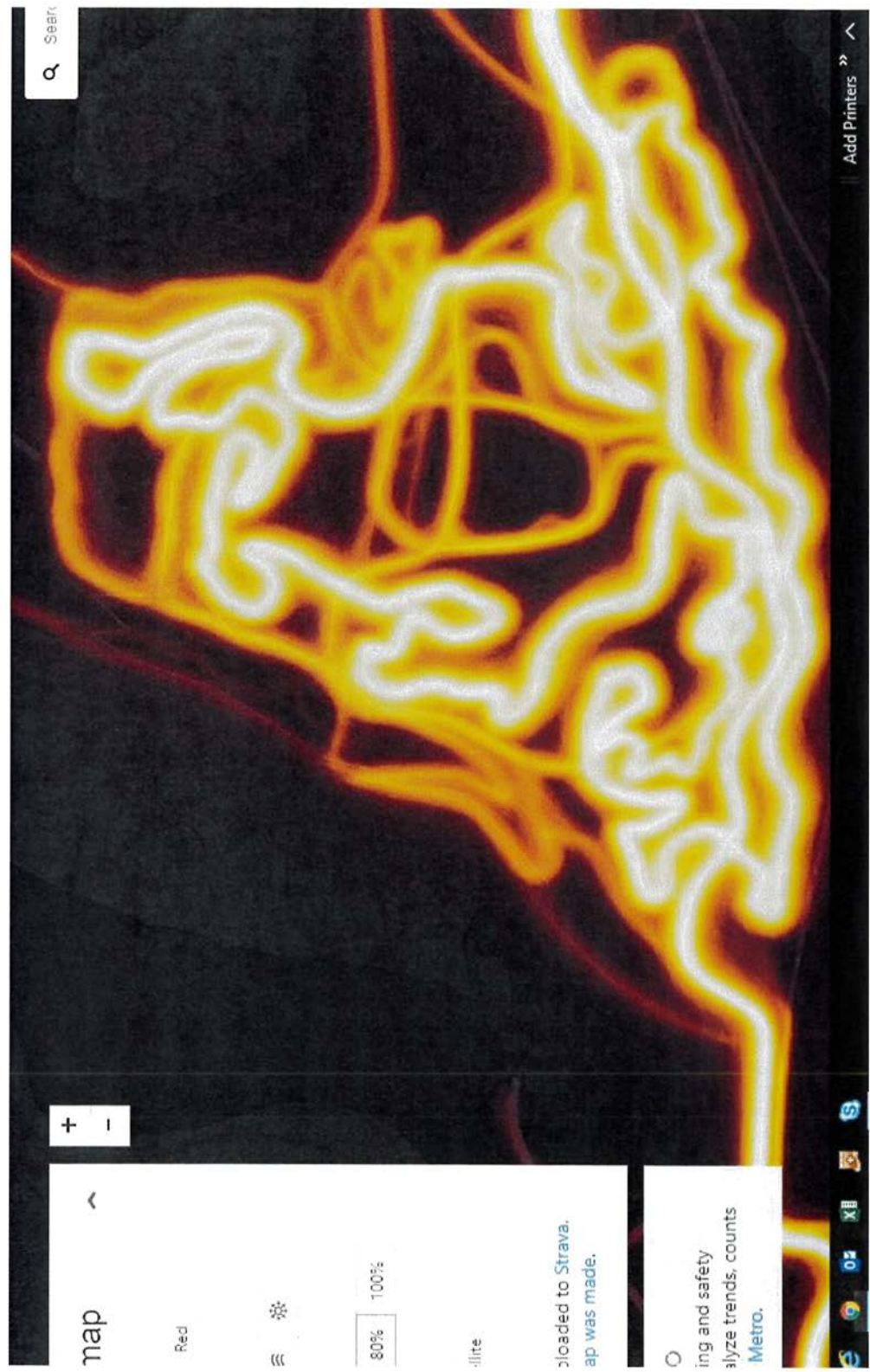
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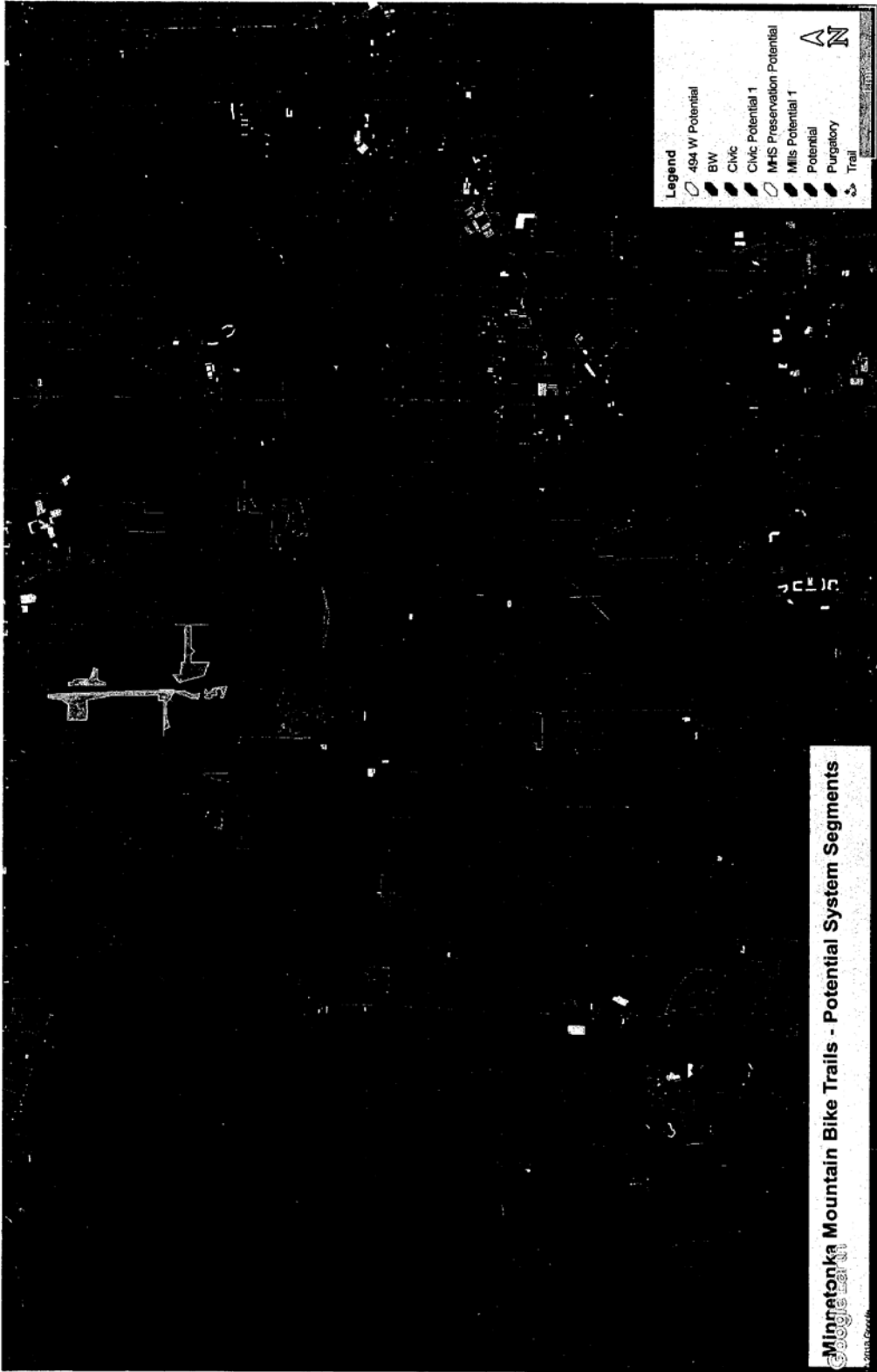
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January 22, 2018

**From:** Ed Friedman

**Sent:** Monday, January 22, 2018 6:24 AM

**To:** Brad Wiersum <bwiersum@eminnetonka.com>; Deborah Calvert (deb@debcalvert.org) <deb@debcalvert.org>; Dick Allendorf (dallendorf@eminnetonka.com) <dallendorf@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>; Patty Acomb <pacomb@eminnetonka.com>; Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Perry Vetter <pvetter@eminnetonka.com>; Geralyn Barone <gbarone@eminnetonka.com>; Peggy Kvam <pkvam@eminnetonka.com>; Nelson Evenrud <nevenrud@eminnetonka.com>; Madeline Seveland <sevelandm@eminnetonka.com>; James Durbin <jdurbin@eminnetonka.com>; Cynthia Kist <ckist@eminnetonka.com>; Christopher Walick <cwalick@eminnetonka.com>; Chris Gabler <cgabler@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Mountain Biking in Big Willow feedback

I am forwarding this post from MinnetonkaMatters. I do not know if the Park Board members are reading the posts on this site set up for public feedback on the Mountain Biking Project or not. I do not know if the consultants orchestrating the public input will forward these to you or not. I do know that they will be removed before the next Park Board meeting. I believe it is important for the Park Board to consider comments such as these which I totally support.

at January 18, 2018 at 10:22pm CST

I attended both city meetings and have read a lot of the above dialogue. It seems to me that a good summary would be, most are not opposed to mtn biking trails in Minnetonka as long as the proper location could be chosen. I think the rub comes when an already established nature trail gets targeted for mtn biking- (do I dare say, mostly by those who don't use it for walking?), and then those who have really enjoyed the peaceful nature walks meandering along the creek feel indignant and displaced and not valued. I fall into that category. As a walker of Big Willow paths for over 25 years, I want the potential bikers to understand that this area is extremely unique and special. How many cities have parkland that roams and rambles along the creek? It is a respite - a peaceful, calm, beautiful area to unwind, clear your head and get AWAY from the hectic, chaotic, break--neck speed of life!!! I feel like adding mtn biking trails to Big Willow would totally change that already established character, and Big Willow trails would no longer be the calm sanctuary they are now, they would become the exact opposite. For that reason, it just does not make sense to add mtn. bike trails to this area. Would you put mtn biking trails in at the Arboretum, or at Minnehaha Falls? There are just some places that deserve to be left alone, to be kept tranquil and restful. I feel even more strongly about this after attending the meetings. If, as its enthusiasts are saying, mtn. biking is growing as a sport, do we want to grow it in our back yard? Does a small, local park have the capacity to grow it?? If Hopkins HS and Mtka. HS want to use the trails, what's to prevent other schools from caravanning over here? And I saw lots of Minneapolis Mtn. Bikers in their club shirts (?) at the last meeting - so this will not just be a locally used trail. Big Willow is not the place to accommodate a whole new sport set with who knows how many schools and groups coming in to these once-calm and peaceful trails. I think a separate, new trail needs to exist, one that will not make walkers feel neglected or displaced, one that can accommodate lots of bikers and make them happy too. I am for that!!! I was encouraged to see all the land available outside of Big Willow that could be used. Specifically the 494 corridor, Lone Lake,... - If you find an area and develop it new, not trying to convert existing walking trails that would make walkers feel displaced, I think you could make many more people supportive and happy. It looks like from the handouts given at the last meeting, you could do that, and get the majority of people in agreement, by using the other, yet-undeveloped acreage that is available.. Big Willow has St. David's

School at the West end, and the new senior housing at the east end. I see teachers taking their kids out for hikes on these trails, I see mom's having lunches with their kids on the arched bridge, many strollers, many many dog walkers, seniors leisurely strolling the paths... Do we really want to interject mtn biking into this dynamic? It doesn't seem conducive to the current atmosphere and character. I saw that the proposed trails would intersect with the current trail in 4 different places, one of them being the arched bridge. How will that look at 4:00pm on a school day with multiple school teams on the trail practicing, when walkers coming home from work are walking their dogs? That's just one little example, but truly, if we are going to be honest, am I being too skeptical when I imagine that the bikers may not actually stay only on their paths? Is it wrong of me to doubt that they will? I know the bikers that have expressed their thoughts on this forum sound very respectful, and I'd like to give them all the benefit of the doubt. Even more so, I'd like to give them their own trail Haha! I also am concerned with what increased traffic would do to Minnetonka Blvd., which has really become a too-busy-enough road already! If mtn. biking really does take off as seems to be predicted, the little quaint and charming, Mtka Mills area may turn into a not-so-charming, super congested area. It makes sense to look ahead, and look elsewhere. Mountain. biking is great, and I want to be respectful and accommodating and supportive, but it needs to be in the right area. Please please consider some yet-undeveloped land (from the chart handout, its there and available!) that can make everyone happy!!

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**January 25, 2018**

**From:** Irv and Kate- Home

**Sent:** Thursday, January 25, 2018 4:06 PM

**To:** Tony Wagner <twagner@eminnetonka.com>; Kelly ODea <kodea@eminnetonka.com>

**Subject:** Re: NO to mountain biking park at Big Willow

Just curious about the meeting I went to on Jan 8th...

There were many people there, both sides of the issue. Happy to see such a great turnout. However not all were residents of Minnetonka, esp the members of the mountain biking club. Although I understand that they are really hoping to push this through so they have more trail options, I was pretty surprised that they would have basically the same input as residents. Is this correct?

Also, noticed a lot of brush clearing in Big Willow park. Is this buckthorn removal? Hoping we're not already preparing for the bike path...

Thank you for your time-

Kate Amendt

Irv

---

# Potential Mountain Biking Trails

Closed Jan 31, 2018 · Discussion · 58 Participants · 1 Topics · 204 Answers · 115 Replies · 159 Votes

58

PARTICIPANTS

1

TOPICS

204

ANSWERS

115

REPLIES

159

VOTES

## SUMMARY OF TOPICS

### SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

 204 Answers · 115 Replies

Are you in favor of the potential creation of mountain biking trails in Minnetonka &ndash; yes, no or unsure? Please explain your position and share your feedback.

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**Amy Morsman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 02, 2017 12:10 pm

 8 Votes

I have been following this on Next Door. I am not for or against biking trails in general. I have family members that would probably use them on occasion. I recently found a map of potential mountain bike trails at the civic Center, which is somewhere I walk my dog several times a day, probably 325 days a year. I am concerned that we will no longer be allowed to walk on the single file wooded trails along the south side of the creek that seem to be designated for mountain biking in the plan. Will walking be disallowed here? In that case I am firmly against.

A second concern with the civic center trails is, if they build them on the north side of the creek, how close they will come to property lines. The sketch that I saw is just a sketch, but the trails came too close to the neighboring properties. I am not opposed to trails there, but there should be a larger setback. Getting rid of buckthorn would be great. THAT SAID - if you build trails on both sides of the creek here, how will you manage bridge traffic? We do have bikes, runners and dog walkers, strollers, etc now, but in the event this becomes an attraction, there will be many more bikes than there are now, especially if there are trails on both sides of the creek. I foresee many speedy bikers cruising through to get from one section to the other and we would need some way to maintain safety for people, dogs, etc who are walking there. It is a heavily utilized trail. (I know because the city refuses to plow it and I shovel the bridge in the winter because otherwise it becomes an ice sheet with all the foot traffic on top of the snow. Again, I wish the city would help out with this trail in winter). This could be a big safety problem, or, at least, a real downgrade for those of us who walk there.

Questions: 1) On the bridge and shared portion of the trail, could bikers be asked to yield when walkers are present? How to handle the bridge? 2) Could we still walk on the trails between the soccer field and the creek or will walking be outlawed there? 3) Could Minnetonka sell annual passes to mountain bikers from outside the city to help fund this amenity? Resident taxpayers could get a sticker free and others pay a small fee per year? Could be minimal but I think would create goodwill.

# Potential Mountain Biking Trails

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Finally, this seems like such a short trail that bikers who make the effort to haul their bikes over here will likely go through the trail multiple times, so it could be constantly in use. Imagine four people coming, going through one after the other and starting again. Lots of traffic.. If that is the case then I guess there is a lot of demand for mountain biking, but why such a short trail? I guess I missed why this can't be built in a larger park like Purgatory. What was the reason there?

Thank you.

## Response:

**Jeff Greenwood** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 8:08 pm

I am concerned these current trails are just old deer paths that are not constructed correctly to resist erosion and used by a very few residents. Enhancing the area with fun trails will add to the image of our great city for all to enjoy.

## Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 1:58 pm

Very good questions! I hope we have adequate time to work issues like these out when we meet 12/13 & 1/8!

Regarding the "short trail" - all of the trail segments at Theo Wirth (Wirth is recognized as high quality urban singletrack) are less than 2 miles in length. They are able to make up for that fact by having several other trail segments in proximity and easily accessible so someone bicycling can easily have a longer ride if they wish. Given the possibility of having a segment at Big Willow in addition to the segment proposed for Big Willow, we would be following a similar path and hopefully as successfully as Wirth!

---

**Elisabeth Trach** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 02, 2017 11:55 pm

👍 6 Votes

I am a resident on Minnehaha Place. I have concerns about increased parking from bikers who will bring their bikes to our neighborhood to ride on these new paths. The street is narrow and is not conducive to park cars on either side of the street.

I am also concerned about speedy bikers coming out of the path onto Minnehaha Place. There already is a hazard at the end of our street onto the frontage road. Bikers do not stop when they are riding on the bike path as they swarm onto Minnehaha Place (from either direction on the frontage road). They ride two - four abreast and make it a hazard for drivers.

Finally, I agree with the concern raised above about the bridge and how to maintain the safety of walkers, strollers and runners. The entire path is narrow getting to the bridge and then add to it the narrowness of the bridge and I have concern about walkers being plowed over by bikers. Bikers are very aggressive as they ride in and around our neighborhood and it could make it hazardous for both walkers and cars.

I am not in favor of the proposal to add a mountain bike trail in our neighborhood. Find another place to put it where we are not at risk of being run over as we walk our dogs and walk through and to the park and as we drive our cars down the street. Bottom line, I am concerned about the increased car traffic/parking issues, the unruliness of bikers already who come into our neighborhood and have limited regard for us as pedestrians and as drivers and I worry about the safety of all of us as we navigate the narrow bridge

## Potential Mountain Biking Trails

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and path. It is not big enough for mountain bikers and pedestrians. Please do not vote to approve this proposal. It may be okay for bikers but it is not okay for our neighborhood.

### Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 1:50 pm

Parking

While it is certainly possible that people coming to use any trails at Civic Center Park MAY decide to park along Minnehaha Place, it seems very unlikely for a couple reasons.

- 1) There is a lot of available parking at Civic Center and at Big Willow, so there would be no need to park along Minnehaha Place.
- 2) Many (not all, certainly!) bicyclists will ride their bike to the trail and so won't need to park at all.

Since "unlikely" doesn't guarantee that bicyclists won't ever park along Minnehaha Place, maybe one solution could be to post that area as No Parking? Especially since it is not conducive to park there already?


Safety

Any shared use trail (like the bridge over Minnehaha behind Civic Center) will have the potential for conflict and will need to be signed (and enforced!) to minimize these conflicts. However, to use these potential conflicts as a reason to not build new trails misses the point that the existing trails are and will continue to be open to all non-motorized users (walkers, strollers, runners, bicyclists, dogs, etc).

And please, stop categorizing people bicycling as "unruly", "aggressive", or as having "limited regard for us as pedestrians". We're not.

---

**Brandon Gallagher Watson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 9:54 am

 11 Votes

Sustainable, purpose-built mountain bike trails would be a great addition to Minnetonka parks as it is a healthy, family-friendly activity that gets people outside and into nature.

I am a parent of two young girls (7 and 10) and we are frequent trail users at many of the local singletrack maintained by the volunteer organization, Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists (MORC). These misleading categorizations of who mountain bikers are and how mountain bikers act is very concerning as it clearly shows a lack of knowledge of what this community is actually like. If mountain biking was anything like it is being portrayed here would I ever bring my small daughters to enjoy it? Would it be the fastest growing sport in high school athletic? Would it be a community amenity that surrounding cities are working into their Parks and Rec Master Plans to provide to their residents? Of course not. Ask around to any of the cities who have recently opened purpose built singletrack trails and you won't hear stories of "unruly, rude, aggressive bikers" taking over their neighborhoods. Bikers stay on the trails, volunteers maintain the health of the trail and the forest, and families come and enjoy the resource together.

Minnetonka is doing the right thing by hearing different voices on this topic, but 25+ years of experience at the other trails around the Metro show that these fears are unfounded and this is a recreation resource that benefits every community that invests in them.

# Potential Mountain Biking Trails

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## Response:

**John Piepkorn** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 10:43 am  
Brandon-

Thank you for a post that echoes the sentiments of many people who are in favor of adding mountain bike trails in Minnetonka Parks. Hopefully at the public meetings, some of the misconceptions people have about mountain biking, and mountain bikers, can be cleared up. I've read descriptions of mountain bikers in Next Door being described as "extreme, "adrenaline-fueled," and "noisy", and that if a trail is implemented, "hordes" mountain bikers will descend on Minnetonka. If there is enough demand for Mountain Bike Trails in Minnetonka, they city is doing the right thing to take a look at both sides.

---

**Katherine Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 10:01 am

👍 6 Votes

I am against Mountain Biking in Big Willow Park. Big Willow is one of the smaller Minnetonka Parks and the traffic/maintenance/possible events/noise is not welcome. Mountain bike parks belong in a exurban park. Big Willow Park already accommodates pets, walking and biking trails plus new bike trails being created. It is a beautiful suburban park - keep it for people's walks, pet walking, biking.

---

**Donovan Kovar** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 10:23 am

👍 7 Votes

I'm a 15 year user of the Willow Creek Park paths, and I love them. In the last 2 years, I started biking them as well, and I love it even more. So I'm definitely interested in having trails that are mountain bike friendly, but ONLY if they don't come at the cost of the existing trails, or the need to cut down more trees. Thanks!

---

**Kathy Peterson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 11:26 am

👍 2 Votes

I love the fact we have bike trails in Minnetonka, but I have 2 major complaints about bikers here, 1. The bikers think they own the trails and never signal that they are coming up behind walkers and when I have been on the trail walking they come by so close to walkers and scare us. Please give walkers a courteous signal like a bell or verbal signal " on your left" etc. it seems like it should be a common courtesy.

2. The bikers who use Minnetonka Blvd usually don't ride single file and don't adhere to the traffic signals, and also slow down moving traffic. I wish when Minnetonka boulevard was being replaced and painted that they would have made a bike lane instead of the turn lane. Why can't they use the bike trail rather than the narrow Minnetonka Blvd?

## Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 1:29 pm

I can't (and won't) dispute that sometimes people on bicycles pass people who are walking in a way that those people don't feel comfortable with. However, to generalize that people bicycling "think they own the trail" is not a productive point to bring up here and is not relevant to the discussion at hand, UNLESS, any mountain bike trails that may be built are also designated as walking trails. If co-use of the trails (both bicyclists and walkers) is decided, then we'll definitely need to discuss it!

## Potential Mountain Biking Trails

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In addition, current Minnesota statute (see link below) explicitly states bicyclists "shall give an audible signal WHEN NECESSARY before overtaking and passing any pedestrian" (my emphasis). So if the bicyclist determines it is safe to do so, they may pass without any audible signals. Should they? Maybe.

Regarding Hennepin County (Minnetonka Blvd is their road) not adding a bike lane when they repaved & restriped earlier this year - oh my goodness YES! They totally should have done that! However, when I requested that very thing at the open house they held, I was told that the repaving project was funded in a certain way and that funding precluded anything other than repaving (they couldn't expand the road width, which would have been necessary to fit a bike lane in near 494). So now, unless there is some other project that may come up in the next several years, we're all (bicyclists AND drivers) stuck using the same old road layout.

Regarding Bicyclists riding single file - current Minnesota statute explicitly states that bicyclists MAY ride 2 abreast (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=169.222>). It also says that bicyclists "shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic", so maybe they shouldn't be riding 2 abreast there. HOWEVER, a core principle of bicycle safety is that the bicyclist may "take the lane" when "reasonably necessary to avoid conditions, including fixed or moving objects, vehicles, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards, or narrow width lanes, that make it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge". So, even though they may be adding several dozens of seconds to your journey, they are permitted to do so if they feel it is necessary.

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**Eric Pirius** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 1:47 pm

 12 Votes

High School mountain biking is becoming extremely popular. It is a healthy, very accessible way for youth to be involved in a positive activity. I am convinced that an olympian will come from the current large, crop of highschool racers in MN. So many other local communities have been successfully managing multi-use trail systems for over a decade; I know Minnetonka is progressive enough to match that commitment to diversity in shared outdoor activities.

I would want my kids to have these same opportunities.

I'm 50 and an avid biker. I have been biking on every available trail in the twin cities for 18 years. I have never hit a hiker, pedestrian, horseback rider or any wild animals, nor have I heard of anyone doing that. When you are zooming through the woods, trees are the biggest danger. Slowing down for an intersection or a person is easy and a no-brainer.

Deer, hikers, dogs, turkeys, mountain bikers and sometimes horses all get along at Lebonan Hills in Eagan. Due to the success, Dakota County rebuilt and expanded the trailhead recently. Same thing at Wirth Parkway in Minneapolis minus the horses. Wirth is probably the busiest trail and is the closest to downtown ( few miles). It is super successful and an icon for quality of life in the Twin Cities. Because of the success, the Loppet Foundation was able to raise just under 5 million dollars to build a chalet, more ski and bike trails including mtb/fat bike. 15yrs ago, Minneapolis made MORC prove itself by approving mtb trails on a trial basis. Trail builders/managers were so successful in their sustainability and stewardship that the trails have blossomed.

The energy and community of enthusiasts is a plus for all ages. Minnetonka is lucky it has a space to host another great trail in the Twin Cities.



# Potential Mountain Biking Trails

Closed Jan 31, 2018 · Discussion · 58 Participants · 1 Topics · 204 Answers · 115 Replies · 159 Votes

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**Jerry Johanning** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 2:18 pm

👍 5 Votes

This discussion is going to end up being exactly what was discussed over and over again on the Nextdoor threads. We could just copy and paste. so without saying what's already been said, maybe this private message between myself and advocate for the trails and my new friend a non advocate might be useful to read for a little better understanding. I have omitted my friends name she can chime in if she wants to..:

I still am not sure what the scope of the project is, or needs of the Mountain Bikers. (may have missed this at first park board meeting.) Maybe some of the crazy snarkiness is just a reaction to the unknown.

It seems like Mountain biking needs lots of undeveloped land, Unfortunately land and access to nature seems to be getting more difficult every day.

Maybe there is a way to weave trails into the landscape in Mtka., but with out knowing the needs I would be guessing.

Any way the Mountain Bikers could define the project?

# of people who will use, where the bikers will come from, acreage needed, special access

You

Thanks XXXX, I'm not in charge, so I don't know these answers for sure. I am however an avid mountain biker Although an old weary one, and I have been to several of the surrounding trails. The larger trail systems like Lebanon hills, Elm Creek park reserve can get pretty busy on a weekend (Only according to what I've seen while going there on a weekend). I think they get busy because there are limited places to ride, and they have 16+ miles of trails. I drove to Cyuna a few weekends ago (2 hour drive from the cities). really fun trails, again several different trails, lots of bikers and hikers, but didn't seem crowded. There was a map floating around of the proposed trails at Big Willow and two other suggested sites in Minnetonka. The milage would be smaller, which the kids (High school aged) who started this whole thing thought would be a good idea to have to practice specific skills for when they travel to the races. Guys like me jumped onboard because it would be a great opportunity for me to bring my kids and our bikes to some trails without loading up the car. I think initially, several local mountain bikers (No idea how many) would come to check it out, then the "Hard core" guys would get back to going to Elk Creek, Lebanon hills etc.. The guys like me who want something besides a flat path and the younger kids would utilize the trails more. That's only my guess at what would happen. I think it's a pretty good guess though. As far as disturbing the landsape, or scaring off the wildlife, i just don't see it happening. I'm a professional photographer (13 years tomorrow), and I often carry my big camera with me, I seen owls, deer, turkey of course, and I've actually seen large black river otters right near Big Willow Park, just west near 494 and Minnehaha creek. Spectacular . I love being able to cover more ground on my bike than on foot. I think dogs and trains and the utility center etc. scare more wildlife than the bikes do, again just my opinion. . Thanks for your message, I hope this helps explain an advocates side a little better...

I'll add to this that there are 50 parks in Minnetonka, you can walk and enjoy nature at all 50 of them. You can do other sports at courts, fields, hoops, nets etc at several of them. There are about 28 maintained 8 foot wide crushed limestone trails where dogs are allowed on leash. You are allowed to bicycle on about 16 of those trails. out of all 50 parks you are not allowed to mountain bike at any of them. I live very close to Big Willow, you don't need much space to make some mountain bike trails. It would actually get a lot of the bikes off of the crushed limestone paths..

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### Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 2:26 pm  
Agreed about the regurgitation of Nextdoor stuff!

Maybe if we had posts for main topics (like Safety, Parking, Environmental, etc) people could add their comments to the appropriate post and it would be a little more focused? Or, maybe use hashtags, like #Safety, #Parking, etc?

---

**Jeff Bisso** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 8:23 pm

👍 10 Votes

I am excited to see Mtka thinking progressively as a community about the needs of its residents and how to stay a place many want to call home. Mountain bike has grown as a sport because like other outdoor sports it offers people a way to get outside. I would find it disappointing if we started to over analyze how people want to enjoy the outdoors. It is unfortunate that we are allowing fear of some really rare occurrences to rule the day. That would be similar to me asking for no more dog walkers to be allowed around the parks because a few of them allowed their pets to go poo in the park. With all the benefits we get as a resident of a city like Mtka comes pros and cons - you can find bad apples no matter the topic. But for the most part I believe most of us tend to be good people just trying to enjoy something provided by their city and their tax dollars. Same goes for mountain biking - most of us will act responsibly and those that don't may get away with it and that is unfortunate, but it should not cast a dark shadow on a great way to get outside, get healthy and enjoy our great city. I support everyone who want to use all city areas however they want to use them - that is their right as a resident of the city - I respectfully ask for their support in return for my desire to mountain bike in my own city. As for comments on the city providing more clarity on if the trails will be separated or mixed use I think that is very fair and they city should be able to do this with a little effort- it will be impossible to keep them completely separate but it would help if they can do this - from what I can tell when I am using the parks in question there is plenty of room to do that. Thanks

---

**Ben Marks** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 8:42 pm

👍 9 Votes

In May of 2016 the City of Minnetonka launched "Imagine Minnetonka", a citizen outreach campaign asking residents what their one wish was for the future of Minnetonka. Overwhelmingly, the most common response was a request for local mountain bike trails.

It's more than the trails:

The support for this project by residents of all ages is unprecedented. To date, more than 450 advocates have registered at [www.tonkatrails.com](http://www.tonkatrails.com). This summer, the local advocate group began weekly volunteer events, removing invasive species from our parks. City staff has never had such a large, committed group of volunteers. This project has given the local biking community a reason to care for our parks and could be transformative to our city's park restoration efforts. The most inspiring aspect to this project is the engagement of our youth. It's such an instructive experience for these kids to have a stake in this project, to see firsthand how our local government works, and to learn that their collective voices can help create change.

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Share our parks:

For those who have concerns about this project, it may not be as bad as you fear. We are talking about an 18-inch ribbon of dirt trail winding through the wooded areas of several of our city parks. The trails will likely be in areas of the parks that no one else uses. We understand that change is difficult, but it is inevitable. If our city parks never changed in the past twenty years, we would still have swing sets, teeter-totters, and football fields. Today we enjoy modern playground equipment, ice rinks with warming houses, and pickleball courts. Minnetonka prides itself in offering amenities that encourage healthy outdoor activities. As residents' interests evolve, it's the city's responsibility to address these changing needs. Mountain biking is the fastest growing high school sport and one of the fastest growing segments of the biking industry. There are already unofficial trails in every Minnetonka park. These trails are not sustainable. Using these trails causes erosion and creates user conflicts. Well designed, designated mountain bike trails will minimize these problems. It's true that designated mountain bike trails may increase users of our parks, but is that bad? These are public parks. Think about that eleven-year-old neighborhood kid who receives a shiny new mountain bike for her birthday and gets to ride these awesome singletrack trails with her friends. That sounds like the future of Minnetonka we all wish for.

## Response:

**Amy Morsman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 05, 2017 9:26 pm

Where was this outreach? I don't remember receiving a survey. I think the city needs to work on their communication. It is a good idea but it seems many of us did not get the memo or were not invited to participate.

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**Jeff Greenwood** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 9:19 pm

👍 6 Votes

I favor mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. I have been riding in Minnetonka for 35yrs. We used to ride in the empty lots and open spaces in the Tonkawoodcroft neighborhood before they were developed. I have ridden through most of the parks in Minnetonka over the years. Now, I would like to ride on trails in Minnetonka with my children instead of having to load up the car and drive across town to ride. I see frisbee golf, pickle ball, soccer fields, hockey rinks, and support going to other sports. I believe residents will use the mountain bike trails and give Minnetonka a special feature other suburban cities lack.

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**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 9:20 pm

👍 7 Votes

As is probably abundantly clear from my responses above, I am strongly in favor of adding mountain bike trails in and between Big Willow and Civic Center parks. I recognize there are challenges with both locations, but it seems that City staff must have had some solid criteria they used to arrive at their original proposal to use those two locations. And only a little checking out shows that there is indeed adequate elevation difference at both locations.

It's only a guess, but I think one of the reasons the City had, and certainly a reason I have, was/is proximity to each other. Having BW only 1.25 miles from CC, with most of that distance on the limestone Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, makes sense. More people will use them (which is the goal, after all) if they can string multiple segments

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together (like at Theo Wirth).

Another guessed reason (I hope the City can share their criteria?) is that putting all the mountain bike trail in one park would likely overwhelm that one park. Breaking it into smaller segments, while not ideal in some respects, makes it easier to fit trails in while maintaining current usages (dog-walking, strollers, runners, etc).

Yet another guessed reason that I support mountain biking trails at these two locations is that they are less than 2 miles from Spasso / Snuffy's / Mandarin Yang on the west, immediately adjacent to Station Pizza / People's Organic / DQ, and a short 3-4 miles from all of downtown Hopkins (multiple restaurants, a brewery, a bike shop, etc) along the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail. Overall, making Minnetonka Blvd / Minnetonka Mills / Hopkins more of a destination is a good thing! One only needs look briefly at the economic upturn mountain biking has brought to the Iron Range city of Crosby to see the potential here.

And yet another reason I support mountain bike trails at these two locations is that the system / network could be easily expanded from this core. Adding trails along the west (and possibly east?!) sides of 494 between McGinty & Oakland would bring mountain bikers close to Ridgehaven / Ridgedale with all of the amenities there. And there are other areas that could potentially support mountain bike trails.

Another reason I support mountain bike trails in Minnetonka is to aid middle schoolers and high schoolers on the Minnetonka, Hopkins, and probably Wayzata mountain biking teams. In order for those kids to get relevant training currently, they have to drive either 30 minutes to Lake Rebecca, 25 minutes to Elm Creek or Murphy-Hanrehan, or 20 minutes to Theo Wirth. Since this takes up lots of time for those able to drive, and with many of them are unable to drive, they don't get as much practice with the necessary skills. Hometown trails would sure help!

The last reason (that I'll share now) that I support mountain bike trails in Minnetonka is that I am a fan of mountain and fat biking. Commuting to work exclusively by bike year-round for the last three years, and extensively for 4 years before that, means the variety that mountain and fat biking brings is, for me, very important. In addition, it is just plain fun! And, it is great exercise! Having it become available so close to my home of the last 16 years (and hopefully many more!) would be wonderful!

## Response:

**Amy Morsman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 05, 2017 3:09 pm

Thinking of three different local high school mountain bike teams using the trails - this is a good thing in many ways. But it sure makes me think there will be lots of large groups wanting access. Can anyone tell me why larger Minnetonka parks were not chosen? Again, I support this being built somewhere if the concerns can be met. The city just built a paved walking trail that takes 4 minutes to walk in its entirety. This is not cost effective. I think we need a larger area for this bike trail to make the investment worthwhile.

---

**Jeff Ingram** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 04, 2017 10:53 pm

 7 Votes

I am in favor of developing sustainable mountain bike trails in Minnetonka parks. In addition to the good points made regarding the youth sports and healthy lifestyles, we should think about keeping Minnetonka relevant to the next generation of homeowners

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and engaging a new generation of park stewards.

The proponents of the trails have taken initiative to support invasive species removal in the targeted parks under the leadership of City personnel. Tonka Cycle and Ski has pledged funds to help the city maintain the proposed trails.

Instead of looking at this proposal as a negative for the parks and city, it should be looked at as a lifeline to keep Minnetonka vital and as a means to preserve the parks..

---

**Bill Greenwood** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 05, 2017 6:21 am

👍 5 Votes

The city needs this recreational activity.

Lots of great questions and ideas.

Minnetonka has lots of room for this new trail and as this topic is vetted I'm sure a logical conclusion will prevail.

---

**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 05, 2017 6:34 am

👍 4 Votes

I am a senior and frequent walker of the paths in Minnetonka Parks along with many others of all age groups. I am not against the Mountain Bike efforts. But I am against changing the whole character of Big Willow that so many of us have been enjoying and utilizing for generations. The bikes and pedestrians cannot coexist safely. I have been hit multiple times when I could not get off the path fast enough for the biker. Most bikers are polite and respectful of pedestrians, as I try to be to them. (Even if ordinances say they shouldn't be there.) The issue in my head is that if these trails are allow to be used for Mountain Biking, exercise/practice/training or whatever the danger to the pedestrian seniors, families with toddlers and other young kids will increase. If teams or individuals are training there will be a natural motivation toward speed and efficiency. That is not meant in a nasty way, it will just happen and should be expected. Is this going to lead toward pedestrians being excluded from using these paths that they have been using for generations with their kids? Lets find a place that is currently unused such as the property east of the Civic Center, the 494 Corridor, or maybe a new piece of land west side of Oakland, north of Meadow Park, that was recently gifted to the city.

### Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 05, 2017 8:02 pm

Ed -

I think the parcel you are describing north of Meadow Park and west of Oakland is designated as exclusively for bird watching? If it is the same parcel, that is what Kelly O'Dea told me when I asked him about it at the last meeting...

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**Melissa Greenwood** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 05, 2017 4:06 pm

👍 4 Votes

I believe expansion of mountain biking trails would benefit our community and I support these efforts. It is an attractive recreational activity that increases the desirability if our area. This would positively impact property values. It is also a great way to increase the health and well being of our community. There are many park areas that are not being

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used and enjoyed. This expansion would help more people to enjoy the recreational opportunities around us. Thank you.

---

**Kris MacDonald** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 05, 2017 5:09 pm

👍 4 Votes

I regularly walk Big Willow, accessing it from the small gate on Plymouth Road. I enjoy the calm, peaceful stroll through nature, never wearing headsets but taking in the sounds of the woods. Even when coming across other walkers, we pass each other and are again in the solitude of nature. Right now you can easily see through the trees and can tell that this is not a big park. I tried to imagine what it would be like having mountain bikers zipping through the woods between the paths and have come to the conclusion that the peace and tranquility would be gone. You would see them in the winter, and hear and feel their presence in all of the seasons. It would be a sad loss.

### Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 8:51 am

I would recommend that you enjoy a walk in Theodore Wirth Park (along the Luce Line for example), there are very popular bike trails in the park. I expect you will find what I know, the bikes are not loud nor zipping, the trails are technical, keeping bike speeds down. People are currently biking throughout Big Willow, and based on my dog-walks in the park, I've never had the peace of the park disrupted by the people biking. And as a person biking the park, I am respectful to other park users and enjoyed many interactions with nature in Big Willow - both flora and fauna. Based on my experience, I know that Big Willow will be better for the whole community with the addition of these bike trails.

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**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 05, 2017 8:13 pm

👍 0 Votes

From the online minutes of the November 2, 2016 Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Minutes, available here -

[https://eminnetonka.com/images/meetings/parkboard/fullpacket\\_nov2.pdf](https://eminnetonka.com/images/meetings/parkboard/fullpacket_nov2.pdf) :

Parks & Recreation Board Mission - The mission of the Minnetonka Parks & Recreation Board is to proactively advise the City Council, in ways that will:

- » Protect & enhance Minnetonka's natural environment
  - » Promote quality recreation opportunities and facilities
  - » Provide a forum for citizens interested in our parks, trails, athletic fields and open space
- 

**Andy Treno** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 06, 2017 11:15 am

👍 6 Votes

I think responsibly placed/maintained mountain bike trails would be a great addition to Minnetonka parks. We have plenty of open spaces to suit a variety of needs, and designated trails would provide a great new opportunity for people of all ages to recreate

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and enjoy the outdoors in an area that is suited for their needs. Done correctly, the trails to not need to come at the expense of other forms of recreation and would only provide more opportunities for people to enjoy the abundance of outdoor parks we are so fortunate to enjoy.

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**Claudia Gundlach** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 06, 2017 2:37 pm

👍 1 Votes

I am opposed to the addition of Mountain Bike trails into Big Willow Park as the design stands now. First I would hate to lose the access to hiking off the improved trails since they are all flat, and not the best exercise. I would also hate to lose the peaceful feeling of this much used park, it wouldn't be the same if every Walking path has a hill above it woven with bike trails built for speed and challenge, as is the design now.

Big Willow may be too small to accommodate all uses, it is 90 acres 1/2 of which is developed with City buildings and ball fields, leaving 45 acres of natural area. The proposed Mountain Bike trails add 5 more miles of trail to the existing 2 miles. I believe this will be too crowded to maintain the nature of the park and surrounding neighborhoods, I bought my house because of the proximity to Big Willow. Is there really enough demand to dedicate 45 acres of natural land to the 500 or so people who support the new trails. Is the interest diverse enough across the city to use the Green space that is left in Minnetonka?

I also think the residents need to know exactly what a Mountain Bike Trails entail, will there be banks and jumps, what will the development be when finished? see attached photos from Carter Lake Park in Woodbury

[https://www.google.com/search?](https://www.google.com/search?q=carver+lake+park+mountain+bike+trails+woodbury&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwIqoYinkfbXAhXj5IMKHxhDBEK)

[q=carver+lake+park+mountain+bike+trails+woodbury&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwIqoYinkfbXAhXj5IMKHxhDBEK](https://www.google.com/search?q=carver+lake+park+mountain+bike+trails+woodbury&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwIqoYinkfbXAhXj5IMKHxhDBEK)

My thoughts are not against Mountain bikers, they have been very polite on the unimproved trails when I need to let them pass, so I see hope for adding Mountain bike trails to Minnetonka, we may need more land, or we may need to rethink the many ball fields, or there may be a very clever Park Designer who can see the parks differently.

---

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 8:42 am

👍 4 Votes

I am life-long Minnetonka resident and I'm excited for Big Willow Park to get well-designed and maintained mountain bike trails!

I grew up with Big Willow in my backyard, throughout the 1970s I was riding horseback in the park. By the mid-70s me and my friends were biking in the park, both on the main trails and the deer trails. By the 1980s I was biking through the park getting between home-and-school. I continue to enjoy biking in Big Willow, both on the main trails and the same deer trails I rode as a child - these trails are fun to ride in the summer and winter. Additionally, we frequently walk my dogs in Big Willow.

With MORCs help, we will have trails that will do more to protect the natural beauty of Big Willow and minimize any concerns of conflict between park users. I frequently ride the bike trails in Theodore Wirth Park, and have enjoyed other MORC trails in the metro area - I know that they will help Minnetonka create and maintain quality trails. I have volunteered time in 2017 to help the city and mountain bike community clean up invasive plants in Big Willow. I will continue to help with these clean up efforts and well as trail building/maintenance, and be a trail advocate to help educate all park users

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about these trails.

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**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 10:20 am

👍 3 Votes

Having read a number of comments about noise concern with bikers in the park, as well as concerns about the speed of bikes. To address these concerns, I will share some video I've captured while biking other local trails designed by MORC:

This summer riding in Theodore Wirth Park, I came across this handsome buck, take note, the deer is alert, but not scared: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B74m7RsBH20>

Here is a longer loop at Theodore Wirth Park, the worst noise is my huffing and puffing (not too different from a runner working hard): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMII0rYKHLE>

This is a winter ride in Theodore Wirth Park: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmVJPRojOa0>

Lastly, this was a race in Elm Creek Park Reserve, take note of the speed and noise of a race: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTZKMf3tUtc> (& I can't image a race in Big Willow)

As you watch the videos, pay attention to the narrow and twisty sections of these trails, this is the type of trail design I expect in Big Willow. It keeps the speeds low, does the least damage to existing plantings, and allows for longer trails in a small space.

Lastly, to some hyperbolic claims I've seen posted about conflicts between people on bikes and other trail users: I've been riding bikes, walking dogs, riding horses in Big Willow Park for over 40 years, and I've never seen a conflict between park users.

## Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 9:43 pm  
Awesome videos - thank you for posting! Clear incontrovertible proof of how quiet mountain biking is on these types of trails, how the speeds are nowhere near the Redbull Rampage stuff, and how wildlife doesn't get overly spooked by the presence of mountain bikers!

## Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 9:45 pm  
And IF (that's a big if!) there was a race at Big Willow or Civic Center, there would be plenty of people there for support, and much communication to other park users ahead of time about the disruption.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 1:54 pm

👍 2 Votes

Chris Nelson: I am surprised that we do not know each other. We must be on different



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schedules. I also have been walking Big Willow for over 40 years on a near daily basis. I'll give most bikers that benefit of acknowledging that they are polite, considerate, and generally friendly in the park.

However, I do not encounter them very often on the unmaintained trails. Occasionally, and this is the concern I have, I was not able to get off the trail fast enough before the biker was passing and got struck or scraped by the handlebar. Often leaving scrapes or pain behind without a word from the biker. Twice I was actually hit solidly enough to be knocked down, again without a word.

I am still well enough to be able to handle the insults, but the time when I won't be able to is coming, and has arrived for many seniors that I encounter on the trails. My concern is that if this activity gets promoted at Big Willow, the number of bikes is going to increase and these incidents will become more frequent. Pedestrians, be they seniors, or families with young children will not be able to safely walk these paths and will either be prohibited by the city, or self-prohibited for safety concerns.

I see the value in developing this activity somewhere in the city. I would like to hear that the staff is looking at locations that are currently unused by residents for other activities. The 494 Corridor sounds like exactly such a location. Possibly a great location for the city to start with Mountain Biking and gain some experience to later assess other locations. The property next to the Civic Center is not used by many but I may be wrong on that.

### Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 3:24 pm

We may have crossed paths without knowing it!

Foot traffic always has the right of way, bikes must yield to foot traffic. I commit to you, if I witness anybody on a bike behave as described, I will confront them, get their contact information, report them to authorities, and tell them to leave the park. This behavior is unacceptable.

For reference, Theodore Wirth Park posted the following today on Facebook:

Now that the Theo trails are back open, I feel the need to offer up several friendly reminders about winter singletrack trail use at Theo.

1) All Theodore Wirth Singletrack is multi-use. That means that it is possible during winter you will encounter bikes, runners, hikers and people on snow shoes. All have equal rights to use the trail. Bikes must always slow down / yield to foot traffic.


....

6) Lastly...we have a fantastic resource available to us. Let's keep it that way by always adhering to Theo Rule #1: Don't be a jerk! Be kind and respectful to EVERYONE you encounter at Theo.

I shortened the post, it has a number of other points not relevant. I simply want to point out that MORC and the trail advocates are educating people biking to yield to foot traffic.

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**Henry Moerer** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 2:06 pm

 5 Votes

I am 84 years old and a resident of Minnetonka. I also am for building mountain bike trails in our city. Even though I personally will not be using them I see the value they will

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bring to our community. I love our open spaces and parks and want them protected and cared about into many future generations. I believe to do that is to build these trails that so many people of all ages, in particular younger adults and children, will enjoy and use and consequently care about nature and preserving it. With all the parkland in Minnetonka I believe that we can build these trails and still have plenty of space for those who want to do other activities, as in hiking. I have lived long enough to know that things change and that's not always a bad thing.

---

**Brian John** · Citizen · (Postal Code: 55345) · Dec 07, 2017 5:03 pm

👍 3 Votes

Very excited at the prospect of having mountain bike trails in Minnetonka! This would be a great outdoor, physical activity that I could do with my children without having to drive to neighboring communities.

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**Claudia Gundlach** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 8:30 pm

👍 1 Votes

I would be very excited to have a ski hill near by that I didn't have to drive to or pay \$40 bucks to use, But that is not likely to happen, given the value of land in the area.

### Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 9:39 pm

Seems more likely not to happen based on topography (no hills big enough to support a ski hill in Minnetonka)?

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**Kris O'Reilly** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 07, 2017 9:29 pm

👍 3 Votes

I'm learning more than I ever thought I would about mountain biking just by reading this discussion thread! I was (and still am) not for or against adding mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. It's obvious there are many residents that are passionate about their chosen sport, just as other residents are passionate about theirs. I'm confident the city/citizens can formulate options that will largely satisfy everyone, and/or put into place criteria designed to address any future problems or issues of safety, parking, noise, group biking etc—well-thought-out fixes to situations of “if this happens then we will do this.” The only question I had as I read this discussion forum was that the “Imagine Minnetonka in 20 years” resident input project resulted in 5 or 6 qualities that residents consistently stated they wanted to retain or build upon when they imagined what Minnetonka could be like in 20 years. Things like open spaces, quality lakes and forests, linking of neighborhoods thru paths/sidewalks to promote feeling of community, a “city center” or downtown per se, affordable housing, a city that attracted and supported the desires and needs of a diverse demographic. (Not sure I'm stating these very well so feel free to comment or correct as needed!) Anyway, my question to the city council is, are we proceeding simultaneously with projects that support the rest of the outcomes stated as part of the overall Imagine Minnetonka plan? Though mountain biking trails seem to support a passion of our younger residents/families, are building these trails a special interest project or part of the larger, overall “Imagine Minnetonka” 20-year development plan? If the trails are part of the long-term plan, can we see what the development plan is, and the strategy and tactics for achieving the plan? And therefore where, when and how do mountain bike trails fit within that plan? Again I'm not

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opposed to mountain bike trails, just wondering if other projects/visions are also moving forward that support the overall plan? Thank you for your consideration!

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**Spencer Mohr** · Citizen · (Postal Code: 55345) · Dec 08, 2017 7:47 am

👍 5 Votes

I can only speak on behalf of the Civic Center location as I reside right next to the proposed trail path. I would like a better definition of "mountain biking" explained. The civic center area in which the trail is being proposed is fairly flat. From my understanding and research "mountain" biking consists of terrain that includes but is not limited to, elevation, rocks, logs, elevated bridges, teeter-totters, jumps, drop-offs, etc. I understand you don't need all of that criteria to simply create a mountain bike trail. With that understanding there is hardly an elevated area at the Civic Center park. The largest drop off would be about 5 feet and riding on the side of a hill. I'm not sure this would keep the average mountain biker interested in continuing to ride this same trail, but again I could be wrong.

I also have some concerns on the design of the trail at the Civic Center. This trail would cross over a frequently used walking path several times according to the map. This trail is used by children that come over from the soccer fields and the hockey rinks during the summer and winter months. It is also used heavily by every day walkers with dogs. Although I believe there could be some compromise on right of way for when the mountain bikers cross that path I still find it very dangerous for these children.

Another question in relation to trail design is the company that was hired to do the actual design. Did any city officials or anyone in this group happen to go out with the hired company while conducting the trail design? I could be wrong in this but I did happen to see a fellow marking areas of which this path was created. He was simply walking through with no technology that I could see determining a trail design. To me with a flat elevation and the ability to produce a map of a location via a computer it would be particularly easy to draw a line on a map to create a trail. Does anyone have any information on how this trail design took place and what determined the actual path of the trail?

I have also read that cities and private landowners have a difficult time determining what type of liability insurance they would need for mountain bike trails. As I am aware, anyone could be injured on city property by a number of things, mountain biking through trails at a relatively fast rate of speed with some obstacles would result in greater injury to that person if they were to crash. Has liability insurance been discussed with city officials?

I am not for or against the idea of mountain biking trails in the City of Minnetonka at this time but I do have some concerns about the Civic Center park as I reside right next to it. Thank you to anyone who could provide me with a little more information.

### Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 08, 2017 9:07 am

I understand your concerns, I hope I can help address a couple of them with my experience.

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"Mountain biking" is a big term, including many diverse type of terrain and trails. Many people hear the term "Mountain biking" and think about Red Bull type events with riders speeding down mountains over huge jumps. Typically the type of trails we have in the metro area are referred to "single-track", and that would be the correct term for the trails proposed in Minnetonka. This is a video clip I recorded on one of the Theodore Wirth trails, I bookmarked the start time to a place on the trail much like Big Willow (woodland). <https://youtu.be/AMII0rYkHLE?t=1m30s>

If you scroll up in this forum, I've posted four videos to help show the types of trails we have in the metro - these are trails that were designed by MORC (Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists), MORC is working with Minnetonka on the proposed trails. Additionally, I hope these videos help people unfamiliar with single-track riding understand the speed of people riding these trails.

Most people would be surprised how easy it is to create a challenging single-track trail with little elevation gain. I recently spent some time at a beach resort that was pancake flat, they designed a number of single-track loops with small, natural rolls (2-3 ft high); I can report that I was enjoyably challenged.

You bring up a fine point about bike trail intersections with foot trails. We have a great example of heavily used bike trails crossing a multi-purpose trail - In Theodore Wirth, the oldest and main bike trail crosses the Luce Line twice. As somebody that frequently uses both the Luce Line and the bike trails, I've never seen a dangerous interaction at these crossing. This is mostly because of intelligent trail design that keeps the mountain bikes moving slowly prior to the crossing.

I don't have specific information about liability; however, I can point out that there are many trails like this throughout the metro area. Some of these trails are over a decade old. Therefore, I know that the liability issue has been addressed. And frankly, with the low speeds on these trails, serious injuries are very rare.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 08, 2017 12:42 pm

👍 0 Votes

What is being proposed/evaluated for the Mountain Bike Trails in Minnetonka? Are these multi-use trails, i.e. Bikes and pedestrians, or strictly bike trails?

## Response:

**JOHN SPEER** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 09, 2017 8:22 am

There is a portion of the north part of the civic center trail where mountain bikes and pedestrians will occupy the same space so it is therefore multi use

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**Chris Johnson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 08, 2017 4:08 pm

👍 1 Votes

My view on the City of Minnetonka developing mountain bike trails is fairly simple. I describe it below in a series of steps to be taken.

These same steps could and should be used for most amenities Minnetonka residents might want.

1. Does it appear a significant number of Minnetonka residents (and only residents!)

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want these trails? If No, then do nothing further. If Yes, proceed to step 2.

2. Do more residents want this amenity (trails) than other amenities which compete for the same space, money or facilities? If Yes, proceed.

3. How will the creation of this amenity be funded? If no money, stop.

4. How will the maintenance of this amenity be funded? If no money, stop.

5. Determine with public input the best locations and manner in which to implement the amenity.

6. Go make it so.

7. Don't forget to maintain it -- or intentionally plan for it to be worn out and replaced with some new amenity in the future.

In none of these steps do opinions of non-residents of Minnetonka matter unless they are paying for both creation and maintenance. For example, the Chain of Lakes parks in Minneapolis, and the Mississippi riverfront parks get funding from outside because millions of non-Minneapolis residents visit them. I'm ok with that.

I am not ok with Minnetonka (the city) and its residents (taxpayers) getting cajoled into building and maintaining an amenity that a small number of Minnetonka residents will no doubt use and favor, but which are lobbied for by outside people.

I'm not going to name names where outsiders persuaded a city to build something using resident tax dollars -- this is not the space to argue those individual projects -- but such has happened in recent years. Rather, I'm stating a general principle I believe Minnetonka (and any city) really should adhere to: the city should be run for the benefit of the city, and no one else.

## Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 09, 2017 10:03 am

While I agree with Chris that there is (and should be!) a process for decision making in cases like this, I'm not sure that the second step identified is entirely accurate. A better way to present it is if overall benefit would be greater for the proposed idea instead of whether more individual citizens voted for it.

I also have to take a certain level of issue with casting this as something being pushed by outsiders. There are likely people from outside Minnetonka participating, but there are also many (more?) people from Minnetonka participating. And given that effects of any potential trails would have on areas outside Minnetonka, it is appropriate to consider those voices.

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**Paul Lorinser** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 09, 2017 1:38 pm

 3 Votes

I live in Minnetonka and am a strong proponent of developing and legitimizing biking on single track trails in our parks. I say 'our' because the parks belong to all Minnetonka tax payers. All the parks are currently bike friendly on either paved or limestone trails that run through them. Both sides of this debate have been sharing the parks for years.

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Which is great! All the biking community is asking for is legitimate access to the single track trails through the woods. Which are currently accessible to walkers alone. This isn't a new conversation. The topic of biking in Lone Lake Park was seriously debated decades ago. Back when there were few places for bikers to legally bike in the woods on single track trails. More recently that reality has changed. As is evidenced by the growth in the amount of single track trails being developed locally, regionally and nationally driven in part to the growing participation within the sport of mountain biking at the high school level. Communities around are asking for these amenities and local governments are responding in kind. Our neighbors to the east are presently having the same conversation about adding single track biking trails in Braemar Park. Other communities have realized that single track trail development generates economic activity, promotes a healthy lifestyle and gives people a spot to connect with nature. These trails can and will be developed to address safety concerns and environmental feasibility. Locally we might not have one large area to develop, but we have several smaller parks worthy of trails to suit many levels of abilities. I ask the City Council to approve this plan so we can add another benefit to living in Minnetonka. Thanks!

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**John Leighton** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 09, 2017 3:50 pm

👍 4 Votes

I am 73 years old. I enjoy the relaxed and safe experience of single track biking. I am thrilled that this opportunity is proposed for Minnetonka.

I have ridden single track all over the US, and there never seems to be any contention between bikers, hikers, or horses.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 9:19 am

👍 2 Votes

Joshua Rebennack: Your comment> ' Unofficial trails are not considered in planning processes on purpose. In the context of trails on public land being managed by a municipal body, "unofficial" is just polite term for unsanctioned or illegal. You are not suggesting the city should place a higher importance on illegal trails vs. a series of legal trails going thru a municipal process are you?'

Attempting to respond politely, your comment is a distortion of the facts. Unmaintained trails, you call them unofficial, are the primary path that the maps proposed cover 100%, or close to it. So yes, The proposal very much includes the unmaintained trails, unlike your comment suggests. These unmaintained trails are not unused, There are many residents that use these trails everyday. If these Mountain Bike single track trails are not going to be multi-use you are basically taking away a nature resource from current users. If they are going to be multiuse, then pedestrians are going to be at risk of injury. I have experienced several such occurrences over the past 40 years of walking these trails almost daily.

May I suggest we see what the City staff comes up with for the 494 property and possibly set that currently used land as the first trial location for Minnetonka.

## Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 1:18 pm

Ed, with all respect, you have been arguing \*for\* well designed and marked bike trails in Big Willow. The conflicts you have reported are on non-designed, non-maintained

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trails in Big Willow. The team that will design off-road bike trails in Big Willow, and around Minnetonka, will work to minimize conflicts between park users. As posted above, the designed trails around the metro and state do not have the conflicts you are reporting.

Remember: Big Willow is *\*our\** park. This park has evolved over 40 years and it needs to continue to evolve to meet the changing interests and needs of Minnetonka residence. We used to be able to ride our horses through Big Willow Park to get ice cream at Dairy Queen... we can't do that any more.

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**Jerry Johanning** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 10:37 am

👍 2 Votes

Ed, In almost every one of your posts, you mention getting hit, knocked down, injured and yelled at by bicyclists. I just want to personally say that I am raising the next generation of cyclists, and I have put a big emphasis on teaching them the correct trail etiquette. I would also like to apologize for the cyclists who have run you over, please know that they do not represent the majority of us who are trying to advocate for these single track mountain bike trails in our community. Please know that I am being sincere, it's hard to know on these social media posts. I drive a car, I ride bicycles, and I walk the trails. I see cars get upset at bikes on the road, I see walkers get upset at bikes on the trails, and I see bikes get upset at walkers blocking the trails. If we all use a little trail/road etiquette and a tiny bit of patience we can all enjoy what our town has to offer...

### Response:

**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 6:09 pm

Jerry, Do not get me wrong. Most of the bikers I encounter on the trails are very polite and considerate. I try to be the same. However, occasionally one will be in too much of a hurry to allow me time to get to a spot were I can safely step off the trail. Maybe 10-20 yards ahead. My concern is that if the trails are multi-use and used for practice, training, competition between friends, that there will be more incidents like I have experienced. Not because the bikers are nasty in any way, but the adrenaline of a friendly competition may impact judgement. That is what I am concerned about.

---

**ray kurth-nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 2:30 pm

👍 2 Votes

I think it is GREAT to ADD to the uses of MNTKA parks and trails. I'd just say, shouldn't take AWAY from hiking or walking trails ... but ... ADDING mt bike trails would be FINE, especially if you could walk them, and REALLY ESPECIALLY if the city or county OR STATE even would authorize planting flowers along the trails! ... also, I walk the trails a lot and have never ever never had a problem with cyclists, ever. As a rule to each and every one, they have been courteous and a LOT of them even say Hi! And the dogs have all been very nice, too. SO i'd say GO FOR IT, LET'S HAVE THEM!

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 7:28 pm

👍 0 Votes

Chris Nelson: you said, 'The team that will design off-road bike trails in Big Willow, and around Minnetonka, will work to minimize conflicts between park users.' The map

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included in the proposal that was presented to the Park Board that was prepared by professional trail designers incorporates all the deer trails, or unmaintained trails in Big Willow. I have asked the question multiple times, Will these trails be multi-use or dedicated to single use?

## Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 8:00 pm

Ed, the trail maps you see today are proposals. No routes are confirmed today. I wouldn't commit that no 'deer trails' will be affected by the proposed bike trail. However, the routes of these bike trails are still a work-in-progress. If the trails move forward in Big Willow, they will improve the experience for all park users and minimize the type of conflicts you have described.

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**Brian Wyneken** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 7:45 pm

👍 3 Votes

I do not support turning the Big Willow Park into a mountain biking recreation area. I realize that the way I just described my opposition to this proposal would be objectionable to those who seek to persuade other readers that the biking will have minimal impact on other users. I don't find these joint use arguments very persuasive. I have visited this park on approximately a weekly basis for about 25 years, and noting the location, the size, the terrain, and the surrounding area, and it does not seem probable that we can have this park as a primary destination for mountain bikers while still having anything remotely like the park usage in its current state. This discussion is really about those who would like to convert Big Willow into a mountain biking center and those who would not want that. Arguing that the foot print and usage of these proposed mountain biking trails will be compatible with a pedestrian oriented park seems little more than an effort to minimize the issue.

## Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 8:23 pm

I'm sorry you have misunderstood the scope of the Big Willow proposal. No one is suggesting 'mountain bike center', simply a bike trail. I respectfully request you take the time to read the whole forum, it will help you understand the scope of this proposal, there's a lot of good information in here (& a peppering of misleading comments)

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**Lisa Gose** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 8:12 pm

👍 3 Votes

I live in Minnetonka. grew up in St. Louis Park, and graduated from Hopkins High in 1987, my grandparents lived at 36xx Shady Oak Road - I grew up driving by Big Willow and looking forward to the times we could go walk across the old floating bridge across the swamp - the floating bridge is gone now but I bring it up because it shows my life long connection to the park and the evolution of the park over the years. There actually used to be a BMX track by the softball fields and the railroad tracks. Back in the day my Grandfather was a paint sales executive for Tonka Toys and Schwann Bikes / he "painted cool toys!" Now I am also in sales but for a very large health insurance company in Minnetonka. I genuinely care about people and their health care. Mental and physical wellbeing has everything to do with great care of ones self, it also saves our country and our personal expenses billions of dollars annually. What does all of



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this have do do with bikes at Big Willow? Well let me share my story...I am 49, I have an incredible job and I am fortunate to be in great health except I have one set-back, it's called psoriatic/rheumatoid arthritis - trust me, it is rough, unpredictable, deforming and painful. Here's the deal - in 2010 my daughter graduated from HS and I needed a way to be more physically active. I tried the gym-not my thing. I like to feel like I am outside, "in-it" feeling the sun, the wind, seeing people and trying something not as mechanical and prescribed as my day to day life in an office - I spend a lot of time there. I got a dog (he is incredible) and I also got a bike! I started biking and fell in love - I went to France and rode my bike all over. I bought a City Bike and started to ride to dinners and coffee and the farmers market to buy fresh food here in Minnetonka. I bought a fat bike and fell in love riding in places that I never thought I could ride a bike - off the road and paved trail, it's so much fun! I started to go outside in the winter for the first time in years on my fat bike (for someone with rheumatoid - that is a big step, winter is not our friend). I bought a faster road bike and started distance riding. Thanks to my improved health and physical activity I am off of all prescription drugs and look forward to finding fun ways to be more active, preferably on my bike. I want to share my story because having fun places to go to enjoy a sport helps all of our health, joy, love of friends, teaching people new things and creates a sense of community. I will use and enjoy Big Willow Park on my bike, on the mountain bike trails. I will also continue to enjoy it on foot and while I am walking with my dog! We will all enjoy it equally - there is room for everyone,

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**Mark Broin** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 11, 2017 9:53 pm

 4 Votes

I apologize for my late entry into this forum. As an introduction, I own two properties on the north side of Timberhill Road, and a few years ago sold nearly 600 feet of property along the south shore of Minnehaha Creek, consisting of approximately 6 acres of buildable land off Timberhill Road, to the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. My reasons for doing so, and foregoing the profits of development, included assuring the property would be restored to its natural state, and remain preserved for the enjoyment of the public, and the benefit of the creek's environmental integrity, for generations to come.

I have been educating myself concerning this "single track" mountain biking trail being proposed, and am somewhat fortunate to have had some experience with similar efforts in Lake County, MN, where I own a home on the shores of Lake Superior.

A dedicated group of mountain biking folks are working with St. Louis County, Lake County and Cook County to build/create a contiguous mountain biking trail along the area of the North Shore of Lake Superior. Time spent evaluating the pros and cons of this effort, I believe, has provided me a basis for a reasonable and independent perspective on the project's background, and it's claimed potential for a variety of economic, recreational, environmental and social outcomes.

Before commenting further, I am working hard to gather and understand information about a similar, but smaller scale, local proposal, which has been provided to the City of Minnetonka. At this juncture, I can say I am concerned about the suitability of the proposed "intensity" of the development with regard to the land characteristics that are an integral part of the attributes of most of Minnetonka's parks...including the Civic Center and Big Willow.

As I post more comments, I appreciate the efforts others on this forum may make to help address/clarify any viewpoints/concerns I may offer for discussion.

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**Spencer Mohr** · Citizen · (Postal Code: 55345) · Dec 12, 2017 11:45 am

👍 4 Votes

Sorry guys, didn't mean to delete the last comment. I thought I could simply change it, so some wouldn't feel offended because that was not my intention. Anyway, I'll start this again. There are people in this forum who do not reside in the city of Minnetonka and also some that may or may not be real at all. I have a concern on the access of this new forum as I believe it should be held only as a resident to resident platform (although I understand that could be difficult).

### Response:

**Brian Wyneken** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 12, 2017 12:14 pm

No problem - thanks again for raising this as a concern - something for the "city staff and project consultants" to bear in mind as they review this forum.

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**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 12, 2017 12:00 pm

👍 1 Votes

Hi Spencer,

Sorry, I can't quite figure out replying in the correct thread, and I'm starting a new post... I hope this isn't too confusing. In reference to your post at 11:19 on Dec 12:

Thank you for the apology, I appreciate it.

I totally agree with you about the decision making process for the proposed changes, it is up to Minnetonka and it's residences to make these decision. To this point, all decisions are made by Minnetonka. Some outside parties have been invited as subject mater experts to help with the planning. These outside parties are only providing a service, think of it like the city contracting with firms for road projects through out Minnetonka.

Additionally, I believe I know the person you are referring to as "... a portion of it unfortunately still stands and is true". Earlier, I think you suggested that a person was not using their real name in this forum. I have a friend that used an alias to comment in this forum. They let me know that they wanted to share their feelings as a Minnetonka resident, but were wary of some of the people in this forum and the way they have been searching information about posters.

To that point, I think we all need to take a look at ourselves and the civility of this forum. It's very unfortunate that people don't feel comfortable sharing their real name in this dialog. Unfortunately, there have been some unrelated and very personal posts made.

### Response:

**JOHN SPEER** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 5:18 pm

Several of the residents including myself have felt personally attacked by Luke Van Santen he ended a response to me with " your already perilously thin grasp on reality." In addition Mr. Van Santen has sent e-mail directly to my personal e-mail address so I

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was interested in how he had gained access to my personal information. So yes I did attempt to find how Mr. Van Santen had access to this information. and I discovered that Mr. Van Santen as a government employee apparently has access to the personal information of those who post on this site. In joining the forum I did not give permission for comments to be sent to my personal e-mail address. I also did not expect to have my grasp on reality questioned simply for disagreeing with Mr. Van Santen. Please inform Mr. Van Santen that bullying is no longer being tolerated and that his lack of civility simply weakens his position and does, call into question his background and maturity. In the interest of full disclosure perhaps government employees who have special access to information should either be restricted from using it in a non governmental residential forum or should make known at the outset their special access to information. And if rules have been broken I would expect their to be consequences. So I don't blame those who chose not to use their real name in retrospect that seems like the safer course.

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**Steve Yochum** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 12, 2017 1:54 pm

👍 3 Votes

We all want the trails to be safe and environmentally friendly. These desires inherently make the area more attractive for people to use no matter where they live or the activity they choose. Please use this opportunity to create the features that have been proposed to protect the space and so everyone can enjoy the space more than they do now. This proposal will only improve the area and protect what is important to all of us. Well designed and sustainably built parks attract people to reside in the area that are educated, involved and have a positive economic impact on the area. Keep Minnetonka a positive place to live and work. Be open to the benefits this design can bring to the whole community.

---

**Mark Broin** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 12, 2017 8:14 pm

👍 4 Votes

After hours and days of researching, reading and looking for common threads amongst the available information, it appears to me the proposed intensity and specialized "single track" trails of the project are simply demographically inconsistent with the intent, character and layout of the Minnetonka park system. I can, however, visualize some additional expansion of "bike/walking" trails to reasonably accommodate the maximum number of potential park users. If pursued, how to do this responsibly is my fundamental concern.

Many of the claimed positive aspects of the proposal discussion make sense when viewed from the perspective of a large land area Crosby-Ironton (MN), Oregon (Oakridge), Canadian and other expansive areas of diverse land characteristics, expansive views and low population density. The only perspective that became clear to me is too many of these comparisons do not make common sense when looking at the characteristics of the currently delineated Minnetonka park system and its associated demographic profiles. The housing density, the pressured/encroached characteristics of the bounded natural environment, and the need to address, in fair balance, the desires of a very physically capable diverse city population and many similar visitors to the city, simply don't support the practical implementation of the proposed plan for adding mountain biking trails.

I'm trying not to complicate the issue with all the pro and con details that have been

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thrown back and forth. Just take a simple look at the land profile, and address your natural reactions about what makes common sense.

To me, this plan, as proposed, or even with modest adjustments, in many ways, just doesn't pass the "smell" test.

Let's take the claim for increased economic benefit. C'mon folks. The existing eating establishments can only handle so much business, and most have limited parking and seating for those that now use them. Lodging income? A regularly occurring multi-day trip to Minnetonka for mountain biking? I don't think so. Significant spending on other local products and services over any extended period of time? What are the proponents thinking about? Minnetonka is part of a large metropolitan area. Significant economic activity occurring in Minnetonka because of mountain biking? Its not going to happen, and this claim may as well be shelved.

However, valuable and scarce natural land resources and habitat will be affected. Maintenance needs will increase. Crowding may increase. All the other established issues with generating higher visitor density to limited areas of suburban park land will get more difficult and time consuming to manage. And to what advantage?

Support exercise and a healthy life style? Again, I think our park system already does this without promoting more extreme and more widened utilization of existing parkland footprints. I, for one, don't want an entertainment center, I want what prudent, balanced and reasonable use of naturally focused parklands are supposed to deliver to the largest segments of our population.

So, at this juncture, I do not see what adding these specialized or additional mountain bike trails would add to Minnetonka's already carefully managed and well planned mix of natural and reasonable recreational opportunity for the vast majority of its residents and visitors.

After all the reading and research I have diligently focused upon, It all seems pretty straightforward and simple to me.

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**matt keohen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 12, 2017 9:05 pm

 5 Votes

I am 100% against the creation of mountain bike trails in Big Willow park. The beauty and serenity of this park will never be the same.

Unfortunately I have to work when these meetings are scheduled, so my only voice is here. The animals that live here and their dwindling green space are once again trying to be pushed aside. They are my primary concern. Why cant we just leave a beautiful thing alone. There are so many other places to ride mountain bikes. I walk in this park very often, just to have a place to clear my head and enjoy its natural beauty. I realize that whatever happens will happen with this vote, but my vote is NO. Keeping our nature park natural is something we in Minnetonka can be proud of for generations to come.. thank you.

### Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 7:56 am

Hi Matt, Thank you for your input. I respect your no-vote and concerns.

Without trying to sway your vote, I would like to share something about the effect of

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single-track mountain biking on wildlife and the general peace in our parks. I've had many interactions like this while riding single-track trails in Theodore Wirth Park:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B74m7RsBH20>

I cherish the quiet of our parks and the encounters with the wild life as well as I'm a big fan of native flowers and plants. I would not support these trails if I felt they would take away peaceful space that is Big Willow Park.

I hope this information is helpful.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 7:22 am

👍 0 Votes

Really!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Luke Van Santen at December 12, 2017 at 6:33am CST

Brian, you did see that the entire northern portion of Big Willow has no proposed mountain bike trails in it, right?

There are obviously different maps of the proposed trails, because the map I saw, and see on the subject city website certainly does have mountain bike trails in the northern portion and the southern portion and the eastern portion and the western portion. In this discussion, the bridge over Minnehaha Creek is mentioned as common to bikes and pedestrians. Where do you draw the line for the northern portion?

### Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 16, 2017 7:43 am

Hi Ed!

For me, the railroad seems to be the line that divides Big Willow into north and south segments.

Could I trouble you to share or link to any maps you've seen? The two maps included in the City minutes, and that I posted separately, only show potential trails south of the railroad tracks.

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**Spencer Mohr** · Citizen · (Postal Code: 55345) · Dec 13, 2017 8:31 am

👍 4 Votes

We seem to have gotten off track to the real points in this discussion. At this time, I can say that I completely oppose these "Single Track" "Mountain" bike trails in Civic Center and Big Willow Parks. I have read 100s of pages of material from Minnetonka's website and outside sources in regards to these single track mountain bike trails and it just doesn't make common sense to create these trails.

I can't help but think of all of the natural habitat restoration many city officials and volunteers have done over the years in our amazing parks. Here is a snip it from the April 2017 park board meeting in regards to both Civic Center and Big Willow Parks.

Habitat Restoration Activities

# Potential Mountain Biking Trails

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- Over 310 acres of city land in parks and natural areas continues to be under habitat restoration with the goal of bringing back diverse healthy ecosystems and habitats. After many years of active restoration, this has been largely achieved in the core areas of five large parks: Big Willow, Civic Center, Lone Lake, Purgatory and Jidana. Due to the pressure from invasive species substantial annual maintenance is essential.
- In 2016 habitat, restoration was conducted in 15 parks including Gray's Bay Marina. Nine parks have a high level of restoration activity including regular work by Adopt-a-Spot volunteers.
- Goat grazing occurred at Purgatory Park in 2016. In early May, 22 goats arrived on a trial basis to assist with control of two invasive species. The goats grazed in seven different paddocks of about a half-acre each until early July. The goats were extremely popular with residents, drawing in many visitors; but they did not come problem-free. Staff summarized the benefits and challenges goats pose for habitat restoration and is continuing trials with strict measures to avoid harm to native plants.
- More than a decade of buckthorn and invasive species removal has taken place before space and time has become available to plant native trees and shrubs in restoration areas. Twelve species, totaling 127 trees and shrubs, were planted to benefit native diversity, wildlife, birds and pollinators in ten parks.
- This past year was the first year native prairie, woodland and wetland wildflower seeds were collected from Minnetonka rain gardens and restoration areas. Seeds of 25 species were dispersed in six parks with open restoration areas. Emphasis on collecting milkweed species will benefit declining monarch butterfly populations.
- The greatest natural resources benefits from volunteers comes from two types: Groups and Adopt-a-Spot individuals. It is unusual for a group to volunteer multiple times in a single year. Geocache volunteers have assisted with control of garlic mustard and buckthorn control more than three times per year for the past three years. They are a very enthusiastic, motivated group who gives restoration projects a boost.

I can just see Trail Source LLC's mini plow running over all the hard work that these volunteers have done to restore our natural habitat, just to create a track that ONLY mountain bikers can ride on. Here is an image of Trail Source LLC's plow that may create these trails <http://trailsources.net/home/#foobox-1/2/Tim-Wegner-3.jpg>. I'm sure it won't be something this small as Minnetonka has now hired a larger "consultant" that would more than likely bring in a bulldozer to create these trails. My point is that there are so many trees, among other natural habitat, that would have to be removed to create these trails. MTKA has purposely left the down trees in these areas to create part of this natural habitat. Based on these trail designs, we would have to remove at least 40+ downed trees in Civic Center Park alone to create this single track. Not only would the trees be removed, the animals would go with them. There would simply be too much activity to keep the amazing wild life in both Big Willow and Civic Center Park. These areas are becoming limited every day in this state and country, why do more damage? This is not ok with me; I have lived in Minnetonka my entire existence and no other city compares when it comes to the natural beauty of Minnetonka.

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This just doesn't make sense for the City of Minnetonka. If we look at all of the MTKA parks, they are designed for multi-use. What does multi-use mean? It means that many different activities can take place on the existing trails, fields, courts, ice rinks. The proposal states that the uses for the mountain bike trail will be strictly for mountain biking, which is not multi-use. In fact, they specifically say that they will close these trails at specific times, so no use will be permitted during those times. Last I checked our residents were able to enjoy all trails and parks no matter what they may be doing, and now we are looking at restricting access to our residents in both Civic Center and Big Willow Parks to create a single track trail only for mountain bikers.

Again, it just doesn't make common sense. If a biker/mountain biker wants to go on the current deer trails today, they do and no one seems to be bothered. Why would we go ahead and plow down our restored habitat areas to create something that is not multi-use?

Again, it doesn't make common sense for the City of Minnetonka to build these trails in areas which already have limited natural habitat. It also doesn't get close to comparing to any single track trail system in the State of Minnesota. I could go on and on about the cons regarding the environment and comparisons to other trails, but Civic Center and Big Willow are already small as it is today and only so much can continue to be preserved. To me, there is absolutely no point to destroy what has been worked so hard on, and that is our natural habitat in our Minnetonka parks.

### Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 9:27 am  
Hi Spencer,

Are you able to attend tonight's meeting? I hope we can have the opportunity to talk in person since these online forums aren't great for me.

To your post, I'm feel the need to respond to a couple points - because I think readers of this forum should understand the counterpoints.

The proposed trails will not "plow down our restored habitat areas"; on the contrary, the mountain bike advocates are volunteering with the city to restore Big Willow. I will share a comment from one of the Minnetonka park employees while the bike advocates were cleaning up Big Willow, they said that they never get this number of volunteers for a clean up project.

If you are available to attend tonight's meeting, I expect the city or bike advocates can give you details on the number of people and hours volunteered cleaning up our park. Also, you can come join us on Saturday to remove buck thorn in Big Willow.

Quick afterthought: last fall, as we were removing noxious plants in Big Willow, I was overjoyed to find an Indian pipe in the woods of Big Willow, I've never found one blooming in the metro area. What a gift to have a plant like that growing the middle of our suburb landscape. Reference: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monotropa\\_uniflora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monotropa_uniflora)

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**Martha Olson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 11:10 am

 8 Votes

I work at St. David's Center and spend my lunch break walking in Big Willow every weekday. The time spent on the trail is very therapeutic as it is peaceful, calm and quiet.

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I fear that adding a mountain bike path would disrupt the serenity of this natural area. Please take this into consideration before making a final decision. Thank you!

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**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 12:45 pm

👍 2 Votes

I have read many posts expressing concern about the noise of the proposed bike trails. I understand the concern and I agree that we do not want to disrupt the peace of our parks with loud noises. However, that leads me to ask a question:

Why do people believe these bikes will be so loud?

I expect everybody here has been walking on a mix-use trail and had a person on bike pass without announcing themselves. It's unsettling since bikes are so quiet, at least that's my experience. So I'm honestly confused about the idea that 'mountain bikes' are somehow louder than bikes you encounter elsewhere.

### Response:

**Jerry Johanning** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 1:19 pm

Agreed. Bicycles are certainly no louder than the train that goes through Big Willow, or the softball fields, the soccer fields, or the baseball fields, or the recycle center the cars on Minnetonks Blvd etc..

### Response:

**Brian Wyneken** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 1:40 pm

Chris - I will provide my perspective which I suspect may be typical enough of those not in favor of this proposal.

I don't think people are suggesting that the bikes themselves are noisy, although bikes do make some noise and lots of bikes make more noise than fewer bikes. It's the people riding them that make noise as they are having fun, riding fast, calling out to one another, etc. Again, more people having fun typically make more noise than a few people having fun.

I don't think anyone here is so stingy as to not want the mountain bike enthusiasts to find an a good place to ride and to have fun and get good exercise. But right now, for the most part, Big Willow is relatively quiet place and many of the users prefer that current state over something that would very likely add the usual noise associated with a more exciting recreational area.

What I've added above is a response to a question - solely about "noise", provided in the nature of perspective based on experience.

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**Pam Anderson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 2:20 pm

👍 3 Votes

We have lived in Minnetonka since 1980, when the walking/bike trails along Minnetonka Blvd. were still rail lines. We formed a group of concerned citizens requesting a bike/walking trail for those lines once they were no longer being used for trains. We



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succeeded in getting approval from the county and the city for the wonderful trail that many now use. We have always been in favor of a safe place away from traffic for people to get out and exercise and enjoy nature at the same time.

Big Willow Park is one of the most beautiful treasures left in the city of Minnetonka. It is one of the few places that you can go and not have speeding bikes or cars next to you. When you walk the narrow trails off the main trails within the park, you can actually imagine that you are no longer in the suburbs. It's common to see deer and other wildlife in the area. It's nice to have a place where you can slow down in such a hectic world and be with nature.

Now with the large senior complex that was built right across the street from the parking lot from Big Willow, there is increased foot traffic and an increase in people walking with pets.

It would be a tragedy to have off road biking in that particular park. I know of many other walkers/joggers in the area that are not happy with the idea of changing Big Willow. We all use those narrow paths in addition to the main paths. Sometimes you don't want to walk or jog on a big wide path with others, but need to have some solitude.

I am very concerned about how off road biking would affect the tranquility, the natural resources and the wildlife in the park. Big Willow is a unique ecosystem within the city, especially with the Minnehaha Creek flowing through it. There is only one bridge crossing the Creek - are walkers, joggers, pets, and off road bikers all going to share that bridge? There is only one winding trail that goes under the railroad bridge. Would that also be used by off road bikers in addition to walkers/joggers??? I have almost been hit by recreational bikers on that trail many times as there are many blind spots as you come around corners.

The amount of foot traffic in Big Willow Park has increased considerably in the past few years. There is very little parking (about 6 spots) at the park, which can't really accommodate an increase of use. Please consider other locations for off road biking and leave this small, local park for its neighbors to enjoy.

Thank you!

### Response:

**Laura Arndt** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 10:21 pm  
Totally agree with you 100%!

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**Naomi King-Smith** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 2:55 pm

👍 3 Votes

I am president of our neighborhood association which backs on to Big Willow Park and the Minnetonka Public Works. We are vehemently opposed to the mere suggestion of a mountain biking trail in the area, with it's inevitable destruction of the beautiful woods and creek. Our homes were built many years before the Minnetonka Public Works and Big Willow were expanded to their present size and scope of operation. The noise above 70 decibels from the Public Works year round, the lights and boisterous crowds 7 months of the years until 10:30 PM, and the increasing theft reports we receive from the Minnetonka Police Dept, will increase. Our quality of life will decrease, and decrease our

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property values even further. Additionally, canoeists on Minnehaha Creek treat it as the Apple River beerfest, bringing yelling, noise, parties, rafts, dogs, and use it as a public toilet on occasion. Mountain bikers go for speed, and any walkers or dogs (who are let off leash - and they are all the time, no matter what rules you post) will be at risk - because they do not stick to rules or trails either.

### Response:

**Laura Arndt** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 10:18 pm  
Agree about safety of walkers and dogs. I DO NOT let my dog off leash, but even so, I would not want bikes flying by. And no matter what bikers say, there are MANY rude bikers out there that feel they OWN the trails. Do we really want more bikes here in our one safe place?

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**Jeffrey Severson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 5:57 pm

👍 3 Votes

I am a new resident of Minnetonka, living in the same neighborhood association mentioned by Naomi above. Friends and family that have walked this park for the first time rave about its beauty and serenity. Given the size and layout of Big Willow park, I feel that the addition of bike paths will almost certainly detract from the experience we currently enjoy in the park, so I am against the bike paths. If there is a desire for more bike paths, why not put them in a larger park, or in areas that are not as pristine as Willow Park. From reading the comments, it sounds like the proposed trails would be used in part by competitive mountain bike riders. These riders are going to be focused on their speed and technique, not the beauty of the park. So put this kind of path on land that has average beauty, not one of the most pristine small parks in the Twin Cities.

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**Jeffrey Severson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 5:57 pm

👍 0 Votes

I am referring to Big Willow Park.

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**CC Clarkson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 10:05 pm

👍 4 Votes

Big Willow park is a very popular walking area for people of all ages and their pets. As a senior citizen who loves to walk, I need the trails in Big Willow to stay as they are. I can no longer safely walk along roadsides. Bicyclists using Minnetonka trails already often do not obey trail rules. It is quite startling to have a bike approach rapidly from behind without warning. Bikers are supposed to call out "To your left" before passing, but most do not. Approaching bicyclists often are looking down, apparently at the front tire or the road just in front of it and pedestrians have to get out of their way, as the bicyclists do not look out for pedestrians. Big Willow is too diverse a park to dedicate it for Bike trails. Just on the other side (south side) of Minnetonka Boulevard is the trail that runs for many miles, formerly a railroad track. Bicyclists are already using that. I would like to see Big Willow not used as a bicycle gathering place for people not paying taxes in Minnetonka anymore than is currently happening and it is happening quite a bit. Minnetonka was a village when I moved here. Now it is a very populated city and can only support so many people.

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**Laura Arndt** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 10:14 pm

👍 4 Votes

The best thing about Big Willow Park is that it is peaceful. It is the ONE place I can walk or run and not have to worry about a biker flying past without announcing themselves. I can stand by the train bridge and listen to the creek and watch the wildlife. Minnetonka is already FULL of biking opportunities. I know! I bike too! We don't need more....at least not through this park. Has anyone looked into the history of this park? My father can tell you many stories about the history of the home that used to be there. And the people that lived there. He cared for the property. (You can still see a bit of the foundation.) We don't need bikes ruining this beautiful natural setting. It saddens me that living a mile away, the first I heard about this had to be tonight on the news! Very disappointing!

## Response:

**Pam Anderson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 10:32 pm

I couldn't agree more, Laura!!! I would love to hear about the history of that home. We have watched that area change over the years and always wondered about the people who lived there!

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**Andy Braun** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 13, 2017 10:35 pm

👍 3 Votes

- 1) Any city property should be considered (parks or not) and perhaps should first consider non-developed (non park) property, or otherwise property that is not currently used for any other recreational or for other purposes, as this would alleviate issues regarding the current usage of existing parks.
- 2) A broader scope for 'off road'/gravel trail systems should be explored in tandem with mountain bike specific trail use. That is for example Bryant lake and Lone lake are currently connected with a favorable trail. We should continue the trail system up through Shady oak and to the SW Bluff trail, continuing on and connecting other parks and hubs to Willow and Civic parks. This would allow more convenient access to the various hubs/parks and foster a more inclusive network of trails for all forms of bicycle and walking paths. Included with this consideration should be a concept similar to the new Nine Mile Creek trail system through Edina and into Hopkins.
- 3) Existing Parks with existing 'vast' walking trail systems should be considered for a designated or mixed use mountain bike trail system. There are many 'non sanctioned' foot and bike trails through many parks. And there is still an ample amount of space for additional trails within those parks. We should simply redesign as needed, and designate as mixed or bike trails.
- 4) There are many pros. Family friendly. Group or solo friendly. Accessible (any bike works fine on a mountain bike trail, you don't need a special 'mountain' bike. There's no admission fee. Year round outdoor recreation. Great alternative to 'traditional' sports such as baseball/football/soccer/hockey etc. Fosters community engagement, clubs, groups. Supports small/local business such as bike shops and other businesses. Its more environmentally friendly than 'ball fields' as it fosters bio diversity, support of the environment/ecology, mixed use of land. No pesticides/herbicides/destruction of habitat. You don't have to mow it every week (gas, monoculture/grass)
- 5) Trail systems built specifically for mountain biking will prevent the large prevalence of non-sanctioned trails. I personally believe that non-sanctioned trails should be encouraged in our public spaces (whether walking, cycling, skiing, bird watching etc.)

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but I'm not sure the city would agree.

6) For parks specifically, I believe Lone, Willow and Bryant should be the focus. They have ample space and already have a prevalent non-sanctioned trail system. Which I don't foresee going away. There has always been a culture (throughout the generations) of building 'off grid' trails in the 'nooks and crannies' of our neighborhoods and parks. I'm in full support of this, but am in stronger support of 'mindfully and purposely' designed trail systems. The non sanctioned trails aren't going away, I think the 'ask' now is just to say 'lets build them better.'

7) I'd love dog parks, public spaces for community gardens and year round green houses, xx-ski trails, marsh cat walks and any/all matter of outdoor eco-friendly recreational activities. The real issue is supply and demand, and having to balance a 'mix use' approach.

8) I'd say for all the ball fields, and playgrounds etc, we can provide at least one mountain bike trail.

9) Anyone concerned with environmental impact should first look at themselves, and their own lifestyles/homes/environmental footprint. a) GO SOLAR. b) STOP USING PETROLEUM. c) GO ORGANIC. d) STOP MOWING YOUR LAWN, plant natives, pollinators and wildlife edible species, stop using/overusing synthetic fertilizers/pesticides/herbicides.. Until they've done these things they have no leg to stand on in this argument (including the city). Our local Minnehaha and Nine Mile Creek watersheds (governing bodies) are strong advocates against mono-culture, well-manicured grass lawns. Anyone who believes the negative environmental impact of bike trails is greater than that of grass-lawns is sorely mistaken.

10) I too love using foot trails and the serenity of our parks. Its a great asset/amenity. I believe there is still plenty of space in our parks and other public land to accommodate at least one, if not several bike trails.

11) Mountain bike trails (even ones that are several miles long) are/can be actually quite compact, and have a small footprint, (think of how long your intestines are fit inside your abdomen). Overpasses/underpasses with adjacent foot trails should be encouraged.

12) We should look to use 'lesser desirable' land for mountain bike trails.

Thank you to the city and residence for all the work and consideration.

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**Richard Martinson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 7:19 am

 2 Votes

I believe we have more than enough bike paths and trails. I think we should consider using the money for something more important.


## Response:

**Andy Braun** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 12:36 pm

I don't think we have nearly enough. we certainly don't have any mountain bike trails which are a specific build type. with all the ball fields, ice rinks, playgrounds, pools and other amenities, we should be able to offer at least one mountain bike trail.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 8:05 am

 2 Votes

I attended the Dec 13th meeting at the Civic Center and found it disappointing from the very start. This was, as I understand it, an attempt to gather input from city residents on the establishment of Mountain Bike trails in Minnetonka Parks or not. Resident input to

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the city Park Board, and then potentially to the City Council. At no time was I asked for my full name, or address to establish myself as a city resident. We are talking about city property and city \$. It is a Minnetonka issue. There were a lot on non-residents in attendance. There was even a failed attempt to determine how many were Mtnka residents, non-resident but within the metro, and beyond the metro. But of course that survey tool from the paid consultants on this issue did not work.

The subject was Mountain Biking and a question got ask about the size of Big Willow. A question clearly aimed at the size available for the trails. The answer provided was of the total park area including ball fields and wetland. When challenged because the area of the park available for these trails is less than 1/4 of the total, the challenger was reprimanded. Not what I would have anticipated verses an acknowledgement of the correction. This makes me wonder if the money being spent for this external information gathering from residents is not total waste of city resources to try to justify a decision that has already been made and this is nothing but an attempt to suppress public input into the decision.

I have asked several times of different people involved if this mountain bike trails if established in Big Willow, would remain accessible to pedestrians, or would become dedicated to the single track bike trails. The answer provided last night was that these trails, which based on a previously published map, would include most if not all of the existing deer trails and not be available to pedestrians. This is not acceptable to the estimated 1500 daily visitors to this park. Was this answer provided accurate?

### Response:

**Spencer Mohr** · Citizen · (Postal Code: 55345) · Dec 14, 2017 10:13 am

Ed, I should clarify, the Civic Center park location would not use any existing deer trails. I am not as familiar with Big Willow as you are, but I did hear from a resident that some of the deer trails would be used based on the proposal from Trail Source LLC. The point is, whether there is a deer trail or not, they will still use the same equipment to create these new trails. So that would mean if you walk on that deer trail today and the proposal ends up on that trail, it will no longer become multi-use, it will only be for mountain biking. And just so you are aware, I completely oppose these trails in both Civic Center park and Big Willow.

### Response:

**Spencer Mohr** · Citizen · (Postal Code: 55345) · Dec 14, 2017 8:27 am

Ed, none of the "single track" trails would be on the existing deer trails. Instead, WSB & Associates (which also happens to be a general contractor, among other things) would create brand new trails for mountain biking ONLY. This means they would bring in some sort of equipment to create new paths through Minnetonka's natural habitat areas. The fact that Mr. Nelson on Fox 9 News last night said that this wouldn't effect anything is utterly ridiculous. Facts state, NEW trails would be created, and unfortunately that would be at the cost of the existing natural habitat and wild life.

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**mm mckee** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 9:20 am

👍 5 Votes

I attended all the Imagine Minnetonka meetings during 2017 and at no time did I hear anything about citizens wanting mountain bike trails. I was impressed with the size of people attending the Dec 13 meeting and the obvious feeling of NOT wanting mountain bike trails. I felt the city representative was dismissive of people and not calling for a

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show of hands of people who were not residents at the meeting was a mistake.

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**Mark Broin** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 9:59 am

👍 4 Votes

This comment is a follow-up to my original assessment on December 12, 2017, and a response to Joshua Rebennack who implied I should review the last 20 years of mountain biking in Minnesota. So, let's take a look at the facts surrounding some of Joshua's comments, and his references to the changes in the last 20 years in Minnesota. I present this with all due respect, understanding his and other proponent's passion for the mountain bike and related bicycling industry:

The bicycle industry in Minnesota over the past 20 years, which Joshua referenced, to be clearly understood, must be viewed in terms of national trends regarding bicycles and interest in bicycling.

The 2015 (the latest data I could find) NBDA (National Bicycle Dealers Association) bicycle sales statistics, going back to 1992, in which projected sales volumes of two categories of bike sales are available (bikes sold with 20+ inch wheels, and the total of all bikes of all wheel sizes sold) is available. The number of 20+ inch wheel bikes going back to approximately 1973 is outlined in this report, but total sales of all bikes earlier than 1992 are not shown.

1973 was the record year for sales of bikes with 20+ inch wheels. The year 2000 was the highest projected sales year for all bikes combined. There is no data presented for total bikes during the years previous to 1992.

The total number of all bikes sold in 2015 (17.4 million) was some 3.5 million bikes fewer than in 2000 (20.9 million). In general, it appears bike sales of all kinds have consistently been remaining stable between 15.3 million and 19.4 million total bikes sold per year. In fact, according to Streets.MN (7/29/2015), "... sales have been flat, and declining per capita, for 15 years".

In 2015, nearly 69% of all bike sales were of bikes with wheel diameters of 20+ inches or larger. In 2000 (the high sales year for all types of wheel size unit sales), approximately 57% of bikes sold had wheel diameters of 20+ inches or more.

Between 2004 and 2012, "specialty market" share sales of mountain bikes dropped from about 29% to around 25%, a decrease of 4%. In 2010 mountain bike sales were as low as 22% of bikes classified as "Specialty". The "Specialty" portion of the total Bicycle Market comprised approximately 13% of the total bicycle units sold in 2015. So, in 2015, mountain bike sales reflected around 3.25% of the total national bicycle marketplace.

Although I don't have the latest sales data, one can only presume Minnesota's bike sales, at best, mirrored aspects of the national mix of types and volume percentages. However, when taking state climate patterns, particularly winters, one might expect Minnesota's per capita biking patterns are even more fundamentally challenging than the national trends.

What the numbers do show is that mountain biking, as part of the relatively stable but per-capita declining biking experience, represents a minority of biking activity. This

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should cause any government body considering biking amenities in their local planning processes, to pay close attention to the fact roughly 96% or more of public biking activity does not include an interest in mountain biking.

There are other facts in the referenced materials outlining the general state of bicycling and marketing of bicycles in the United States. This information does not support the oft repeated claims by mountain biking advocates that bicycling interest, and the related commercial market, is or has been growing dramatically over the years, or that mountain biking interest is a major concern of the vast majority of the public-at-wide bicycling community. The data simply do not support many of the mountain biking claims.

So, with this fact-based assessment of the general state of the bicycling industry, and mountain biking's participatory share of that industry, just what do supporters expect me, or the City of Minnetonka, to infer differently when it was suggested I "...Actually look at the facts and history. You might find many of your conclusions to be challenged by reality".

From what I read, I believe the aspect of the facts surrounding "reality" discussed in responding to Joshua is pretty clear, and may actually mitigate any tendency I might have considered for compromise to now be overly optimistic. I simply don't see my original conclusions adversely "challenged by reality". And, that "reality" is publically documented back many years.

So, no matter how I look at the information proponents are alluding to, regarding mountain biking in Minnesota and its demographic centers and other areas of concern in my initial comments, I don't see any overwhelming or driving factors to cause anyone to look at mountain biking as a priority in any way above other, and more far reaching, public parkland planning priorities.

And, there is no indication, as more recent data may become available, that the past trends in the bicycling marketplace are going to radically change and cause mountain biking to be any more of a priority or interest to the wider general public than it has been for years.

Major public investment, in my opinion, therefore, should have much higher and wider-ranging priorities when looking at the best use of disappearing and valuable suburban natural resources, such as preserved parkland located in these higher population density areas.

### Response:

**Brian Wyneken** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 11:33 am

Thank you Mark - the obvious time and care that you are putting into these remarks is much appreciated. I perceive a theme on this forum suggesting that if people "just had the facts" (so to speak) that there could not be any reasonable opposition to this proposal. Certainly facts should be a part of the discussion, so your taking the time to address this theme is a great contribution - thanks again.

---

**Gary Kerber** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 10:19 am

 2 Votes

As an aging close-by resident, mtn biker and 10+ year vegetation volunteer in BW, I am

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neither for or against... Discussions with opponents quickly disconnect when they reveal ignorance of mtn biking and its venues. Please visit a local mtn biking area, like Theodore Wirth Park. Google and park in Schaper Park in Golden Valley, walk east on the Luce Line asphalt trail. After the wood bridge, walk left or right on any narrow path for 50+ feet. You are now in/on a mtn biking course. Now we can reconnect for further discussion.

---

**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 5:03 pm

👍 0 Votes

Andy Braun at December 14, 2017 at 12:39pm CST

Ed, the total size of the park including the ball fields and wetlands could be repurposed/rebuilt for bike trails.

Really Andy? What a great idea! I am sure the DNR will approve destroying the wetland for Mountain Biking. Your idea of using the ball fields is actually a much better suggestion. If that works for the Mountain Bikers, we can just scrap this whole idea and use the regional trails already interlacing all over the city, and extending as far as any biker would like to go. Great idea, Andy. I think you should pursue it with the MORC people and the city.

---

**Alan Sussman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 5:45 pm

👍 2 Votes

I regularly walk our dogs in this area. I use both the crushed limestone path and the informal trails through the woods. It is regularly used by neighbors and people who arrive by car and park in the lots. I'm also an avid bike rider, although it's mostly road riding in the metro area.

I'm hard-pressed to understand how pedestrians, pets, and mountain bikes can SAFELY coexist in what is actually a relatively small space. I can't seem to find a proposed layout for a mountain bike course, but since it's a fairly small space when you factor in the wetlands, the only proposal I can think of would have the mountain bike course criss-crossing the limestone path. That seems like a recipe for accidents, injuries, and maybe worse.

I grew up in the City of Minneapolis near the lakes. For those of us of a certain age, we remember that pedestrians and bikes used the same paths. There was no separation. And then one day a young woman was killed by a bike rider on the Lake Harriet path. That spurred the separation that we all take for granted today.

So here's an idea that should be considered if a mountain bike proposal proceeds. One of my favorite trails to ride in the Boulder CO area is a mixed pedestrian and bike trail. But it's only open to bike riders on certain days of the week. For those pedestrians who want complete separation from bike riders, they avoid the trail on the days that it is open to bikes.

**Response:**



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**Mike Vandeman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 9:37 pm  
"Alternate days" plans aren't fair to the majority. The ONLY sensible plan is for bicycles to be restricted to paved roads. Any mountain biker who wants to see the park can WALK - just like everyone else! Are they too lazy to walk? Why else do they insist on bringing a LARGE PIECE OF MACHINERY along with them?????

---

**Mike Vandeman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 7:21 pm

👍 1 Votes

Mountain biking and trail building destroy wildlife habitat! Mountain biking is environmentally and medically destructive. Bicycles should be restricted to paved roads!

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.info/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.info/scb7.htm> ). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video: <http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous: [http://mjvande.info/mtb\\_dangerous.htm](http://mjvande.info/mtb_dangerous.htm) .

For more information: <http://mjvande.info/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

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The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

Now watch the mountain bikers lie and attack me for telling the truth about their selfish, destructive sport!

## Response:

**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 7:54 pm

Mike Vandeman: I am trusting that you posting is accurate in what it covers. It is so contrary to other posts, I would like to suggest that you send it to Kelly O'dea requesting that he forward it to each of the Park Board members. In addition, I would copy each of the city council members and the mayor. Inputs need to get to the people that matter and unfiltered by a hired consultant that I have concerns about their ability to forward an accurate assessment of the feedback they are receiving.

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**Brian Wyneken** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 8:56 pm

👍 0 Votes

This forum appears to be getting some interest from outside of our city and nearby communities. Access and participation on the forum appears not be limited in any manner. I see some issues with this.

For disclosure, while I am generally opposed to the specific Big Willow proposal, I am not necessarily opposed to public funds being used to accommodate this mountain biking activity. I also have not detected a reason to question the good faith of the local advocates for mountain biking on this forum insofar as I believe that they believe what they say here. That's what not questioning good faith means - being willing to believe that people are not deliberately trying to deceive.

That being said, I think it is important for those of us who are residents to be cautious about two things: (1) how we treat our neighbors on this forum, and (2) forming associations on this forum with people not living in this community - it's the shared stake-holding in living together here that will work to keep this forum civil. I'm not suggesting that others cannot participate - the site allows it and they are, but outside advocates have a mission different from one that includes protecting neighborly relationships. I do not mean to come off as lecturing or condescending - if I have it was not intended - I'm just concerned about some things I'm seeing on this site.

---

**Tanni Stone-Dorshow** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 9:16 pm

👍 3 Votes

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposal to designate trails in minnetonka for the use of mountain bikes. The trails near my home (between Minnetonka Blvd and Cedar lake road, and across and along Minnetonka Blvd) are a precious resource, treasured by me and many of our neighbors. They are currently (mostly) successfully shared by pedestrians, many of whom have dogs, strollers, or

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young children in tow, and bikers alike. However, I would hate to see an increase in the number of bikers, which would certainly adversely affect both the safety and enjoyability of the trails for pedestrians.

I therefore strongly urge the city not to proceed with the proposed mountain biking designation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Tanni Stone-Dorshow, MD  
2805 Ella Lane  
952-543-8146

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**Mike Vandeman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 14, 2017 9:21 pm

 1 Votes

I have been studying mountain biking and its impacts for about 25 years. In that time, I have never heard even ONE good reason to allow bicycles in natural areas. They are environmentally and medically destructive. Anyone who wants to see the area can walk or use a wheelchair. Bicycles are machines, not citizens! BICYCLES have no rights. And there is no right to mountain bike. There's nothing to debate. See <http://mjvande.info/mtbfaq.htm>.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 15, 2017 5:11 am

 1 Votes

Joshua Rebennack at December 14, 2017 at 2:58pm CST  
Ed Friedman - Why do you keep saying these trails will be for mountain bikers only? Do you have a source for that? At the meeting on Dec 13, the City Manager responded to my question and stated that the trails would be single purpose for safety.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 15, 2017 9:13 am

 0 Votes

Ed Friedman at December 15, 2017 at 5:16am CST  
Joshua Rebennack, Background question for you. Are you involved in the trail construction business? Are you involved with the firm hired to do this information gathering? Do you live in Minnetonka?

The source of this information which is available to the public is,  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joshua-rebennack-319a1843>

There is absolutely no guarantee that this is the Joshua Rebbennack posting here, but there are enough similarities to indicate it is.

I asked if you were involved in the trail construction business? The answer from available information on your LinkedIn information is, maybe.

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Are you employed by the company gathering information for Mtka? The answer is that the information available does not indicate that.

Do you live in Minnetonka? The answer available is that you do not live in Minnetonka, you live in Pine River, but you could have moved.

Why are you inserting yourself into this local issue?

## Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 15, 2017 10:24 am

When they repave the street in front of your house, does the city involve people from outside the city? Same thing here, the city is working with people that know how to design trails, because we do not have the expertise in the park staff. Also like at the meeting on Wednesday night, the presenter (sorry, forgot her name) was brought in because of her specialty knowledge. As respectfully as I can say this, calm down your paranoia and stop spreading misleading information.

---

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 15, 2017 10:08 am

👍 1 Votes

While looking for something else about Minnetonka history, I stumbled on to this history of the Minnetonka Horsemen (linked below). This is my person history, we lived in the Hilloway area with horses on our property, I grew up in with the Minnetonka Horsemen.

This clip highlights the nature of change in Minnetonka, and the changes in activities in Minnetonka's parks.

"Hilloway Park was too small to be a roaming area destination for riders so that little riding was done north of Big Willow Park except by a few riders that still had horses at their homes in the Hilloway Park area.

The City of Minnetonka covered many of the bridle paths in both Big Willow and Hilloway Parks with improved walkways as part of the city's loop trail system. In the winter, some of these trails were left unplowed by the City. Cross country skiers began using the unplowed, improved trails and they had strong objections, made known to City officials, to sharing the trails with horses as they claimed that the horse hoof tracks impaired their ski tracks. The City encouraged riders to use alternative new trails, and they put up signs in Big Willow Park notifying riders of the separation between the Minnetonka Trails System trails and bridle trails."

Our parks have evolved over the decades, and will continue to evolve as Minnetonka's residents wants and needs change. These are our parks, and they can evolve to address the want of a large number of residents for single-track bike trails.

[http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/8f0c0e\\_a3b7bfeccec594eb2879d1e5055f9a042.pdf](http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/8f0c0e_a3b7bfeccec594eb2879d1e5055f9a042.pdf)

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 15, 2017 11:21 am

👍 2 Votes

Chris Nelson: I remember the horses in Minnetonka, in Big Willow, In the Hilloway Park

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area, in Meadow Park, riders taking a short cut across my lawn. I still miss the horses. The damage they did to my lawn was manageable and worth the thrill my kids seeing them, and occasionally being able to talk to the riders and touch the horses. I do not know all the reasons the horses have gone. I am sure the increase in property value had a major impact on the owners of the stables off Cedar Lake Rd and the pasture land on the east side of Plymouth Rd. There were cattle there also. It was sad to see how some of those animals were not properly taken care of. Some conditions obvious to a no-farm guy that knows that the hooves should not be so long that they are curled up.

Anyway, this has nothing to do with the subject at hand. The subject at hand that has many engaged now is making a conscious decision to change the atmosphere of Big Willow and to eliminate the opportunity for 100s of residents enjoy a walk off the maintained paths and to bring our kids and grandkids with us to enjoy nature. And yes, the opportunity will be taken away if the bike paths are established. The question was posed to the City Manager at the meeting on Dec 13 and she said that the bike trails would be single use, not multi-use by pedestrians and bikers..

## Response:

**Chris Nelson** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 15, 2017 2:55 pm

Hi Ed, I'm sorry my point wasn't clear to you. In brief the reason horses left is covered in the text I quoted and in more detail in the link I supplied. It is relevant because the parks of Minnetonka have changed, displacing historic users for new users. The parks will continue to change as for newer users have new interests in our parks. I would like to see everybody be able to enjoy our parks. That's the last I'm going to have to say on this issue, I have a very demanding schedule and will not be able to come back to this for a number of days.

---

**Joe Black** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 15, 2017 2:48 pm

 4 Votes

I attended the 12/13 meeting and came away from the meeting both encouraged and discouraged about the prospects of single track mountain bike trails being added to Minnetonka parks.

During the presentation, questions, and from side conversations it is obvious that there is still a misunderstanding of what adding these trails will look like in the parks. Many of the comments above and resources cited explain how the trails can be built to be sustainable, safe, and fun.

What encouraged me is that during the discussion at our table [four pro-trail advocates and four citizens concerned about trails] we had a respectful discussion and learned about the concerns and opportunities.

One word I have not seen much in the conversations above is "compromise". During our group discussion I asked if it would be acceptable to the residents close to Big Willow if the mountain bike trails were only built on the portion of Big Willow north of the creek [and south of RR tracks]. Due to the short length the single track trails would be dedicated for mountain bike use only.

Our group thought that could be a workable compromise allowing walking through the woods south of the creek and biking on trails in the woods north of the creek. The crushed limestone trails would still be there for connecting the parks to surrounding parks and neighborhoods.

Obviously, as a mountain biker I would prefer a longer trail, but I would welcome any addition of single track trails to the flat trails that we currently are allowed to use. In Civic Center the woods south of the creek away from the neighborhood could be

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developed with single track trails and the woods north of the creek there could be left as is.

In addition, a portion of Purgatory Park, Lone Lake Park, and possibly other areas [494 corridor] could have similar shorter segments of trail. Those two parks are large enough to have areas with single track trail while still allowing a large portion of the park to remain in its current state.

For Minnetonka riders that could provide miles of single track trails across several parks, A complete loop of these parks is only about 24 miles via crushed limestone and paved trails.

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**Mark Broin** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 15, 2017 10:03 pm

👍 4 Votes

Part of the job I do is to resolve major business problems for a wide variety of organizations. I start with the "big" view and work down into appropriate details. However, when the larger view makes a solution obvious, without cluttering it with details vested interests may have, I don't waste time or money getting into the minutia.

In this case, I would stand with whatever might be in the best interest of the 96% of the biking community that does not show an obsessive interest in only one small aspect of the bicycling experience.

Also, in this case, there is more at stake than a small minority's deep commitment to biking options which they, to the tune of only around 3% or so, seem to have given their intense loyalty and focus. Particularly, rare, sensitive, and disappearing natural parkland environments must be viewed from the perspective that not all special interests are able to be accommodated in a balanced, respectful and workable set of circumstances.

This is how I see our Minnetonka parklands, which have now been managed for decades with a focus on highly important and long view priorities which properly outweigh the many other options the land might be used for.

If expanding biking/walking trail footprints in the parks is desirable, in a manner consistent with respect for the land upon which they run, and also consistent with maximum access and usability for the larger hiking and general bicycling public at large, it seems to me this more inclusive objective should be the obvious goal to pursue.

Even if this more wide-ranging and inclusive consideration is not pursued, and in particular if no mountain biking paths were added, it seems to me the vast majority of current and future park users will hardly be inconvenienced or disappointed.

And, I say this with all due respect to members of the mountain biking community.

### Response:

**Luke Van Santen** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 16, 2017 8:20 am

Mr Broin -

First, thank you for your previously mentioned sale of land to MCWD. Having citizens who can see the benefits of long-term conservation makes our city, and our world, a better place!

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While mountain biking may be a small percentage of biking based on sales volumes, I'm not sure that can be used to disqualify its validity. After all, what percentage of overall racquet sport sales are attributable to pickleball? Or, a similar question for skateboards (I admit, I don't know what larger sport category that falls into!)? Yet, Minnetonka has (or will shortly) facilities for both.

Regarding "disappearing natural parkland environments" - I completely agree! Minnetonka IS woods and water, to me, and it seems, to you. So if any changes are to be made, they should be done in a balanced, respectable, and workable way. Which my experience with singletrack (mountain bike trails) at Theo Wirth, Lake Rebecca, Murphy-Hanrehan, Cuyuna, and the Minnesota River Bottoms trails indicates will be the case!

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**Ben Marks** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 17, 2017 5:32 pm

👍 4 Votes

This past Saturday morning a group of eighteen MTB trail advocates volunteered at Big Willow Park, removing buckthorn. Our efforts are clearing the way for the growth of native species and making Big Willow a better place for all users! This is just the latest example of the engagement by the local biking community and demonstrates how proposed MTB trails gives more local outdoor enthusiasts a reason to care for our city parks. City of Minnetonka's Natural Resources staff is delighted with this community engagement, which could be transformative in our city's restoration efforts.

## Response:

**Darrell Sykes** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 18, 2017 4:33 pm

The City of Minnetonka's Natural Resources Department being pleased with an effort in Big Willow Park does not equate with the Park being a good place for Mountain Biking.

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**Lisa Diebel** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 17, 2017 10:41 pm

👍 3 Votes

Wow, lots of energy on this board and I'm happy to see mostly positive. I'm an advocate for this project. Fostering physical and social wellbeing while getting people outside is good for everyone. It seems like folks have worked through all the cons so why wouldn't you support this?

## Response:

**Darrell Sykes** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 18, 2017 4:29 pm

Please tell us exactly what "cons" have been worked through?

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**Trish Gardiner** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 18, 2017 10:13 pm

👍 2 Votes

Many of the people opposed to the trails are residents of the Applewood Pointe Senior housing facility. We welcome these new residents to our community. I've visited with several of these folks during this process and they are nice friendly people. It is interesting, however, that they are so opposed to change. After all, if it wasn't for change, Applewood Point would not exist. A few years ago, when Applewood Point was

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first proposed, many residents expressed concerns regarding increased traffic and population density. Several small businesses were displaced when this complex was built. Minnetonka residents who were customers of those businesses had to adapt and find alternatives for those services, likely in less convenient locations.

Change is scary, difficult and sometimes inconvenient, but it is inevitable. Compromises will have to be made at Big Willow and other proposed parks, and I'm confident that our city leaders will develop a plan that is best for the future of Minnetonka.

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**Carol Allis** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 18, 2017 10:43 pm

👍 4 Votes

I am one of the 149 residents of Applewood Pointe. We have lived in Minnetonka for more than a decade, long before we moved to Applewood, and have used the parks for as long. We love where we are, and we love the park in our front yard. We are NOT assisted living (not that that should matter) -- we are a large, extended family of active, engaged seniors, most of whom bike. Our kids and grandkids are mountain bikers. So we are NOT opposed to mountain biking. We know Big Willow well, and we think it's the wrong location -- too small, too filled with other users, and too environmentally fragile to sustain the kind of increased traffic (including groups of 30-50 bikers from all over the Twin Cities area) and parking issues trails would create. We have asked the Park Board to consider other larger parks, including Lone Lake. We think there's a compromise possible here. There are so few places to go anymore within the city to find peace and quiet, away from our hectic, stressed, high-paced lives. Big Willow is one of those places. It's a quick drive-by for a biker, but it's a tranquil place of respite -- a destination -- for those of us who spend hours a week in the park. We love this park, and we want to protect it from any damage. Mountain bike trails will fundamentally change the nature of this tranquil family neighborhood park and drive away wildlife. It will never be the same. We hope the Park Board and City Council will preserve and protect Big Willow for everyone.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 19, 2017 6:49 am

👍 3 Votes

I find it interesting that some are regarding Applewood Pointe residents as newcomers resistant to change. When most may be new to Applewood Pointe since it is new, but their selection of that location to live was significantly influenced by the location near Big Willow. As was the selection of so many others that live near the park and walk the trails, (maintained and natural) on a daily basis year round. The park provides a natural and peaceful environment to enjoy and the motivation for so many of us to get out for some fresh air, physical activity, and health benefit. While those promoting Mountain Biking are basically looking for the same, that effort as stated by the City Manager will result in a dedicated to Mountain Biking use and take away that resource from the rest of the community that enjoys and protests that natural treasure. There are other locations within the city that are used far less, Civic Center property, 494 corridor, Lone Lake Park western and southern sections, Evergreen central area. The prospect of providing this facility on Regional Park land would provide larger areas and longer trails for the enthusiasts. I do not understand why the Park Board and city staff seem so focused on altering Big Willow and taking that resource away from so many current users.

The proponents have made a point of putting forth a restoration effort, but do not mention groups of 30+ riders that have used the dirt trails in Big Willow. Should the Park Board recommend and the City Council approve Mountain Bike Trails in Big Willow, will



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the restoration effort by the proponents continue? We also do not know how much of the proponent activity is coming from residents of Minnetonka, and how much is being driven by groups that are not residents.

---

**Dian La Pointe** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 19, 2017 8:27 pm

👍 0 Votes

Greetings. I'm new to this discussion; however, I have read all of the prior posts. I'd like to get a better sense of what the mountain bike trails might look like when they're being developed. I was at the meeting last Wednesday night and people at various tables (my friends were at different tables) said the width of the trails when the trails are developed would be about 4' wide. And this statement at the meeting supports a prior post that said the equipment to dig the trails would have a tread width of 42 - 45". I have posted a link to TrailSource, the firm that worked on the original proposal.

<http://trailsources.net/blog/elm-creek/> I will attempt to upload photos from their website of the development of Elm Creek Park Reserve mountain bike trails. My observation is this type of trail development could be expected in Big Willow Park. Will the initial trail be designed with a lower technical trail rating difficulty and then would additional elements be added at a later date to increase the technical trail rating as has been done at other mountain bike trails? I also found there wasn't a consensus on the level of technical difficulty at the meeting. I recognize that there are not any official plans, but it would have been helpful to have received a better sense of what the mountain bikers are looking for so we could respond more specifically rather than hypothetically. I'm not sure our table gave any substantive feedback to the Park Board on this project, which was most unfortunate. These are just my observations of the meeting on Dec. 13.

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**Dian La Pointe** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 19, 2017 8:43 pm

👍 0 Votes

Here's one picture from TrailSource - development of Elm Creek Park Reserve

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**Dian La Pointe** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 19, 2017 8:46 pm

👍 0 Votes

2nd image from TrailSource - development of Elm Creek Park Reserve

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**Dian La Pointe** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 19, 2017 8:50 pm

👍 0 Votes

3rd and final image from TrailSource - development of Elm Creek Park Reserve. The images are much crisper if you go to their website: <http://trailsources.net> I recognize that the equipment in the images may be representative of the equipment that would be used in the potential development of mountain bike trails in Minnetonka.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 20, 2017 7:19 pm

👍 2 Votes

Joshua Rebennack: I see that you worked for WSN at some time. Are you doing work for them now while WSN is gathering information for the Park Board? Are you supporting the

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trail project prospecting for future employment? The coincidence is too much to overlook. The questions are serious for the Park Board and WSN to consider.

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**Dian La Pointe** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 20, 2017 7:35 pm

👍 2 Votes

Joshua R -- thanks for your detailed responses. Your statement "Minnetonka failed to explain where in the process they are," I would like to underscore that plus add that I feel they failed to communicate the proposed project, plus are struggling with their "reset" process. Because of this, it has resulted in a loss of \$17,000 to the pool of City money that was allocated to the project in order to pay WSB, the consultant for the community engagement process, I appreciate your technical responses. Recognizing some of the statements by Mr. Sykes, I can attest that different tables were given different information to the same questions at the Dec. 13 meeting, which further complicates the ability for participants to give thoughtful feedback that they city is relying upon. Right now, I'm just expressing my frustrations with the process; nothing directed to you, Joshua. There were Eden Prairie students present at the Dec. 13 meeting -- so it appeared there's a broader interest than those who would bike a few miles to get to their trail destination. Regarding the parking issue, there's already a parking issue at Big Willow -- which can only get worse if programming is expanded. I wish the city would have completed the feasibility studies before we got so far down the pike -- it would have made all of our conversations much easier and not fall back on conjecture. I thank you for your time to respond to so many posts on this dialogue.

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**Brian Wyneken** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 20, 2017 8:10 pm

👍 0 Votes

Another aspect of the Big Willow proposal is the location of these trails. On that topic I attach a depiction of the proposed trails from the 7 June 2017 Park and Rec Board Meeting. I added a couple short comments to this image for orientation.

If you look at this image and where the proposed trails will be located, it's difficult to me to see how this park would remain a very nice location for walking. These proposed trails thoroughly dominate the nicest portion of the park. If anyone knows of a different proposal, please let us know as this is all I've seen from reviewing the meeting minutes.

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**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 21, 2017 6:08 am

👍 1 Votes

Joshua Rebennack: I appreciate your response and your feedback in general. It appears I missed a one letter difference in your employers name. I am not negative to the concept of developing Mountain Bike Trails in Mtka. I am negative to the idea of developing Mountain Bike Trails at Big Willow that will be exclusive to biking and off limits to pedestrians. That is what the City Manager said would be the plan should the trails go forward at Big Willow. It becomes an issue of taking away from a larger portions of the city residents, rather than providing access to the Mountain Bike Trail proponents. If the trails are multiuse by all it would be much more reasonable.

---

**Dian La Pointe** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 21, 2017 3:17 pm

👍 2 Votes

# Potential Mountain Biking Trails

Closed Jan 31, 2018 · Discussion · 58 Participants · 1 Topics · 204 Answers · 115 Replies · 159 Votes

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Ed F. and Joshua R., I heard what Ed F. heard - bikes only for safety reasons -- and that's what I also had recorded in my notes during the presentation.

## Response:

**Brian Wyneken** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 21, 2017 8:30 pm  
Not that this resolves the question, but I searched the posted Park Board Meeting Minutes, and below are all of the comments I found that addressed the question of multi use versus single use:

Minnetonka Park Board Meeting Minutes – September 7, 2016

- He [Ben Marks] indicated that these trails are typically one-way and multi-purpose meaning walkers and others are permitted to be on them.
- Acomb asked for confirmation that the trails being requested would be available for multi-use. Marks indicated that they would.

Minnetonka Park Board Meeting Minutes – June 7, 2017

- Durbin strongly recommended that if the number of intersections can be minimized, the experience will be better for both the bikers and existing users. Wegner mentioned that they try to minimize those interactions between the bikers, hikers and other trail users. [BPW note – this entire discussion with Tim Wegner of Trail Source LLC in the minutes appears to assume a single use trail system, although that is never expressly stated]
- Multiple use that has been described in some of the readings that are in supporting documents do not seem realistic. Walkers with headphones, dog walkers with rollout leashes, it is hard to walk on our trails as it is. [comment by local resident George Skinner]

That's all I've seen in official minutes that included Park Board members and are posted on this site.

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**Brian Wyneken** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 21, 2017 9:34 pm

 3 Votes

Subject: Big Willow versus the "494 Corridor" as the preferred location for these proposed trails.

I have gone through all the Park Board meeting minutes that are posted on the City of Minnetonka site, and what I see is that board has consistently asked the city staff and other promoters of these trails to look at the 494 location and to proceed cautiously with any plans that involve Big Willow park. I am attaching the excerpts from these board meetings that are specific to this issue for your review. For the meeting of 7 June 2017 I inserted a comment:

"this meeting began with a presentation by Tim Wegner of Trail Source LLC – Mr. Wegner had been hired by the city to conduct a feasibility study, but it appears that his study had not included the feasibility of proposed trails for the 494 corridor, only for Big Willow and the Civic Center – so it appears that City Staff had promoted the Big Willow location somewhat contrary to the concerns expressed by the board at the December board meeting. After Mr. Wegner's presentation there was time for public questions and comments, and there were many public concerns about the use of Big Willow for these trails – those comments are not included here"

# Potential Mountain Biking Trails

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If you review the attached there were many questions by board members about why the city staff had prioritized the Big Willow location. After my review, I am really wondering why the 494 location has not received more priority in this effort. Perhaps this is just an issue of "who's ox gets gored," but I cannot discern that from the minutes other than a brief mention of some property owners on the west side of this corridor.

## Response:

**Ed Friedman** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 22, 2017 6:13 am

I want to thank Brian Wyneken for putting together Board\_Meeting\_Minutes\_-\_Big\_Willow\_versus\_494\_Corridor.pdf

I have read the minutes of the Park Board meetings several times and never took the time to consolidate the comments relative to Big Willow vs the 494 Corridor. I have to question who is driving the ship, where is the City Staff getting their direction from and who are they accountable to? Not a pleasant question to ask, or even think about. Why hasn't the city staff executed to same feasibility study regarding the 494 Corridor property as directed by the Park Board? Why hasn't the same effort been put into Lone Lake Park.

Someone has thrown out that if all parks are considered, 51 parks would require a feasibility study. This comment is an obvious attempt to suppress any effort on locations other than Big Willow and the Civic Center. Most of the parks in Minnetonka are not large enough to consider, i.e. Lake Street Ext and Tonkadale, or Mayflower and Cedar Lake Rd. There are a total of approximately 6 parks. Lone Lake, Purgatory (the area west of the creek), Big Willow, Civic Center, 494 Corridor, and Evergreen.

Regarding the most recent public input meeting by WSB, similar questions arise. Why wasn't the question of those present and residency in the city answered. The electronic poll was not set up properly apparently, but a simply show of hands was not requested either. The questioner on each table for input was focused primarily on Big Willow, pros and cons. None of the other parks were specifically listed for input. Even in this 'reset mode' and no decisions have been made commentary, it appears that decisions have been made and these reset mode and no decisions have been made comments are solely to suppress objections. Where is the accountability and to whom?

There are comments floating around about multiuse trails and how well they work in other locations, and about exclusive use for safety concerns. Obviously conflicting comments. Where are we on that subject? The answer could definitely impact the viewpoint of a significant number of the city residents, positive and negative. The closest thing to an answer from the city was after the meeting that the trails would be dedicated for bike use only for safety reasons.

Personally, I feel misled and I know that I am not alone.

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**Ma Mo** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 22, 2017 10:18 am

 4 Votes

Yes, I am concerned. The meetings at the city center have been such a waste of time. First a very Well informed "uniformed" with blue shirts have a cozy party with the city and focus group. No serious questioning or discussion. Then a different meeting with those hearing through the grapevine that an unwelcome change was about to happen. Oooh, the "ununiformed were angry!! So angry they finally shut down the silly game the

## Potential Mountain Biking Trails

Closed Jan 31, 2018 · Discussion · 58 Participants · 1 Topics · 204 Answers · 115 Replies · 159 Votes

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focus group wanted them to play. Then the big show down with both groups coming together. We were made to endure a lecture. No proof of being a resident required. No questions allowed. ...until the end with no answers given except by a very uninformed city employee or ? No one at my table knew who she was.

A simple raising and counting of hands for or against WILLOW PARK being used would have been nice. (WE COULD HAVE PUT OUR HEADS DOWN ON THE TABLE AND NOT PEEK)

The actual process that is being used is suspect. \$5,000 being paid to the City of Minnetonka by a special interest group Minnetonka High School...pay for a study of only Big Willow Park. Big Willow is closer to St. Louis Park or Hopkins actually. If Minnetonka high school needs a practice run. Why even think of putting it so far away from their school? There must be a hidden agenda. Purgatory is RIGHT THERE! I've heard that that park is not being considered because they don't want to ruin the fragile ecosystem! Well come on over and ruin BIG WILLOW Park's fragile ecosystem!

Obviously I have strong opinions against mountain biking trails being built in a unique wild feeling park. What is wrong with quietly strolling ? No headphones, no distraction from the inner voice? Laugh if you will but this is important to note people than many know. Especially those of a certain age. Here's some wisdom...why cut down trees that Minnetonka has been trying to preserve? The people's whose names memorialized on the benches respected the quiet beauty.

I live on the creek. I walk that park daily. I absolutely believe that the vast majority of people do not want the park disturbed

Oh....the reason the ENVISION MINNETONKA was so swayed toward mountain biking is because the ones who paid for the study were all there. The high school kids were there the MORC group were there. What other things were envisioned? The city didn't take that large group into consideration? Gee, why are there so many people here for mountain biking?

Every objection to the trails being built in BIG WILLOW in this thread are answered by 1 or possibly 2 people. Why?

If this post is taken down, please tell me who is doing it and why?

### Response:

**Brian Wyneken** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 22, 2017 11:33 am  
Per the minutes, at the December 2016 Park Board Meeting (in which the Vantage Group made their presentation), someone named "Johnson" (who I think must be a city staff member) " . . . indicated that parks like Purgatory Park are overwhelmed with other activities such as dog walking, and general trail use."

When I read that I had to wonder if anyone had taken the time to visit Big Willow. I go to both parks and (anecdotally) I find Big Willow to be a bit more crowded with "dog walking, and general trail use" than Purgatory (but I assume "experiences will vary").

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**Darrell Sykes** · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 22, 2017 1:29 pm

👍 0 Votes

What has happened to all of the comments made by Joshua R are the related responses? The information contained in the removed items is a very important part of this dialog.

**Mountain Biking Community Engagement**  
**Focus Groups, Community Conversations, and Public Meetings**  
**November 8 & 16, December 13, 2017; January 8, 2018**  
 Minnetonka Park Board

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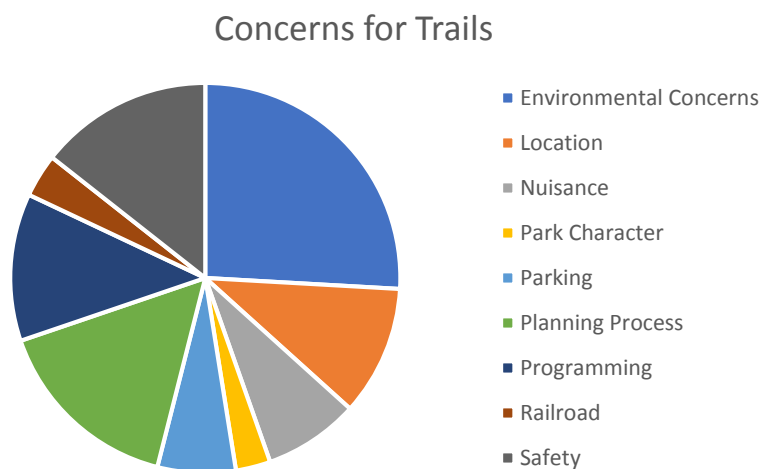
**Introduction to the November Focus Groups**

In November 2017, Minnetonka residents were invited to two focus groups to share their thoughts on the concept of creating mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. The first focus group was aimed at residents concerned about the potential trails while the second focus group convened residents who were advocates for mountain bike trails. Each group provided feedback on the prospect of trails and expressed priorities for the potential project.

**Feedback**

Below is a summary of the findings from the community engagement activities. This information will be used to guide staff in creating a study to present to the park board.

*Focus group #1*



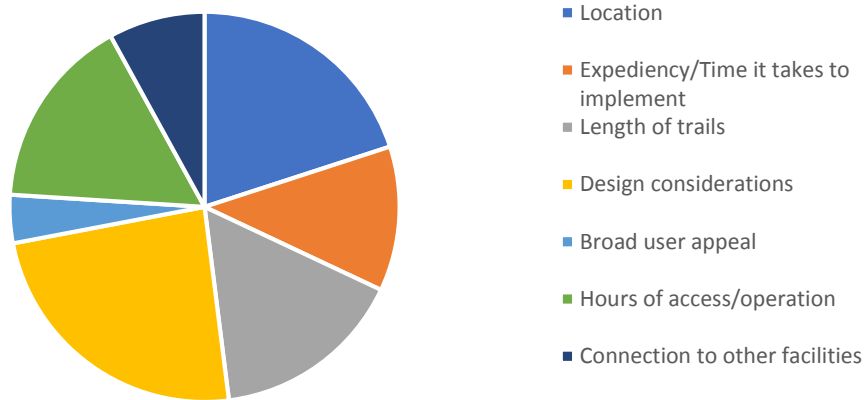
**Representative comments:**

- Mountain bike trails will cause “damage to nature, animals/plant life, erosion.”
- The trails will “radically change the character of the park.”
- There may be “danger for walkers at common trail segments.”
- The trails will cause disruption, noise, and ruin solitude.
- Concern for the “displacement of current trail users.”

Generally, focus group attendees expressed a concern for the safety of park users, bikers and pedestrians alike. They also wondered how the trails would add to parking pressures, noise pollution and environmental deterioration. Attendees also voiced a desire for increased communication and engagement surrounding this issue.

*Focus group #2*

### Priorities for Trails



Representative comments:

- Users “don’t want to have to drive to trails—local kids need outdoor activities.”
- Attendees believed “separating walkers from bikers will increase safety.”
- Potential trail users are “stewards of the land and want good trail design to minimize bike/other users’ conflicts and address safety concerns.”
- The trails will cater to young people and increase physical activity.
- Park programming should cater to diverse community interests.

Generally, focus group attendees expressed excitement at the prospect of mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. They see this as a growing sport that has the potential to draw new, young people to outdoor recreation and physical activity. Similar to concerned residents, they prioritize safety, and the mitigation of trail user conflict. They are also concerned with the design and construction of the trail, desiring a course that is high quality and challenging.

## Introduction to the December Community Conversation

In December 2017, Minnetonka residents were invited to attend a community conversation to share their thoughts on the concept of creating mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. They were presented with three options, and asked for their opinions on each option. The options were:

- A. Designate mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park and/or adjacent city-owned location(s)
- B. Designate mountain biking trails in other city-owned location(s)
- C. Do not build mountain biking trails

Residents were asked to write down the pros and cons of each option.

## Feedback

### *Option A, representative comments*

Pro	Con
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big Willow is close to potential trail users, they would not have to drive to the park</li> <li>• Big Willow is connected to the LRT</li> <li>• Big Willow's terrain is variable and suitable for mountain biking</li> <li>• Trails at Big Willow would help local businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is not enough parking at Big Willow</li> <li>• There may be conflict between bikers and walkers at trail intersections and on the bridge</li> <li>• The neighborhood would be disrupted</li> <li>• Big Willow is not a large enough park to support additional trails</li> </ul>

### *Option B, representative comments*

Pro	Con
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other parks in Minnetonka are bigger and better able to accommodate trails</li> <li>• Less controversy at other locations</li> <li>• If there are trails at multiple parks, the impact would be lessened and dispersed</li> <li>• There may be fewer environmental concerns at other locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other locations would be farther from Hopkins high school</li> <li>• Other sites would be less accessible/central for users</li> <li>• Less connectivity to regional trail system</li> <li>• Other parks are flat – would not make for good mountain biking</li> </ul>

### *Option C, representative comments*

Pro	Con
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current parks would not be disrupted</li> <li>• No money would be spent</li> <li>• Less influx of non-Minnetonka residents to use the parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes Minnetonka less appealing to young families</li> <li>• Does not support mountain bike community</li> <li>• Unsanctioned use of trails for biking will continue</li> </ul>



## Introduction to the January Community Meeting

In January 2018, Minnetonka residents were invited to attend a community meeting on the proposed mountain biking trails in Minnetonka. Residents filled out a questionnaire, indicating their feelings on topics like space constraints, environmental protection, and user conflict. The questions aimed to figure out which issues had consensus among residents and which issues were still being debated.

## Feedback

The following matrix shows responses to survey questions. Some residents did not respond to all questions.

	Agree	Disagree
<b>Adequate Space</b>		
A trail system should be able to sustain a minimum of 4 miles of single track trails. This could include a single park on its own or a circuit of parks in close proximity to one another. Staff believes that less than 4 miles would not be utilized.	79%	21%
If a circuit of parks is considered, a given park within the circuit should be able to support a minimum of 2 miles of mountain bike trails on its own.	73%	27%
If a circuit of multiple parks are needed, the parks should be located within one mile of another.	67%	33%
A mountain bike trail system should be within one mile of a regional bike trail.	60%	40%
A park must contain a minimum of 20 usable acres to be considered. Usable acreage is undeveloped acreage that could be used to build mountain bike trails. Acreage does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.	71%	29%
<b>Environmental Protection</b>		
Trails should be built using the highest standards for development and pursuant of sustainable trail guidelines. This would limit erosion, vegetation loss and water quality problems.	99%	1%
Areas containing uncommon plants and high quality restoration areas (per city natural resources staff) should be avoided.	92%	8%
Generally, narrow trails (approximately 24") should be built to reduce the total area of intensive tread disturbance, slow trail users and minimize vegetation and soil compaction.	89%	11%
Site should be designed to minimize tree impact and removal.	97%	3%
<b>Minimize User Conflict</b>		
The majority of existing mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are one way to avoid head on interactions. If built in Minnetonka trails should also be one way.	95%	5%
Mountain bike trails should be built to minimally intersect existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.	85%	15%
Mountain bike trails should not displace existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.	78%	22%
Mountain bike trails should be designated as multi-use (open to runners, bird watchers, hikers, snowshoers, bikers, etc.). Ninety-two percent of all mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are multi-use.	73%	27%
Adequate parking should be available at each proposed park.	69%	31%

November Engagement Results

In order of priority, please list the characteristics/considerations that should be given to the siting/construction of mountain biking trails							
Location	Expediency/ Time it takes to implement	Length of trails	Design considerations	Broad user appeal	Hours of access/ operation	Connection to other facilities	Other
5	3	4	6	1	4	2	
1		2	1				4 Safety: Dedicated single track for MTB (3)
2	6	2	4	5	7		5 Connectivity to other trails (3)
		2	1	3			Connection to existing trail network (LRT) (4)
2	6	4	1				Fun/recreation, parking, accessibility, maintenance, access 3 to destinations (restaurants, etc)
1	1	3	1				Create a community (4), parking (5)
1	3	5	4	7	2		6 Close to DQ (8)
1		5	3	2			Varied skill level (4), opportunity to expand (6)
6	5	2	3	8	4		7 Quality, flowy (1). Maintenance.
1				2			5 Parking (3), Pedestrian traffic v bikes (4)
8	9	1	2	10	7		Sustainability/maintainability (4), cost (6), 3 signage/instructions (5)
3	2	4	1	5	7		6
1	3	2	1	2	1		Connectivity of trails (1), Parking, Year round use (1)
1	4	3	2	6	7		5
3			6				Bikes only - no pedestrians (keep peds and bikes separate)
<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>44</b>	
<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>	

## November Engagement Results

Theme	Response
Environmental Concerns	Preserve a pristine nature area
Environmental Concerns	Preserve rich history and wild life in Big Willow area
Environmental Concerns	Environment sensitive trail impact
Environmental Concerns	Disruption
Environmental Concerns	Environmental impact
Environmental Concerns	Environmental degradation caused by bike trails
Environmental Concerns	Environmental nature corridor. Animals: Beaver, mink, 5-lined skunk, barred owls, kingfisher, etc.
Environmental Concerns	Big Willow is along the Minnehaha Creek. This is a wild life path from Lake Minnetonka to the Mississippi River
Environmental Concerns	Disrupt nature, animals/plant life, erosion
Environmental Concerns	Damage to wildlife and habitat
Environmental Concerns	Restoration efforts
Environmental Concerns	Nature feel gone
Environmental Concerns	Preserve natural habitat
Environmental Concerns	Save our greenspace
Environmental Concerns	Environmental impact
Environmental Concerns	Can we request an environmental study?
Environmental Concerns	Soil impaction - degradation of land
Environmental Concerns	It will destroy nature trails and wild life
Environmental Concerns	Damage to marshland and walking trails
Environmental Concerns	Disruption of wild life
Environmental Concerns	Where will the animals go?
Environmental Concerns	Erosion
Environmental Concerns	Minnehaha Creek Preservation
Environmental Concerns	Natural environment: damage to trails, quiet walking, impact
Environmental Concerns	Wildlife impact
Environmental Concerns	Impact on current animal and people trails through woods
Environmental Concerns	Wildlife endangerment
Environmental Concerns	Conservation fund
Environmental Concerns	Concerned about canoeing through a bike park - now it's a nice canoe ride
Environmental Concerns	Trail frequently flooded
Environmental Concerns	Litter
Environmental Concerns	Trash
Environmental Concerns	Too hydric

## November Engagement Results

Theme	Response
Environmental Concerns	Too sandy
Environmental Concerns	Off trail impact
Environmental Concerns	Will not stay on trail - will ride all over grass and grass will not grow
Location	Not here - why not closer to high school purgatory?
Location	Big Willow - no! Noise, traffic, policing. Why run down a general popular public asset?
Location	Too small
Location	Big Willow is not centrally located - what's the real reason it was chosen?
Location	Not here
Location	Big Willow is not the best location
Location	Why was Big Willow selected?
Location	Biking is fine but NOT Big Willow
Location	Big Willow - wrong location
Location	Eliminate Big Willow site for mountain bike trail
Location	Smallest park in the system. Why stuff bike trails into park with small hills, tight turns, and lots of people walking trails. Wrong park, wrong time - because it is by Dairy Queen?
Location	Locations considered, motorized bikes, noise effect
Location	Big Willow: 0 mountain bike trail attributes
Location	Where will trails be?
Location	Small park - B.W. runs will be short
Miscellaneous	Use of volunteers for work - liability
Miscellaneous	Bike speed limit in park now is 15 mph - will that change?
Miscellaneous	What will stop motorized bikers from using the trail?
Miscellaneous	Mountain biking would be used mostly in summer, and mostly after school
Miscellaneous	Who opens/closes the trail and does the "major" trail maintenance?
Miscellaneous	Motorized bikes, etc.
Miscellaneous	Park users: everyone can walk, fewer ride bikes. What is in the public best interest. Don't put pedestrians off the trail
Miscellaneous	People who don't pay taxes want the bike trails
Miscellaneous	Design
Miscellaneous	Concerned about property values going down.
Miscellaneous	# of mountain bike trail users in neighborhood? Minnetonka?
Miscellaneous	Is this just a minnetonka need?
Miscellaneous	Lack of map clarity

## November Engagement Results

Theme	Response
Miscellaneous	One access/exit point
Miscellaneous	Map based on current trails used for walking/animals
Nuisance	Noise control
Nuisance	Noise
Nuisance	Noise
Nuisance	Dust, noise, erosion
Nuisance	No serenity
Nuisance	Disruption
Nuisance	Late night noise
Nuisance	Quiet place to walk
Nuisance	Love the park for peace and quiet
Nuisance	Destroy peaceful nature of park
Nuisance	Ruin solitude
Park Character	Destroy beautiful peace
Park Character	Radically change the character of the park
Park Character	Don't want a neighborhood park to become a high traffic area
Park Character	Destroyed trails at Theodore Wirth, too small of a park, vantage?!
Parking	No parking available
Parking	Parking, policing \$, porta-potties?
Parking	Parking issues
Parking	Parking lots
Parking	Parking
Parking	Parking crowding on Minnetonka Boulevard
Parking	Parking
Parking	Parking
Parking	Lack of parking - already lots are full or close to it
Planning Process	What happens if trails not built?
Planning Process	Challenge of planning the larger community meeting for respectful listening to each other
Planning Process	Lack of trust
Planning Process	The way we found out about the project
Planning Process	Minnesota Statute 103D.
Planning Process	County project
Planning Process	People with something to gain are hired to do the studies

## November Engagement Results

Theme	Response
Planning Process	Advice on trail impact from a trail builder - bias
Planning Process	\$ from MORC or Minnetonka Mountain Club
Planning Process	Process the same for other special interest?
Planning Process	Process: who decides, based on what, when. How will you ensure all interested parties are heard, especially older residents?
Planning Process	Trust is destroyed - the process is all wrong
Planning Process	Bias: confirmation bias and special interests
Planning Process	Fairness - who is the cycling community vs. pedestrian community
Planning Process	Order of decision making: yes/no then location then design
Planning Process	Process
Planning Process	Transparency of process
Planning Process	Mission
Planning Process	Process
Planning Process	Input for residents
Planning Process	Older pedestrians don't text or email - how will you get their voice - many use Big Willow!
Planning Process	Process - if you're taking a step back, don't put the trail source Big Willow (totally biased) sheet on the takeaway table
Programming	Peaceful setting for memorial bench sites at Big Willow
Programming	Events? # of people, what races?
Programming	No room for both pedestrian and bike paths
Programming	Now, it's ideal for multi-family walking, running, dog walks
Programming	Displacement of current users of trails
Programming	Displacing seniors, displacing walkers, environmental
Programming	Needs to be one or the other user
Programming	Displacing seniors
Programming	Is mountain biking inclusive enough to dedicate land?
Programming	Displacing walkers
Programming	Thousands of people per year
Programming	Lose use of small trails for walking
Programming	Number of bikers
Programming	Where will I walk my dog
Programming	No bathrooms
Programming	Will there be events? Races? Rallies?

## November Engagement Results

Theme	Response
Programming	How will trails impact future projects? Gardens?
Railroad	Train tracks - will bikers be tempted to ride across tracks or down railroad tracks?
Railroad	Contact the railroad
Railroad	Conflict with BNSF
Railroad	Conflict with BNSF!
Railroad	How would plans change if the RR pu up 12' cyclone fences on both sides of their tracks to keep bikers off their right-of-way?
Safety	Liability
Safety	Possible vandalism
Safety	If you live by Big Willow it is the only safe from traffic place to walk
Safety	Danger for walkers at common trail segments
Safety	Safe environment
Safety	Safety
Safety	Safety
Safety	Safety
Safety	Pedestrian safety
Safety	Safety when walking 2 dogs on leashes
Safety	Safety
Safety	Failure to obey traffic control signs
Safety	Traffic safety: safe crossing, increased car volume, speed
Safety	Bikers already don't alert walkers
Safety	Bikers who don't yield to pedestrians - safety
Safety	Safety of crossing Minnetonka Blvd to riders - parking. Trails too short; too many crossings. Spending \$ for local upgrades that only affect a few
Safety	Safe place for the most people
Safety	Loss of safe, peaceful trails
Safety	Utilization conflict
Safety	Confusion over bike/walk junctions

November Engagement Results

What are your interests in this project (your Why?)	Explain your top priorities	What do you see as the biggest risks to the development of mountain biking trails in the community?
<p>We love mountain biking, enjoy parks/nature, don't want to have to drive to trails, local kids need outdoor activities. 50 parks in Minnetonka but 0 miles of singletrack. Parks are for people and if the majority want MTB trails it could be a good way to encourage a new generation to take an interest in parks and the environment. Single track MTB trails are less impactful to the environment than other current park uses like softball fields, wide walking trails, etc. Bikers have less impact on wildlife than off-leash dogs and walking trails. Equal park access - everyone should get to use them.</p>	<p>Location/design: Trails need to be easily accessible by bike and built according to Sierra Club and IMBA and MORC design standards for safety and low environmental impact. They also need to be long enough to be interesting and fun.</p>	<p>The perception that mountain bike trails will harm the environment, when in reality we're on the same page. Design challenges - we want to make sure the park can still be safely used by everybody. We also don't want the trails to be underdeveloped such that they don't get used. This discussion and these concerns are nothing new. The Sierra Club has environmental impact standards for mountain bike trails going back to the 1990s.</p>
<p>Exercise/recreation, family activities in neighborhood, easy access to fun singletrack, close singletrack, engage young families to care for our parks</p>		<p>A small group that is resistant to change, thus stopping the project</p>
<p>Personal and family (son) use. Like the idea of having accessible trails that don't require driving. Improving accessibility to sport to youth. Maximize the use of park, having a specific purpose.</p>	<p>Maximize use of park land and letting families, youth and high school teams get a local mountain bike (singletrack) experience</p>	<p>Environmental and safety impacts. Would need to ensure that trail is professionally designed to limit these risks, and even potentially improve the environment. Minnetonka trail advocates have already been working on this clearing invasive species (Buckthorn) at Big Willow. Current off path trails (hikers, dogs, bikes) get eroded and are the biggest risk. Professionally designed trails don't have the erosion issues. Parking - keep it limited to existing trails.</p>



November Engagement Results

What are your interests in this project (your Why?)	Explain your top priorities	What do you see as the biggest risks to the development of mountain biking trails in the community?
<p>Member of Mountain Bike Team (Minnetonka), coach and parents of kids on the team. Avid mountain bikers for recreation and health. Proponents of enhancing the livability and tax base of Minnetonka.</p>	<p>The opportunity to have access to a place in our community to bike off road.</p>	<p>Incompletely informed people making decisions, preventing fair use of public assets - high likelihood. Injury - very low likelihood. Environmental damage - low to very low likelihood. Change to existing use patterns. Environmental damage (animals leaving) - low likelihood. Increased tax revenue (more people going to station, people buying bikes at Tonka Cycle, etc.) - medium likelihood.</p>
<p>I love to mountain bike. Wants well built, safe trails. Wants a place for the mountain bike teams to practice. Want to improve quality of the park. Looking for opportunities to get outside in nature. Just looking for places to ride. Bringing trails closer to Minnetonka to encourage outdoor enjoy. Currently using other trails and would enjoy Minnetonka more with trails. Parent wants trails closer for safety because kids biking on roads to other sites is too dangerous.</p>	<p>We feel designing a trail correctly will maintain the natural beauty of the park. As cyclists we feel having quality singletrack will be a safe way to enjoy the park. Design with zero to low maintenance. Proximity to our home. Make Minnetonka great for biking so residents don't have to drive their bikes to trails in far off cities. Want to see it in our life time (73 yr. old user).</p>	<p>Risk to the park if designed wrong. Risk to students biking/driving long distances to ride. Opponents to the development who are misinformed about the basics of mountain biking and trail development. Apathy of potential advocates.</p>

November Engagement Results

What are your interests in this project (your Why?)	Explain your top priorities	What do you see as the biggest risks to the development of mountain biking trails in the community?
<p>Kids like to mountain bike, we also would like to have the trails close. The use of parks should be available to everybody's interests, like mountain biking. There's 50 parks in Minnetonka, and there's 0 trails for mountain biking. A mountain bike trail would get more kids interested in our parks, it would also get more people spending money at our local businesses.</p>	<p>To be able to mountain bike close to home, and not have to drive far/out of town. Use of the parks should not be exclusive, if there is sufficient interest for a sustainable MTB trail in Minnetonka, the issue should continue to move forward.</p>	<p>Other than the people who are against it, I don't see a bunch of risks. The misinformation that is perpetuated on Next Door about mountain bikers are generalizations many times, and also negative. All the dog poop on the ground that doesn't get picked up is worse for the environment than bikes. I really don't see any risks. Look at all of the other cities that have trails. They all work, they all get used. I have to load up my bike and my kids bikes on the car and drive there. I end up spending money in their town instead of my town for lunches - snacking, gas, etc.</p>
<p>Biking is part of our family lifestyle - spouse, kids, etc. Also involved with high school MTB team. Access to off road trail</p>	<p>Short drive to or bike to trailhead. MTB specific park probably not viable.</p>	<p>Limited space and large diverse group of users. Balancing community interests.</p>
<p>Benefit for the high school MTB team. Proximity, shorter drives, bike to the trail. Community awareness. Growth of team and sport. More exercise options for kids. Improve skills. Growing, life long sport. Builds community. Bikes off roads.</p>	<p>Want a fun, enjoyable trail with challenges. Long enough to get a work out, technical enough to want to return to, bring awareness to the sport, provide opportunity for youth to join sport.</p>	<p>Keeping trail nice, respecting the trail, keeping debris from trail. Challenging but safe. Harder and easier trails for all audiences. Walkers and bikers both included, but separate. Being too far from audience. Disagreement between neighbors. Inappropriate use of trails. Disasters - flooding, forestry, want to keep the natural beauty, not drive species or habitats away, want to keep stable systems.</p>
<p>Maintain the character of Big Willow, which is used by families with small children and people with pets.</p>	<p>Purgatory would be ideal location - Big Willow is a nature conservancy in park board mission statement.</p>	<p>Trying to combine MB with other activities which may not be compatible in small park. No one seems to know what is being proposed.</p>

November Engagement Results

What are your interests in this project (your Why?)	Explain your top priorities	What do you see as the biggest risks to the development of mountain biking trails in the community?
<p>Support for family and kids interest in the mountain biking sport. Local access to facilities for mountain biking without having to drive. Lack of bike specific trails. Increase utilization of park areas. Provide a means to interest now local people to the use mountain biking sport. Promote fitness and healthy lifestyle.</p>	<p>how easy would / should it be to add to the overall system? I seem to recall some discussion of criteria for locating trails to be interconnectivity, and it seems that the ability to grow the overall network should be considered as well</p>	<p>Lack of understanding of what a mountain bike singletrack actually is. Risks of not developing mountain bike trails - lack of park use, forces riders onto multiuse trails/roads--neither is mountain bike friendly, riders who are out may well spend in restaurants in area around trail post ride.</p>
<p>Many questions on the location why Big Willow, why not Purgatory or other parks? 494 Corridor trail? Any outdoor activity/facility is a plus. Trails in west metro (about time). Excited for local trails. Activity in Minnetonka is important. A diverse recreational amenity. Minnetonka could use more activities aimed at young people.</p>	<p>The need for MTB trails is real now. Where is up for debate, but why not several parks?</p>	<p>Misinformation as to the impact of singletrack trails on the park, the environment, watershed, etc.</p>

November Engagement Results

What are your interests in this project (your Why?)	Explain your top priorities	What do you see as the biggest risks to the development of mountain biking trails in the community?
<p>Riding close to home without having to drive to bike. Quality of life attracts people and improves our community</p>	<p>Location - we want to be able to bike from home without having to pack up our bikes and drive, we want our children to be able to bike near home. Environment - we are interested in limiting the impact to the environment. We are stewards of the land and we want good trail design to minimize bike/other users conflicts and address safety concerns. Connectivity - it's important to have the MTB trails connect to other trails to increase number of miles. Have limited time having to bike on roads for safety is a priority. Use - many of us bike year round so having the trail available is important. Also separating walkers from bikers with increase safety.</p>	<p>We see the biggest risk is not developing a MTB trail system. A trail system is a community asset and will attract healthy and education work force and increase money to local businesses.</p>
<p>Hopkins MTB team. This project allows us to travel from HHS to trails in a safe manner. Lack of options in the West Metro.</p>	<p>Proximity to the school, design will be available to all riders, variety in terrain.</p>	<p>Popularity! Increase in trails.</p>
<p>The nearest legal place is 20 miles away. Tough for non-drivers (under 16 yr.). It's hard to bike around pedestrians, as in LRT. RR track not a big deal - stopping happens at Theo Wirth also (safety). Maybe residents can ride existing trails and the new trails could be more advanced.</p>	<p>I'm a stay-at-home mom and I'd love a chance to ride during the day. LRT is super boring, lots of pedestrians. High school team has a lot of racers and nowhere to ride. Need something in western burbs. Personally would ride it. Don't care where - just closer than Minneapolis. I just want good terrain. A flat trail isn't worth doing. Want to read with friends without an adult driving me around (HS rider).</p>	<p>Walkers and biker interaction, environmental degradation, not enough acreage.</p>

## November Engagement Results

<b>What are your interests in this project (your Why?)</b>	<b>Explain your top priorities</b>	<b>What do you see as the biggest risks to the development of mountain biking trails in the community?</b>
Need to address the active lifestyle and need as young people and encourage park use with well-designed MTB trails.		"Not in my backyard" so parks, zero singletrack does not seem well-balanced.

December 13 Engagement Results

Option A: Designate mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park and/or adjacent city owned locations	
Pro	Con
Get trails closer to the western suburbs.	Very limited parking
Hikers can walk in any of the other city parks. Bikers cannot.	Lacks significant elevation gain
More diversity to our parks.	Concern for elderly residents, especially of Applewood point
Make Minnetonka more marketable to young families looking to relocate.	Bridge bottleneck
It would be fun.	Concern for upkeep/policing of trails
Better mountain bike community.	Use of city resources for installation and maintenance, even with volunteers
City campus accessibility - good parking, near to regional trail, and enough length to be interesting/useful	Concern for Minnehaha Creek preservation
Big Willow but south of creek - and west of Big Willow toward Minntonka Mills, might be a connector	Concern for use at night
Might reduce illegal trail use by bikes if there's a trail	Influx of non-Minnetonka residents into Minnetonka parks
Might bring more habitat volunteers	Change peacefulness and current traffic in neighborhoods, especially by property owners/houses, risk of theft, collisions, assault
Access	Potentially reduce property values near Civic Center park and more
Any obstacles?	Will change current safety standards
Beautiful environment	Inevitable spread of invasive species (no firm commitment to remediate this)
Outdoor experience	Park is too small
Family activity	Lack of parking
Healing/spiritual	Ecological degradation, loss of trees
Being in nature	Bottleneck of trail around railway
People using the mountain bike trails will support our businesses - brewery, hamburger joint	Change character/peacefulness of parks
Less demand on one specific park	Disruption of wildlife
Maybe bikers from other towns wouldn't come because they don't want to drive	About half of Big Willow is already used with ball fields and maybe other things
There are standards for trails	Sharing with bikers and walkers is not realistic, or how do you share?
Kids love it	Mixed usage is dangerous
Railroad not a threat	Loose off trail hiking
Asset to school	Not maintain pristine open space
Good for businesses	Conflicting shared uses

December 13 Engagement Results

Option A: Designate mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park and/or adjacent city owned locations	
Pro	Con
Growing sport - high school, great sport for kids	Mixed use trails are unsafe
Big Willow is close - don't have to drive	Changing the character of the park (ie machine-built trails)
Not have to drive and park	Only 15 acres when you take out the ball fields
Well-designed trails, sustainable and not damage	Hosting events a concer (racing - competitions)
Can get a lot of trails in a small area	Environmental concerns (wetlands, creek, animals)
Bikers work in parks - will help	Unclear width of trail, and maintenance - who? How often?
Want to be in woods	Unclear how many intersections and where trail goes
Parents want to get home and be able to get kids to trails	Hours of operation
Separate walkers and bikers	Unclear how connects to other parks
Proper design crucial	Safety near railroad tracks
Invasive species removal and maintenance	So many bikes on regional trail now - don't want too many bikes in Big Willow
People who want to bike also pay taxes and have a right to use trails	Having a big ugly gate at trailhead would have a negative effect on community
Remove renegade cyclists who would move to designated trails	Would be problematic to lose trail running on existing single track
Make MTB trails accessible within the neighborhood	Parking - we don't want a huge parking lot (park @ Civic Center)
Give them something to do outside that's safe and communal in a life long	Possible too crowded at the park. Too much activity.
Centrally located on LRT	Since it's on the east edge of the city, maybe a more central location would be better
Putting a sustainable MTB trail will fix the eroded deer trails	Is the park big enough for variety of trails?
Makes Big Willow more user friendly and environmentally friendly due to the volunteers who help maintain it	It's bisected by a railroad, tough to design around that?
Centrally located	Potential for neighborhood disruption/inappropriate use
Connected to LRT	Safety at intersection of bike and pedestrian trail
High school bike teams	Parking - where are they going to park?
Promotes healthy lifestyle	Concern about having to add elevation
Can use existing "bootleg trails"	Originally designated as a wildlife area
Easy access to business (food/drink)	Wear and tear on terrain with team competition/training
Local business opportunity	Strangers in neighborhood
Trail maintenance will improve Big Willow	Big Willow smaller than Purgatory
Separated trails safer	Half of acreage at Big Willow is established playing fields and other uses
Participation in a larger community	Loss of trees and wildlife for trail construction

December 13 Engagement Results

Option A: Designate mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park and/or adjacent city owned locations	
Pro	Con
Attracts non-residents	Parking problems - Minnehaha Parkway
Big Willow has good terrain for MTB	Safety - bridge issues (Civic Center)
Large enough area - suitability	Environmental concerns/wildlife impact
Variety of terrain	Too small a footprint for Civic Center - too short
Dedicated trails - separate bikers and walkers	Insufficient buffer (trees go down?!)
Nearby to riders	Lack of space in park
Invasive species removed	Erosion
New park stewards	Change atmosphere of park
Suitable terrain	Can't have walking trails MTB trails in same area, they don't coexist
Proximity to other parks	Parking
Location near LRT	Hours
Adding enough trails to make a good system	Who maintains it
Connect to metro trail system	Creating a park funded by city. Use of MTB trails from outside city.
Big Willow good for beginners	Walkers and bikers together = danger
High school biking huge/it's sanctioned	Hearing it's one-way for walkers (might be for bikers)
Exercise good	Parking is limited
Proximity to users	Railroad track, under is flooded often
Trails may have positive impact on walking	Affect wildlife/environment (conservancy)
If trails can be separate from walking trails, MTB trails greatly expand park usage opportunities	Have designated walk/bike lanes
Good activity	Smallest park in system
Don't have to commute to a trail	Floods
Use fallen tree for obstacle	Parking
Volunteers maintain trails and keep safe MORC	Safety concerns
Small, in the woods	# trails in Big Willow
Take bikers off walk/jog trails	Railroad tracks
People connect to nature	Upsetting wildlife and peace at Big Willow
Kids/exercise	Change Big Willow park
Central location of park accessible	Although mountain bikers learn to follow rules, other bikers who are not rule followers will also be attracted to trails at Big Willow
Control the mountain bike use. Being use no unauthorized	User conflicts until we see plans



December 13 Engagement Results

Option A: Designate mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park and/or adjacent city owned locations	
Pro	Con
Sustainably managed trails vs free form use	Natural resources interactive map/Hennepin County shows ecologically significant areas with parks and trails unfit in Big Willow Park
Accessible from other trails - small carbon footprint	Cost
Good amenity for residents	Use by residents vs non-residents
Good high school sport	Civic Center - north side of creek should be nixed
Provides volunteer incentives to participate in invasives removal	Bridge concerns
Having separation of pedestrians and bikes is important	Will the narrow trails be off limits to walkers? People use them now for walking
More physical activity options is good for public health	Bridge - in both Big Willow and Civic Center - very used now - safety
Bikes no allowed on wet trail	Parking - where?
Central to lots of connections - City Hall as parking - proximity to high schools and other trailheads mitigate unofficial undesignated trail	Near neighbors' property lines - Civic Center
Keeps kids riding on appropriate trails - not playgrounds	Nature - environment wildlife corridor
More butts on bikes	Damages integrity of park/environmental/safety
Hopkins and Minnteonka MTB teams can both practice	Unkown impact to maintained and deer trails
Accessible without car - better for youth and families (via LRT)	Attracting non-residents
Gets MTB off roads	Potentially limiting to other users
Convenient location for exercise - "I can bike there from my house"	Cost (\$130k?)
Great for adult and kid outdoor recreatoin	Too small (Big Willow and Civic Center)
Convenient near my home, accessible via LRT	Parking at Applewood Pointe
Brings people to our local businesses; DQ, people's organic, pizza	Wetland buffer
Least possible invasive structure to a park: no elec, no pavement, etc.	Traffic
Even if it were experimental, it goes back to nature like it was...unlike a	Parking
Love activity within nature - extremely healthy!	Size of trail
At other MTB parks, hikers and bikers coexist in the same park w/o conflict	Protected wetlands and floodplains
MTB is also a winter sport now, so park will get more 4 season usage	Civic Center park location is too small
Providing outdoor activity/amenity for both kids and adults	Recreating all new trails
It is close to nearby schools who have MTB teams	Sustainability
MTB is healthy	Erosion
Most central location with best natural amenities for a MTB trail	Sharing bridge over creek in Civic Center and Big Willow
It's a community draw - brings people in	Not multi-use trail
Separation of bikers and peds	Big Willow too small

December 13 Engagement Results

Option A: Designate mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park and/or adjacent city owned locations	
Pro	Con
It'd be nice to share the park - multi-use without dangerous intersections	No space for multiple trails like other locations
Proximity to other trails, connectivity, centrally located	Habitat restoration is ongoing - what happens to that?
Geography suitable	One feels animals and birds will move away, due to increased traffic and fragmentation of land - but others disagree!
High school team use	Rushes out walkers and existing users
Centrally located/near LRT	Not enough parking
Significant usable area	Environmental concerns of disturbing existing wildlife
Traffic/revenue for nearby businesses	Flooding
Minnetonka residents can ride their bikes there	Environmentally sensitive area due to Minnehaha Creek and disturbing existing habitat
Easy trail access from high school	Erosion is already a problem
Managed by responsible parties	Railroad makes it a safety issue
Reduced illicit activity with increased traffic	Too small a park for both walkers and bikers
	Bikers would be coming from all over
	So what if you have to drive to get to a MTB trail?
	If we allow MTB, what's next? Trap shooting next? When does city have to provide for every sport.
	Is this a big enough park to do it?
	Who will maintain it
	Maybe use football fields or baseball fields
	Destroy integrity of small neighborhood park
	Big Willow is one of the last quiet, tranquil parks
	Historic Mills area is protected
	Only one bridge for both walkers and bikers
	Separate conversation: dogs vs bikes
	Big Willow on very edge of Minnetonka - not centrally located (better for Hopkins)
	Close to Minnehaha Creek - can cause erosion
	Damage environment
	Ground cover destroyed
	Not many walkers there (?)
	Railroad - very dangerous

December 13 Engagement Results

Option A: Designate mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park and/or adjacent city owned locations	
Pro	Con
	What will happen to the wildlife?
	Dog people - 6' leash - accidents
	Bikers don't let you know when they're coming
	Bikers upset wildlife
	Not enough parking
	Current map shows bikers and walkers on the same trail
	Parking - Applewood cannot allow that
	Overuse for the scale of Big Willow
	Trails for biking and hiking should be separate
	Photography, hiking, serenity interrupted
	Big Willow is not big enough to accommodate trails. Too small to be attractive to mountain bikers
	People coming from other cities will be a disruptive congestion
	Bridges in Big Willow could not support both uses
	High school use would be concentrated to certain times and be very disruptive
	Parking
	Business conflicts of interest - what city is Minnetonka ski/cycle located in?
	Construction process / \$
	Influx of non-Minnetonka users, Minnetonka tax payers funding regional park
	Why conflate with LRT?
	Compliance with laws, legal challenges, \$
	MTB practice density
	Lack of study/process
	Lack of NR staff involvement
	Multi-use
	City liability/safety
	Density of trails and use
	Big Willow park too small
	Need to identify all environmental concerns

December 13 Engagement Results

Option A: Designate mountain biking trails in Big Willow Park and/or adjacent city owned locations	
Pro	Con
	Wildlife habitat
	Vegetation disruption
	Hydrology
	Ruins character of park
	Trail becomes a regional resource - too many bikes drawn in from other schools and cities
	Habitat and nature preserve will be degraded
	Pinch points @ bridge over creek and railroad track blind corner
	Little parking at Big Willow
	Conflict with kids from Big Willow and seniors walking there
	Big Willow not large enough to support the length of trails desired and maintain high quality habitat
	Introduce more garlic mustard and weed seeds on bike tires
	Big Willow is one of few parks where you can bird watch. You also can walk your dogs there. I think we should try to keep natural, undeveloped area in Minnetonka

December 13 Engagement Results

Option B: Designate mountain biking trails in other city-owned location(s)	
Pro	Con
Is there really a site suitable in Minnetonka? Purgatory? South? Jidanna? Hilloway? Lone Lake	Where ever is proposed people will have issue with NIMBY.
I 494 - No landowner conflicts	Need an idea of where bike area will be
Hilly terrain at 494	People walk dogs, watch birds, ski, and snowshoe
Near city campus parking (494)	There are now a pair of eagles living and hunting from 494 to I69 along Minnehaha Creek
Might be room @ Purgatory for one trail	City parks not large enough to accommodate the separate mountain bike trails
Relieve congestion in Big Willow	Lack of off-street parking at most parks (e.g. Purgatory), Big Willow would not accommodate a lot of extra cars
Achieves goal of both "sides"	We have not been presented other viable options
Improvement of environment along 494	Time/cost of thorough study
Longer trail options	Get the RIGHT solution for all parties
Other option for mountain bike trails have less traffic (Civic Center/along 494) so would be more suitable	Fewer miles of trails for the mountain bikers
Limestone trail interconnecting cities may be more suitable and provide many more miles for mountain bikers. Would require inter-city	Potential overuse to those parks
With more people using the parks there will be more interest in	Civic Center not any better - has to be linked with other area
Many believe high schoolers should be accommodated somewhere	Bikers in our group did not seem to be aware of Lone Lake or other locations
Less demand on any single park	Park board will have to notify other neighborhoods (oh well!)
Bigger area	Needed to create enough trails for people to utilize
Wouldn't need to do a loop with other locations	Centrally located at Big Willow
Protect small park like Big Willow	Distance from Hopkins high school
More area for biking	Environmental study
Would create a compromise - keep MTB but go to bigger park	Habitat restoration being done by city currently
Topography better suited to MTB	Erosion
Wouldn't bigger park be better - 3 Rivers?	Big Willow too small (and Civic Center)
More staff to oversee	Damages integrity of park/environmental/safety
Hilloway Park is near, has large hills and is virtually unused - this would be a good place to develop trails	Cost (\$130k)
Both Hopkins and Minnetonka teams have place to practice	Too small (Big Willow and Civic Center)

December 13 Engagement Results

Option B: Designate mountain biking trails in other city-owned location(s)	
Pro	Con
Big Willow can't support 2 miles of trails within its small acreage	Purgatory - too steep?
Other parks have less use and activity	Not environmentally sustainable
Purgatory Park - size, much better suited for MTB: parking, near a school, Lone Lake Park - suited for MTB	Hard to say cons w/o site chosen
	Efficient use of city resources?
Purgatory is big enough	See new current trail in Civic Center = boondoggle. Make sure trails are long enough!
Attracts non-residents	Big Willow is centralized and off a bike trail
No parking at Applewood Pointe	Less accessible for users
Larger park would be better	Parking limited
Longer trails, more parking	Safety concerns w/ people walking
Having the trails is a pro	Not centrally located
Hard to say without knowing where?	Design issues for larger bike park
Planned trails as opposed to bootleg trails - give someplace to do it	Couldn't use city hall as parking hub if at Purgatory, for example
Lone Lake park larger, non-intersecting trails with fewer walkers, great riding	494 trail route - not very long, not long enough to be interesting and not connected to access other trails - no connectivity
How about Hilloway?	Purgatory is designated wetlands
Less controversy	Loss of trees and wildlife for trail construction
Lower multi-use trails	Other parks are very flat, not good for MTB
Have more than one park host the trails	Not enough length to make a worthwhile trail
Connect to metro trail system	Trails more spread out? Location of singletrack trails should be close enough together for the flow of the whole system
More land	Walkers and dog walkers
If several small trails, won't get over-crowded	Mixed usage is dangerous
Not going to attract hard-core bikers	Existing formal walking trails may need to be redesigned to accommodate trails
Great for residents, esp. kids	Purgatory would require more redesign
Still quiet park	
Riders in the woods	
People connect to nature	
Multiple trails disperse parking, trail traffic, and wear; also improves access for more Minnetonka residents	
Other parks may be larger	

December 13 Engagement Results

Option B: Designate mountain biking trails in other city-owned location(s)	
Pro	Con
May have better topography in another park	
Seek larger footprint	
Support regional use	
Bikes not allowed on wet trail	
Great terrain at Purgatory	
Purgatory = 155 acres, Big Willow = 95 acres	
Could create a more interesting trail and more challenging terrain if not limited to Big Willow	
Would mitigate, reduce use of unofficial trails	
Provides volunteer incentive to improve environment - removal of invasives,	
More central location easier for all Minnetonka residents to access	
More parking?	
Less contentious? Less opposition?	
Separation of bikers and peds	
Opponents more satisfied	
Fewer environmental concerns	
More elevations for singletrack biking	
494 corridor: suitable for biking	
Less damage to pristine areas	
Not using existing park land	
Size of Lone Lake and Purgatory parks are better (a bit larger than Big	
Place for kids to ride "free" on the trails	
Local, safe option for riding	
Purgatory close to high school	
Possible other sites: Hennepin County home school property ~150 acres, already has parking, open land, and not the high quality nature areas; a site that is not already in use as a park	
Lone Lake would provide more elevation and space	

December 13 Engagement Results

Option C: Do not build mountain biking trails	
Pro	Con
None	No trails doesn't address safety concerns
Preserve parks/nature/ecological/animals	No access for mountain biking teams
No safety issues/risks	Unfair to growing, active cycling community of all ages
Not the magnet of Twin Cities	Makes Minnetonka less appealing to young families
More peaceful for residents and no parking issues	Possible missed revenue opportunity for local businesses
No disruption of current usage of parks (walking mainly)	Not supporting the sport/recreation of mountain biking
No conflict of non-Minnetonka residents	Does not expand the recreation option for biking
Safer for all users and still feel comfortable, especially for elderly in	Serve a segment of community
Fewer accidents	Health
Property values remain	Alternative competitive sport
No influx of traffic	Recreation for kids (year round)
Money can be redirected	Support local businesses
Current parks remain the same	Bikers deserve the opportunity for local facilities
Many bike paths exist through our Minnetonka parks already. Cutting more trails through woods (which is what mountain biking desires most) is now repurposing and changing designs already set.	Money is already budgeted for the project
People have lots of cycling options - expanding into more undeveloped areas is a definite con	Lost effort of planning, etc.
None	Loss of potential benefit that could be brought to local businesses
Save money?	We want to diversify park usage
Don't have to rely on volunteers to maintain trail if we don't have one	We want to open up the number of outdoor recreational activities we can do here
Less contentions	Lose attractive family-friendly rec opportunity
Keep adjacent community members happy	More bikers on roads, seeking a workout
Preserving wilderness/natural areas that it would take to construct trails	No place for high school team to practice (middle school also, and Hopkins team)
Eliminate all issues/concerns of cons	Loss of diversity of outdoor activities
No money spent	Doesn't allow as many physical activities options
Doesn't disrupt environment	Limits recreational options
No arguments	Would lose incentives for volunteers to participate in invasives removal activities - loss of volunteers
No money spent	City is not competitive with other cities



December 13 Engagement Results

Option C: Do not build mountain biking trails	
Pro	Con
No safety concerns	No amenity for users
Saves money	Eliminating an option for exercise
Save money	No experience for residents
Leaving as is for those who like it	Residents have to commute to other trails
Preserve in natural states	Local businesses miss out on business
No cost	More poaching of trails
No change	Does not address diversity of Minnetonka residents
No cost associated with maintenance	Sell Minnetonka short and fail to embrace future
	Not enough land to build a park for biking as any parks we discussed weren't viable
There are already impervious trails	Lack of this amenity for residents (home sales)
Would keep the habitat preserved	Other communities have trails
Less environmental damage	People will bike off road - not safe/controlled, more erosion
City won't have to spend money	Lack of mountain biking
Might make residents happy	Won't stop unsanctioned use of deer trails
For open parks, no restrictions	Leads to biking anarchy
Enjoyment of nature, dog walking and general walking are high demand	Less opportunity for healthy lifestyle
Preserves park as-is	Residents leave city for other locations
Teams from other schools use the trails and overwhelm the parks	Our kids and citizens who enjoy MTB would have trails to use
We can come to a mutual agreeable location that everyone can be happy	Our future generations would lose the incentive to be environmentally active
	Continued use of illegal trails
	Mountain biking is a high demand sport, high interest, great amenity for city
	Continued illegal use if no official trails are available, official trails might serve to protect the other parks (like Purgatory)
	Big Willow and Purgatory Park are the two parks where you can bird watch and walk your dogs. Kinsel, a smaller park is good also. Do not develop these parks. Do not put MTB trails in Big Willow or Purgatory. Right now we walk our dogs or bird watch at Purgatory Park or go to Eden Prairie. Why should residents have to go to Eden Prairie to find natural areas?

## December 13 Engagement Results

### Miscellaneous comments

Option D: Other places to consider. Landfills in Hopkins, south of SW light rail; Landfill remnant in Minnetonka north of Ceder Lake Road and west of 73; Space west of Dominik Drive, north of Regional trail, near Mudd lake - owned by Minnetonka and Hennepin Co?; Hennepin County boys school land; Purgatory park; Carver Park (3 rivers); Could there be enough space at Minnetonka high school for some trail (con = might only be open to students)?

Option D: Single loop on periphery of Big Willow, connecting to 494; do you expect civil lawsuits from nearby property owners for decreased property values?

We would like to see a nearly complete design plan to be presented at next meeting to facilitate decisionmaking.

Start at a less popular location = (not Big Willow), see how it goes. Opposition may decline and you can expand

Option D: Build trails in all parks in Minnetonka to spread usage across many places

Wants A plus B - some @ separate parks for residents and not attractive to people from other areas

Note: Presenting more information about details of what mountain biking/singletrack actually is would have led to a much more productive assessment of pros and cons

Option D: Partner with non-city entities (Cargill, Hopkins, MnDOT, Churches, Hennepin co) to develop a comprehensive trail network throughout Minnetonka and ultimately neighboring cities

Option D: We really don't have enough information to evaluate these options. Many if not all of the above pros and cons are based on supposition, emotion and opinions, not experiences and facts

Option D: Look at collaboration with other regional parks (Cities, hennepin county, three rivers); do you have a long term plan?

Silencing comments (providing necessary information) does not generate confidence in the process (and also I understand need for order - there's a way to keep it and also get clarifications or info)

Possible compromise: Only use a portion of Big Willow (north of Minnehaha) for dedicated MTB trails, south of Civic Center only for MTB - away from neighborhoods and not crossing the bridge; If you make the trails short, and don't promote the park and use the light rail, it should be a good community park

One of the major outcomes of Imagine Minnetonka is that residents want to conserve the natural character (and trees) in the city. MTB will achieve the opposite results = environmental degradation

## December 13 Engagement Results

Questions
Who paid for this study? I believe there is bias
Why did you solicit specific feedback from Applewood?
Don't the park belong to all residents?
What other areas are being considered?
What is overall city budget? Parks budget?
Why do people who don't know get to decide?
Would the same selection criteria applied in the future lead to Big Willow being selected again?
High school teams - do they practice all at once? How many at a time?
What is the end date for a decision?
How do I get copies of the pie charts shown tonight?
Does the city have an articulated policy on the use of a city park for regional benefit?
Does the no biking off trail ordinance apply to Big Willow/Civic Center and other parks or just Purgatory?
How big in acres is Big Willow?
Would walking and biking be separate trails?
Would there be parking added?
Who would maintain trails open/close when weather is bad?
Where in the six steps at the beginning of the program was the \$130,000 approved and by whom?
Has there been a survey to determine the present Big Willow usage?
If no decision has been made with regard to MTB, why has money been allocated to construct the trail in Big Willow park?
So was there a sign in other Minnetonka Parks?
Why was Big Willow park zeroed in on right from the start?
Has Lone Lake been considered?
Where or when can we view the environmental study?
What are the parking plans in Willow park?
Will non-Minnetonka residents be required to purchase access permits?
How do you stem the flow from people who do not live in Minnetonka?
Has there been a study on any other location?
How were people selected to attend the invite-only focus group sessions?
What other locations would the city consider? Bryant Lake? Purgatory? Lone Lake? Along limestone out to Excelsior? Behind Deehaven School?
Will you have to cut trees to make the course?
Can Minnetonka work with other communities on this to connect trails?
Have you talked to Cargill?

## December 13 Engagement Results

Questions
Why is Lone Lake not being considered?
Who would be responsible for maintaining the trails (from the city - that's who's liable) and making sure they aren't expanded with berms and jumps?
Why did the park board wait so long to notify the general public?
Who's going to design the trail?
Why has there been no Environmental Impact study done?
Can that little park handle that kind of traffic?
The vast majority of Big Trail users and neighbors are senior tax payers. They are totally opposed. They have made their feelings known through emails and phone calls. Why are you prolonging the process?
Will the trails be created or will you be using existing trails?
Will you take soil samples to see if soil is suitable?
Define mountain biking
How is Big Willow a "central" Minnetonka location?
What does a future LRT trail in Hopkins have to do with MTB (close) to Big Willow?
Is the 494 corridor a (good) possible location?
Is the trail proposal set in stone? Or can it be changed for the better. It seems too environmentally impactful
Would there big changes in the landscape of Big Willow park - would you make larger hills?
Why isn't the Civic Center park called out specifically as part of option A or B? Does Big Willow in these options include the "Civic Center" portion previously proposed and mapped out?
Why was Big Willow selected?
Why not all parks being used?
How many non Minnetonka residents?

January 8 Engagement Results

	Agree	# of agree	Disagree	# of disagree	No Answer
<b>Adequate Space</b>					
A trail system should be able to sustain a minimum of 4 miles of single track trails. This could include a single park on its own or a circuit of parks in close proximity to one another. Staff believes that less than 4 miles would not be utilized.	67%	126	18%	33	15%
of those who responded	79%		21%		
If a circuit of parks is considered, a given park within the circuit should be able to support a minimum of 2 miles of mountain bike trails on its own.	59%	108	21%	39	20%
of those who responded	73%		27%		
If a circuit of multiple parks are needed, the parks should be located within one mile of another.	56%	100	28%	50	16%
of those who responded	67%		33%		
A mountain bike trail system should be within one mile of a regional bike trail.	50%	93	34%	63	16%
of those who responded	60%		40%		
A park must contain a minimum of 20 usable acres to be considered. Usable acreage is undeveloped acreage that could be used to build mountain bike trails. Acreage does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.	57%	105	23%	43	20%
of those who responded	71%		29%		
<b>Environmental Protection</b>					
Trails should be built using the highest standards for development and pursuant of sustainable trail guidelines. This would limit erosion, vegetation loss and water quality problems.	88%	163	1%	2	11%
of those who responded	99%		1%		
Areas containing uncommon plants and high quality restoration areas (per city natural resources staff) should be avoided.	82%	151	7%	13	11%
of those who responded	92%		8%		
Generally, narrow trails (approximately 24") should be built to reduce the total area of intensive tread disturbance, slow trail users and minimize vegetation and soil compaction.	77%	144	9%	17	13%
of those who responded	89%		11%		
Site should be designed to minimize tree impact and removal.	88%	161	3%	5	10%
of those who responded	97%		3%		

January 8 Engagement Results

Minimize User Conflict					
The majority of existing mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are one way to avoid head on interactions. If built in Minnetonka trails should also be one way.	87%	158	4%	8	9%
of those who responded	95%		5%		
Mountain bike trails should be built to minimally intersect existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.	76%	141	13%	24	11%
of those who responded	85%		15%		
Mountain bike trails should not displace existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.	70%	131	20%	37	10%
of those who responded	78%		22%		
Mountain bike trails should be designated as multi-use (open to runners, bird watchers, hikers, snowshoers, bikers, etc.). Ninety-two percent of all mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are multi-use.	63%	116	23%	42	14%
of those who responded	73%		27%		
Adequate parking should be available at each proposed park.	61%	113	27%	50	11%
of those who responded	69%		31%		

January 8 Engagement Results - Adequate Space

<p>A trail system should be able to sustain a minimum of 4 miles of single track trails. This could include a single park on its own or a circuit of parks in close proximity to one another. Staff believes that less than 4 miles would not be utilized.</p>	<p>If a circuit of parks is considered, a given park within the circuit should be able to support a minimum of 2 miles of mountain bike trails on its own.</p>	<p>If a circuit of multiple parks are needed, the parks should be located within one mile of another.</p>
<p>Minimum 4! More would be better</p>	<p>Reasonable argument.</p>	<p>Not necessary, but it's desirable</p>
<p>10 miles would be reasonable minimum if spread over multiple parks.</p>	<p>2 miles is good. 1.5 miles is good. Any amount in a single park is good!</p>	<p>A start is a start. There is enough demand that MTKA will be used.</p>
<p>The trail system need substance to be worthwhile</p>	<p>Less connections on roads will be better for high school kids. Many trails connect on single track connections.</p>	<p>If they are connected by the regional trail, I think &gt;1 mile is okay</p>
<p>At least! We could start with this and build up (like how Theodore Wirth started)</p>	<p>It should fit the environmental regardless of miles</p>	<p>Could be more than a mile - if there are 2 parks that are optimal but further away, I'd prefer that over lots of unpractical close together</p>
<p>More miles is better, but getting a trail system started is going get the community involved and interested in more miles</p>	<p>Minimum 2 miles, more better (2.5)</p>	<p>Making connections off of established mixed-use paths would be more safe and efficient</p>
<p>It should fit the environment regardless of miles</p>	<p>Agree but looking at the list of trails available, 2 is really small</p>	<p>The closer the better</p>
<p>Four miles is not a very long trail. At this length it probably would not be utilized by non-residents, which should alleviate parking concerns</p>	<p>I think that's definitely a minimum, ideally more</p>	<p>WITHIN 1 mile</p>
<p>5 miles should be minimum</p>	<p>4 miles</p>	<p>Can only connect parks if a bike-only route is feasible</p>
<p>5 mile min</p>	<p>More experience shows that it is difficult to get a consistent core of volunteers for trails shorter than 3-5 miles</p>	<p>Also consider availability of safe connecting trails</p>
<p>5 mi min</p>	<p>Does that really matter if they are contiguous?</p>	<p>Could be a little farther if access is good</p>
<p>I would like to see a higher # than 4</p>	<p>Stick to 4-mile minimum</p>	<p>If connected by LRT, ok to be longer</p>

January 8 Engagement Results - Adequate Space

A trail system should be able to sustain a minimum of 4 miles of single track trails. This could include a single park on its own or a circuit of parks in close proximity to one another. Staff believes that less than 4 miles would not be utilized.	If a circuit of parks is considered, a given park within the circuit should be able to support a minimum of 2 miles of mountain bike trails on its own.	If a circuit of multiple parks are needed, the parks should be located within one mile of another.
Existing Twin Cities parks are the best reference for needed space to allow trails	Multiple parks should not be in criteria. Only one park is sufficient	Develop trails at all parks
Parks in Minnetonka are not big enough for lengthy trails	Could be plus or minus	How will high school kids navigate this? Will they have to drive on the street?
4 miles isn't enough. 5+ or more min	seems reasonable	Multiple parks should not be considered.
Tend to agree length of 4 miles would be adequate - only 2 miles would likely be under-utilized.	Should be a minimum of 3	Give or take
This is ridiculous. If you are building the park just say so	If close to other parks <2 miles ok.	With provisions for safe passage to get from one to the other
Current unsanctioned trails are very short. Build trails that fit park size in as many parks as possible	Unless parks are very close.	Distance between is not a huge factor
A contiguous trail is best	1.5 miles	ideal but not mandatory
Agree, but not a show-stopper	The use of 2 parks is unfair to other users	Would be nice, not required.
Many single loop trails are less than 4 miles	Do we want to expand mtn. biking to more than just 1 area park? I am referring to the disruption caused)	Limit road crossings on non-bike lane roads.
As a non-biker, these all seem reasonable	Need to see a specific proposal	Not necessary but would be nice
The trail should be in a non-Minnetonka park	2 miles is too long for families	2 miles
Examples of other trails are in much larger parks - none of Minnetonka parks are large enough to support this 4-mile minimum	Build to what terrain is available, not an arbitrary distance.	Longer ok w/ access by LRT
Not a circuit of parks by safety issues	Only if the acreage exceeds 20 acres.	This is unduly restrictive
Could be plus or minus	2 miles does not seem adequate.	2 miles of relatively safe roads
If shorter bikers would dump into non-formalized trails to add distance	Should not use multiple parks	Don't have to be



January 8 Engagement Results - Adequate Space

A trail system should be able to sustain a minimum of 4 miles of single track trails. This could include a single park on its own or a circuit of parks in close proximity to one another. Staff believes that less than 4 miles would not be utilized.	If a circuit of parks is considered, a given park within the circuit should be able to support a minimum of 2 miles of mountain bike trails on its own.	If a circuit of multiple parks are needed, the parks should be located within one mile of another.
Civic center too small by creek	1-2 is acceptable.	Excludes Long Lake - better venue
4 is still quite short	Again, more than 2 is better. Makes for < 20 minutes of riding.	Somewhat agree
anything is better than nothing	2 miles of trail loops in a park would have too great a impact on wildlife and existing uses.	Bikers on roads with traffic - safety concern
Whatever is best practice, common convention	Not important to me.	Bikers need more exercise
Seems like an arbitrary minimum but directionally it makes sense.	No trails on small sites	Sure
More than 4 miles would be fine		The right sites should be selected based on all criteria, not just proximity.
Although multiple 3 mile trails in close proximity could work.		So what
If the median for trails in the area is 9 why is this so low?		1-2 miles is acceptable
So many trail/park connection opportunities BW/494/Civic		Not important to me.
Less than 4 miles could be used.		If parking is a criteria, parks further apart is ok.
Single park only.		
Neutral		
Would rather not limit at all		
Somewhat agree		
Short trails to slow speed.		
Environmental concerns outweigh any arbitrary mileage goal.		

<p>A trail system should be able to sustain a minimum of 4 miles of single track trails. This could include a single park on its own or a circuit of parks in close proximity to one another. Staff believes that less than 4 miles would not be utilized.</p>	<p>If a circuit of parks is considered, a given park within the circuit should be able to support a minimum of 2 miles of mountain bike trails on its own.</p>	<p>If a circuit of multiple parks are needed, the parks should be located within one mile of another.</p>
<p>The density of trails in any one park should not exceed 1 mile/10 acres. Less than 4 miles would still meet needs of kids.</p>		
<p>While I ride a bike recreationally, I am not a mountain biker so I don't know that I can knowledgeably answer these criteria</p>		
<p>The 494 corridor should be included in any loop.</p>		
<p>It seems short</p>		
<p>Trails should be at least 10 miles in length</p>		
<p>2 miles is nice for starters. 4 miles would be great.</p>		
<p>Even 4 is fairly short but is a good start</p>		
<p>It's a lot shorter than the parks given as examples</p>		
<p>A useful technical riding challenge trail could be shorter</p>		
<p>This is the bikers desire. This is not important to me.</p>		
<p>Bigger trails should only be on large sites.</p>		

January 8 Engagement Results - Adequate Space

A mountain bike trail system should be within one mile of a regional bike trail.	A park must contain a minimum of 20 usable acres to be considered. Usable acreage is undeveloped acreage that could be used to build mountain bike trails. Acreage does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.
Lone Lake is on the River Bluffs Trail	In general, yes.
Again, just a preference	Population density proves otherwise. Make a table.
Within 2 miles is likely good enough	Mountain biking is the pursuit of getting lost in the woods. We don't want to overcrowd any park.
Many are not.	Too much of a "friendly opponent" question
If you are concerned about parking, having it close to the trail system will help with that - also would allow access to the bikers who already bike.	Depending on the vegetation density, 20 acres could feel very small
I would say not a need, but should be supplemented with another safe option	Looking at other metro trails, acreage per mile could go down to 15 acres, but 20 is also good criteria to start with
All roadways already here. Safe bikeable access	Lone Lake would be ideal
YES--I want to ride to the trail and not drive	40 is a minimum
Would be ideal but 1.5-2 would be acceptable	Based on other parks with MTB trails, this is definitely a minimum
Not necessary	A park should not already be used for other purposes
Agree, most residents would want to bike to the trails	A system of trails in different parks does not need to be within 1 miles of one another
Some trails are paved, mostly for road biker	Lone Lake!!
Would be nice, but not necessary	If the park has the necessary features it shouldn't matter
A nice-to-have	25" acres
This is not highest priority	There is no need to develop every inch of every park
This does not pertain to mountain biking	Minimum of 20 is too low
If you can build 5 miles in Lone Lake, built it or Purgatory	If no mixed use trails, hardly any park has 20 acres to dedicate to mountain bike trails
Give or take	30 would be better if you're trying to squeeze 2+ miles into Big Willow you would have only Regional park with less miles per acre
Reduces parking issues	Don't set 20 acres in stone
Preferred - but not mandatory	Could have less usable if close in proximity to one that does have 20+ acres
As long as parking is adequate	Could be packed more tightly

January 8 Engagement Results - Adequate Space

A mountain bike trail system should be within one mile of a regional bike trail.	A park must contain a minimum of 20 usable acres to be considered. Usable acreage is undeveloped acreage that could be used to build mountain bike trails. Acreage does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.
As long as that 1-mile is rideable, i.e. safe to bike	Not as important to me, but ideally trail wouldn't overly dominate park
Reduce need for parking can make it a longer ride	Very important
Maybe not a mile, but no more than 5 away	7.2 miles of trails is worth it if you can ride to it
Not necessary but nice	Multiple nearby sites could work, big willow, civic center.
Wherever we can get it	I've seen trails built with less.
I would bike up to 5 miles to get to something similar to terrace oaks in Burnsville.	Not sure
Limits the options way too much. Bikers can bike off the regional trail or drive to a location. Don't need to be pampered.	Also exclude existing restored nature management areas.
Would be nice, not required	Min acreage could be less if adequate space for new trails.
If possible, awesome	And BW has only 25 acres (question your figure - the website says 25)
There are some great parks > 1 mile from regional trails	To minimize impact and maximize solitude
I don't think this needs to be a criteria. It's nice to have	The parks on the chart that meet this criteria are all viable options.
Would be nice	35 acres
Closer is better	More important, keep the ratio of disturbed to undisturbed low.
2 miles	With a max of 1 mile / 10 acres.
Unduly restrictive	This depends on current usage.
Safe riding within 2 miles	This seems too small.
Doesn't matter to me but ok with other opinions/perspective	Should look at the configuration of the acreage
Why have parking? Bikers need exercise.	Is this large enough.
A "nice to have"	Reduce turf areas in parks to allow mountain bike trail development. Leave woods and prairie alone.
The right sites should be selected based on all criteria, not just proximity.	20 useable acres should be determined after subtracting the high value habitat.
Not sure it has to be w/in 1 mile. 1 mile on a bike isn't that far.	Adding trails to usable acres depends on total park acreage.
So what	
yes	

January 8 Engagement Results - Adequate Space

<p>A mountain bike trail system should be within one mile of a regional bike trail.</p>	<p>A park must contain a minimum of 20 usable acres to be considered. Usable acreage is undeveloped acreage that could be used to build mountain bike trails. Acreage does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.</p>
<p>Beneficial but not necessary.</p>	
<p>Regional trail users not the target audience</p>	
<p>It depends on park chosen.</p>	

January 8 Engagement Results - Environmental Protection

Trails should be built using the highest standards for development and pursuant of sustainable trail guidelines. This would limit erosion, vegetation loss and water quality problems.	Areas containing uncommon plants and high quality restoration areas (per city natural resources staff) should be avoided.	Generally, narrow trails (approximately 24") should be built to reduce the total area of intensive tread disturbance, slow trail users and minimize vegetation and soil compaction.	Site should be designed to minimize tree impact and removal.
Any other way wouldn't be responsible	Off limits areas are an option. This isn't a yes or no	Most MORC trails are <24"	It isn't needed to facilitate a MTB trail
Talk to MORC	Minnetonka already has an abundance of parks for this purpose	Can be smaller than 24" - check out other trails. Some obstacles could take up more space	Can plant more trees too!
Trail maintenance and preservation needs to take priority	It would be nice to make those items a highlight and feature to encourage outdoor bikers enjoy the	Narrower is the norm 15-19"	Avoiding trees that can prosper is what we all want
Why ask this question?	Areas recovered from buckthorn should not be considered restored	Mountain bike trails need compaction	Most mountain bike trails curve around most trees
Well built and maintained trails simply do not damage the environment	"Uncommon" should not be the sole criteria here	Would like combination of single and double track	Tree removal should be unnecessary
Erosion is a non-factor on any properly designed trail system - mountain bike trails are typically constructed with sensitivity to	That should be ALL Minnetonka parks	Mountain bikers don't generally want or need wider trails	Safety should be first
Again, you act as if the park is a foregone conclusion	Sure, but are there really endangered plants?!	It would be more fun to ride with less trail space (width)	Nice to have
The essential character of the park experience should be unchanged	Depends on the uncommon plant	Thin trails are way better anyway	This would be impossible at the Civic Center location
Not sure what sustainable trail guidelines are?	Wildlife- mountain biking would change this	24" may be too narrow	Prefer no trees be removed
Will mountain bikers stay on trails? They destroyed environment in Purgatory. Who will supervise?	"Uncommon" should not apply to invasive	Starting with 24" might be too narrow	Maximizing trees improves experience
Must be overseen by experts	Within reason. This alone cannot determine location	s/B Shared with existing trails	IMBA guidelines. Within reason.

January 8 Engagement Results - Environmental Protection

Trails should be built using the highest standards for development and pursuant of sustainable trail guidelines. This would limit erosion, vegetation loss and water quality problems.	Areas containing uncommon plants and high quality restoration areas (per city natural resources staff) should be avoided.	Generally, narrow trails (approximately 24") should be built to reduce the total area of intensive tread disturbance, slow trail users and minimize vegetation and soil compaction.	Site should be designed to minimize tree impact and removal.
The requirements to build the trail require almost 48", near of 42"	No doubt	Trails should be more narrow and use existing deer trails	Really can you justify even on removed tree for this? What about wildlife and solitude impact.
And ongoing community education to care for our parks	This would exclude all of the city's large parks.	Must be narrow, no more than 24"	What about wildlife impact? Nesting areas?
IMBA guidelines	Be careful in WHERE trails are built	Trail will be 24" but takes wider path for construction	The city usually takes this into consideration.
Informal walking trails that are undeveloped are far worse for erosion than a developed trail	Are these areas clearly identified?	Use national trail standards	Lots of trees to slow speeds
My concert is environmental protection- all the criteria in the world won't fane the negative impacts this would have on Big Willow seems to be targeted..	At planners discretion	How can this be multi-use?	
Absolutely	Natural habitat covers most of the area both sides of the RR tracks.	Informal trains should not be a concern	Avoid areas of high value and rare trees.
No doubt	Consider the entire ecosystem as well. Trails should not become victims for invasive plants. Also, keep density low to minimize wildlife disturbance.	Needs wider spread of trees for handle bars	Pretty hard to do.
More=huge advocates in sustainable trail use	Natural resources staff must be on the ground during trail construction.	Can be narrower 12-15" is fine	Some trees will need to go.
If trail ends up being built, then yes. Abide by sustainable standards but rather no trail.	What about animals and the effect?	Double track areas needed	A must.
IMBA standards are well	Must protect	Within IMBA and safety guidelines.	Trees, plants, wild life were here

January 8 Engagement Results - Environmental Protection

Trails should be built using the highest standards for development and pursuant of sustainable trail guidelines. This would limit erosion, vegetation loss and water quality problems.	Areas containing uncommon plants and high quality restoration areas (per city natural resources staff) should be avoided.	Generally, narrow trails (approximately 24") should be built to reduce the total area of intensive tread disturbance, slow trail users and minimize vegetation and soil compaction.	Site should be designed to minimize tree impact and removal.
Erosion: Do a soil sample. MTKA has a lot of sandy soil that would cause erosion.	This is a must	How does a 24" trail allow walking and biking at the same time?	
Of course	Very important	I am ok with wider trails	
Trails should not be constructed in any area undergoing active restoration and deemed high quality.	But not just "high quality"	Do not build trails. Use existing	
Animals? Ecosystem disturbance?		Of course	
Basically this whole section says if you build it, build it right. How about soils?		How do you prevent trail widening over time?	
How would the trail be maintained?		Compacting soil will impact tree	
Bicycles not compatible with environment. Look @ what happened @ Purgatory		24" can be narrow especially on long bridges	
Should be the same as walking trails.		There should be larger sections for passing and visibility.	
This is a must.		You forgot damage to tree roots that allow disease to spread	
		I'm not sure I believe the trail will stay 24"	
		How can bikers pass on 24" without leaving trail.	



January 8 Engagement Results - User Conflict

The majority of existing mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are one way to avoid head on interactions. If built in Minnetonka trails should also be one way.	Mountain bike trails should be built to minimally intersect existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.	Mountain bike trails should not displace existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.
ABSOLUTELY	In most cases yes.	Signs help designate, and a small area, this helps
Most MTB trails share usage and work great!	Informal foot paths can be formed around formal paths - hence the name "informal footpaths"	We can share though
One way with signs explaining this	It is not unavoidable	There are many foot paths in this case MTB trail should take priority
Must be one-way	A major requirement	This is a minor conflict
Absolutely! I've never ridden on a two-way MTB trail	Not minimal: NO intersection of biker and foot	If more bikers will use a trail than a walker, it should be repurposed
One way could encourage speeding	This is the most important point to prevent conflict between both sides of the issue	Try to avoid displacing, but some may be needed
Definitely important for safety	Informal foot path were not properly designed and should be eliminated	Bike trail can be use existing trails, but as needed/necessary
Can't emphasize enough that existing trails and new mountain bike trails should not intersect. As much as possible. Signage must be a design element.	Yes, minimize crossings	Too many informal paths in Big Willow
If this supports a high school team, the high school should be financially invested. I will pay an additional \$50 a year so Hopkins can have a mountain bike course?	Proper signs will do the trick	Repurpose
Do walkers have to go one way?	Less of a concern. Stop signs can be implemented	If existing trails would be used more by mountain bikes AND would be multi-use and still available for walkers, it should be okay
Multi-use either way	As long as there is proper signage	Where reasonably possible, yes. But not a show-stopper
Avoid interaction at all costs	Use gates or sharp turns to slow bikers	S/B shared

January 8 Engagement Results - User Conflict

<b>The majority of existing mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are one way to avoid head on interactions. If built in Minnetonka trails should also be one way.</b>	<b>Mountain bike trails should be built to minimally intersect existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.</b>	<b>Mountain bike trails should not displace existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.</b>
Mostly agree- some could be two-way	There should be no overlap	Walking trails must be priority
Absolutely!	S/B shared	I think they could use "bootleg" trails
For bikers. Walkers/runners would benefit going opposite way to see bikes coming toward them vs being startled from a bike behind	Ncio trails should not be built	Preferred - but not mandatory
Yes also try to make them bicycle-only	Walking trails and mountain bike trails kept apart	High-use only
With signs to denote	Signs will also help. There won't be 1000 bikes/day	Agree with exception of "high use informal foot paths"
Ideally one-way. Two-way can get really dangerous	Within reason, without detracting from overall design	If another walking trail built, then ok.
Two-way is okay	Appropriate signs negate the issue	Existing trails can be modified
signs to educated all users on courtesy "in on your left" etc.	Do not consider informal paths	No to informal
If there is an opportunity to build dual-track, I think it should be considered.	I'm okay with intersection	To be more environmentally conscious, use existing trails.
It is the safest way	If multi-use, why is this specific? (high use informal foot paths).	Can walkers please get considered!!
A must	Yes to maintained trails, no to informal foot paths.	There may be some displaced and that is unavoidable.
Safety first	What about existing informal trails?	Foot paths ok
Who monitors? It is not practical for walkers to go a full 2 miles. They will walk back the way they came.	MTB folks are good at giving way to pedestrians	Should not build new. Use existing
Should be more a desire than a hard criteria	Traffic control/stops	Maybe?

January 8 Engagement Results - User Conflict

The majority of existing mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are one way to avoid head on interactions. If built in Minnetonka trails should also be one way.	Mountain bike trails should be built to minimally intersect existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.	Mountain bike trails should not displace existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.
Cuyuna started with 2 way and is slowly changing to 1 way for safety.	Even minimal intersection will create problems (safety + tranquility) on already established park trails used by many for walking	High use footpaths (some) might make very good mountain bike trails. If utilized, would minimize the impact and reduce the need for building new.
Two-way trails limit speed	There are ways to minimize conflicts	displace "informal footpaths" which are a growing problem.
Would it be one way only for cyclists? If I were walking I would want to be approaching them, not having them coming up from behind me.	Also what about minimal impact to residential areas and property values and parking issues.	If we're going to share, why do all the trails need to be new?
How much signage would there be?	Very difficult to do in Big Willow	Nor should existing trails be re-routed.
Definitely	Where possible	
I don't see as necessary. Duluth has 2-way single track.	Big Willow has high use of foot traffic and bikes - parking lot often full	
Concerned about passing issues on trail.	Should have almost zero crossings	
	Good idea for most part. Sometime may be unavoidable.	
	Multi-use is fine as long as good visibility and signage is there.	
	Not a high priority because if the bikes are really going slowly, it should not be needed	
	Should not intersect or be near other trails.	

January 8 Engagement Results - User Conflict

<b>Mountain bike trails should be designated as multi-use (open to runners, bird watchers, hikers, snowshoers, bikers, etc.). Ninety-two percent of all mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are multi-use.</b>	<b>Adequate parking should be available at each proposed park.</b>
It's a safety concern to be multi-use	Meh
Only if this can be done safely	If built near regional bike trail, riders would bike to the mountain bike trail - no need for parking
Neutral	Less of a concern than access to trail system. Nearby parking (<2 miles via trail) would be nice
I am fine with multi-use, but I am also fine with dedicated trails if it makes people feel safer	This is an example. It's fine
Designations of who has right of way need to be clear	Since the point is to be close to the regional trails so people can bike there, I don't care about parking
For safety and enjoyment of users I generally disagree with multi-use. Possible exception would be reduction of "blind corners" and include passing lane	Not necessary if on regional trail
If it's only 24 inches, this is not enough room. It either needs to be wider or not multi-use, but not both	Not necessary, park and rides would be sufficient
So long as rules are clearly posted and followed by all	Same for multi-use
1st choice to be mountain bike only. Multi-use if needed	I would prefer to ride to the trail and not drive
Too dangerous	Near is close enough
This is critical. The trails may technically be multi-use but are universally used separately (bikers on bike trail, hikers on hike trails)	Residents can bike to parks. Parking would be for non-residents
But there can be separate hiking trails also	Many will ride there
With safety/caution sign	Not needed as most people will bike to trails
I would prefer less technical designed trail	Can encourage people to bike to park
Safety concern, if trails are only 24"	As long as you can bike to trail, no parking needed
Not sure how this helps with conflict?	Seems like most will bike to trail
I have walked Theodore Wirth as bikers are going down hills--this is very dangerous!	Parking is/will not be an issue. Bikers would utilize nearby lots and utilize regional trails to access Big Willow
S/B shared	Close to regional trail will allow cyclists to ride to trail system
Both mountain bikers and non want single use	Bicyclist typically ride in

January 8 Engagement Results - User Conflict

Mountain bike trails should be designated as multi-use (open to runners, bird watchers, hikers, snowshoers, bikers, etc.). Ninety-two percent of all mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are multi-use.	Adequate parking should be available at each proposed park.
Mountain bikers - in my experience - do not always share trails. Hazardous to all users	I would bike to the trail not drive so I wouldn't care
No competitive racing should be allowed	You wouldn't need adequate parking because most people would ride in
With signage	Nice to have
This will be the source of continued conflict, please separate them	Most people will ride there so they don't need to park
Very important	If pre-existing, prefer no new parking
Could lead to extra hazards	All riders should ride to trails. No parking for this.
But not necessarily	Adequate parking at the trail entrance site, not counting the Big Willow ball fields and the maintenance facility
Dogs and bikes are not compatible	or close by, etc.
mountain biking and walkers don't mix, neither would be happy	At the city lot - maintenance location don't build more
Multi use would drive existing hikers out a some local. You need to look at who uses the park. Dogs, elderly, etc. are much more at risk to multi use trails.. Should be centered and designed around feasibility	Nearby is fine - 1-2 miles
Safety a major concern for multi-modal users. Dogs and bikers do not mix.	Or a secondary option. Hate to see a big lot built
Walkers are already rude about sharing trails	Lots and lots of parking is key to all users
Too many off leash dogs in MTKA.	Encourage ride to park and allow more local residents to use
We can share	If close proximity to regional trail, cyclists will ride to trail as warmup or more miles
If everyone uses one way it works	Not sure what this means
I don't understand how a birder wouldn't get run down!	Nice to have but not needed if you can ride to it.
Not a great idea, runners maybe.	If it intersects a regional trail, this is a minimal concern.
Should only include trail runners	Adequate parking exists. Most users will ride to trails.
Non-bikers need to be aware and ALL users need to be safe	Not needed.
Mt. bikers go fast - that is the main purpose. How would that be compatible w/ say birdwatching or snowshoers?	Multiple spread out parking

January 8 Engagement Results - User Conflict

Mountain bike trails should be designated as multi-use (open to runners, bird watchers, hikers, snowshoers, bikers, etc.). Ninety-two percent of all mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are multi-use.	Adequate parking should be available at each proposed park.
Can always be tricky. Everyone is oblivious to others.	Don't care - ride there.
But why build it here? Have people use those.	Off site parking (@ city hall) is good if trail accessible by LRT or other.
No differentiation than current trail usage	Within a safe ride area (1-2 miles)
Definitely	Absolutely! Not on residential streets!
How much fat tire biking is expected in winter? Will it interfere with skiing and snowshoeing if we get enough snow?	Bikers will bike to park.
Kid and dog safety	Not roll over to neighborhoods.
As long as foot traffic is aware of speed mismatch they should be allowed.	Agree but how would you manage that at BW? LL has better parking.
Too risky. User accidents/conflicts	Not a valid criteria
If safety can be ensured.	Do not build new parking lots.
I would rather have a single use.	Parking is secondary to good environmental trails.
They are not designated as	At least 15 parking spaces.
Trail running, snowshoe - Yes	There is enough now.
Proper signage needed	Most will ride.
Would be safer to be separate	Big Willow has some parking issues.
Very hard to hear bikes coming. Too great a speed difference to be safe.	If circuits, less parking may be needed per site.
Not sure how I feel about shared use.	Less parking would discourage non-locals.
Mixed use in 24" trail widths is foolish	The claim is that local bikers need the trails. Our city parks are not regional parks.
	No additional park land should be for cars.

January 8 Engagement Results - Additional Comments

Additional Comments
Access to neighboring neighborhoods is an issues Civic Park access of Minnehaha Place will create safety issues, congestions, parking challenges, etc.
Multi use paths is an accident waiting to happen. Bike paths should not be accessible to others.
Collaborate and coordinate with other cities and regional parks
Access to regional trails, food, parking important
Concerned for safety of railway and flooding areas
I think there is room for mountain biking in our city - we offer so much to so many - why wouldn't we want to add this amenity to our community?
We love biking as a family and with friends
494 Corridor seems to be the best overall choice to consider
Wirth is for mountain bikers only. Minnetonka parks are not big enough for what we mountain bikers want--single use!
Informal walking trails are far worse for erosion than a developed MTB trail. A developed trail would be built to drain appropriately while informal trails are not if we are so concerned with erosion and environmental impact the city should end the human use of these undeveloped trails.
The best trail will have a mix of difficulties - not just "easy"
I degree with mountain biking trails in will Park - the environment is too sensitive to handle it. A lot of great vegetation work has been done there. The trails would fragment the environment, add to erosions, disrupt fauna, a cause safety concerns a completely change the character of the park
The trail community meeting does not have any space for people who are against the trail to express their opinions. I've personally done restorations work at Big willow for 2 yrs., we've made a ton of progress encouraging mature plant and minimal habitation actually occurs. A mountain bike trail would drastically fragment the space at bike will and would encourage invasive species would not only spread across the park, but bike tires carry invasive plant seeds which would spread to others parks of MN outside of big willow.
Please look for more appropriate location and don't think criteria here was into account
I firmly believe this criteria process is flawed!! The third option of no tracks!! That was preserved at the focus group is bypassed by these questions! My position is that no criteria matters and no trails should be developed. This meeting set up a false questions of do we want a red or blue choice of trail - I say no trail period!
As this country ages we need more activities to promote healthy lives/lifestyles. I'm 61 and love to bike. It is a safe body friendly activity that can be done into old age.
Winter biking becoming popular - year round trails would be good
can not 494 and civic center be considered as a location?

## January 8 Engagement Results - Additional Comments

### Additional Comments

I have lived in Minnetonka since 1975. every year I have enjoyed the experienced on the trails and in the parks in Minnetonka... it is time for the parks to evolve again to alter to the community please add MT bike trails to improve the community and give children opportunities to fall in love with their natural surroundings.

The construction of trails will be a great benefit for the city. People will travel to new trails to try the out. Which in turn will have people effect get gas, something to eat, bike repairs, etc.

How much money can we pay you NOT to build the track at big willow! Just leave the park alone!!

Another meeting- try to bore people into submission! When do we get to speak out instead of filling out a response to your foregone conclusions!

What a waste of my taxes.

Keep Big willow for walking only, please!

Along with the size of the park, the character of the park should be considered. Big Willow is very serene and beautiful. MT bike traffic will really hurt Big Willow's greatest asset. Other parks that have less beauty and serenity should be considered

Fascinating process watching America at work for us all. Go Minnetonka!

Using Big willow park at a mountain bike trail would be a big loss

I don't want any MT bike trails at civic center park.

Many parks are underutilized. If constructing designing trails gets more people out (esp. youth) it's a good thing!

It would be useful to consult other cities (Eagan, Champlin, etc.) about how the concerns shown tonight were addressed. Lebanon Hills is an excellent example of how trails can be built responsibly.

All the questions that were given assume that this trail will be made. I feel like this did not give me an opportunity to express on opinions. I don't want this trail to be built due to both environmental reasons and because I feel it will be disruptive to walkers. I believe that there is a big group that would not want these trails and there voice taken away by this biased system.

This form/process is flawed and leading. It pre-supposes that the trails will be built. Nowhere on this form am I asked if I want the trails to be built.

This is sales 101. "Do I want to buy a red pen or a blue pen" What if I don't want a pen?

Lone Lake looks ideal based on acreage and usability. I've been riding single track for decades having grown up in WV and going to school in VA in Blue Ridge Mountains. I miss the mountains but a great up and down trail with twists and challenging natural obstacles is great. We don't have any trails around officially to support this. I-94 corridor - is it possible too?

It is absurd that Minnetonka doesn't have an existing trail for mountain bikers. There are no options within 30 minutes by car. This leaves no option for kids to mountain bike. Disgraceful!!

From an economic and recreational standpoint, the addition of mountain bike trails to Minnetonka has many benefits so long as it is done in a planned manner with local support to help maintain and clean the system. I am 58 years old and enjoy biking but have not been able to do much mountain biking as I have to drive to trails and having local trails would enable me to increase the amount of time and money I can spend locally doing what I love.

I fully support mountain bike trails in MTKA! Thanks!!



## January 8 Engagement Results - Additional Comments

### Additional Comments

MTKA needs to think long term. In 5 years, how many of the people opposed to all this will even be using the trails. Many people opposed have been walking these parks for 20+ years - its time to share! We have 51 parks in MTKA. How many can you walk in? All of them. How many have single-track? Zero!

2' wide paths - multi-use - 1 way? Hahaha - good one! How could that possibly be enforced? Not Big Willow. Somewhere else please! This is a disaster waiting to happen (in more ways than one)

How about using the more linear edges of the regional trail to tie together groups of loops! I like the idea of using the corridors between parks. Add bike trails that run parallel to existing trail systems with smaller loops. Civic Center and 494 could work

It would be nice if the trails could stay open when its wet. We bike all year!

All of these answers assume I am in favor of these trails which I am not.

Are the trail advocates looking at locations outside Minnetonka or on non-city property to build trails that would be more suitable for a high quality trail system?

Trails should be near LRT Trail + have designated bike lanes or paths connecting.

Has a minimum elevation change been considered?

Why is proximity to a school in Hopkins important?

Trying to maintain no increase in budget, how will this be built and maintained (source of funding)?

Absolute advocate of configuring MTB trails in MTKA. Having lived here (MTKA) for 18 years and biking in and around the area in addition to the obvious MTB folks, kids will take to it as well = Better health. Look beyond just Big Willow. Look @ connecting 494 & civic - easy link to Big Willow. Thank you, Stanley Benston

Much welcomed addition to Minnetonka. Any current non-sanctioned walk/bike trails should be improved to support both types of traffic.

Thanks for the discussion! Very excited for the possibility of trails to use w/ my family.

Based on the criteria, Lone Lake is the best option for size, parking availability, location to trail/SWLRT. I am concerned about having a mtn. bike trail in Purgatory Park. There are a lot of dogs using the park, including non-leashed dogs.

Why are we not discussing other parks? By selecting Big Willow, we would be destroying a rustic park bordering Minnehaha Creek. There is no other area in the Twin Cities with these attributes. We have a duty to protect a unique park such as this for future generations. Where is the feasibility study? This is not. It is measuring public opinion. Why did we not restrict this to residents? There are people here filling out these forms from outside our city.

Kids and outdoors activity enthusiasts need more activities or alternatives.

Would be great to be close to regional trail BUT could be ok if a safe riding area or street could link to it.

Lone Lake could be stand alone. Civic Center + 394 corridor could be great combination.

Great job by the facilitator / speaker.

Additional Comments

Why not Big Willow?

1. Applewood Pointe Senior housing at one end.
2. St. David's Preschool on the other end. These paths are used for serene nature walks and 4 intersections, including the arched bridge just would not be compatible/safe to walkers!!
3. Few suburbs have the privilege of parkland along Minnehaha Creek. big Willow is an established walking/beautiful nature area. I don't believe high speed mountain bikers and mountain bike trails are able to be "mixed in" without totally changing and disrupting this special area.
4. Dog-walkers, moms and dads pushing strollers, seniors walking, families picnicking - these trails are used for leisurely nature walks/hikes. People use them to get away from high speed, fast paced roads and regional trails. Putting mountain biker trails in the mix just doesn't mix. its way to special of a place and would permanently damage and change the character of this park.
5. Given the above (#4) there would be accidents. Even if bikers stayed on their trails (which is doubtful) they still intersect at least 4 points and rounding the bend and coming face to face w/ a biker is not going to be fun! or good for the city's legal dept.!!
6. Walkers need to be priority!! Bikers are everyway and to try to take over Big Willow, I would feel "pushed out" as a walker.
7. If Hopkins High School + MTKA HS mountain bike teams come and have their practices at Big Willow, what is to prevent other schools from also coming? Then what happens to the serenity and walkability from 3-6 pm each day? It would be crazy! Do we want to bring in all this extra traffic on these nature trails? I hope not!! Please please- not in Big Willow.

Don't want the trail. Strongly opposed to the idea of mountain bike trail, especially since people have other options in the metro area.

Strongly opposed to the trail. It will impact wild life and peace. Better leave it untouched.

I don't see any justification. People need to use already existing trails in the metro.

Build MTB trails in 494 corridor area. There will be less resistance. A good portion of that land is unusable for many things except "single track" trails.

If a mountain bike trail is built in Big Willow, it will be impossible for walkers and dog walkers to use!

Change is not bad. The parks are for everyone. No one owns the parks - we all do. Some people seem to want to keep "others" out. We should be more inclusive. As I looked out on the mountain bikers (with t-shirts) I was surprised that many were middle-aged members of our community. Not wild destructive people.

Please don't build mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. What about environmental impact? Property value impact? Increase in traffic? Must study these impacts to bridge across from Civic Center in neighborhoods. There it is serene and full of wild life. I bought a house in this area for this purpose. I'm concerned about tens of thousands of more people annually disturbing this serenity and natural habitat including with parking in neighborhoods and noise.

We don't need mountain bike trails in Minnetonka. Folks have access to other trails in the metro area. We should leave the two remaining passive and natural areas untouched for Minnetonka citizens to enjoy. This is what attracted us to the city. Don't ruin your city.

**Additional Comments**

Nothing here about impact on wildlife. Big Willow is smallest family park in Minnetonka. Lone Lake is not flat! Railroad issue is huge for safety. What will prevent bikers from jumping the track? Impact on Minnehaha Creek? Impact on St. David's? Minnetonka Mills Historical area? Who will monitor the trails to prevent ramps, barriers, jumps? Liability if someone hurt or killed? Families who donated land to Big Willow. Have you considered volume of 30-50 bikers (teams).

No opportunity for audience comments or questions and discussion perpetuates distrust of a process designed to put mountain biking into Big Willow as a forced outcome. The confusion about Big Willow is not because people had concern but because it is the only site ever looked at. Taking a step does not mean you're looking at other sites but to give the appearance of our participation in the process. You've not addressed concerns. As of Friday January 7th, there are only signs about "The City exploring feasibility at Big Willow and Civic Center" and not about other parks - Purgatory or Lone Lake. Your proposed questions are cleverly written to include all biker concerns and what you think takes care of opponents but it does not reflect any serious looking at other park sites. Trail Source (organized by bikers) is the only real feasibility study done. This outcome was predictable. Only when you got consensus did you take a "step back". No way Park Board could look at anything between now and February 7th.

I strongly feel this will be an asset to all homeowners in Minnetonka. In home value and desirability to younger families. A key to success will be working with volunteers (trail bosses, trail workers)

I am pro mountain bike trails for 2 reasons: 1. Homeowner: Surrounding suburbs including Edina (Braemar Park) are implementing mountain bike trails. Minnetonka must be competitive to attract future quality residents. 2. Bicyclist: The current bicycle trails are a primary reason for my family staying in Minnetonka. In good weather, I am on the trails 5-6 days a week. We have owned 3 homes in Minnetonka. Promote fitness. This is a major priority for millennials.

Trail maintenance: Does a plow fit through a 24 inch trail? For snow/ice clearance?

I am concerned with interfering with natural habitat and wetlands at Big Willow. In addition, there is not sufficient parking. 10 stalls of parking at entrance to trail. The rest would need to be @ baseball fields or in front of city maintenance buildings? Hard to conceive of 4 miles of trails @ Big Willow and 2 miles is a stretch w/ so much natural habitat and wetlands given the use by people walking, dog walkers and handicapped folks in motorized carts already using it.

How are you going to stop kamikaze bike riders (a small group, that it is) to endanger park visitors -- especially kids on bikes.

Current trail construction best practices have a strong focus on erosion and water quality - that's a tremendous step in the right direction. However, trail practices do not seem to be cognizant of the potential for allowing invasive plant species to flourish in the inevitable disturbance they create. Especially concerning are parks like Big Willow that have undergone considerable restoration (effort and \$\$) but are not yet ecologically robust enough to sustain being fragmented by trails. Fragmentation of sensitive habitat would reverse all of the efforts invested since the City of Minnetonka began active restoration in the 90s. I think the best locations for trails ( and I do think they would be a desirable amenity for our community) are ones that have suffered previous disturbance like the 494 corridor, or are in need of restoration like Victoria-Evergreen or Civic Center. That way restoration efforts can take place simultaneously with the effort to construct trails. That would be win-win. Fund restoration at the same time as trail construction.

**Additional Comments**

If the City does not find viable options/sites I suggest they contact the County regarding their property next to the Home School - close to 80 acres of vacant land. Viable parks with more than 20 acres can accommodate 2 miles of trails and not under active restoration: 494 corridor (larges in acreage), Hilloway, and Victoria-Evergreen (low use, parking, 0.5 miles from LRT, could be actively restored along with the development of trails, same with Hilloway). Lone Lake, Big Willow and Purgatory should be off the table because they are under active restoration.

I would like to see Mt. Biking trails developed somewhere in or near Minnetonka. I do have concern about it being in Big Willow. Big Willow is a true respite from city living - peaceful mostly undeveloped and a wonderful area to be immersed in nature. While the occasional cyclist or small group of cyclists doesn't seem unreasonable, groups of 20-30 or more (and no one has told me this wouldn't be the case) would significantly alter the feeling and atmosphere of the park. At that level of activity, it would lose its aspect of serenity I believe.

As a resident, this process did not seem fair and open as this is the first meeting I have heard about so I feel as though this was geared to the small community rather than the surrounding neighbors. I personally have been signed up for emails for a few months and this is the first meeting I was notified about. Blindsided residents which will not help you with a smooth discussion of city approval.

Dog walkers are currently allowed to walk their dogs off leash on undeveloped trails in Big Willow. Changing this would significantly affect current use. Access points are very important. Trails must be controlled to avoid any riding during wet or freeze thaw conditions. How can any restrictions be enforced. One of the things discussed at the beginning of the program was Big Willow is close to Hopkins High. Is Hopkins going to help out with the cost? One of the criteria should be present usage. For example - Big Willow presently has high usage.

Concerns about erosion and maintenance. Also effects on wildlife. What about cost. Could be a collaboration with 3 Rivers Parks

There should be a regional park for the design and need of a mountain bike trail - 3 Rivers park district should oversee. Look @ meadow brook golf course - Eden Prairie along 212

I am a 50+ year resident of Minnetonka and walk my dog everyday in various parks - Lone Lake, Big Willow, Evergreen, etc. - I have no problem sharing parkland and I support mountain biking in all of the above.

Where is the feasibility study? Have other parks been considered. How about wildlife protection. Total lack of important information from presenter. No one allowed to speak. Clarify multi-use trail safety.

This meeting was a bunch of crap. The presenter was the one with financial interest only. A very slanted question on back which would only prove nothing. Too bad Minnetonka does not care for input from both sides.

This leads me to believe that the City is not going to do a feasibility study which has been talked about since becoming an issue. The Trail Source study is not a bonafide study. I am tired of being told we can't ask questions and being dismissed from a meeting without being able to have an open forum to ask questions. Not a very democratic process. As a 48 year resident of Minnetonka, I am very disappointed in the manner the Park Board and City has handled this.

**Additional Comments**

My dad takes me and my brother and my neighbor mountain biking all the time. We need to drive for 30 minutes just to get to the trail. It is time the other people learn to share. I learned in kindergarten at Groveland.

I strongly support this idea. Having trails indicates to people that a city cares about fun outdoor recreation for its community and is a big draw. A local non-profit could be established to maintain trails. Coggs in Duluth is a good example.

It also seems important to acknowledge if in some areas it would disrupt animal habitats. Probably won't though since so many are already high use parks. There should be guidelines about cost to implement.

We signed up for text notifications but didn't receive notification.

I would like to see the trails built because on my road bike I have been hit by a car and had many close calls. I feel much safer in the woods, with my experiences I have been biking less and unfortunately gained weight. Please build trails.

The process gave people near Big Willow more weight and notice than other park users. People who love Lone Lake and Purgatory are not aware those parks are being considered. Groups of bikers ripping through the woods and over the prairies ruins my park enjoyment. There has been no discussion of trail enforcement issues. I have no reason to expect mountain bike trail users to honor wet trail closures. this has been and remains a big problem on trails in other areas. A great many mountain bike riders do not stay on trails, obey rules, etc. No discussion of studded tire use on trails. many winter riders use studded tires. These cause trail and plant damage in thawing conditions or shallow snow. Existing and future Minnetonka residents deserve high quality nature areas in our parks that provide wildlife viewing. The existing maintained trails provide space for wildlife to retreat from users. Networks of mountain bike trails in parks will push wildlife away. The existing maintained trails and use policy regarding bikes is a good policy and should be continued.

I feel like this discussion is like the mine developers and oil drilling companies saying "there will be no environmental damage. Trust us." Keep mountain bikes out of Lone Lake Park! Keep Mountain bikes out of Big Willow! 494 corridor isn't the most lovely spot but I'd be willing to work on plantings etc. to make it nicer. Put the mountain bike trails there. Minnetonka mountain bikers may feel they deserve local mountain bike trails. Its interesting that none of the surrounding suburbs have any mountain bike trails. It would be nice to have cross country ski trails but Minnetonka doesn't have any and that's ok with me. Consider Mud Lake along the SW regional trail for the mountain bike trails.

How will trails closed due to rain be enforced? How will trails be marked for winter users? How will bikes pass on 24" trail without leaving trail? How will adding mountain bikes to our parks benefit wildlife? I don't believe young future homeowners to Minnetonka have "MTN bike trails nearby" as a priority. Minnetonka should strive for more diversity and family welcoming parks - not limited to MTN bikes which benefit the few. The city parks are great without MTN bike trails.



## Existing Twin Cities Mountain Bike Trails

PARK NAME	ACREAGE			TRAIL MILEAGE	DISTANCE FROM MTKA
	TOTAL	USABLE*	ACRES PER MILE		
Battle Creek	840	289	30.42	9.5	27 miles (St. Paul)
Bertram Chain of Lakes	1200	398	30.38	13.1	38 miles (Monticello)
Carver Lake Park	150	51	9.71	5.25	31 miles (Woodbury)
Elm Creek	5315	184	14.84	12.4	22 miles (Champlin)
Hillside	80	68	13.6	5	29 miles (Elm River)
Lake Rebecca	2577	300	21.28	14.1	22 miles (Rockford)
Lebanon Hills	2000	190	15.83	12	24 miles (Eagan)
Murphy-Hanrehan	2786	140	14.29	9.8	22 miles (Savage)
Salem Hills/Harmon Park	84	82	18.64	4.4	25 (Inver Grove Heights)
Terrace Oaks	230	57	25.91	2.2	22 miles (Burnsville)
Theodore Wirth	743	87	12.79	6.8	10 miles (Minneapolis)

\*The surrounding acreage used to develop a given mountain bike trail system. Acreage that does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.

## Minnetonka Parks with Over 20 Undeveloped Acres



PARK NAME	ACREAGE			
	UNDEVELOPED	DEVELOPED	TOTAL	USABLE**
494 Corridor	34	0	34	25.6
Big Willow	50	45	95	29.1
Civic Center	98	48	146	15.2
Covington	20.5	7.8	28.3	7.5
Crane Lake	86	2	88	4
Hilloway	29.3	2	31.3	23
Jidana	55.5	4	59.5	15.5
Lake Rose	31.8	2	33.8	3.3
Lone Lake	132	14	146	52.3
Meadow	101	10	111	4.4
Mooney	96	1	97	6
Purgatory	134	24	158	37
Victoria-Evergreen	22	3	25	21

\*\* Undeveloped acreage that could be used to build mountain bike trails. Acreage that does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.



# Proposed Core Criteria

Having adequate space in a park & minimizing user conflict to support mountain biking has come up repeatedly. Also, protection of the environment is of the utmost importance when considering mountain bike trails. Based on your feedback from previous meetings some basic draft criteria has been developed that could help the city determine if a park is a viable option for mountain bike trails. Please provide your feedback to the following criteria. Please check agree or disagree and add comments as needed.

ADEQUATE SPACE	Agree	Disagree	Comments
A trail system should be able to sustain a minimum of 4 miles of single track trails. This could include a single park on its own or a circuit of parks in close proximity to one another. Staff believes that less than 4 miles would not be utilized.			
If a circuit of parks is considered, a given park within the circuit should be able to support a minimum of 2 miles of mountain bike trails on its own.			
If a circuit of multiple parks are needed, the parks should be located within 1 mile of another.			
A mountain bike trail system should be within 1 mile of a regional bike trail.			
A park must contain a minimum of 20 usable acres to be considered. <i>Usable Acreage is undeveloped acreage that could be used to build mountain bike trails. Acreage does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.</i>			

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	Agree	Disagree	Comments
Trails should be built using the highest standards for development and pursuant of sustainable trail guidelines. This would limit erosion, vegetation loss and water quality problems.			
Areas containing uncommon plants and high quality restoration areas (per city natural resources staff) should be avoided.			
Generally, narrow trails (approximately 24") should be built to reduce the total area of intensive tread disturbance, slow trail users and minimize vegetation and soil compaction.			
Site should be designed to minimize tree impact and removal.			

MINIMIZE USER CONFLICT	Agree	Disagree	Comments
The majority of existing mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are one way to avoid head on interactions. If built in Minnetonka trails should also be one way.			
Mountain bike trails should be built to minimally intersect existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.			
Mountain bike trails should not displace existing maintained trails and high use informal foot paths.			
Mountain bike trails should be designated as multi-use (open to runners, bird watchers, hikers, snowshoers, bikers etc.). Ninety-two percent of all mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are multi-use.			
Adequate parking should be available at each proposed park.			

**MINUTES OF THE  
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD  
June 7, 2000**

**1. Roll Call**

Park Board members Buck Anderson, Jim Calkins, Diane Hayden, Paul Lehman, Bob McFarlin, Mary Russ, and Steve Watkins were present. Staff members Dave Johnson and Mark Simenson were also present.

**2A. Introduction of New Board Member**

Mary Russ was introduced as the new Park Board member from Ward 3, replacing Deborah Muth who moved out of the City.

**2B. Election of Chair and Vice Chairperson**

Chairperson

Hayden moved, Lehman seconded a motion to appoint Steve Watkins as Park Board Chairman. All voted "yes" except Bob McFarlin who was not present at the time. Motion carried.

Vice Chairperson

Watkins moved. Russ seconded a motion to appoint Paul Lehman as Park Board Vice Chairperson. All voted "yes" except Bob McFarlin who was not present at the time. Motion carried.

**3. Approval of Minutes - April 5, 2000**

Lehman moved, Hayden seconded a motion to approve the April 5, 2000 minutes as submitted. All voted "yes" except Bob McFarlin who was not present at the time. Motion carried.

**4. Discussion relating to trail etiquette signage and updated trail map**

Johnson reviewed conceptual plans for the creation of trail etiquette signs using the "Burma Shave" technique developed by the City's Trail Coordinator.

The Park Board generally favored the concept. McFarlin inquired as to where the signs would be placed. Johnson responded that three signs would be developed and moved throughout the City's trail system. He added that placement of the signs on County portions of the trail system would require County approval.



Calkins voiced concern over too many signs being placed throughout the system and favored creative information with a good design. McFarlin added that the State of Minnesota has conducted studies on effective signage which might benefit staff. Hayden noted that humor was an important element. Russ favored a combination of pictures and information that were short and to the point. The Park Board noted that signs will not prevent some existing problems but the concept was worth a try.

Signs were recommended with messages pertaining to dog clean up, trail speed limits, and passing notification. Staff indicated that signs with this information would be developed and presented at the July 3, 2000 meeting.

#### 4B. Mountain Biking in Lone Lake Park

Staff provided an update regarding deteriorating conditions in Lone Lake Park resulting from increased mountain biking in the natural areas of the park. A history of Park Board discussions regarding mountain biking, dating back to October, 1996, was provided.

Minnetonka resident Bill Churney, 5575 Bristol Lane, voiced concerns regarding bikers on his property which borders Lone Lake Park. Mr. Churney's concerns focused on mountain bikers not being aware of the park's boundaries, unsafe conditions which exist as a result of multi-use trails, and environmental damage which is being done to the park. Mr. Churney favored the banning of all biking within Lone Lake Park and designating the trails for pedestrian uses only. Johnson noted that a ban of biking in Lone Lake Park due to concerns regarding multiple uses of the trail could have a significant impact on the City's overall trail system.

Lehman noted concerns over how a ban on biking could be enforced. This concern was echoed by other Park Board members.

Simenson noted that erosion caused by mountain biking is severely deteriorating the park's natural areas. He added that restoration of these areas is required to remain consistent with goals established in the Natural Resources Stewardship Program. He further noted that the removal of evasive vegetation such as buckthorn has opened up the natural areas of the park and created new and expanded informal trails. Calkins noted that the eroded areas in the park need to be repaired and will not correct naturally.

The Park Board directed staff to prepare 2-4 management options for the Park Board to review. Staff will present this information at the July 5, 2000 meeting.

**4C. Park Board Tour**

Johnson requested follow-up observations from the Park Board regarding their May tour of the park system. McFarlin inquired about the status of Bennett Park. Johnson responded that the City Council supported assisting Bennett Park in the form of a loan to improve facilities at the park.

Calkins inquired about the status of the NSP sub-station and the possibility of it being located in Civic Center Park. Johnson indicated that updates on the project were available on an NSP website, and that staff would provide the Park Board with an update prior to the July meeting.

**5A. Natural Resources Stewardship Program Subcommittee Update**

Simenson updated the Board on restoration efforts within the park system. He noted that anonymous postings were placed in Purgatory Park which included inaccurate information about control efforts being incorporated within the park.

Calkins inquired about deer exclosures and the possibility of using different material. Simenson indicated that staff would explore this possibility. Issues regarding the management of garlic mustard vegetation were discussed.

Watkins and Calkins inquired about the status of the Natural Resources Stewardship subcommittee. Johnson noted that an update would be provided to the Park Board and the status would be discussed at the July meeting.

**6A. Trails Update**

No staff report was provided.

**6B. Weed Control in Parks**

Simenson reviewed current weed control policies used by the Operations and Maintenance Department. Calkins questioned the City's treatment of duckweed on a pond at Oakridge and 34<sup>th</sup> Street. He noted that in this case, education efforts would have been a better alternative because duckweed is not detrimental to water quality.

**7. Park Board Member Reports**

Board members Watson and Hayden noted that they had been contacted by a member of the Minnesota Historical Society who expressed concern with the

City's cooperation with issues related to the Runwell House. The caller noted that the City had been "unresponsive to the society's needs".

8. **Information Items**

The Board inquired about updates on the possible development of the Minnetonka Boulevard/169 area, and the Gray's Bay Marina site.

Calkins inquired about the status of the native grasses planted at the Adopt-A-Sign sites. He said many of the plants had not survived over the winter and should be removed or replaced.

9. **Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**

The following agenda items were suggested for the July 5, 2000 Park Board Meeting:

- Mountain Biking Update
- Trail Etiquette Signage
- Update on Natural Resources Stewardship Subcommittee
- Update on Gray's Bay Marina Project.

10. **Other Business**

None.

11. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** PARK BOARD

**ITEM PREPARED:** JUNE 28, 2000

**ITEM NO:** 3A

**MEETING DATE:** JULY 5, 2000

**SUBJECT:** Discussion Relating To Proposed Mountain Biking Regulations

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At the June 7, 2000 meeting, the Park Board reviewed staff concerns related to mountain biking in Lone Lake Park. Of concern to staff is significant erosion damage within the park due to increased usage of informal paths for mountain biking. This increased use has lead to compacted soils that prevent the reestablishment of native vegetation.

Also in attendance at the June 7 meeting was Mr. Bill Churney, a Minnetonka resident who's home borders Lone Lake Park. Mr. Churney voiced concerns related to bikers accessing his property for mountain biking and what he viewed as unsafe biking conditions within Lone Lake Park. Mr. Churney requested that the Park Board consider an overall ban to biking within the park.

Subsequent to a review of information provided by staff, the Park Board requested that staff develop various options to address the issue of mountain biking within the City's park system. In response, staff has developed the following three options for the Park Board to consider.

**Option 1 - Prohibiting mountain biking within City's park system**

Option 1 as proposed by staff would prohibit off trail mountain biking anywhere within the City's park system. Enforcement of this option would require changes to the City's Park Ordinance as recommended by the City Attorney.

Staff feels that this option is justifiable due to the extent of trails currently maintained and operated by Hennepin Parks. Hennepin Parks provides designated mountain biking trails totalling 14.5 miles at three locations within their park system. Mountain biking trails are limited to only three sites due to park management concerns related to natural resource deterioration caused by extensive mountain biking. Information specific to mountain biking in the Hennepin Parks System is included with this report.

Staff considers enforcement the most difficult step should the Park Board recommend prohibiting mountain biking within the park system. Many of the areas currently used for mountain biking are accessed off of the main trail system.

**Option 2 - Provide designated mountain biking areas**

Option 2 as proposed by staff would allow for designated mountain biking locations within the City's park system. Designated mountain biking areas could consist of

maintained trails, designated areas within a park, or possibly an entire park.

Due to the extent of maintenance and signage which would be required, designated areas would most likely be permanent and not be rotated throughout the system. Staff concerns with Option 2 relate to enforcement and maintenance. As with Option 1, enforcement of this option would be difficult and the areas where biking would be allowed would need to be clearly marked. Regular trail maintenance, including sign maintenance, mowing and removal of debris (i.e., rocks, branches, garbage) would require additional staffing and other budgetary implications for Operations and Maintenance. Enforcement of this option would again require changes to the existing Park Ordinance. The existing language would require modification to clearly state that off trail biking would only be allowed in designated areas.

### **Option 3 - Restore damaged areas**

Option 3 would essentially allow mountain biking in its current status, while attempting to close damaged areas off to further use. If successful, this option would allow damaged areas to be restored, however new problem areas would most likely be created.

As stated by the City Forester at the June 7 Park Board meeting, efforts to control buckthorn and other exotic species have made the natural areas of Lone Lake Park easier to access. This has in turn, expanded the amount of informal mountain biking trails within the park.

Option 3, if successful, would allow damaged areas within the park system to be restored, while at the same time cause further damage to other areas of the system. It is staff's recommendation that, if this option is considered, modifications to the existing Park Ordinance be made which clarify that entering areas under restoration is against regulations.

It is staff's concern that restoration efforts in damaged areas of the park system will be expensive and require considerable attention by Operations and Maintenance employees.

**RECOMMENDED PARK BOARD ACTION:** Review options developed by staff and provide direction on a desired option, or additional options, for consideration.

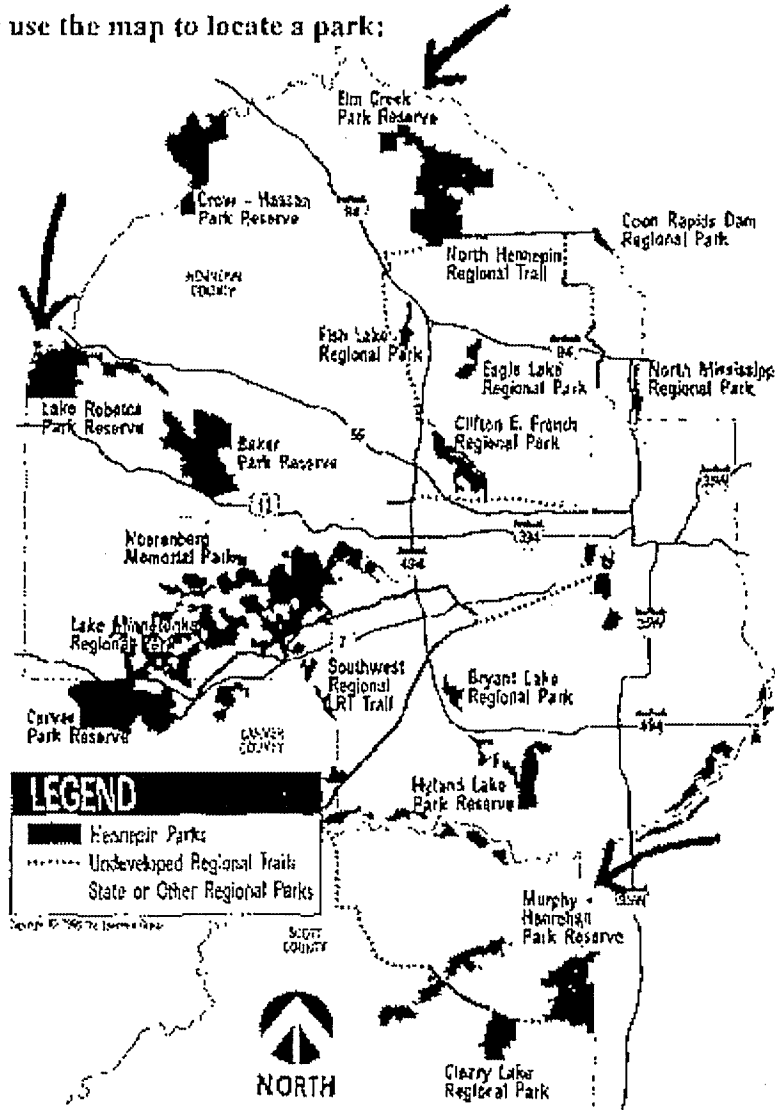
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Select a park from the list...

Baker Park Reserve

...or use the map to locate a park:



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➔ Indicates that mountain biking is allowed.

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## Lake Rebecca Park Reserve

Located in the cities of Independence and Greenfield, this 2,200-acre park reserve offers outdoor activities and opportunities for glimpses of wildlife. Lake Rebecca Park Reserve's gently rolling Big Woods landscape, with numerous wetland areas provides a haven for wildlife. This park reserve is one of the sites for the trumpeter swan restoration program. Several overlooks along hiking trails provide glimpses of these swans, the world's largest waterfowl. Except for ice-fishing and snowmobile access, the park is closed between November 1 and March 30.

## Facilities and Amenities

1. **Swimming beach** - On the north shore of Lake Rebecca there is a swimming beach available for use from Memorial Day through mid-August. A beach curtain is in the water surrounding the beach in order to maintain a higher level of water quality in the swimming area. For scheduled beach hours call (763) 476-4666.

2. **Mountain bike trail** (3.5 miles) - This trail (opened in 1998) begins at the Lake Rebecca rental building. The rolling hills of Lake Rebecca Park Reserve are part of the Des Moines ground moraine. Most of the trail winds through rapidly succeeding old fields and remnant maple-basswood forest. The trail passes an overlook of the swan refuge pond where birds can regularly be seen.



3. **Boat launch** - Located on the northwest end of the lake, there are 27 car/trailer spaces in the boat launch parking lot. Lake Rebecca is a non-motorized lake. Electric trolling motors are allowed.

4. **Public and group picnic areas** - There are four reservation picnic areas with three shelters. The areas with shelters have capacities of 300 - 1,000 people. In the general picnic area, many tables and grills are available for use on a first-come, first-serve basis. These areas overlook the beach area and are also located up on a hilltop, close to the rental building.

5. **Creative Play Area** - The main feature of this play area is a slide

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## Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve

The glacial ridges and hilly terrain of northeast Scott County make Murphy-Hanrehan one of the most challenging cross-country ski areas in the Twin Cities. The terrain also is popular with horseback riders, mountain bikers, bird watchers and hikers. With the exception of the trails, this 2,400-acre park reserve remains undeveloped. The extensive forests make this the best park in the system for woodland songbirds.

## Facilities and Amenities

➤ **Turf hiking trails (2 miles)** - The Wood Duck trail is very hilly and takes hikers through oak woods. It can be accessed from the trailhead.



➤ **Horse trails (9.7 miles)** - Riders can enjoy the scenic beauty of this park reserve on horseback year-round. A trailer parking lot is available. Use of horseback trails requires an annual Parks Patron permit (\$25 - includes horse trail pass upon request) or a \$5 daily pass for each rider age 16 or older.

➤ **Mountain bike trail (6 miles)** - This rugged trail is open from August 1 through the end of October (the short season is to protect the park's natural resources).

➤ **Pet trails (3 miles)** - The turf pet trail at Murphy-Hanrehan is a part of the horse trail. Pets must be on a leash not more than 6 feet long, and owners must clean up after them. The trail can be accessed from the horse trailer parking lot on Sunset Lake Road.

➤ **Cross-country ski trails (19.4K)** - These challenging, groomed trails are for advanced level skiing and ski-skating. They are located in the northeastern part of the park reserve.



➤ **4 miles of snowmobile trail (no trailer parking)** - This stretch of trail provides a connection across the southern edge of the park to an outside snowmobile trail system.



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### Elm Creek Park Reserve

Northwest of Osseo, this 5,300-acre park is the largest of the Hennepin Parks. Many recreation activities can keep the most active family occupied. Eastman Nature Center, with exhibits and imaginative programming, stimulates curious minds. Wildlife is abundant due to numerous woodlands, streams, and marshes. Bald eagles and sandhill cranes can be viewed. Miles of trails through rolling hills provide challenges to the biker, hiker, cross-country skier and those on snowshoes.

### Facilities and Amenities

➤ **Visitor Center with concessions** - A year-round recreation services building provides rental of cross-country ski equipment, bicycle rentals, concessions, public seating, and a wood-burning stove in the winter. During the winter, ski trails and the sliding hill are located just outside the building. In the summer, the mountain bike trail, bike-hike trail, pet trail and various turf trails begin at or are adjacent to the building.

➤ **Eastman Nature Center** - Located in the west part of the park reserve and south of Elm Creek Road, the nature center consists of various interpretive displays. Meeting space and various programs are offered by nature center staff for the public and school groups. In addition, there are 3.25 miles of interpretive trails.



➤ **Turf hiking trails (14.8 miles)** - Trails are located south of Elm Creek Road. There are many access points; however, a primary starting point is from the visitor center.

➤ **Paved bike/hike trails (19.3 miles)** - For the bike enthusiast, trails are located throughout the entire park reserve. For years there has been a two-loop system of 9.5 miles in the south portion of the park reserve. Recently, a 10-mile long trail was added to the system, resulting in more than 19 miles of bike/hike trails. This newer trail is 10 feet wide going through the northern part of the park reserve, connecting residents of the cities of Dayton and Champlin to the developed recreation facilities. Three trail access parking lots are provided.

➤ **Access to North Hennepin Trail Corridor** - In the southeast

section of the park reserve, the North Hennepin Trail Corridor (7 miles) connects to park trails.

➤ **Mountain bike trails (5 miles)** - Beginning at the visitor center; this is an intermediate skill level trail which encompasses winding and gentle meandering terrain. A few hills provide intermediate difficulty.

➤ **Horse trails (17 miles)** - Trails consist of a mowed 10-foot wide path. The trail consists of two main loops and connections south to the regional trail corridor and then northwest along Diamond Creek. A horse trailhead is provided on County Road 121 to serve this trail. This facility includes a trailhead parking access as well as provision for a horse reservation group camp with space for up to 40 users. A Parks Patron package (\$25/year), which includes a horse trail pass upon request, or daily parking permit (\$5) is required for each rider age 16 or older.

➤ **Pet exercise area** - 30 acres of open space allow dogs to run off leash; a special permit for use of the area is required and is available from Hennepin Parks Headquarters (fee: \$25/year in addition to the Park Patron annual parking permit, which is also required). For information call (763) 559-9000.



➤ **Pet walking trails (5.4 miles)** - Turf and gravel roadway. Access from visitor center. Pets must be leashed and owners must clean up after their pets.

➤ **Public and group picnic areas** - Four reservation picnic areas, available during the spring, summer and fall seasons, which are in close proximity to the summer recreation facilities including the swimming beach, play area, and concession plaza. Three sites provide a shelter; all sites offer grills, picnic tables, volleyball and open areas for games. Non-reservation picnic areas are located near the swimming beach and creative play area. Tables and grills are located throughout the area some of which are accessible for wheelchairs. [How to reserve a site.](#)

➤ **Group camp sites** - Two group camps for groups of 35 - 50 are offered; Rush Creek Group Camp is located near the bike/hike trail and Eastman Nature Center, and Hayden Lake Group Camp is in the north end of the park near the horse and snowmobile trails. [How to reserve a site.](#)

➤ **Creative play area** - Located at the south end of the picnic area, opposite the swimming pond, the play area includes equipment for climbing, sliding and swinging for a wide range of age groups, with an adjacent separate area for pre-schoolers.

➤ **Swimming pond** - A man-made swimming pond with a sand beach

It shall be unlawful for any person to:

- a. Ride, lead or allow a horse within a park except in designated areas or trails at designated hours and without payment of required fee.
- b. Ride a horse in a reckless manner so as to create a nuisance or to endanger the safety or property of any park visitor.
- c. Tether a horse to a tree, other plant, building or park equipment.
- d. Allow a horse to graze or browse.

#### Section 7 - Bicycling

It shall be unlawful for any person to:

- a. Operate any type of bicycle, including mountain bicycle, except on paved trails, roadways, and designated mountain bike trails at dates and times authorized by the Board.
- b. Operate any type of bicycle except as close to the right hand side of the authorized trail or roadway as conditions permit or to cross to the left of a solid yellow center line.
- c. Operate a bicycle in violation of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 169, "Highway Traffic Violation."
- d. Ride or operate a bicycle except in a prudent and careful manner or at a speed faster than is reasonable and safe with regard to the safety of the operator and other persons in the immediate area.
- e. Park a bicycle at any Park District beach except at a bicycle rack if such rack is provided.

#### Section 8 - Snowmobiling

It shall be unlawful for any person to:

- a. Operate a snowmobile in a park except on designated trails and then only on the right hand side of the trail.
- b. Operate a snowmobile in a park contrary to rules and regulations issued by the Board.
- c. Operate a snowmobile in a park in excess of posted speed limits when present or at a rate of speed greater than reasonable or proper under current conditions, or in a careless, reckless or negligent manner so as to endanger the person or property of another or to cause injury or damage thereto.
- d. Operate a snowmobile in violation of Minnesota Statutes, Section 84.81-84.90, "Snowmobile Laws" and Chapter Five: Natural Resources 51-59, "Snowmobile Rules and Regulations" (all rules and regulations therein pertaining to "public land and water" shall apply on Park District property.)
- e. Tow another person or thing except through the use of a rigid tow bar attached to the rear of the snowmobile, except in emergencies.
- f. Operate a snowmobile in violation of any posted trail sign.

**MINUTES OF THE  
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD  
July 5, 2000**

**1. Roll Call**

Park Board members Buck Anderson, Jim Calkins, Diane Hayden, Paul Lehman, Bob McFarlin, Mary Russ, and Steve Watkins were present. Staff members Dave Johnson, Mark Simenson and Perry Velter were also present.

**2. Approval of Minutes - June 7, 2000**

Two corrections to the June 7, 2000 meeting Minutes were noted. One spelling correction and one word struck from "Information Items". The paragraph should read: "Calkins inquired about the status of the grasses planted at the Adopt-A-Sign sites". With the noted changes made, Calkins moved and Hayden seconded a motion to approve the June 7, 2000 minutes as amended. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

**3A. Discussion relating to trail etiquette signage and updated trail map**

Johnson provided a brief history of mountain biking and off-trail biking issues addressed previously by the Park Board. Three options for addressing off-trail biking in City parks were reviewed by the Board and included the following:

1. Prohibiting mountain biking within City's Park system.
2. Providing designated mountain biking areas.
3. No restrictions/restoration of damaged areas.

Calkins inquired if staff had estimated costs for the restoration of damaged areas. Johnson indicated that cost estimates had not been completed but could be compiled by the August 2, 2000 meeting.

Anderson stated concern for prohibiting off-trail biking. McFarlin also noted concern for prohibiting off-trail biking if an alternative was not provided.

Simenson expressed concern with continuing the Natural Resources Management Program if off-trail biking continues to be allowed. He noted that restoration efforts will not be successful due to ongoing damage caused by off-trail biking.

Calkins and Watkins voiced their support for restoring damaged areas whether off-trail biking is allowed or prohibited. McFarlin inquired as to the scope of the problem in parks other than Lone Lake. Simenson indicated that staff has observed increased damage to Purgatory and Big Willow Parks, as well as Lone Lake.

Russ expressed concerns regarding safety, due to biking in areas also used for walking and hiking. She added that Cities should not be expected to provide all types of recreational amenities and felt that trails maintained by Hennepin Parks provide bikers with an alternative.

Hayden expressed concerns related to designating areas for off-trail biking including the impact on selected areas, increased maintenance responsibilities, and liability. She added that the community survey of residents indicated that protection of the City's natural areas was a high priority.

McFarlin suggested that all options presented to the Park Board be reviewed at a community meeting for public input. The Park Board requested that the issue be referred to as "off-trail" biking as opposed to "Mountain Biking".

McFarlin moved and Russ seconded a motion to direct staff to schedule a community meeting regarding off-trail biking to review the options presented to the Park Board at the July 5, 2000 meeting. All voted yes, motion carried.

**3B. Review of proposed joint athletic field improvements with the Minnetonka School District**

Vetter provided a brief summary of progress to date and reviewed proposed plans for improvements at Minnetonka High School (MHS) and Minnetonka Middle School East (MMSE).

McFarlin inquired about the City's use of fields at MHS. Vetter responded that City programs have not previously used facilities at MHS and improvements at this site are primarily intended to improve options for community organizations. Russ asked who would schedule the fields if completed. Vetter noted that Minnetonka Community Education currently schedules all District facilities and would most likely continue to do so.

McFarlin noted that he has observed poor maintenance conditions on existing fields at MMSE and inquired about maintenance of any improved fields. Vetter noted that the maintenance of any improvements would need to be outlined in a joint agreement between the City and District. Johnson added that improvements such as irrigation, improved soil conditions, and adequate grading would make the fields easier to maintain. Anderson added his concern about maintenance, noting that School District staff is limited during summer months. Anderson added that an agreement with the District would be critical.

Hayden moved and Calkins seconded a motion to direct staff to conduct a

community meeting to review and discuss proposed improvements to athletic fields located at MHS and MMŞF. All voted yes, motion carried

**3C. Review of new trail etiquette signs**

This item was tabled until the August 2, 2000 meeting.

**3D. Discussion of Open Meeting Law requirements**

The Park Board reviewed a short video regarding the Open Meeting Law.

**4A. Status of the Natural Resources Stewardship Subcommittee**

Simenson reviewed a staff recommendation that the Natural Resources Stewardship Subcommittee be disbanded. Staff's recommendation was to have Simenson provide a stewardship update at future Park Board meetings, and if needed, establish an ad hoc committee to review major issues that may arise. This recommendation was favored by the Park Board.

**5A. Trails Update**

Johnson provided an update of the Oakland Road project. Hayden indicated that tree trimming maintenance was needed in the area. Simenson indicated that Operations and Maintenance would complete the trimming needed.

**5B. Status of proposed Glen Lake Skateboard Plaza**

Vetter reviewed plans to move construction of this project from 2003 to 2000. He noted that continued concerns with skateboarders in the Glen Lake area have increased the need for completion of the project.

**5C. Status of improvements to the Gray's Bay Marina Site**

Johnson provided an update and reviewed preliminary plans prepared for possible improvements to the Gray's Bay Marina, Gray's Bay Dam and Causeway sites.

McFarlin inquired about the Park Board's future input regarding these improvements if completed. Johnson noted that community input would be directed through the Park Board and added that policies for use would be recommended to the Council through the Park Board.

Calkins inquired whether improvements to the Dam/Headwaters site could be completed jointly between the City and Watershed District. He noted that the process could be improved if ownership of the property was not distributed among so many agencies.

McFarlin noted several questions and concerns related to proposed traffic patterns. Johnson advised that those concerns should be expressed to the City Attorney who serves as a representative of the City on this project.

**6. Park Board Member Reports**

Watkins noted that the seeding of areas in Purgatory Park looked great. Calkins provided staff with information on an alternative "rosin pavement" trail surface material. Simensen indicated that he would forward the information to the Operations and Maintenance Director. Calkins requested an update on the City's animal management efforts with respect to deer and geese control.

**7. Informational Items**

The Park Board reviewed information submitted in the agenda materials.

**8. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**

Items for the August 2, 2000 agenda include a community meeting on field improvements, off-trail biking discussion, and review of trail etiquette signs.

**9. Adjournment**

Anderson moved and McFarlin seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:17 p.m. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** PARK BOARD

**ITEM PREPARED:** JULY 26, 2000

**ITEM NO:** 3B

**MEETING DATE:** AUGUST 2, 2000

**SUBJECT:** Off-Trail Biking

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At the July 5, 2000 meeting, the Park Board reviewed three options prepared by staff to address the issue of off-trail biking in the City's park system. Staff has expressed concern regarding biking related damage to the natural areas of Lone Lake Park. Staff was directed to provide an example of restoration costs to Lone Lake Park. In response to the Board's inquiry, staff estimates it will cost approximately \$65,000 to restore the current conditions at Lone Lake Park. A memorandum regarding restoration costs is included with this report.

Sections 1136.005-1136.035 of the City's Code of Ordinances includes regulations pertaining to park and trail use. As previously discussed with the Park Board, the general park rules section of the ordinance does not clearly regulate off-trail biking within the park system. Any Park Board recommendations to regulate or prohibit off-trail biking would require changes to the park ordinance. A copy of the existing park regulations is included with this report.

Options developed by staff to address biking concerns include the following:

1. Prohibit off-trail biking in all parks.
2. Provide designated areas for off-trail biking.
3. Allow off-trail biking as currently regulated while restoring damaged areas of the parks.

Following the Park Board's discussion at the July 5, 2000 meeting, staff was directed to notify the public of the Park Board's August review of off-trail biking options. Information regarding the meeting was published in the July 19 and 26 editions of the Sun-Sailor News.

**RECOMMENDED PARK BOARD ACTION:** Discuss and review options for regulating off-trail biking at the August 2, 2000 meeting. Gain input from residents in attendance, and forward recommendations to the City Council for review.



**MINUTES OF THE  
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD  
August 2, 2000**

1. **Roll Call**

Park Board members Buck Anderson, Jim Calkins, Diano Hayden, Paul Lehman, Bob McFarlin, Mary Russ and Steve Watkins were present. Staff members Dave Johnson, Mark Simenson and Perry Vetter were also present.

2. **Approval of Minutes - July 5, 2000**

McFarlin moved and Anderson seconded a motion to approve the minutes of July 5, 2000 as submitted. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

3A. **Review of new trail system etiquette signs**

Johnson presented a new concept for trail system etiquette signs designed by Trail Coordinator Dean Elstad. The signs developed use the "Burma Shave" technique of displaying information. Johnson noted that the signs are portable and have been designed to be moved around the trail system. As recommended by the Park Board, signs will be developed to inform trail users of trail rules pertaining to dog cleanup, speed limits and passing information. McFarlin questioned how staff would be able to determine how effective the signs are in displaying the information to trail users. Johnson noted that the Trail Coordinator records complaints received from trail users and could use this information to determine where the signs could be located. Staff could then monitor the number of complaints to see if they decline or not. Anderson noted that he liked the "positive" information and approach used in the sign concept. Calkins requested that the signs be monitored closely for vandalism and maintenance needs so that they remain in quality condition.

3B. **Discussion relating to proposed off-trail biking regulations**

Johnson provided a history of issues and concerns related to off-trail/mountain biking within the park system, primarily Lone Lake Park. He noted that, at the Park Board's request, information regarding this discussion item was included in the July 19 and 26 editions of the Sun-Sailor Newspaper to seek input from residents and users of the park system.

Johnson provided a summary of the 20 phone calls staff received regarding the issue of off-trail biking. He noted that of the callers, only two were residents of Minnetonka and all but one caller were in favor of allowing off-trail biking within the park system in some capacity.

Simenson provided information regarding damage created in the natural areas of Lone Lake Park as a result of off-trail biking. Photos of the damaged areas were displayed and Simenson received cost estimates of \$653 to repair an area of approximately 12,500 square feet.

Chair Watkins then opened the issue for public comment.

Bob Mueller, 17810 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North, Plymouth, noted that he was a member, and founder, of the "BLAST", a biking advocacy group. Mueller noted that he had notified approximately 200 biking enthusiasts by e-mail regarding the meeting. He added that "BLAST" has, in the past, held fund-raising events with revenues going to cities and the organization to assist in promoting and maintaining quality biking opportunities. Mueller indicated that he was a Landscape Architect and his first impression of the informal trail system at Lone Lake Park was that it was "a mess". His recommendation was to develop one trail which loops back and forth through the park and restrict bikers to this single trail. He noted that he and members of "BLAST" have assisted other cities such as Elk River and Milaca.

Eric Sultvold, 5933 Bell Circle, Minnetonka, indicated that he owned several bike shops and felt strongly that off-trail biking amenities were needed within the community. He noted that he had attended previous meetings and felt it was premature to eliminate mountain biking. Sultvold felt that the City had not done enough to promote mountain biking. He indicated a preference to develop a single trail at Lone Lake Park.

Jay Carlson, 4101 Merriam Road, Minnetonka, noted that he has been a long time biker in Lone Lake Park and is one who developed many of the trails in the park. Carlson felt that the signage was needed to provide one way directing to users of the existing informal trails.

Dana Kromer, 3725 Elmwood Place, Minnetonka, noted that although the sport does have an impact on the natural areas, mountain biking is a fast growing, popular sport. As a taxpayer, he supports the use of funding to develop and promote a trail or trails in the City. He added that bikers should not be allowed to bike off a designated trail and that a single, designated trail would be optimal. Kromer added that the Twin Cities metro area is severely short of mountain biking trails and that the City of Minnetonka has an obligation to assist in providing such trails.

George Skinner, 4753 Barbara Drive, Minnetonka, indicated that the current system of providing informal trails is not working. He felt that the terminology "off-trail" biking was poor and should not be used because it insinuates that

bikers can go anywhere they wish. Skinner expressed concern regarding taxpayers "footing" the bill for providing mountain biking trails and restoring the damaged areas. He added concern that Minnetonka is being asked to provide trails for regional users. Skinner informed the Park Board of Hennepin Parks 80/20 development policy in their park system. He was concerned that continual development of the City's park system will have a lasting impact on the bird and animal habitat. Skinner added that enforcement is a key issue because the placement of "no biking" signs will not be effective. Rick Moe, 17809 Frommes Circle, Minnetonka, noted that he is an avid mountain biker who has never used the Minnetonka Park System for the sport. He added that he and other "BLAST" members do not ride "illegal" trails.

Lisa Pearson, 4800 Dcerwood Drive, Minnetonka, indicated that she has been involved in mountain biking for approximately one year. She felt strongly that a designated trail or area was needed within the City. She indicated that as a beginner, she would not be comfortable riding in Lone Lake Park without a one way designated trail system. Pearson added that, based on experience, she felt that the sport of mountain biking does not effect wildlife.

Matt Bergerson, 3223 Shores Boulevard, Minnetonka, indicated that he was employed by Erik's Bike Shop and an avid biker. He felt that the Park Board should be concerned with two issues: 1) the impact trails will have on a park and; 2) how they are used. Bergerson noted that the closing of trails will create increased use on remaining trails and also increase "renegade" use of illegal trails. He supported the use of organizations and other volunteers to develop and maintain trails for mountain biking. He indicated support for designating trails in a park or parks and noted that kids need a place close to their home and if the trails are not designated, they will continue to use them anyway.

Mueller responded by indicating that Hennepin Parks had been approached and that additional trails were unlikely due to development policies in place for Hennepin County parks. McFarlin questioned earlier comments that Minnetonka had a obligation to provide mountain biking trails stating that requests for amenities need to be measured against available resources. He cited snowmobiling and hunting as examples of recreational amenities not available within the City.

Watkins suggested that a budget allowance to restore damaged areas be considered for the 2001 budget. Johnson noted that budget requests for 2001 had already been submitted and the City Council will be reviewing the 2001

budget in the near future. McFarlin voiced concern for recommending funding for restoration without addressing the issue of biking which is causing the damage. Watkins requested that staff take steps to close off damaged areas to prevent further deterioration to these areas. Calkins noted that with the limited space available within parks such as Lone Lake and Big Willow, continued damage to the natural areas should be expected and needs to be addressed.

Following public input, the Park Board discussed their views of the issue. Russ indicated that she was concerned about the size of the City parks and felt that a trail of 5-6 miles in length would significantly impact a park like Lone Lake. Anderson echoed the same concern, questioning whether Lone Lake Park was large enough. McFarlin inquired whether staff had information on costs associated with maintaining a mountain biking trail. Staff indicated they did not but could work with Cities such as Burnsville to compile this information. McFarlin stated that concerns regarding mountain biking included two separate issues:

1. Providing/prohibiting trails.
2. Restoration of existing damaged areas.

He added that a logical solution to consider would be to prohibit mountain biking in Lone Lake while damaged areas are restored. If trails are to be added to the system, McFarlin does not want Lone Lake to be the only park considered.

Anderson questioned whether Hennepin Parks had been approached to add more parks. Responding to the questions of whether Lone Lake was the appropriate location for a trail, Calkins noted that it was the only park which provided the elevation changes and steep grades bikers seem to be looking for. Calkins added that he was concerned whether prohibiting and the enforcing mountain biking was possible.

After discussing various possible motions, Lehman moved and Calkins seconded a motion to recommend to the City Council restoration and budget consideration for 2001 while staff explores options for construction of a designated trail or trails in the park system in 2001. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

This work is being performed by an outside contractor. A bud inhibitor has been applied to the small buckthorn seedlings to prevent them from leafing out next spring.

Prescribed burns for Big Willow and Jidana parks are still planned for this fall weather permitting. A firebreak was moved to Jidana in preparation for the burn.

**c) Off-Trail Biking Committee Update**

Johnson reported that the committee had not been able to convene since the October 4<sup>th</sup> Park Board meeting. He added that members of the committee have toured Lone Lake Park individually and are in the process of formulating options for managing a mountain biking trail within the park. Johnson noted that the next meeting of the committee is tentatively scheduled for November 14, 2000.

Hayden noted that e-mail messages sent to staff from interested bikers and forwarded to the Park Board have been helpful. Johnson noted that in addition to the e-mail messages, several phone messages have also been received by staff.

**d) Joint Athletic Field Improvements Update**

Vetter reported that he had met with representatives of the Minnetonka School District's Community Education Board to review plans for athletic field improvements at Minnetonka High School and Middle School East. Vetter noted that the Board seemed to be in support of plans to dedicate quality athletic fields. The Board asks to be kept apprised of the process.

In addition, Vetter noted that staff continues to meet with other District representatives regarding potential joint improvements to athletic fields. He noted that staff has requested the District to amend the plans in order to suit their needs. Once this process is completed, Vetter indicated that the Park Board would then review the plans to determine the extent of community benefit the revised plans would provide.

Johnson noted that dedicated space for soccer, baseball and softball was preferred by staff. He noted that it was staff's opinion that funding spent to improve multipurpose fields on District property would be better spent improving multipurpose fields on City property.

**5. Park Board Member Reports**

McFarlin noted that he attended an October 26, 2000 meeting at the Minnetonka School Board. One item of discussion was the financial plan for construction of an ice arena. McFarlin indicated that a consultant hired by the District to review the project's financial plan noted some concerns regarding both revenue and expenditures for the project. The School Board is currently in the process of developing questions based on these concerns which will be presented to the Youth Hockey Association at the November 2, 2000 meeting.

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** PARK BOARD **ITEM PREPARED:** MARCH 21, 2001  
**ITEM NO:** **MEETING DATE:** APRIL 4, 2001  
**SUBJECT:** MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAIL (Ability level and POST report section)

### ABILITY LEVEL OF PROPOSED TRAIL

The proposed trail is to be considered an “advanced” trail relative to the degree of difficulty. It should be then noted that all participants would not be able to use “advanced” trails. This trail will require the combination of an advanced physical ability level and advanced equipment (special tires, frame, suspension, etc.) that not all participants may possess. The Parks, Open Space and Trails (P.O.S.T.) report defines an advanced biker as this:

*Advanced or experienced riders – are generally using their bicycles as they would a motor vehicle. They are riding for convenience and speed and want direct access to destinations with a minimum of detour or delay. They are typically comfortable riding with motor vehicle traffic; however, they need sufficient operating space on the traveled way or shoulder to eliminate the need for either themselves or a passing motor vehicle to shift position.<sup>1</sup>*

It should be noted that the definition of an “advanced” rider in the P.O.S.T. report is not the “advanced” rider that this proposed trail is designed for. According to Mark Casey, risk administrator for the League of Minnesota Cities, there are no federal guidelines to define what an advanced mountain bike trail or rider are.

Once the proposed trail leaves the existing cross-country ski trail it traverses across, up and down steep elevation changes or grades. This is what is most appealing to an “advanced” trail rider. At numerous portions of the trail a 25 – 40 foot segment of the trail may have up to a 60° grade change.

According to the International Mountain Bicycling Association (I.M.B.A.), they have encouraged that urban trails be designed to be used by an intermediate rider or with intermediate equipment.

*“We have found that trying to build trails that require advanced skills in urban parks can lead to user impact problems due to the ease of access for beginners. Urban trails should be kept to an intermediate level at the highest and technical challenges should be provided using natural features.”<sup>2</sup>*

The I.M.B.A. also indexes a definition of a Social Trail as a “Trail created by recreationalists as they wander from the ‘official’ Trail”.<sup>3</sup> With the continued removal of invasive species in the park system, social trails are increasing in number.

## **PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN**

Section V of the P.O.S.T. report details the Trail System Plan and its components. Specifically the report seeks to provide a comprehensive trail plan with the following overriding goals:<sup>4</sup>

- Develop an interlinking, looped trail system throughout the city and interconnecting with other local, state and regional trail systems.
- Provide reasonable trail access to the natural resource amenities within the community without unduly compromising their integrity and natural qualities.
- Provide trail linkages from the looped trail system to neighborhoods and where feasible, individual parks.
- Provide a reasonable degree to universal accessibility to trails throughout the system.

The report also details that,

- Trail design shall be sensitive to the natural environment and character of the area it traverses.
- Trails shall be designed to be accessible to all populations with varying abilities wherever feasible, practical and appropriate given the specific setting. Principles of universal design shall also be applied.
- Provide reasonable trail access to the natural resource amenities within the community, without unduly compromising their integrity and natural qualities.

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<sup>1</sup> Minnetonka Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan. Page 5.1 (Source: Federal Highway Administration)

<sup>2</sup> International Mountain Bicycling Association. Trailbuilding basics, Page 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Page 18.

<sup>4</sup> Minnetonka Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan. Page 5.1

that with the many areas of responsibility the Park Board deals with, it may be prudent to focus on specific areas considered as priorities by the Board. Russ added that the establishment of programming criteria would assist the Board with their decision making process.

Johnson suggested incorporating the changes requested by the Park Board for their 2001 goals and meeting with McFarlin to explore the possibility of incorporating a theme into the document for the Park Board to review for consideration.

#### **4. Staff Reports**

##### **A. Off-Trail Biking Committee Update**

Matt Bergerson and George Skinner, members of the Off-Trail Biking Committee were present to provide a progress report.

Bergerson informed the Park Board that five members of the committee have met on two occasions, and in addition, walked the trails at Lone lake numerous times. Bergerson indicated that he was optimistic that the committee will be able to design a trail system for mountain biking that would be sensitive to the environment. Skinner reviewed a "tentative" trail route which totaled approximately 3 miles in length. Bergerson noted that 90-95% of the proposed trail would consist of existing informal trails.

Bergerson asked if Park Board members had trail concerns that did not appear to be addressed under the proposed plan. Russ noted that it was of concern to her that riders stay on the designated trails. McFarlin added that he questioned community support of the trail based on a perceived lack of Minnetonka resident support for a trail. Bergerson noted all comments and said the committee would address these issues in their final presentation in February.

##### **B. Natural Resources Stewardship Update**

Simenson reported that the contractor is continuing buckthorn removal in Lone Lake Park. Fall weather has cooperated and the removal has gone faster than expected. Work is completed in the middle section of the park, and work will continue on the ridge in the southwest end of the park until late December. Simensen noted that approximately 40 acres have been completed to date.

Due to dry and windy conditions, prescribed burns did not occur this fall. Planned burns will be rescheduled for the spring.

A consultant has completed the study and overall plan for restoration of Purgatory Park. A copy of the study will be included in the January Park Board packet.

##### **C. Trails Update**

Simenson reported that due to weather, landscape restoration on Oakland and



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Park Board                      **ITEM PREPARED:** January 29, 2001  
**ITEM NO:** 3c                              **MEETING DATE:** February 7, 2001  
**SUBJECT:** Consideration of Mountain Biking Committee trail recommendations

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At the August 2, 2000 Park Board meeting, issues pertaining to off-trail biking in City parks were discussed. Subsequent to this discussion, the Park Board directed staff to convene a committee of residents interested in the sport of mountain biking to develop recommendations for how the activity can be incorporated into the park system. The Park Board further requested that the committee finalize any recommendations by the February 7, 2001 Park Board meeting so that any potential changes to the existing park regulations could go into effect prior to the summer of 2001.

The mountain biking committee will present their recommendations for the development of a designated trail in Lone Lake at the February 7 meeting. Attached is a letter that has been distributed by representatives of the committee, encouraging interested residents to attend.

Section 1135.005 of the Minnetonka City Code refers to park regulations. A copy of the regulations are attached for the Park Board's review. As previously noted, a reference to mountain biking or off-trail biking within the park system is not included in the current regulations.

Staff is recommending that, regardless of the Park Board's recommendation to either allow or prohibit off-trail biking, changes to the existing park regulations be considered to clearly define the Park Board's intent with respect to biking within the natural areas of the City's park system. Any changes recommended by the Park Board would require two reviews and approval by the City Council prior to enforcement.

**RECOMMENDED PARK BOARD ACTION:** Review committee recommendations for the development of a mountain biking trail at Lone Lake Park and recommend to the City Council changes to existing park regulations, which will enforce the Park Board's desired intent for allowing or prohibiting off-trail biking within the City's park system.

1/23/01

Dear Minnetonka Mountain Biker

As you may have heard last summer, Minnetonka Park and Recreation Services is developing a policy in regards to mountain bike use in Long Lake Park.

An important meeting will be held Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> regarding allowing mountain bike through the use of designated trails. Matt Bergerson, from Erik's Bike Shop, working in conjunction with the Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists, has been developing a proposal to keep mountain bike use in Long Lake Park. This proposal will be discussed at the Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ordinarily, getting as many mountain bikers as possible to attend a meeting like this would be important. Due to the sensitive nature of this particular trail situation, however, it's important that only Minnetonka residents attend this meeting. Since this is a city-owned facility, the need is to hear specifically from those who reside in Minnetonka.

If at all possible, please attend this meeting. If you have children who like to mountain bike, bring them as well. The city of Minnetonka needs to hear that mountain biking is a family activity that provides a sound, sustainable outdoor recreation activity. If needed, please volunteer to help with trail maintenance or as a committee member to oversee the use of this trail.

If you have questions, please contact Matt Bergerson at (952) 934-7993.

Thanks in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Gary Sjoquist  
Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists

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consider the priority of the project with other recommendations included in the Parks Open Space and Trails (POST) plan. Hayden concurred noting that "unfunded" did not mean long-term and that she understood the neighborhood's desire for park amenities in the near future.

McFarlin questioned whether Hennepin Parks would have interest in a joint project, noting that the County's trail was in close proximity. Schwartz said he would contact Hennepin Parks to gauge their interest.

Hayden moved and Anderson seconded a motion directing staff to explore a lease agreement as described in option 2, and contact Hennepin Parks to determine their interest in a joint project. In addition, contact the property owner of the lot described in option 1 to determine if there is interest in selling the property, and includes the project in the 2002-2006 CIP as unfunded with a cost of \$150,000. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

**c) Consideration of Mountain Biking Committee trail recommendations**

Johnson provided a history of mountain biking issues and introduced Matt Bergerson who was in attendance representing a Mountain Biking Committee assigned by the Park Board to prepare recommendations for a trail in Lone Lake Park.

Bergerson reviewed the pros and cons of both prohibiting and allowing mountain biking within the Minnetonka park system. He distributed an outline detailing the committee's recommendations to construct a trail in Lone Lake Park. Bergerson indicated that the proposed trail would be 3-4 miles in length, with 95% of the trail utilizing in formal paths currently in place. The Committee's recommendation included a five-step process:

1. Erect signs closing the trail for construction.
2. Identify access points and sign appropriately.
3. Organize workdays and volunteers.
4. Upon completion, tour trail with Park Board and Staff.
5. Open trail for use.

Anderson asked how city staff would be involved in the process. Bergerson responded that he assumed staff would be involved throughout the project, noting that this would be a city project with volunteer assistance.

Russ expressed her appreciation to the Committee for their preparation. She questioned staff as to the city's liability costs if the trail was to be

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completed. Johnson noted that the LMC insurance trust recommendations are for a 6' wide trail. He noted that these were only "recommendations" and that staff was not aware of any additional insurance costs that the city would be assessed.

Lehman questioned how much additional use construction of the trail would generate. Bergerson indicated that he felt the increase would be insignificant because mountain bikers already use the area heavily. Lehman followed by asking what obligations local riding clubs would take on in order to fulfill their commitment. Bergerson responded by saying that the city would schedule maintenance periods in the spring and fall with a volunteer pool of workers available to complete the work. If these volunteers were not available to complete the work, the trail could be posted "closed".

Don Youngdahl, New Brighton, was in attendance representing Minnesota Off-Road Cycling (MORC). He noted that most trail projects have been completed with the cyclist's initiation. McFarlin asked if volunteers are covered by insurance from MORC. Youngdahl indicated they were not, but this has not been a concern. Some agencies have not allowed volunteers to use power equipment.

Anderson questioned whether City crews would have the time to manage volunteers and conduct regular maintenance. Bergerson responded that he felt the time required to maintain the trail would be less than the time needed to restore the existing damaged areas.

Katie Bergerson	3223 Shores Boulevard
Eric Dahl	3216 St. Alban's Hollow Circle
David Rob	16018 Excelsior Boulevard
Chris Smith	16018 Glenhiem Way
Adam Barowe	4330 Wilson Street

All spoke in favor of the committee's recommendations to construct a trail at Lone Lake Park.

Anderson asked if non-residents would travel to Minnetonka to use the trail if constructed. Matt Bergerson indicated they would. He asked the Park Board to consider constructing the trail for residents, knowing that non-residents will likely use the trail.

McFarlin commended Bergerson and the Committee for their work. He expressed concern about use of the trails even if mountain biking is

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prohibited. McFarlin also indicated confusion over the maintenance responsibilities the city would incur.

Lehman noted a parallel between skateboarding and mountain biking concerns within the City. Haden concurred, but noted that property damage from mountain biking was more extensive.

Calkins indicated a need to clearly define the cost to construct and maintain the trail. He noted that regulations allowing or prohibiting off-trail biking are needed and that if damage to the natural areas does not stop the problem will not be solved. Calkins suggested completion of the trail with the ability to close if problems are not controlled. Calkins requested detailed information from the City of Burnsville regarding the cost to build and maintain, use patterns, and whether problems in other parks have been reduced as a result of their trail being constructed.

Russ questioned whether Simenson had reviewed the plans. Simenson indicated he had not, but had serious concerns about how a mountain biking trail could co-exist with the natural resources management plan. He added that restoration progress made in Lone Lake Park has opened up the natural areas making the ability to control routes mountain bikers would take extremely difficult.

McFarlin questioned if a single trail would be compatible. Simenson indicated it was possible, but extremely unlikely due to the ability of bikers to leave the trail if desired. Simenson noted that attempts to close portions of the existing informal trails have failed.

Lehman moved and Calkins seconded a motion to direct staff to proceed with preparing cost estimates for constructing the trail as recommended by the Mountain Biking Committee and report findings to the Park Board. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

Russ moved and Hayden seconded a motion to recommend amending the existing Park Regulations to prohibit mountain biking within the Park system except for areas designated by the Director of Recreation. The City Attorney will recommend language used. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

**d) Review of 2002-2006 Park & Trail CIP projects**

Vetter provided a review of projects recommended by staff for the 2002-2006 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Park Board                      **ITEM PREPARED:** February 26, 2001  
**ITEM NO:** 4c                              **MEETING DATE:** March 7, 2001  
**SUBJECT:** Off-Trail Biking Status Report

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### **Ordinance Amendment**

At the February 7, 2001 meeting, the Park Board recommended amending section 1135.00 of the City code to define where biking is allowed within the park system. The Park Board's stated intent was to allow biking on roadways, parking lots and maintained trails, while prohibiting biking in the park system's natural areas unless designated by the City. The Park Board directed staff to work with the City Attorney to develop language for the amendment.

The ordinance change as recommended by the City Attorney is attached for Park Board review. Upon approval by the Board, this recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for discussion on March 19, 2001. The Council would then introduce the ordinance for consideration at their April 16, 2001 meeting to take action on the requested change. If approved by the Council on April 16, the new ordinance would be published on April 25 and become enforceable on May 25, 2001.

### **Lone Lake Trail**

As directed by the Park Board at the February 7 meeting, staff is in the process of contacting other municipalities to obtain information on construction and maintenance costs related to mountain biking trails. In addition, the City Forester is reviewing the proposal submitted by the Mountain Biking Committee to determine the impact the trail would have on the natural areas of Lone Lake Park and in particular, the natural resources management program.

Staff toured the proposed Lone Lake trail with members of the Mountain Biking Committee on March 1. An update will be provided to the Park Board at the March 7, 2001 meeting.

**RECOMMENDED PARK BOARD ACTION:** Review the recommended ordinance amending City code section 1135.020 regarding bicycles in City parks, make changes as desired, and direct staff to schedule Council review at the March 19, 2001 City Council meeting.

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Park Board                      **ITEM PREPARED:** March 27, 2001  
**ITEM NO:** 3a                              **MEETING DATE:** April 4, 2001  
**SUBJECT:** Consideration of a request to construct a mountain biking trail at Lone Lake Park

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The Park Board reviewed recommendations for construction of a mountain biking trail in Lone Lake Park at the February 7, 2001 meeting. The recommendations reviewed were submitted by Matt Bergerson, a representative of a resident committee interested in placing a mountain biking trail within the City's park system.

Subsequent to a review of a proposed plan, the Park Board directed staff to obtain additional information related to construction costs; the impact of a trail on natural resources management efforts; and experiences the City of Bloomington has had with the operation of a mountain biking trail. The following is a summary of information staff has prepared.

### **Construction Costs**

City staff estimate the cost for construction and signage to be \$37,383. Construction costs prepared by staff assume that the City would be responsible for 100% of the work completed. Matt Bergerson will be present at the April 4 meeting to respond to the cost estimates and provide projections as to how much of the cost could be covered by volunteers and biking organizations. Cost estimates prepared by staff include the following:

Purchase of signs (61)	\$ 3,031
Trail Construction	\$29,352
Materials & Supplies	\$ 5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$37,383</b>

A more detailed explanation of sign and construction costs is included as an attachment. It should be noted that the City's 2001 budget does not include funding designated for construction of a mountain biking trail.

### **Trail Impact on Natural Resources Management Efforts**

The proposed trail would utilize portions of the existing walking/biking trail and cross-country ski trail and include a large section of trail that extends through the park's natural area. Much of this area consists of steep slopes and highly erodible soils. The degradation of vegetation due to the lack of natural processes (i.e., wildfire), and the invasion of a non-native buckthorn understory which blocks light from reaching the groundcover layer, have led to a bare soil condition that if left unmanaged will erode simply from rainfall and snowmelt.

As areas are restored by removing buckthorn, these areas are opened up to provide more sunlight to the ground which helps to reestablish groundcover vegetation such as

## Consideration of a request to construct a mountain biking trail at Lone Lake Park Page 2

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sedge and wildflowers. It is vitally important that traffic over these areas be minimized or eliminated to allow plants to become established.

Damage caused by mountain biking in Lone Lake Park is addressed in the P.O.S.T. report, page 4.95.

"In recent times, erosion of the natural areas has become more of an issue. Uncontrolled mountain biking has created numerous trails that are eroding the soils in areas being restored, causing significant ecological concern."

On page 5.12 the report also states;

"Newly exposed slopes that are in the early stages of restoration (post Buckthorn removal stage) are particularly susceptible to degradation caused by mountain bikes."

An assessment of the proposed mountain biking trail must take into consideration the information provided by the P.O.S.T. report and field observations of damage that is currently happening in Lone Lake Park. The feasibility of the trail must also address the future plans of restoration in the park. The P.O.S.T. report lists the south and west areas of the park as "Community Preserve". As defined on page 4.7 of the report, community preserves have two important functions:

- 1) Preserve and protect key natural areas and open spaces within the city.
- 2) Create opportunities for human use and appreciation of the community's natural areas to a level that is appropriate for the site.

As previously indicated, it is the City Forester's opinion that mountain biking activity is not compatible with natural resources restoration efforts currently in place. Lone Lake Park was chosen as one of the first restoration areas because it has a diverse natural area that needs protection. Development of the proposed mountain bike trail would prevent vegetation from becoming established and create erosion problems would not seem to be an appropriate use for the site.

### **City of Burnsville**

Staff contacted a number of metropolitan area cities to obtain information regarding mountain biking trail operations. Of the cities contacted, only Burnsville currently operates a designated mountain biking trail. Other cities contacted were Plymouth, Edina, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, Arden Hills and Eden Prairie.

In response to questions asked by the Park Board at the February 7 meeting, Bruce White of the Burnsville Parks Department provided the following information.

#### Cost to construct

The existing trail in Terrace Oaks Park is approximately 2 miles in length. Construction of the trail was predominately constructed by volunteers. The extent of city involvement is not documented. Placement of the trail followed the path of an existing cross-country ski trail resulting in minimal trail construction.



Cost to maintain

The City of Burnsville is responsible for the replacement of lost or damaged signs. In addition, City crews supervise annual spring and fall trail maintenance efforts conducted by biking volunteers. City crews also inspect the trail an average of one time per week.

Estimated Use

Mr. White indicated that the trail is used on a regular basis, however no use records have ever been kept. He added that the placement of a designated trail at Terrace Oaks Park has helped to reduce problems in other parks throughout the City.

Information on the Terrace Oaks Park trail, including a map and brochure, are included as an attachment.

**Summary**

While considering a recommendation to either approve or deny the proposal to construct a trail at Lone Lake Park, staff is requesting Park Board consideration of the following:

Ability Requirements

The proposed trail is to be considered an "advanced" trail relative to the degree of difficulty. It should be then noted that all participants would not be able to use "advanced" trails. This trail will require the combination of an advanced physical ability level and advanced equipment (special tires, frame, suspension, etc.) that not all participants may possess. The Parks, Open Space and Trails (P.O.S.T.) report defines an advanced biker as this:

*Advanced or experienced riders: are generally using their bicycles as they would a motor vehicle. They are riding for convenience and speed and want direct access to destinations with a minimum of detour or delay. They are typically comfortable riding with motor vehicle traffic; however, they need sufficient operating space on the traveled way or shoulder to eliminate the need for either themselves or a passing motor vehicle to shift position<sup>1</sup>*

It should be noted that the definition of an "advanced" rider in the P.O.S.T. report is not the "advanced" rider that this proposed trail is designed for. According to Mark Casey, risk administrator for the League of Minnesota Cities, there are no federal guidelines to define what an advanced mountain bike trail or rider are.

Once the proposed trail leaves the existing cross-country ski trail it traverses across, up and down steep elevation changes or grades. This is what is most appealing to an "advanced" trail rider. At numerous portions of the trail a 25 – 40 foot segment of the trail may have up to a 60° grade change.

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (I.M.B.A.) recommends that urban trails be designed to be used by an intermediate rider or with intermediate equipment. The IMBA's Trailbuilding Basics manual indicates:

*"We have found that trying to build trails that require advanced skills in urban parks can lead to user impact problems due to the ease of access for beginners. Urban trails should be kept to an intermediate level at the highest and technical challenges should be provided using natural features."<sup>2</sup>*

The I.M.B.A. also indexes a definition of a Social Trail as a "Trail created by recreationalists as they wander from the 'official' Trail".<sup>3</sup> With the continued removal of invasive species from the City's park system, social trails are increasing in number.

#### Parks, Open Space and Trail System Plan

Section V of the P.O.S.T. report details the Trail System Plan and its components. Specifically the report seeks to provide a comprehensive trail plan with the following overriding goals:<sup>4</sup>

- Develop an interlinking, looped trail system throughout the city and interconnecting with other local, state and regional trail systems.
- Provide reasonable trail access to the natural resource amenities within the community without unduly compromising their integrity and natural qualities.
- Provide trail linkages from the looped trail system to neighborhoods and where feasible, individual parks.
- Provide a reasonable degree to universal accessibility to trails throughout the system.

The report also details that,

- Trail design shall be sensitive to the natural environment and character of the area it traverses.
- Trails shall be designed to be accessible to all populations with varying abilities wherever feasible, practical and appropriate given the specific setting. Principles of universal design shall also be applied.
- Provide reasonable trail access to the natural resource amenities within the community, without unduly compromising their integrity and natural qualities.

It is staff's opinion that the present plan proposed for placing a mountain biking trail in Lone Lake Park is not consistent with recommendations included in the POST plan.

**RECOMMENDED PARK BOARD ACTION:** It is staff's recommendation to deny the plan as currently proposed for the following reasons:

**Cost Benefit:** Relatively little support has been displayed for the project from residents. Staff's concern is compounded by the fact that only "advanced" riders could benefit from the trail as proposed.

**Natural Resources Management:** The 2001-2005 Capital Improvement Program includes \$750,000 in funding for implementation of the Natural Resources Management Plan. It is staff's opinion that work completed in Lone Lake Park would continue to be severely impacted by mountain biking activity. This opinion is supported by information included in the POST plan.

**Budget:** Although volunteers could be utilized to construct the trail, any portion of the \$37,383 estimated cost that required City funding would need to be budgeted for 2002 unless alternative funding was found.

For these reasons, staff recommends that the Park Board deny the proposal as currently presented.

<sup>1</sup> Minnnetonka Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan. Page 5.1 (Source: Federal Highway Administration)

<sup>1</sup> International Mountain Bicycling Association. Trailbuilding Basics, Page 8.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. Page 18.

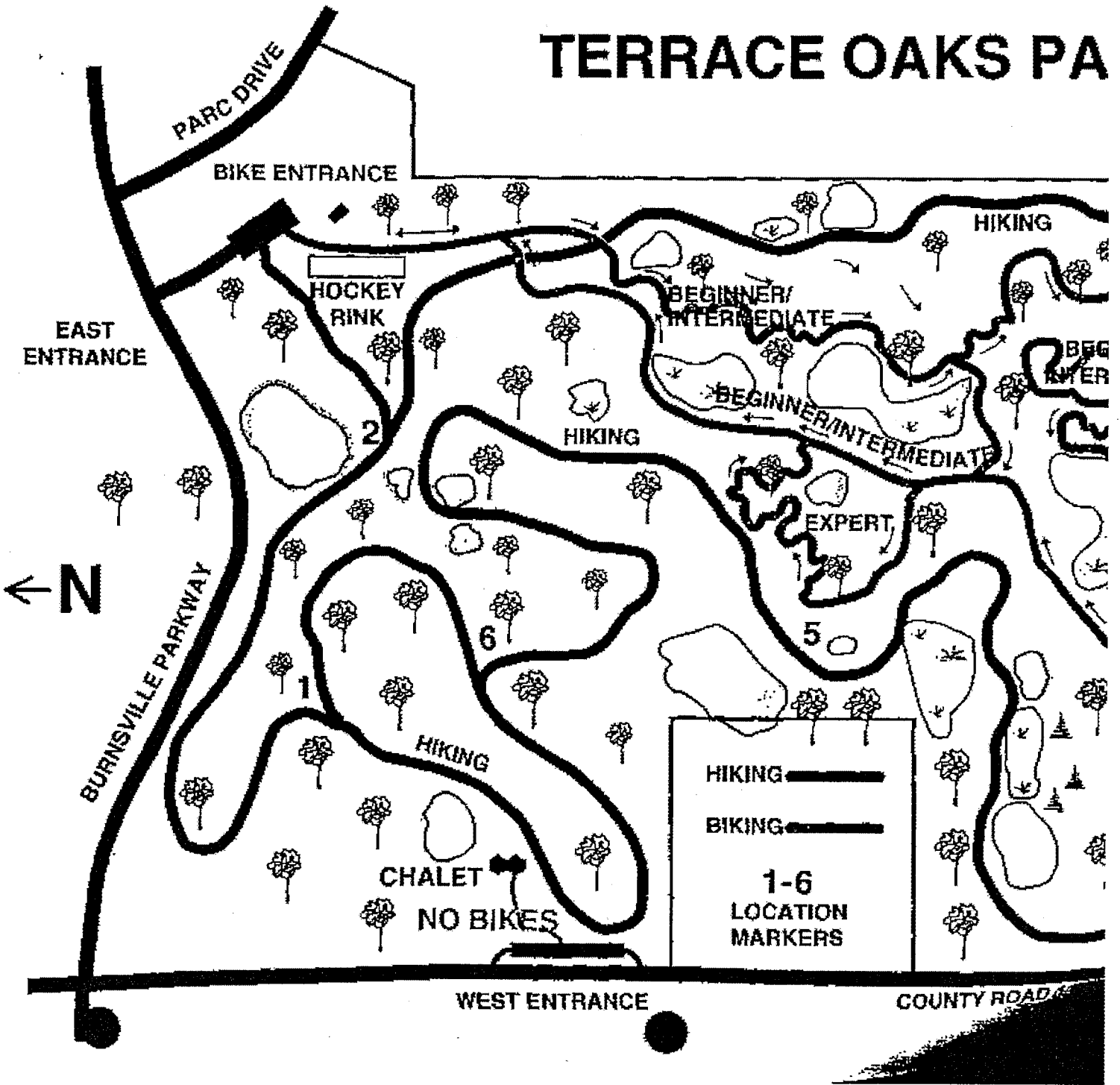
<sup>1</sup> Minnnetonka Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan. Page 5.1

**Lone Lake Park  
Mountain Biking Trail Proposal  
Construction Cost Estimates**

<b>Signs</b>					
Main Entrance/Exit	2	@	\$350	Total =	\$700
Incline/Decline	9	@	\$27	Total =	\$243
Stay on Trail	13	@	\$27	Total =	\$351
One Way	13	@	\$27	Total =	\$351
Turn Warnings	18	@	\$27	Total =	\$486
Approaching Trail	6	@	\$150	Total =	\$900
<b>Total Signs</b>	<b>61</b>				
<b>Total Cost</b>					<b>\$3031</b>

<b>Construction</b>	
Materials and Supplies	\$5,000
Specialized Trail Construction (labor)	\$29,352
3 men @ \$1,223/day 225' per day	
(5,364 total feet) 24 days work	
<b>Total Cost Construction</b>	<b>\$34,352</b>
<b>Estimated Cost for Proposed Trail</b>	<b>\$37,383</b>

# TERRACE OAKS PA



## TRAIL RULES

- ❖ Bikers must enter and exit from the east entrance of the park.
- ❖ Bikers on blue, hikers on brown.
- ❖ Bikers and hikers must stay on designated trails.
- ❖ Stay on the marked trails. No trail breaking allowed.
- ❖ Bikers, slow down and use caution at pedestrian intersections. Yield to pedestrians. Announce your intentions.
- ❖ Bikers, follow directional arrows.
- ❖ Racing and reckless riding strictly prohibited.
- ❖ Bikers, be courteous, use caution, control your speed, and wear your helmet.
- ❖ Carry your litter out with you.

**Help us preserve the beauty and nature within Terrace Oaks Park!**

- ❖ Pets must be leashed.
- ❖ Pick up after your pets.
- ❖ Dispose of litter properly.
- ❖ Don't pick the flowers.
- ❖ Don't disturb the wildlife.
- ❖ Report vandalism - call 895-4518.

**These rules will be strictly enforced. Violation of these rules is a misdemeanor.**

## TRAIL INFORMATION

- ❖ Mountain bike trails are open May 1 - October 15, close at dusk.
- ❖ The City of Burnsville reserves the right to close trails at any time for repairs or protection.
- ❖ Terrace Oaks is a sensitive natural area; help us protect and preserve it. Erosion is a concern, and trails may be closed or diverted during extremely wet or dry conditions.

### Other mountain bike trails in the area are:

- ❖ Hennepin County -  
Murphy Hanrehan  
447-6913
- ❖ Dakota County -  
Lebanon Hills  
437-6608
- ❖ Buck Hill Ski Area -  
Burnsville  
435-7174

**T  
Oaks**

**HIKING**





**MINUTES OF THE  
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD  
APRIL 4, 2001**

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**1. Roll Call**

Park Board members: Diane Hayden, Paul Lehman, Bob McFarlin, Mary Russ and Steve Watkins were present. Attending staff were GERALYN BARONE, Dave Johnson, and Mark Simenson. Chair Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Russ moved and Lehman seconded a motion to approve the minutes of February 7, 2001. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

McFarlin moved and Watkins seconded a motion to approve the minutes of March 7, 2001. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

**3. Discussion Items**

**a) Consideration of a request to construct a mountain biking trail at Lone Lake Park**

Johnson provided an overview of the staff report. Addressing information requested by the Board at the March 7, 2001 meeting, Johnson reviewed a cost estimate for constructing the trail of \$37,383. It was noted that this estimated cost assumed that all labor would be provided by the city.

Johnson reported that staff conducted a survey of seven metro area cities to obtain information regarding mountain biking. The cities contacted were Plymouth, Edina, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, Arden Hills, Burnsville and Eden Prairie. Of these cities, only Burnsville operates a mountain biking trail. Burnsville was also the only city to experience problems with mountain biking in city parks.

Johnson reviewed information provided by Burnsville related to construction costs, maintenance and use of the existing trail.

Simenson provided a summary of staff concerns regarding the compatibility of a mountain biking trail with natural resources restoration efforts currently in place at Lone Lake Park.

Based on information provided in the staff report, Johnson concluded by indicating that staff recommends that the Park Board deny the existing plan to construct a trail in Lone Lake Park.



**MINUTES OF THE  
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD  
APRIL 4, 2001**

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Lehman expressed concern that the recommendation to prohibit off-trail biking does not provide a solution to the problem of where bikers can go. Lehman also expressed concern regarding enforcement. Johnson responded by saying that extensive signing would be incorporated and seasonal staff will be used to inform bikers. He added that staff would continue to work with the biking community to develop other possible options for a trail in the park system.

Watkins noted that erosion control would be a problem at any location that a trail is proposed. He added that maintained trails can be properly maintained, however, casual trails will continue to be a problem if riders decide to leave the designated trail.

Watkins added that he felt the cost benefit and budget issues can be addressed but the natural resources issues are difficult to get around.

Russ expressed concern regarding the compatibility of a trail to natural resources restoration efforts currently in place.

Watkins read an e-mail from Jim Calkins who could not attend the meeting. Calkins expressed concern regarding community support levels, construction and maintenance costs, the proposed location, and the likelihood that this trail would resolve community-wide biking problems. He indicated support for the staff recommendation not to construct the proposed trail.

McFarlin stated concerns related to enforcement costs whether the trail is constructed or not. He inquired as to how damage to Lone Lake Park would be maintained and restored. Simenson responded by saying that damaged areas of the park will be ribboned off. Forestry crews, along with the Minnesota Conservation Corps, would begin restoration efforts in the summer and continue work into the fall.

McFarlin agreed with Calkins that community support was minimal.

Upon completion of the discussion, McFarlin moved and Russ seconded a motion to approve staff's recommendation to deny the plan to construct a mountain biking trail in Lone Lake as currently proposed. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

The Park Board requested that staff continue to work with interested residents in an attempt to develop a new plan, possibly at a different location, which could be brought back to the Park Board for consideration. The Park Board also requested that staff prepare a

**MINUTES OF THE  
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD  
APRIL 4, 2001**

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news release regarding changes to the city's ordinance pertaining to off trail biking.

**b) Discussion regarding itinerary for May 2001 Park Board tour.**

Johnson reviewed a listing of potential sites for the Park Board to tour on May 2. The Park Board suggested adding the proposed park location near Faith Presbyterian church, the Crane Lake observation project included in the 2001 CIP, and a possible Burwell House tour.

**c) Discussion of action plan for establishing Park Board goals & objectives.**

Johnson reviewed a listing of action steps for future planning sessions. McFarlin suggested that Park Board participation be increased from two representatives to three. Watkins, Lehman and McFarlin were selected as the Park Board participants in the planning process, with Russ volunteering as an alternate.

Barone noted that the Mayor and City Manager indicated support for the Park Board's planning process, however both expressed concern regarding the potential time commitment Park Board members would be subject to.

**4. Staff Reports**

**a) Trails Update**

Barone provided an update from Dean Elstad, Trail Coordinator regarding the Hidden Valley project.

Barone was asked to provide an update regarding the Gray's Bay Marina project. Barone indicated that work on funding the project was still in progress. At question was \$850,000 in funding that is proposed in the 2001 legislative session. If this funding is approved, the property could be secured as early as the fall of 2001 with construction of the new marina taking place during the summer of 2002.

McFarlin suggested that a Park Board representative be included on the Task Force for future planning of the project.

**b) Sunrise Ridge Park Project Update**

Johnson reported that staff is working with Hennepin County to obtain a possible lease on the 3 acre parcel located west of 494 between

Tony Wagner  
Minnetonka City Council Ward 2  
January 22, 2018

Re: Mountain Bike Trails being considered at Big Willow Park

As the enclosed petition states, the Mountain Bike Trail under consideration by the Minnetonka Park Board has and continues to mention Big Willow Park and Nature Preserve at the Focus Group meetings and in the presentation material.

Many residents of St Albans Mill Condominiums and St Albans Hollow along with a considerable number of residents from the area around Big Willow Park voiced their concerns at the November 8<sup>th</sup> 2017 Mountain Biking Focus Group Meeting.

There was strong opposition at this meeting to Big Willow Park and Nature Preserve being the location of the proposed Mountain Bike Trail. Although pie charts created from gathered information by the Park Board show only 11% concerned about location, what I experienced at that meeting, concern of location would be considerably higher. St Albans Mill, St Albans Hollow and residents in the general area surrounding the park have been and continue to be impacted in various degrees by the lights and the noise created by activities held at the ball park. A mountain bike trail at Big Willow will just add to this.

At the most recent meeting of January 8, 2018, the presentation contained generic information about mountain bike trails and related issues. There was a lack of specifics in the presentation addressing the following concerns that have been and continue to be raised:

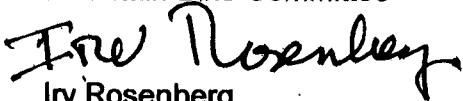
- When will a map of the proposed trail be provided showing where the planned trail will begin and where will the trail end.
- Will there be designated parking area for users? Our understanding is that there are no plans by the Park Board to provide for parking. Where will Mountain Biking teams from Minnetonka schools and other competing teams park their vehicles? Where will individual users both local and from surrounding communities park? We at St Albans Mill are concerned that our private road parking areas would be an attractive option for trail users. This would create potential liability issues to St Albans Mill, loss of street parking for residents, their guests and potential problems for vendor vehicles providing services to the association and to homeowners.
- Why is Big Willow Park the apparent location of choice? Is there not a site for the Mountain Bike Trail that would not impact residential areas? Has Purgatory Park been considered?
- How many "connecting" trails are in the planning and where would they be located?

- We are told that motorized bikes would not be allowed on the proposed Mountain Bike Trails. What is the purpose for the addition of the word "motorized" to "trail bikes" under Minnetonka Park Regulation 1135.020.9 proposed and approved at the April 5, 2017 Park Board meeting. Are motorized trails being planned?
- Could this trail in any way affect property values at St Albans Mill Condominiums?
- **Will there be a meeting allowing for resident input when the Park Board has detailed plans on location, trail maps, number of trails and locations for "connecting trails" parking, etc. before being presented by the Park Board to the City Council?**

We realize that there are supporters of a Mountain Bike Trail (Trails?) but there should be consideration of how the trails and issues connected to this type of trails system would affect residential areas. There must be a better location than Big Willow within the Minnetonka Park system that would not be as close to heavily populated areas.

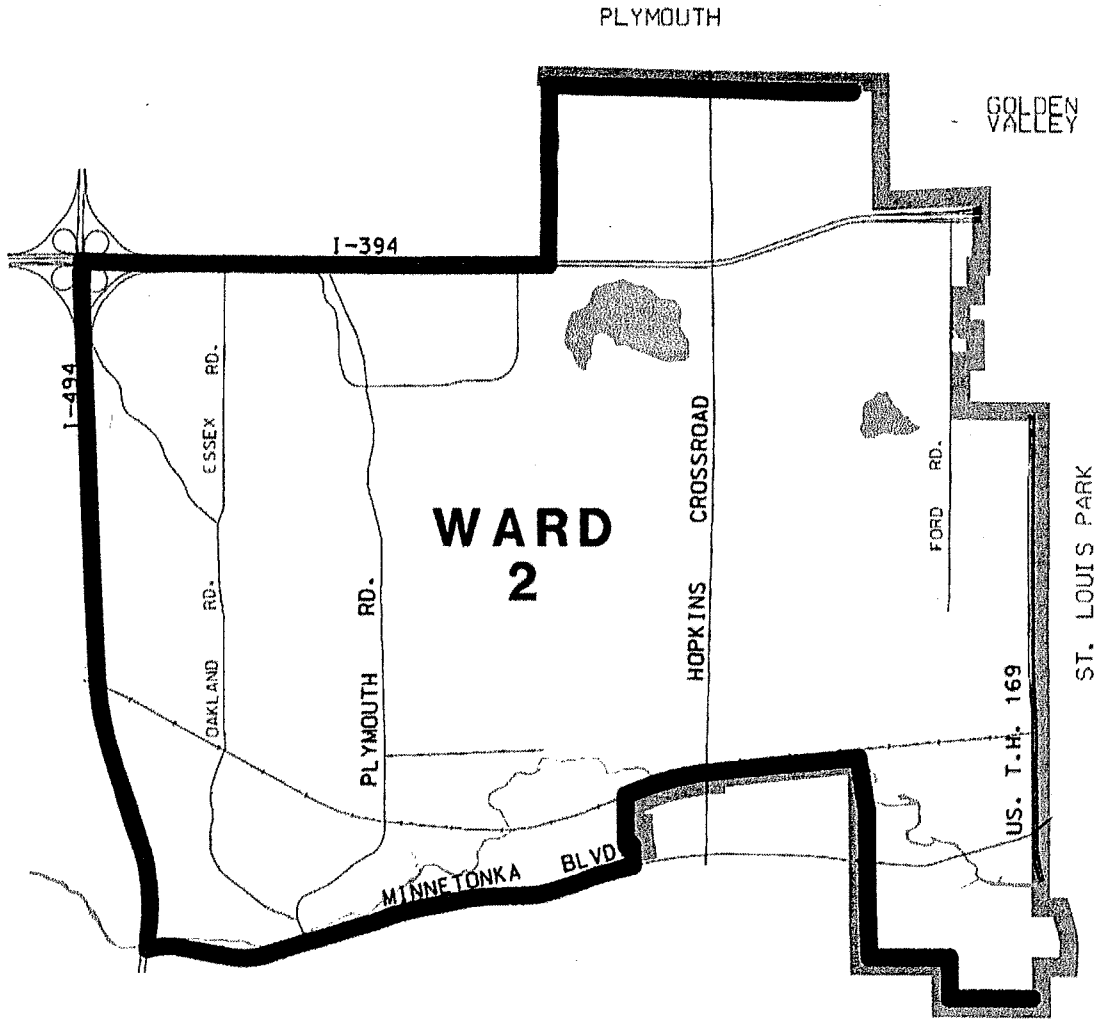
Respectfully submitted,


Mountain Bike Committee



Irv Rosenberg  
3020 St Albans Mill Road #305  
Minnetonka, MN 55305

65



WARD BOUNDARY ..... 



SCALE IN MILES



Petition Summary

A request has been made to have a Mountain Bike Trail built in Minnetonka. Big Willow Park and Nature Preserve has often been mentioned as a prime location by the City of Minnetonka. Major concerns are: environmental for vegetation, Minnehaha Creek and animal habitat destruction. Also serious concerns about safety and noise due to increased bike and auto traffic in general and especially within the park and preserve.

Action Petition

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who request our elected leaders to not allow any Mountain Bike Trail (motorized or not) in Big Willow Park and Nature Preserve.

<u>Print Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
SIGNED PETITIONERS	SAM I	8 SIGNATURES	
	SAM II	36 SIGNATURES *	
	SAM III	30 SIGNATURES	
	JANUARY 2018		
		PLUS TIM BONAZZI	* STAFF 2010
		✓ BONNIE PERDUESKI	

# SIGN PLEASE

## Petition Summary

A request has been made to have a Mountain Bike Trail built in Minnetonka. Big Willow Park and Nature Preserve has often been mentioned as a prime location by the City of Minnetonka. Major concerns are: environmental for vegetation, Minnehaha Creek and animal habitat destruction. Also serious concerns about safety and noise due to increased bike and auto traffic in general and especially within the park and preserve.

## Action Petition

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3000 St. ALBANS MILL RD #102A 55305

<u>Print Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
MARTHA MORRIS	Martha Morris	3000 ST ALBANS MILL RD #102	1-5-2018
Michael GORSKY	Michael Gorsky	" #102	1-5-18
Julie Borgen	Julie Borgen	3000 St. Albans Mill Rd #203	1-5-18
Valerie Parker	Valerie Parker	3000 St. Albans Mill Rd #301	1-5-18
JEFF LEW	Jeffery Lew	66	
MATTHEW ST JOHN	Matthew St John	4	1/7/18
ANDREA ADAMS	Andrea Adams	3000 #105	
		3000 #306	1/7/18

Petition Summary

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Action Petition

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who request our elected leaders to not allow any Mountain Bike Trail (motorized or not) in Big Willow Park and Nature Preserve. 3020 ST. ALBANS MILL ROAD MINNETONKA, 55305

<u>Print Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
SYLVIA KELLER		3020 St Albans Mill Rd #106	1/7/18
HARVEY KELLER		3020 St Albans Mill Rd	1/7/18
Joan Abrahamson	Joan Abrahamson	3020 St Albans Mill Rd	1/7/18
JACK ABRAHAMSON	Jack Abrahamson	3020 St. Albans Mill Rd. #115	1/7/18
Mark LaChapelle	Mark LaChapelle	3020 St. Albans Mill Rd #114	1-7-18
SCOTT BRUSH		3020 St. Albans Mill Rd #114	1/7/18
Doris Clark	Doris Clark	3020 St. Albans Mill Rd. #113	1-7-18
Richard Clark		3020 St. Albans Mill Rd. #113	1-7-18
LEE STENSLAND	Lee Stensland	3020 ST ALBANS MILL RD #101	1-7-18
MARSHA HINZE		3020 St Albans Mill Rd. #107	1-7-18
DAVID HINZE		↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	1/7/18
Julie Farni		" " #108	
Jean Farni		" " #108	



Petition Summary

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Action Petition ALL 3020 ST. ALBANK MILL RD - MTRCA, MN.

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who request our elected leaders to not allow any Mountain Bike Trail (motorized or not) in Big Willow Park and Nature Preserve.

<u>Print Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
CLYDE SCHIMPERLE	<i>Clyde Schimperle</i>	#215	2/15/18
Katie Ruff	<i>Katie Ruff</i>	#215	4/3/18
Rita Nathanson	<i>Rita Nathanson</i>	212	1/3/18
Gill Mahoney	<i>Gill Mahoney</i>	211	4/3/18
Debra Martinson	<i>DMartinson</i>	209	1-3-18
HAROLD OLSON	<i>H Olson</i>	109	1/3/18
JUDITH OLSON	<i>Judith Olson</i>	109	1/5/18
Clyde S. Cooperman	<i>Clyde S. Cooperman</i>	202	4/1/18
Robert Hoffman	<i>Robert Hoffman</i>	210	1/7/18
Jay Hoffman	<i>Jay Hoffman</i>	210	1/7/18
MaryAnne Portz	<i>MaryAnne Portz</i>	214	1/7/18
Sharon Trilling	<i>Sharon Trilling</i>	205	6/7/18
Susan Kaplan	<i>Susan Kaplan</i>	203	1/8/17

Phoned me 1/5 2:16 PM. want my info. requestor I remove her name.

~~Handwritten scribbles~~ Floor

Petition Summary

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Action Petition

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~~3020 ST ALBANS MILL RD~~ ~~MINNETONKA~~ ST 305

<u>Print Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
Barbara Brooks	Barbara Brooks	301 BROOKS	1/5/18
JOEL LEVINE	Joel Levine	301 LEVINE	1/5/18
		302 JACQUES	
		303 RUIR	
IRVING L. ROSENBERG	I L Rosenberg	3020 ST ALBANS MILL RD # 305 305 ROSENBERG	1/5/18
EVA KIEFFER	Eva Kieffer	306 KIEFFER	1/5/18
<del>Handwritten</del>	FATHER NESON	307 NESON	1/7/18
DONALD WESTFALL	Donald Westfall	308 ISAACS	1/5/18
SALLY WESTFALL	Sally Westfall	309 WESTFALL	1/5/18
Nancy Goldberg	Nancy Ellen Gold	3020 ST ALBANS # 310 MINNETONKA, MN 55305	1/5/18
Jeanne Tox	Jeanne Tox	311 TOSE	1/5/18
DONALD LERNER	Donald Lerner	312 LERNER	1/5/18

<u>Print Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
		313 AVEU	
		314 MARKET	
CHARLIE THOMASON	Charlie Thomason	3020 ST. ALBANS MILL RD 315 THOMASON LETICA 51305	4/5/18
Ronda K. Beehler	Ronda K. Beehler	3020 ST. ALBANS MILL RD 315 THOMASON	4/5/18
*Jim Bonacci	Jim Bonacci	3010 ST. ALBANS MILL RD	4/5/18
BONNIE PEROGESKI	Bonnie Perogesk	3010 ST. ALBANS MILL RD	4/5/18

File Copy

Petition Summary

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SAM III

<u>Print Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
NAN WRIGHT	Nancy Wright	3030 St Albans Mill Rd #312	1-3-18
BOB SHIFF	Bob Shiff	3030 ST ALBANS MILL RD #306	1-3-18
CAROL FRANK	Carol Frank	3030 ST ALBANS MILL RD #306	1-3-18
Gretchen Usher	Gretchen I. Usher	3030 St. Albans Mill Rd #303	1-3-18
Coyle Kightowler	Coyle Kightowler	3030 St. Albans Mill Rd #303	1-3-18
Donna Friedman	Donna Friedman	3030 St. Albans Mill Rd #308	1/4/18
Kirk Friedman	Kirk Friedman	3030 St. Albans Mill Rd #308	1/4/18
BEV CARLSON	Bev Carlson	3030 St. ALBANS Mill Rd #102	1-4-18
Muffy Stiles	Muffy Stiles	3030 St. Albans Mill Rd #114	1-4-18
JUDY CARLSON	Judy Carlson	3030 St. Albans Mill Rd #214	1/4/18
Margaret Sojka	Margaret Sojka	3030 St. Albans Mill Rd #308	1/4/18
JUDITH LORD	Judith Lord	3030 St. Albans Mill Rd #205	1/4/18
Kathy Hewitt	Kathy Hewitt	3030 St. Albans Mill Rd	1/4/18

### Petition Summary

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### Action Petition

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<u>Print Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
BARB GOLDBERG	Barb Goldberg	3030 St Alban # 302	12/31
Leslie Rosenberg	L Rosenberg	3030 St. Albans # 307	12/31
Norma Schaefer	Norma Schaefer	3030 St Alban # 307	12/31
LINDA DAMIANI	L. Damiani	3030 # 107	12/31
Sherrie Steen	Sherrie Steen	3030 # 114	12/31
Barbara Myers	Barbara Myers	3030 # 209	1/1/18
Ann Savino	Ann Savino	3030 # 313	1/3/18
ANN PETERSON	Ann Peterson	3130 # 303	1/4/18
Russ Peterson	Russ Peterson	3030 # 303	1/4/18
Jan Schlender	Jan Schlender	3030 # 301	1/4/18
Bern Conetta	Bern Conetta	3030 St Alban # 315	1/4/18
LEO BONNETT	Leo Bonnett	3030 ST ALBANS # 125	1/4/18





**Minnetonka Park Board Item 5B  
Meeting of February 7, 2018**

<b>Subject:</b>	2017 Shady Oak Beach Operations Report
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	To provide quality athletic and recreational facilities
<b>Park Board related objective:</b>	Annually review policies related to the operation and management of parks to determine if changes are required
<b>Brief Description:</b>	The park board will review Shady Oak Beach operational information for the 2017 season

**Background**

The 2017 Shady Oak Beach season began on Friday, June 8. Due to favorable feedback regarding the extended week for the 2016 season. The beach remained open an additional week again this year, closing for the season on Sunday, August 26. Revenues for the season and daily passes were down, however inclement weather forced several full or half day closures. Group visits and birthday parties remained popular. The Stand-Up Paddle Board Yoga and Sunset Beach Yoga programs offered for both teens and adults grew in popularity as well. A total of 45 Stand-Up Paddleboard Yoga classes were offered with 270 participating.

There were some additional expenses in 2017 as a result of aging equipment and structures. A new freezer was purchased for the concession stand at a cost of \$3,600, and the deck area and stairs near the beach front were replaced prior to the start of the season. The total cost of this project was \$29,000. Also purchased in late 2017 was a storage shed which will be used to store rental equipment, and new beach signage which will debut in 2018.

**2017 Operations Summary**

Below is a detailed summary of the 2017 Shady Oak Beach season:

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Season Passes Sold</b>	3,912	4,003
<b>Concession Revenue</b>	\$39,520	\$50,356
<b>Daily Pass Revenue</b>	\$71,977	\$89,479
<b>Rentals (paddleboards, kayaks)</b>	721	906

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	\$182,918	\$224,398
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	\$193,444	\$218,186
<b>Net Operating Cost</b>	\$10,526	(\$6,212)



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Year	Attendance	Resident Season Passes	Non-Resident Season Passes	Total Season Passes
2017	26,202	3,208	704	3,912
2016	31,139	3,073	930	4,003
2015	30,963	3,089	931	4,020
2014	31,937	3,067	1,101	4,168
2013	35,692	3,245	1,073	4,318
2012	39,980	3,642	1,416	5,058
2011	50,416	3,768	1,081	4,849
2010	43,531	3,598	1,000	4,598
2009	29,467	4,157	1,403	5,560

**Recommended Park Board Action:** Informational only.

## 2017 Annual Report Park and Recreation Board

### Mission

The park and recreation board proactively advises the city council in ways that will protect and enhance Minnetonka's natural environment, promote quality recreation opportunities and facilities, and provides a forum for citizens interested in our parks, trails, athletic fields and open space. The park board's established vision is "*A city with outstanding parks and recreational opportunities within a balanced natural environment.*"

### Membership

Two board seats were filled in March, 2017 by James Durbin and Christopher Walick. The open seats occurred with a resignation in December 2016 by Marvin Puspoki and a term ending for Elise Raarup in January 2017.

Nelson Evenrud was appointed as Park Board Chair and Cynthia Kist was appointed as the Park Board Vice-Chair. The park board met for regular meetings a total of seven times in 2017. In addition, they conducted a tour of the park system in May and hosted a joint meeting with the city council in November.

### 2017 Attendance Schedule

Member	Jan	Mar	Apr	Jun	Sep	Nov	Dec	Meetings Attended
Acomb	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100%
Evenrud	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100%
Gabler	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100%
Kist	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100%
Kvam	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100%
Raarup	Y	T						14.3%
Seveland	Y	Y	E	Y	Y	Y	Y	100%
Durbin		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	85.7%
Walick		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	85.7%

Y = Present; E = Excused; U = Unexcused; T = Term Expired; R = Resigned

### Highlights of the Past Year

- ✓ Adopted a Strategic Plan in January that includes a mission, vision, four primary goals, and related objectives.
- ✓ Approved park and trail projects for the 2018 – 2022 Capital Improvements Program.
- ✓ Reviewed and recommended price adjustments to 2017 Shady Oak Beach fees.
- ✓ Received a request to construct mountain biking trails in Civic Center and Big Willow Parks. Held a public meeting regarding mountain biking trails and directed staff to look at other feasible locations including the 494 corridor. Discussed and recommended a plan for the public input process.
- ✓ Reviewed and approved changes to the city's park regulations.
- ✓ Reviewed the Natural Resources Division's 2017 Education and Outreach Plan.
- ✓ Approved 2018 slip fees for Gray's Bay Marina.
- ✓ The Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed District, Scenic Heights Elementary School and the City of Minnetonka are collaborating to restore a portion of Purgatory Park in conjunction with the ecological restoration of the Scenic Heights Elementary School Forest.

The park board reviewed components of the restoration plan and community outreach efforts.

- ✓ Held the annual Volunteer Recognition event to show appreciation for volunteers who donated their time and efforts to the areas of parks, recreation and natural resources management in 2017.

The park and recreation board has established the following goals and objectives for 2017:

**GOAL - To protect natural resources and open space**

Objective #1: Provide feedback to staff in managing the open space process

Objective #2: Continue to review and comment on the implementation of the natural resources stewardship plan

Objective #3: Review options to enhance natural resources and open space

Objective #4: Promote the city's efforts of protecting and enhancing the community's natural resources by creating awareness and supporting educational strategies

**GOAL - To renew and maintain parks and trails**

Objective #1: Involve park board member participation in park and trail projects

Objective #2: As needed, conduct an annual review of park dedication fees

Objective #3: Identify areas of the city that are deficient of adequate park or trail amenities

Objective #4: Conduct a comprehensive review of the trail system to identify missing links and required future improvements

Objective #5: Renew, expand and maintain a trail system to encourage outdoor recreation, and improve the connectivity and walkability of community

Objective #6: Consider all options (off-road and on-road) to improve the connectivity and walkability of community

**GOAL - To provide quality athletic and recreational facilities and programs**

Objective #1: Perform an annual review of the Gray's Bay Marina operations plan

Objective #2: Anticipate, review and respond to community needs not previously identified

Objective #3: Annually review policies related to the operation and management of parks to determine if changes are required

Objective #4: Ensure that park amenities, recreational facilities and programs address future community needs and changing demographics

Objective #5: Conduct a review of the athletic field fee schedule developed for 2017 and make recommended adjustments for 2018

Objective #6: Review drafts of the updated POST Plan

Objective #7: Offer a full range of programs for people of all ages and ability levels

Objective #8: Responsibly maintain our parks, trails and recreational facilities, while fairly balancing user fees with general community support

**GOAL - Enhance long-term Park Board development**

Objective #1: Define CIP projects for 2018-2022 related to parks, trails and open space

Objective #2: Enhance council relations - serve as a voice to the council

Objective #3: Develop a process to increase community awareness of park board initiatives

Objective #4: Schedule board member involvement in annual park board and city-related activities

Objective #5: Annually assess the park board strategic plan

Objective #6: Conduct a review of the park board's program for recognizing volunteers who complete pre-approved projects to benefit the park system

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 7  
Meeting of February 7, 2018**

<b>Subject:</b>	Information Items
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	N/A
<b>Park Board related objective:</b>	N/A
<b>Brief Description:</b>	The following are informational items and developments that have occurred since the last park board meeting.

**Recreation Services 2018 Summer Brochure**

The Recreation Services summer brochure will be posted online and mailed to residents the first week of March. Hopkins and Minnetonka residents, local libraries, and community education offices will all receive copies of the summer brochure. Registration begins at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, March 13.

This edition is the largest publication of the year and the only one that is mailed to residents. The summer edition includes a large array of programming and a variety of community events and family activities including, the Minnetonka Summer Fest, Shady Oak Beach, Music in the Park, Theater in the Park, the Hopkins Raspberry Festival and the Minnetonka Farmers' Market. The summer brochure features registration for health & fitness classes, tennis programs, triathlon events, playground programs, day camps, golf, ice skating lessons, youth and teen programs, aquatics programs, Minnetonka Senior Services, ice skating lessons, adult activities and leagues, facility reservations, Inclusion Services and registration for youth fall soccer.

**Pickleball Courts**

Pickleball courts were designed and bids were received Aug. 3, 2017. Based on concept plans to build eight courts that were prepared in 2016, the estimated cost for construction was \$310,000. The lowest bid received was \$423,050.94, which well exceeded the budgeted amount. Bidding projects in the summer sometimes yields higher bids as contractors have their workloads established for the remainder of the year. The bids were rejected and the project was rebid again in January 2018, when the bidding is expected to be more competitive. The bid opening date is February 13, 2018. If the bids again exceed the amount budgeted in the CIP, staff will look at either recommending amending the CIP or scaling back the project to six courts instead of eight.

**2017 Park Board Annual Report**

A draft of the 2017 Park Board Annual Report is attached. Please review the document and inform staff of any suggested changes.

**Attachments:**

1. 2017 Park Board Annual Report

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 8  
Meeting of February 7, 2018**

<b>Upcoming 6-Month Meeting Schedule</b>				
<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Type</b>	<b>Agenda Business Items</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
<b>Wed</b>	3/7/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the 2019-2023 Capital Improvement Program</li> <li>Review of the Shady Oak Beach inflatable amenity plan</li> </ul>	Technology training at 6 p.m.
<b>Wed</b>	4/4/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Natural Resources Division's 2018 Education and Outreach Plan</li> <li>Consideration of projects for the 2019-2023 Capital Improvement Program</li> </ul>	
<b>Wed</b>	5/9/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Park Board Tour</li> </ul>	
<b>Wed</b>	6/6/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
<b>Wed</b>	7/4/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	No meeting - holiday
<b>Wed</b>	8/1/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	

**Other meetings and activities to note:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
<b>Sat</b>	2/10/2018	Winter Farmer's Market	9 am - 1 pm Community Center
<b>Sun</b>	2/11/2018	Kids' Fest	Noon-3:30 pm Community Center, Ice Arena, & Civic Center grounds

**Items to be scheduled:**

Minnetonka Historical Society presentation regarding Burwell House