

Mountain Bike Trail Development – Assessment and Recommendations
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Prepared for
Chehalem Park and Recreation District

Prepared by
C2 Recreation Consulting

Overview

In early 2026, the Chehalem Park and Recreation District (CPRD) contracted with C2 Recreation Consulting (C2) to assess the needs of local mountain bikers and to evaluate opportunities within the district's portfolio to provide trail access for them. This report contains the results of that evaluation and the related recommendations.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is one of the most popular trail activities in the US. According to the Outdoor Foundation, over 8.5 million mountain bikers went on 654 million rides in 2021. In Oregon, mountain biking's Northwest Trail Alliance is the state's largest trail advocacy group with over 5,000 dues-paying members, and the sport generated more than \$209M in economic activity based on Travel Oregon's 2022 *Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Oregon*. All these numbers have continued to grow since the sport's inception in the late 1980s and are expected to increase as cycling remains the most popular outdoor activity for children in the United States.

The need for more mountain biking trails is identified in the report "Outdoor Recreation Scarcity and Abundance in Western Oregon: A Spatial Analysis", completed in 2014 by ECONorthwest for the Bureau of Land Management in support of the agency's *2016 Northwestern and Coastal Oregon Resource Management Plan*. The report found the following:

- 1) Overall outdoor recreation participation is growing, oftentimes faster than background population growth.
- 2) The Willamette Valley as a whole has large numbers of mountain bikers per existing trail mile (or, alternatively, fewest number of trail miles per mountain biker) compared to other users such as hikers or equestrians.
- 3) Mountain bike trails in the Willamette Valley tend to have the highest number of users per mile compared to the rest of the northwestern and coastal parts of the state.
- 4) Based on county-level data, mountain biking participation rates in nearby communities in the Willamette Valley were 12%, higher than the state average.
- 5) The frequency with which users participate affects the supply and demand for trail-based recreation activities. Mountain bikers participate most frequently out of all the trail-based activities studied; thus, even though mountain biking is less popular across the total population than hiking, in terms of per capita participation rates, use levels on mountain biking trails are higher due to more frequent participation.

This is supported by other recent outdoor recreation studies. The year-over-year outdoor recreation participation rates published annually in the Outdoor Industry Foundation's *Outdoor Recreation Report* notes in the study years 2023-24, mountain bikers, while only 2.9% of the population, went on 13 annual outings, versus day hikers with a greater 15.1% of the population but only six annual outings. While no data in the above-noted analyses are available for participation frequency, the Bureau of Land Management estimated the equestrian population at half of the mountain biking population.

These conditions have increased, not abated, in the decade since the Bureau of Land Management's report was published, leading to even greater demand and to fewer trail miles per mountain biker. The year-over-year outdoor recreation participation rates published annually in the Outdoor Industry Foundation's *Outdoor Recreation Report* notes that mountain biking has increased in popularity in the past several decades (6.89 million riders in 2007 compared to 8.69 million in 2021). Population data from the US Census Bureau show what is obvious to most residents: the population of Oregon, the Willamette Valley, and most local communities have all increased. More mountain bike trails have been developed in the interim, but the number of miles is in the low dozens and therefore insufficient to even hold at bay the gap identified in the ECONorthwest report in 2016.

What is harder to assess for trail activities is latent demand, that is, how often would people recreate if there were more trails closer to home? Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)* shows that lack of nearby trails is a major reason keeping people from being active. The Bureau of Land Management's report notes that trails for all types of users are scarce in the Willamette Valley compared to the rest of the state but that mountain bike trails are "particularly scarce" in the northern part of the valley, where there is an above-average number of riders coupled with the fewest miles of trail per capita.

Polls from communities with abundant mountain biking trails, such as Vancouver, BC, Canada, show that people will go mountain biking four times per week if trails are readily accessible, giving an indication of the latent demand. This does not even include people who do not mountain bike at all because there aren't nearby trails. Especially impacted by the lack of mountain biking trails are children who cannot drive themselves to trail systems outside their communities.

Local Mountain Biker User Profiles

Within the past year, CPRD has engaged in outreach to park users generally and trail users specifically. This has resulted in survey results and comments that help identify local mountain biker subgroups based on user needs and desires. This was augmented by examining Bob and Crystal Rilee Park (BCRP), which was previously available to cyclists, as a baseline for articulating and understanding desired local riding experiences based on trail type, mileage, technical difficulty, and preferred landscapes. Lastly, statewide and nationwide information about riders generated from decades of use rounded out the typical user profiles, allowing for the development of mountain biker personas in the district.

Kids and Teens

According to the Outdoor Industry Association's *2024 Outdoor Participation Trends Report*, bicycling in all its forms is the most popular outdoor physical activity for kids and teenagers. This is no surprise as cycling provides freedom and mobility for youth. While kids and teens love to ride bikes, cycling on the road with vehicles is dangerous, making mountain biking a safer option. This group of mountain bikers needs close-to-home riding, though, because most are prohibited by their age from driving; riding opportunities that can be safely and easily accessed by bike are therefore critical.

At the 2025 CPRD Open House, residents expressed a strong demand for mountain biking opportunities for kids and teens. This is not surprising as nearly 33% of households in Newberg have residents under 18 years old, much higher than the statewide average of 20%. Not only do district residents want riding for kids and teens, but they also want the trails to be approachable with green circle (easiest) and blue square (more difficult) options as detailed in *Appendix A - Mountain Bike Trail*

Difficulty Rating System, having just expert-level trails wouldn't allow kids and teens to fully experience mountain biking and could keep them from even entering the sport.

Families

Mountain biking is a multi-generation activity, with some parents taking their kids on trails as soon as they can scoot bike. Many kids and adults have trail-worthy bikes, and mountain biking combines all the fun of cycling and being outdoors while avoiding busy roadways. Trail systems with varied mileage and difficulty rating are particularly appealing as a family may have kids with varied fitness and skill levels.

In the district, residents indicated that family cycling was one of the most important experiences for them. This is not surprising given the above-noted presence of households with kids and teens. For families, mountain biking is correlated to general outdoor activities such as visiting an open space, riding a bike path to a natural surface trail system, or going to a skate park. Bikes are frequently included with other gear for an enjoyable day at the park.

A desire for more family riding in the district also shows in residents' request for routes that would allow riders to connect home, school, parks and trails, and other destinations. Having these routes, whether on or off the developed transportation network, would allow families to "ride to their ride" and increase the duration of their outing without the need for a motor vehicle.

NICA Riders

Oregon's chapter of the [National Interscholastic Cycling League \(NICA\)](#) provides structured mountain bike training and racing for kids in grades 6 – 12. Per the league's communications, NICA:

- Fills a niche for students whose needs may not met by traditional interscholastic sports
- Gets kids outside
- Welcomes and supports diversity in ability, ethnicity, gender, orientation, and skill level
- Promotes trail-building efforts and environmental awareness
- Improves focus and academic performance in student-athletes
- Promotes health and fitness in teens and their families

NICA riders, while certainly being kids and teens, have different needs based on their involvement in an organized sport rather than casually engaging in mountain biking. NICA riders have a greater need for nearby trail systems that provide a range of difficulty levels, mileage, and vertical relief to accommodate varied fitness goals and cardiovascular training. Ideally, NICA riders would not need to rely on a vehicle to access their riding but their parents' commitment to their sport makes it more likely they will be transported to a trail system.

Even though the major city within the district has an above-average number of households with kids and teens, the in-district population of potential NICA riders is likely not large. However, having no mountain biking opportunities within the district reduces the likelihood that young people will ever consider participating in the NICA league given the barriers that would require them to always travel outside the district to practice.

Furthermore, while the district's facilities, including trails, are primarily for residents they are not exclusively so. Visitors from outside the district are invited to most of CPRD's amenities, just as district residents can visit parks and trails in other jurisdictions. Given the slate of childhood health problems

related to inactivity (e.g., depression, obesity, diabetes), there are clear benefits to having close-to-home opportunities for kids and teens to participate in organized outdoor recreation.

Enthusiasts

At the 2025 CPRD Open House, the desire for having mountain biking opportunities elicited the greatest response. This is expected as mountain biking evokes a dedicated following, with the Outdoor Industry Association's *2024 Outdoor Participation Trends Report* listing it as one of the top five outdoor activities with the highest percentage of core participants. Respondents at the open house desired opportunities for a range of ages from kids to seniors, with enthusiast mountain bikers in the center of that spectrum, typically being adults or at least older teenagers.

Enthusiasts self-identify as mountain bikers separately from other forms of cycling and outside of an organized league. They adapt much of their outdoor life around mountain biking, focusing equally on fitness and technical competence. While they aspire to travel on the weekends to destination-quality trail systems, most riding occurs on local trails, with enthusiasts scheduling rides early in the morning and late in the day to accommodate school, work, and family obligations. This shows through in residents' responses at the open house where they requested routes that would allow them to efficiently connect home with parks and trails, including a strong desire for trails connecting Newberg and Dundee.

Destination Riders

This subset of mountain bikers is willing to travel up to 60 miles (or more) from their home to quality mountain biking, typically on the weekend. Visiting solo, or as part of a family or group, destination riders are relevant for two reasons: they do not pay taxes to support the district, and they stimulate the local economy by purchasing goods and services when they visit. In general, the qualities of a local trail system are insufficient to attract their visitation; however, such amenities as a high-quality bike park would draw outside visitation, much as the way the BMX track and skatepark at Ewing Young Park currently bring in guests from outside the district.

User Profile	Mileage (min.)	Vertical Change (min.)	# of Outings per Month	Difficulty Levels	Landscapes(s)	Infrastructure
Kids and Teens	1.0	No min.	4 - 12	Beginner - Expert	Varied	Trailheads; signs; multiple access points, especially from adjacent neighborhoods, local streets, bike paths, and roadways with bike lanes
Families	3.0	No min.	1 - 2	Beginner - Intermediate	Lightly developed landscapes dominated by a mix of mature conifers and deciduous trees.	Trailheads with parking and restrooms; signs
NICA Riders	3.0	100'	4 - 12	Beginner - Intermediate	Predominately mature coniferous canopy interspersed with upland grassland and deciduous canopy (e.g., oak meadows)	Trailheads with parking and restrooms; signs; multiple access points, especially from adjacent neighborhoods, local streets, bike paths, and roadways with bike lanes
Enthusiasts	6.0	200'	4 - 12	Intermediate - Expert	Predominately mature coniferous canopy interspersed with upland grassland and deciduous canopy (e.g., oak meadows)	Trailheads with parking; signs
Destination Visitors	16.0	500'	3	Intermediate - Expert	Predominately mature coniferous canopy interspersed with upland grassland and deciduous canopy (e.g., oak meadows)	Trailheads with parking and restrooms; signs; directional bike-specific trails

Site Evaluations

In March 2026, C2 visited ten sites with CRPD staff. The site visits were also variously attended by Yamhill County staff, trail users, and staff from Taste Newberg.



Site	Acres (appx)	Park Status	Existing Trails?	Park Infrastructure	Landscapes)	Opportunities for Near-Term MTB Access	Constraints for Near-Term MTB Access
Bob and Crystal Rilee Park (BCRP)	325	Open	Yes; open to pedestrians and equestrians	Parking; trailhead; restrooms	Predominately mature coniferous and deciduous canopy centered around agricultural fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Existing park facilities + Existing trails in a quantity and quality to provide a worthwhile riding experience to a range of visitors + Desirable mix of landscapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access is almost exclusively via personal vehicle, reducing access for some populations (kids, people without cars)
Billias Property	18	Un-developed	None	None	Mature coniferous with riparian area and adjacent agricultural fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Flexibility in trail and infrastructure design given it is currently undeveloped + Large stands of mature conifers are ideal for trail development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site is currently undeveloped and opening it as a park will take several years - Terrain is variously too steep and then too flat (wetlands) for much trail development - Site is not very large and will not accommodate much trail when developed - Site access will be difficult
County Landfill and Baker Properties	TBD	Un-developed	None	None	Open field (capped landfill) and mix of upland and riparian areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Flexibility in trail and infrastructure design given it is currently undeveloped + Trail connection across properties into Rogers Landing + Easy non-motorized access from surrounding neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considerable regulatory, permitting, and tenure/control hurdles to developing site for trail use - No trees can be planted so no canopy can be created, limiting the appeal to a broad range of trail users - Baker property is constrained with wetlands/riparian zones
Dundee Landing	69	Un-developed	None	None	Orchards adjacent to riparian area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Flexibility in trail and infrastructure design given it is currently undeveloped + Non-motorized access is possible from nearby neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site is currently undeveloped and opening it as a park will take several years - Development is limited by flood zone and riparian area

Site	Park Status	Existing Trails?	Park Infrastructure	Landscape(s)	Opportunities for Near-Term MTB Access	Constraints for Near-Term MTB Access
Ewing Young Park	45 Open	Yes; open to pedestrians	Parking; trailhead; restrooms; BMX track; skate park; playground	Mixed mature coniferous and deciduous canopy along riparian corridor; open field; developed park areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Existing trails + Future potential trails when bridge is installed + Supporting bike infrastructure with BMX track and skatepark + Existing park facilities + Good access from adjacent neighborhoods and school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited land available for additional trail development given other uses and programming (e.g., disc golf, overflow parking for BMX events) - Riparian area confounds simple trail expansion
Friends Park	19 Open	Yes; open to pedestrians	Parking; playground; ball court	Mostly open field with deciduous tree canopy along two riparian corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Existing park facilities + Riparian areas connect to potential future non-motorized access corridors (e.g., up to Herbert Hoover Park) + Good access from adjacent neighborhood + Possible connections to Newberg-Dundee Bypass and Wynooski neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited land available for additional trail development given other uses and programming - Much of the site is a riparian area that complicates trail expansion
Herbert Hoover Park	5 Open	Yes; open to pedestrians	Parking (in adjacent streets)	Mature canopy in a narrow riparian corridor surrounded by urban development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Existing park facilities and trails + Riparian areas connect to potential future non-motorized access corridors (e.g., down to Friends Park) + Good access from adjacent neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small site limits amount of trail that can be developed - Limited land available for additional trail development given dynamic nature of riparian area
Hwy 219 Property	91 Un-developed	None	None	Variously mature and emerging uplands and riparian vegetation centered around agricultural fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Large site with a variety of terrain and vegetation + Trail development could occur simultaneously with river access currently being designed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site access off Highway 219 will be difficult and costly - Poor neighborhood and non-motorized access - Trail development may be prohibited by flood zones, riparian area, and reclamation areas
Schaad Park	10 Open	Yes; open to pedestrians	Parking (in adjacent streets); ball court; playground	Mostly open field with pockets of deciduous tree canopy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Existing park facilities and trails + Paved access path climbs hill to softer terrain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small site limits amount of trail that can be developed - Steep terrain on western portion of park
Wilsonville Property	80 Un-developed	None	None	Primarily agricultural fields with a riparian area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Flexibility in trail and infrastructure design given it is currently undeveloped for park use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While the site is large, the area available for trail development is limited by future development and the riparian area - Most area for trail development are flat, open agricultural fields

Near-Term Recommendations

To improve mountain bike access in the near term (12-24 months), the following actions are recommended for two sites:

Ewing Young

#	Recommendation	Timeline (months)	Target Mountain Biker Users
1	Open existing trails to bicycle use; concurrently install signage identifying proper trail etiquette	3	Kids and Teens; Families
2	Improve existing trails to make them easier for kids to ride, particularly on bikes with smaller-diameter wheels and with single speeds	12	Kids and Teens; Families
3	Add a mountain bike skills area in the vicinity of the BMX track/skatepark/playground	24	Kids and Teens; Families
4	Connect BMX track/skatepark/playground with W. Weatherly Way	24	Kids and Teens; Families
5	Once the bridge across Chehalem Creek is installed, develop the newly accessible land with a multi-use (bike/hike) trail network	TBD	Kids and Teens; Families

BCRP

#	Recommendation	Timeline (months)	Target Mountain Biker Users
1	Reopen the majority of the existing trails to bicycle use, particularly those in the vicinity of the main (easterly) trailhead and south of the field; concurrently install signage identifying proper trail etiquette, allowed uses, and recommended direction of travel for cyclists	3	NICA Riders; Enthusiasts
2	Develop a mountain bike trails plan that: improves the visitor experience for pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists; and reduces maintenance costs	12	NICA Riders; Enthusiasts
3	Begin implementing the mountain bike trails plan, including dosing trails, rerouting trails, and building new ones	12 - 24	NICA Riders; Enthusiasts

For both sites, allowing mountain bikes on the trails within three months will quickly meet the needs for a broad spectrum of local riders in all the identified profiles: kids and teens, families, enthusiasts, and NICA riders. With local riders positively engaged, CPRD can work with them to implement volunteer trail management and maintenance for Ewing Young and BCRP, and start the public engagement work necessary for the mid- and long-term recommendations outlined below.

These initial actions will likely be met by resistance from other trail users, especially at BCRP. This passion to preserve current trail experiences is not a negative condition, as it ensures that a range of park users will be involved to refine access opportunities at BCRP during the planning process. With the involvement of equestrians, hikers/walkers, trail runners, mountain bikers, and others, a comprehensive trail plan can be developed that utilizes current best practices to manage multi-use trails to the benefit of many while also reducing maintenance efforts. If the trails are not opened to riders before the plan is enacted, however, experience locally and across the state indicates that opponents of mountain biking will use counterproductive techniques to forestall even the start of the planning process in an effort to curb access for cyclists.






Mid- and Long-Term Recommendations

In general, the other sites reviewed in this report should be developed or redeveloped to include multi-use (bike/hike) trails as the opportunities present themselves. None of the other sites are priorities, however, as they do not provide opportunities that would meet the needs of the target user groups in the near term.

The Highway 219 property should be developed with a comprehensive trail network that includes a trailhead near the entrance as well as trails accessible from the proposed river access location.

The County Landfill, while fraught with constraints, could be developed into a destination-quality bike park that would provide both recreation for residents and enhance family-friendly tourism to Newberg.

Appendix A – Mountain Bike Trail Difficulty Rating System

IMBA Trail Difficulty Rating System					
					
	EASIEST WHITE CIRCLE	EASY GREEN CIRCLE	MORE DIFFICULT BLUE SQUARE	VERY DIFFICULT BLACK DIAMOND	EXTREMELY DIFFICULT DBL. BLACK DIAMOND
TRAIL WIDTH	72" (1,800 mm) or more	36" (900 mm) or more	24" (600 mm) or more	12" (300 mm) or more	6" (150 mm) or more
TREAD SURFACE	Hardened or surfaced	Firm and stable	Mostly stable with some variability	Widely variable	Widely variable and unpredictable
AVERAGE TRAIL GRADE	Less than 5%	5% or less	10% or less	15% or less	20% or more
MAXIMUM TRAIL GRADE	Max 10%	Max 15%	Max 15% or greater	Max 15% or greater	Max 15% or greater
NATURAL OBSTACLES AND TECHNICAL TRAIL FEATURES (TTF)	None	Unavoidable obstacles 2" (50 mm) tall or less Avoidable obstacles may be present Unavoidable bridges 36" (900 mm) or wider	Unavoidable obstacles 8" (200 mm) tall or less Avoidable obstacles may be present Unavoidable bridges 24" (600 mm) or wider TTF's 24" (600 mm) high or less, width of deck is greater than 1/2 the height	Unavoidable obstacles 15" (380 mm) tall or less Avoidable obstacles may be present May include loose rocks Unavoidable bridges 24" (600 mm) or wider TTF's 48" (1,200 mm) high or less, width of deck is less than 1/2 the height Short sections may exceed criteria	Unavoidable obstacles 15" (380 mm) tall or less Avoidable obstacles may be present May include loose rocks Unavoidable bridges 24" (600 mm) or narrower TTF's 48" (1,200 mm) high or greater, width of deck is unpredictable Many sections may exceed criteria

Provided courtesy of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)

Appendix B – Trail Development Resources

Mountain Bike Trail Development Guidelines, IMBA

Guidelines for a Quality Trail Experience, IMBA and the BLM

Managing Mountain Biking, IMBA

Bike Parks - IMBA 's Guide to New School Trails, IMBA