

Meeting Minutes

MOUNTAIN BIKE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MBAC)

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

6:00 – 9:00 PM

CRD Engagement Centre
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

PRESENT:

A. Soraya, H. Prince, H. Rose, D. Cammiade, I. Charles, D. Leong, T. Fenwick, T. Archer, B. von Sacken, C. Plant (ex officio & CRD Board Chair), J. Ellis (Consultant and Chair)

STAFF:

T. Moss, Manager, Visitor Services & Community Engagement; B. Wyman, Recreation Program Coordinator; J. Leahy, Senior Manager Regional Parks; C. Plant (ex officio & CRD Board Chair)

GUESTS:

None

REGRETS:

None

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

2. Approval of Agenda:

Agenda for the September 30, 2020 Mountain Bike Advisory Committee meeting.

MOVED by J. Ellis, SECONDED by B. von Sacken
That the agenda be approved and circulated.

CARRIED

3. Adoption of Minutes:

There are no minutes for this inaugural meeting. Future minutes will be sent to the committee prior to the next meeting.

4. Chair's Remarks:

J. Ellis welcomes all MBAC members and is very pleased to be the guiding consultant for this new committee.

CRD Board Chair Plant welcomes all members of the MBAC and is pleased to be representing the Regional Parks Committee. He will be here to listen and represent the CRD Board's interests.

5. Committee Business:

5.1 Committee Member Introductions --

All members of the MBAC introduced themselves.

Consultant's Role as MBAC Chair --

Justin Ellis is a Senior Associate with RC Strategies; he has been hired as an independent contractor to chair the MBAC meetings and provide recreation planning and management expertise to the MBAC.

5.2 COVID-19 Health & Safety Protocols Review –

MBAC meetings will follow the MBAC COVID-19 Safety Plan. The plan was reviewed and confirmed with all members. The plan will be reviewed from time to time as concerns are raised of public health direction changes.

5.3 Review MBAC Terms of Reference & Advice Process:

The Chair reviewed the MBAC's [Terms of Reference](#) as approved by the Board with emphasis on the committee's purpose and scope.

Duration:

MBAC will endure until the mountain biking guidelines are approved by the CRD Board.

5.4 Committee Protocols & Decision Making:

Process for Generating Advice & Guidance –

- 1) Discussions and input will be generated from prioritized questions;
- 2) MBAC Chair will draft the preliminary advice based on MBAC input;
- 3) MBAC will review and edit the input via online survey and meetings;
- 4) MBAC Chair will compile final **“Advice & Guidance Report”**, to be formally endorsed by MBAC;
- 5) MBAC Chair will submit Advice & Guidance Report to CRD staff;
- 6) CRD staff will draft Guidelines;
- 7) CRD staff will submit draft Guidelines to MBAC for review.
- 8) MBAC will review draft Guidelines and provide input to CRD staff
- 9) CRD staff will submit final Draft Guidelines to CRD Parks Committee with MBAC Advice & Guidance Report.

Key Procedures:

The MBAC will be guided by the CRD board procedures bylaw but structured to function with the working nature and anticipated culture of this committee.

Minutes will be posted publicly on the [CRD website](#).

BREAK

5.5 Regional Parks Overview:

Presentation by Jeff Leahy, Senior Manager, CRD Regional Parks on CRD's [Regional Parks Strategic Plan: 2012 - 2021](#)

5.6 Introduction to Mountain Biking:

Presentation by Justin Ellis, MBAC Chair

The Chair was asked to obtain available research and statistics on visitor patterns in CRD Regional Parks as well as recreation demands in the CRD.

ACTION ITEM: T. Moss will provide URLs for research for next meeting.

6. MBAC's Advice & Guidance:

6.1 MBAC's Focus Questions (survey results, discussion & confirmation of topics) --

MBAC members completed an online survey in advance of the meeting to generate insights on priority topics or questions that MBAC felt were important to provide advice and guidance on. Eight of the ten MBAC members participated in the survey. The committee worked through the potential topics and confirmed which topics they will focus on, which will be put in the parking lot to address if there is time and which the committee will not focus on. Chair Ellis raised that a number of topics that scored low are important topics that should be addressed by the committee.

There was a concern that *all* the ideas listed seemed important, so it was difficult to choose. Chair Ellis acknowledged the challenge with prioritization but reaffirmed the need to prioritize and focus the MBAC's conversations on those topics that are most essential to provide advice on. Chair Ellis estimated that the committee could likely address 6 – 9 topics in the time currently available to MBAC.

FOCUS (MBAC will tackle these questions)

- How can mountain biking be effectively integrated with other approved recreational uses of regional parks in order to minimize impact to the

environment as well as social impacts? (69) / How can mountain biking and mountain bike trails be managed to avoid/minimize impacts on the experience of other visitors? (46)

- How can mountain biking and mountain bike trails be managed to avoid/minimize impacts to ecological, indigenous, and cultural heritage values in regional parks? (65)
- Rogue, or unauthorized trail building, is on the rise in regional parks. What promising practices can be implemented to avoid or limit unauthorized trail building? (52)
- Recognizing that “mountain biking” is a diverse recreational activity, what are the different segments of mountain bikers and their expectations in terms of trail experiences, trail length and size of riding area, amenities, and infrastructure? And, what type of mountain bike experiences do riders expect in regional parks? (28) *The committee asked that the above topic be reframed to focus on what types of mountain biking experiences are in short supply in the CRD and are most needed and appropriate to be provided in regional parks.*
- The popularity of e-MTB (electric mountain bikes) continues to grow. Are e-MTBs appropriate in regional parks, what class, and how should they be managed? (31)

PARKING LOT (If MBAC has time)

- How should mountain bike trails and mountain biking be monitored in regional parks? (39)
- What research should be undertaken to understand mountain biking (e.g., visitation, origins, satisfaction, impacts) in regional parks? (38)
- How can risks/impacts to personal and public safety from mountain biking be managed in regional parks? (28)
- Should, and if so, how should, commercial mountain biking businesses be managed and promoted in regional parks? (24)
- Should, and if so, how should, mountain-bike-based special events (e.g., races), group rides, etc., be managed and promoted in regional parks? (23)

NOT A PRIORITY

- How can the trail planning process ensure that mountain biking does not create undesirable environmental and cultural impacts and conflicts? (28)
- What are the most significant challenges associated with mountain biking in regional parks, and CRD’s ability to achieve their environmental and cultural

- heritage (e.g., for archaeological sites and First Nations village sites) protection mandate? (28)
- Moving forward, of the total amount of approved mountain bike trails in regional parks, generally what proportion should be allocated to each mountain bike experience type? (10)
- What are the benefits of mountain biking in regional parks? (15) [J. Ellis to draft a context section on this topic in the Advice & Guidance Report]
- What are the most **significant future trends** in mountain biking that CRD Regional Parks needs to consider as it develops the Mountain Biking Guidelines? How should CRD plan for addressing these trends? (22) [J. Ellis to draft a context section on this topic in the Advice & Guidance Report]
- How is mountain biking and its varying disciplines defined? (15) [J. Ellis to draft a context section on this topic in the Advice & Guidance Report]
- What type of trail configurations (e.g., linear, loop, stacked loop, maze, etc.) are most desirable for mountain bikers by discipline? And, what practices can be implemented to determine an appropriate density of mountain bike trails at a park level? (15)
- What are the characteristics of a high-quality, safe and sustainable mountain bike trail and experience? (25)
- There are many benefits to a mountain bike trail classification system. The system can create consistency in how mountain bike trails are described and understood between the mountain bike community, CRD, trail designers and other visitors. The classification system allows the accurate and consistent communication of essential information about the trail to allow visitors to self-select the appropriate trail. Should, and if so, how should, mountain bike trails and mountain bike experiences be classified in regional parks? (17)

CHAIR'S THOUGHTS (Need further consideration)

- Currently, mountain biking opportunities are delivered through a system of different lands and providers (e.g., BC Parks, private lands, regional parks, municipal parks). The system should work together and be planned to ensure the diversity of desired mountain biking experiences can be met. Thinking about the mandate of CRD Regional Parks, **what role does CRD Regional Parks currently play in meeting residents' mountain biking needs and what role should it play moving forward?** (28)
- What are the **criteria that should be used to determine when and which existing trails (e.g., multi-use trails) are appropriate to permit mountain biking** and which will provide a desired mountain biking experience? And, what

- activities tend to be more compatible with mountain biking and what management actions are required to increase compatibility? (27)
- Planning, design, construction, monitoring and management of mountain bike trails in regional parks can happen in a number of ways. ***What is the preferred***
- ***service delivery model for the planning, design, construction, management and monitoring of mountain bike trails and mountain bike use in regional parks (direct, indirect, enablement)?*** How can relationships between CRD Regional Parks and the riding community be strengthened and data and information-sharing be enhanced? (25)
- Thinking about the design of mountain bike trails in regional parks, are there any ***existing design guidelines manuals or documents that should be adopted and implemented by the CRD to guide the design of mountain bike trails and related trail infrastructure*** (e.g., Technical Trail Features) and signage? (26)
- Recognizing the range of most mountain bike segments and their expectations, ***what types of mountain bike experiences are most appropriate to provide/enable in regional parks?*** And thinking about park management planning at an individual park scale, ***what are the criteria that should be used to determine/evaluate where mountain bike areas should be developed and for which mountain bike experiences*** (i.e., number of hectares, elevation/topography/slope, trail distances, variety of route options, and mix of styles and levels of difficulty?) (21)

OTHER TOPICS RAISED (but not to be addressed)

- Who maintains and clears trails? CRD or volunteer organizations. How is this contract developed? How is training provided?
- How will CRD provide the amount of mountain bike trail opportunities (design, build, maintain) needed by our region?
- I hope the committee to have plenty of space for the discussion focused around the benefits that MTB brings to the region. I'm concerned that Question 5 in particular seems to focus on challenges without consideration for how to promote the many positives of welcoming MTB in regional parks. As I write this, I am realizing that the many benefits of the sport (physical & mental health, love of nature/environmental stewardship, community involvement, to name a few) should be addressed as an additional fundamental topic. I'm concerned that there are some persistent misconceptions and biases against the mountain bike community, but optimistic that this committee can serve to find the common interests between all the stakeholders involved.

- In consideration of CRD's mandate to protect environment and current park classification systems, should existing trails and [their] use be reconsidered [in] where there are sensitive, rare or endangered ecosystems, plants or animals (e.g., Nighthawk nesting sites on Mt. Quimper)
- It was very difficult to prioritize the questions in the survey, as I find them all very important and necessary to a robust and multi-faceted management plan. It would be worth considering, when we approach the end of this committee's objective, the creation of a standing committee that provides feedback and suggestions about the management plan on an ongoing basis.
- Other regional districts have implemented mountain biking plans in parks with varying rates of success; what qualities of these plans have created successes or failures? Which mountain bike societies/communities are active within CRD Parks, are they involved in this discussion, and if not, at what stage will they be consulted with? Which CRD Parks currently see the most and least mountain bike use and does that correlate with ecological sensitivity (e.g., are sensitive species/ecosystems avoided)? What is/will be the CRD's strategy for preventing, restoring and otherwise mitigating unauthorized trail building?
- What models adopted in other similar park systems (Canada/US) have implemented a successful balance among concerns of mountain bikers, hikers, and conservationists?

Some additional points raised by the committee:

- It was proposed that the MBAC Advice and Guidance should ask that the CRD review the guidelines every five years, as the nature of mountain biking is quickly changing and there are always new park areas being acquired.
- Are there any types of mountain biking that would not be included? E.g., in terms of big jumps, how will factors such as risk and liability, and environmental impact be addressed?
- The MBAC indicated that, for those items left in the Parking Lot, the committee could request that CRD staff address these questions in the draft guidelines document if the committee does not have time to address.
- **Chair's Thoughts** -- The MBAC Chair will email them to the group for review before the meeting.

7. Next Meeting:

The next MBAC meeting will be October 7, 2020.

8. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.