

Meeting Notes

MOUNTAIN BIKE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MBAC)

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

6:00 – 8:30 PM

online, via zoom

PRESENT:

D. Cammiade, I. Charles, T. Fenwick, D. Leong, H. Prince, A. Soraya, J. Ellis (Consultant and Chair), C. Plant (ex officio & CRD Board Chair), E. Sterling (Recorder)

STAFF:

T. Moss, Manager, Visitor Services & Community Engagement; J. Leahy, Senior Manager Regional Parks; B. Wyman, Recreation Program Coordinator

GUESTS:

None

REGRETS:

T. Archer, H. Rose, B. von Sacken

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

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

2. Approval of Agenda:

Agenda for the February 16, 2021 Mountain Bike Advisory Committee meeting.

**MOVED by J. Ellis, SECONDED by C. Plant
That the agenda be approved as circulated.**

CARRIED

3. Adoption of Minutes:

Minutes for the December 2, 2020 Mountain Bike Advisory Committee meeting.

**MOVED by C. Plant, SECONDED by H. Prince
That the minutes be approved as circulated.**

4. Chair's Remarks:

Chair Ellis welcomed the committee back after the holiday break, and thanked those unable to be here tonight for sending their input through email. The purpose of this meeting is to review the draft guidelines provided by staff, using three questions as a framework. Chair Ellis will collect the committee's input and submit back to staff in a memo.

5. Committee Business

Minutes from December 4, 2020 meeting will be sent to B. Wyman to be posted to the CRD MBAC website.

6. MBAC Advice & Guidance

6.1 CRD Park Staff presentation of the Draft Mountain Bike Guidelines

J. Leahy, T. Moss, and B. Wyman all thanked the committee for their hard work and the breadth of excellent advice that was submitted. T. Moss noted that not all of that advice could fit into the guidelines document. B. Wyman explained that a small working group of planners, social scientists and staff met every week or two to work on the draft guidelines document. There was no standard in place for regional parks guidelines, so they looked at other jurisdictions and set principles for their work. The guidelines document is not a decision-making document in itself, but it supports other decision-making processes.

6.1.a. Non-content questions for staff

T. Fenwick asked if the CRD would consider making the MBAC document available to the public. T. Moss responded that when the guidelines go to committee, the work of MBAC will come as an attachment and will become part of the public record. T. Fenwick asked if the CRD would consider making the MBAC document a “front facing” document, and J. Leahy committed to take that under consideration.

6.2 MBAC feedback on the Draft Mountain Bike Guidelines

Chair Ellis had suggested using three questions as a framework for discussion. Beginning with Question 1, the committee reviewed input submitted by email, and then individually made suggestions for the group to discuss. The following are the suggestions the group agreed to by consensus.

What, if any, guidelines need to be edited and how?

1. Glossary

- Remove the reference to “smooth” from the “Flow Trail” definition. Smooth is not a requirement of a flow trail and its inclusion can present inappropriate expectations about trail design and characteristics for staff.
- The term “sustainable service delivery” is used throughout the guidelines but is not defined. This term should be clearly defined.
- Adjust the term “preferred-use” to “activity-optimized” and apply consistently throughout the document.
- The term “self-propelled” should be defined and used to clarify

CRD Parks position on e-bikes and what e-bike classes are considered a non-motorized recreational activity. The MBAC recognizes that this may require additional policy work and encourages the CRD to recognize that the classifications of e-bikes applied in other jurisdictions can allow the CRD to separate and distinguish between permitted uses on regional trails versus other trails within Regional Parks.

- The term “special use event” (pg 14) should be clearly defined in the glossary.

2. Context

- Figure 1 needs to be reviewed and revised to more accurately depict the actual mountain bike optimized trail lengths and exclude the multi-use trails that permit cycling but do not provide a desired mountain bike experience (e.g. old roads). The length of green trails likely accounts for roads. In addition, this table should include the total lengths of trail to bring context to the percentages.

3. Purpose

- The last paragraph of purpose should be amended to read: These guidelines are to be implemented “in collaboration with stakeholders and license agreement holders” and in a manner consistent with...

4. Principles

- A new principle should be included, or an existing principle should be edited, to address the need to achieve a better balance between the current supply of mountain bike optimized trail experiences with the current demands. The MBAC advice spoke clearly to the need to better align supply and demand and which disciplines and difficulty levels are most needed to improve this alignment.
- A new principle should be added to address the need to plan and manage all recreational activities, including mountain biking, in a way that prevents or minimizes the potential for conflicts and safety risks of mountain biking on other recreational activities and of other recreational activities on mountain biking.
- Revise bullet #3 to remove “cannot” and replace with “may not” be supported within all Regional Parks.
- Bullet #7 should clarify that this applies to unsanctioned trails that are not part of a designated system and to which management plans identify they should be closed.
- The CRD is encouraged to add a principle that recognizes the importance of regular monitoring to informed management

decision making.

- As indicated in the Glossary comments above, use of the term self-propelled, without a clear definition, can lead to confusion and misinterpretation. The term needs to be clearly defined and should address which classes of e-bikes are deemed to be considered non-motorized (traditionally self-propelled) and which are not.
- There is opportunity to include volunteer trail builders and mountain bike clubs in the training.

5. Disciplines

- Reconsider the current definition of “downhill” mountain biking. This definition is not accurate as the aim of downhill riding is not, necessarily, to “get riders straight down the mountain as fast as possible”. The mountain bike clubs on the MBAC would be happy to work with CRD staff on preparing a definition.

6. Trail Designations

- The MBAC is pleased to see the general trail designations proposed were adopted. However, this section requires a contextual paragraph that explicitly identifies how staff are to apply these designations.
- As indicated in the glossary comments above, change the term “preferred-use” to “activity optimized” to remove potential for misinterpretation of visitors or unintentional suggestion that a particular trail may not permit a particular activity.
- For clarity, change the term “user” to “activity” to be more accurate.
- For clarity, change the term “advantages” to “characteristics”.

7. Technical Trail Features

- Amend the content to acknowledge that Technical Trail Features support the delivery of trail user objectives.
- Bridges should be considered and permitted more regularly than other constructed TTFs. Consider including bridges as an “enhanced” TTF or acknowledging that bridges, for the purposes of meeting user objectives, will be considered more often than other constructed features.

8. Risk Management

- This section should be clear on what type of risks it is focused on. Most of the section appears to focus on visitor safety and liability with passing reference to environmental risks and risk management. If environmental risks are intended to be included in this section (e.g., bullet 2), the guidelines should ensure that the environmental risks of unauthorized trails are more fully

recognized and characterized in this section.

- Active monitoring and site inspections should be included as mitigation measures (e.g., actively monitoring for unauthorized trail construction).
- This section should acknowledge that the application of inappropriate closure techniques on unauthorized trails and lack of proactive communications and information are risk factors. The closure of unauthorized trails must be well thought through, appropriately undertaken, and proactively communicated to minimize risk and liability and improve visitor safety.
- This section must reference and recognize that appropriate trail design, the use of “filters”, and the preparation and documentation of Trail Management Objectives are important risk mitigation measures.

9. Assessment Criteria

- The current section on “Planning and Land Acquisition” does not indicate that “mountain biking potential” will be included as a land acquisition criteria factor and should be. Or land acquisition should be removed from the heading as the section does not really address acquisition priorities.

10. Decision Making Considerations

- Paragraph 2 on page 14 should be edited to read as follows: ...it also needs to balance the demands of other recreational users, “park values of regional sustainability and environmental protection”, and previous commitments”...

11. Appendix 1: Map of Mountain Biking Offer in the Capital Region

- As the map is currently presented, it is misleading and adds confusion to the supply of sanctioned mountain bike optimized opportunities in the CRD. This map should be removed or be updated to:
 - Reflect the jurisdiction of the CRD,
 - Accurately communicate the nature of the “bike opportunity” (e.g., mountain bike optimized trails, multi-use trails that permit cycling, BMX track),
 - Only communicate sanctioned networks.

12. Appendix 4: Assessment Checklist

- Greater clarity and instruction as to how the Assessment Checklist will be applied is needed in order to ensure understanding and consistency in its application. As it is

currently presented, it is unclear how the answers to the questions will be weighted or used to inform decision making and without this approach, the checklist can lead to potentially inconsistent decision making. The use of filters should be considered and applied to signal “must achieve” responses to the questions in order for a proposal to proceed to further screening.

- It needs to be recognized that management plans are dated and new science is now available about the impacts of mountain biking on environmental and other values which was not available when most existing management plans were prepared. Staff should consider including or rephrasing the following question “Is mountain biking consistent with the park management plan” to “is the proposed mountain biking discipline and trail / trail network consistent with the management intent of the park management zones it is proposed to occur in”. This will enable the use of the Matrix in Appendix 5 to allow park managers to make decisions where a management plan does not expressly prohibit or permit mountain biking.

13. Appendix 5: Mountain Bike Park Zoning Matrix

- Two members of the committee wanted the Environmental Protection Zone column changed to red to prohibit all disciplines and trail network densities. J. Leahy pointed out that yellow (may be permitted) allows a proposal to go through an environmental impact assessment. Most members indicated that the table as presented represented a cautious and balanced approach to mountain biking in the various park management zones. Chair Ellis will contact T. Archer and B. von Sacken to see if they want to put forward the suggestion without consensus.
- Supporting comfort and convenience amenities are important elements of mountain biking. The CRD is to include amenities in this table to improve clarity on what zones amenities are deemed permitted, not permitted, or might be considered.

The 8 pm order of the day was nearing, and a proposal was made to extend it.

MOVED by C. Plant, seconded by A. Soraya that the meeting be extended by 30 minutes, and any additional input not yet reviewed should be submitted to Chair Ellis after the meeting. CARRIED.

What, if any, guidelines should be removed and why?

MBAC members did not feel any of the guidelines should be removed.

What was not included but should be?

1. Acknowledge Volunteers & Confirm Service Delivery

- The MBAC's advice report identified the need to articulate a clear service delivery model for the delivery of mountain biking in Regional Parks. It recommended that the CRD acknowledge and identify the mountain bike clubs would take the lead on, or at least be actively involved in, trail design, construction, and maintenance. To provide clarity and enhance consistency across the regional parks system, this or another section of the guidelines should clarify the CRD's preferred service delivery model for the construction of new, upgrades to existing and maintenance on mountain bike optimized trails in regional parks. This section should be revised to recognize, showcase, and articulate the role volunteer mountain bike clubs and other organizations have and will play as a model for delivery of mountain bike optimized trails in addition to current staff capacity. The guidelines should recognize volunteerism is an asset and a tremendous value and should acknowledge that this service delivery model will augment, not replace, current staffing.

2. Management Actions

- The MBAC advice and guidance report identified a range of indirect and direct management actions, such as enforcement, that need to be actively implemented in order to effectively manage recreation including mountain biking. In addition, outlining guidelines that address the approval and creation of mountain bike optimized trails, the guidelines should also acknowledge the need to proactively apply a comprehensive suite of visitor management actions.

3. Review Period

- The guidelines should contain a commitment to review and set a review period. The MBAC has encouraged that the guidelines, as they are new, be reviewed more often during the early period of implementation to ensure appropriate opportunity for learning and refinements.

In addition to the advice and guidance above, the MBAC also recommended that the CRD publicly release and promote the MBAC's *Mountain Bike Guidelines: Advice & Guidance to CRD Regional Parks* report as it contains important context, research and management ideas that are helpful for creating a common understanding between stakeholders and recreational groups across region as a whole. The MBAC understands that the report will be provided to the CRD Board as part of a staff report package but encourages the CRD to make this document

available in a more obvious way for public use.

The MBAC acknowledged that the guidelines will predominantly be used during park management planning and ensuing implementation; however, public expectation has built around this process and there is an expectation that CRD Parks will move forward on some quick wins outside of the management planning review and updates processes.

Chair Ellis asked the committee members if they were comfortable with him creating a memo based on the meeting discussion, and submitting it to CRD Staff without first bringing it back to them for review. The consensus was that no one was opposed to this. Chair Ellis asked for additional items to be emailed to him within the next day or two.

**MOVED by C. Plant, seconded by H. Prince
that MBAC direct J. Ellis to submit a memo on their behalf that is reflective of
tonight's discussion. Any additional items to be considered will be received,
and if not wildly in disagreement with items already decided upon or the
MBAC advice and guidance report, J. Ellis can include them.
CARRIED**

7. Next Meeting

There are no further meetings planned at this point.

8. Adjournment:

**MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm by C. Plant; seconded by D. Leon.
CARRIED**