

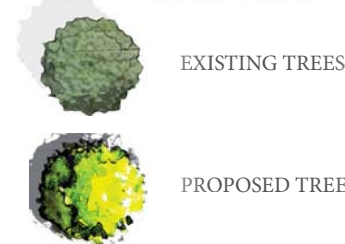
SYRINGA PARK, BIKE SKILLS PARK

MASTER PLAN ADOPTED 10-2016

Parks & Recreation
City of Missoula • 600 Cregg Lane • 721-PARK



Parks, Trails & Open Lands
MISSOULA COUNTY





MISSOULA PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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PARKS • RECREATION • URBAN FORESTRY • CONSERVATION LANDS • TRAILS

Syringa Bike Skills Park Master Plan Narrative

Adopted October 2016, Missoula Parks and Recreation Board

Park Overview

Syringa Park is a County-owned 2.05 acre park located in the upper Rattlesnake neighborhood located at 1465 Lower Lincoln Hills Dr., across from the MCPS Hellgate High soccer and softball complex. The park was dedicated to the County as public parkland in 1973 with development of the Syringa Addition Subdivision. In 1989, the City of Missoula annexed this area into the City, including the park. While Syringa Park is within City limits, the County currently manages the park in partnership with the 'Friends of Syringa Park' as an undeveloped neighborhood park.

The 2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area (MPP) calls for the transfer of County parklands within the City limits to the City. Missoula Parks and Recreation has requested that each park transferred from the County to the City, per the MPP, include a public supported and adopted park master plan. This process assures both City and County elected officials, as well as residents, an expected level of service and park use.

Several years ago, area neighbors organized 'Friends of Syringa Park' a neighborhood group who coordinates with the County Parks, Trails & Open Lands Program and the Missoula Weed District to develop and implement an integrated vegetation management plan for Syringa. The goal of the vegetation management plan is to reduce noxious weeds in the park, and encourage drought tolerant native grasses to flourish in the non-irrigated park. Each year, since initial efforts, 'Friends of Syringa Park' coordinates neighborhood weed pulls to control the spread of Spotted Knapweed and other noxious weeds in the park. At the request of the 'Friends of Syringa Park' in 2014, the park was not mowed in an effort to promote drought tolerant grasses. Today, neighborhood residents refer to Syringa Park as the 'Deer Park' where whitetail deer and fawns frequent late spring to early summer.

Why A Bike Skills Park in Syringa Park

The Rattlesnake Neighborhood is surrounded by open space including Mount Jumbo; North Hills; and the Rattlesnake Recreation Area. Within the Rattlesnake valley, residents have a 15 minute or less walk/bike commute to a diverse range of public parks: Gregory; Greenough; Bugbee Nature Preserve; Tom Green; Pineview; Duncan/Mountain View playing fields; Hellgate HS playing fields; Lincolnwood Neighborhood Parks (Heritage, plus north, east and west) the Power Park Trailhead and corridor; and Syringa Park.

There are three schools in the greater Rattlesnake Neighborhood: Rattlesnake Elementary (public); Clark Fork School (private) and Missoula International School (private.) Both Rattlesnake Elementary and Missoula International School have large open spaces and playgrounds that also serve as neighborhood parks.

Because of the high level of service for parks, open space and trails in the Rattlesnake Neighborhood, it is helpful to consider what unique recreational opportunity Syringa Park could provide Missoula residents.

With the extensive network of open space in and around the Rattlesnake Corridor, management of wildlife and habitat is important.

Development of Syringa Park as a bike skills park will support ongoing City efforts to remove unauthorized bike parks from Mount Jumbo Open Space. In addition, the unauthorized bike park was previously located within a black bear corridor of significance, identified by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Master Plan Design Process

Through an extensive and transparent public master planning process, several guiding principles and values were identified through a series of public meetings that involved: A core leadership team, local residents, both the upper and lower Rattlesnake neighborhoods, and the “Friends of Syringa Park.” The values and principles below guided the planning process.

- Vegetation management plan
 - Preserve existing native / desirable vegetation
 - Utilize Class I trees to mitigate view shed obstruction
- A pavilion/shade structure with picnic tables and benches
- No parking in the park
- Utilize existing park entrance for service vehicle access
- Preserve dark skies (minimal lighting is ok for security on tool shed or restroom, lights shall be motion activated)
- A little something for all / progressive bike skill features
- Water / restroom services
- Bike accessibility
- Bike maintenance area
- Dynamic park
- A place for cyclists to have a space of their own
- Low maintenance / sustainable / natural
- Year round use
- Pump track and dirt jumps

Master Park Plan

A bike skills park is a dedicated recreation area that includes bike trails, jumps and progressive skill features for all ages and skill levels. Generally, a bike park’s natural vegetation and terrain is left in place to minimize impacts on the environment and the neighborhood. Citizen interest in bike skill parks has risen substantially in the last decade, and bike parks offer children and adults a fun way to play outside and stay active.

Syringa Park is designed to provide local riders of all ages and skills levels with a dynamic, progressive bike skills park aimed at youth ages 5-17, designed specifically for practicing and developing bike skills in a safe and managed environment. Missoula Parks and Recreation in collaboration with Missoula County Parks, Trails & Open Lands, have been working with the community toward an adopted master plan since November 2015.

An International Mountain Bicycle Association (IMBA) consultant has been involved in the process to help design high-quality bike skills amenities within a neighborhood park setting. IMBA is a leader in bike park development with experience from projects around the world.

To extend bike park longevity and reduce ongoing track maintenance, pre-fabricated concrete jump lips and an engineered track soil cap is recommended in bike park construction. The suggested cap depth is 10"-12". A thicker cap helps retain moisture longer and withstands heavier wear patterns.

- **Park Entrance**

Syringa Bike Park will welcome riders and spectators with three access points off the east/west pedestrian path on the south side of Lower Lincoln Hills Drive. The primary park entrance will welcome visitors with a pavilion/shade shelter, drinking fountain, bicycle work station and park signage of rules, maps and safety guidelines. The park entrance/common area is intended to be a comfortable and central gathering space for all park users.

Park signage, mutt-mitt stations and trash receptacles will be placed at park entrances and bike skill features. Picnic tables will be supplied on site under the shade shelter, and be allowed to be moved to best meet user needs.

The park is designed so the easiest features are closest to the main entrance with more challenging features further away. A progressive site layout allows rides to progress through the park, with easy-to-access beginner features and moving outward toward more challenging features.

- **Park Restroom Services**

Multiple neighborhood residents have requested information on the feasibility of a shared use agreement with Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) to use the Hellgate HS playing fields existing restroom across from Syringa Park.

A variety of restroom facilities including flush toilets and eco-friendly style toilets will be considered if the need for an onsite restroom is determined. Probable project costs for a range of restrooms from a vault toilet to a standard flush restroom are:

- Vault – \$35,000
 - For sites with road access, but without running water. Waste is held in an underground vault or tank.
- Green Flush – \$50,000
 - Does not require municipal sewer or water hookups to function. Uses solar power or a traditional power source, internal water source and extreme water conservation techniques to provide a clean, environmentally friendly user experience.
- Standard Flush – \$80,000
 - Requires municipal sewer and water hookups.

At the October 2016 Missoula Parks and Recreation Board meeting, the Board approved to support a flush restroom if sufficient funds were raised for the restroom and installation. The Board directed staff to identify the most sustainable restroom available with the most efficient operating costs.

- **Beginner Pump Track**

South of the pavilion/shade shelter is the kids' pump track with clear and open sight lines to supervise children while still being allowed to engage in unstructured imaginative play. A pump track is designed as a continuous loop to allow cyclists of all skill levels to learn and advance their riding skills. Pump tracks are generally directional allowing users to "roll" through the rollers, berms and features. Riding a pump track is a high aerobic activity, learning to use gravity and the efficiency of a bike to get around the track with minimal pedal strokes.

- **Advanced Pump Park**

The proposed advanced pump park in the northwest corner is identified as a future project based on need. Park staff recommends the northwest park corner be preserved as a native prairie to best support neighborhood park values and interests. Staff recognizes that Syringa is a neighborhood park and advanced, larger features would best fit in a community or regional park setting.

Staff explored the feasibility of adding an advanced feature to the intermediate pump track. It is not best practice in bike park design to integrate mixed skill levels into one feature.

- **Progressive Jump Line**

Park users seeking an opportunity to practice jumping in a low consequence environment will benefit from the progressive jump zone. The jump zone includes beginner to advanced progression-oriented jumps, with a mix of dirt jumps, berms and 'slopestyle features'.

The start hill will be constructed from a 20' x 8' x 8' shipping container with a rooftop deck and rail system to a finish height of ~10' with a 45% drop in slope optimized for generating speed. The shipping container will also serve as a bike maintenance area and storage for park maintenance tools.

The progression jump zone is designed for both mountain bike and BMX riders of all skill levels. The beginner jump line on the south offers opportunities for shorter tabletops that could be jumped or rolled over. The intermediate and advanced jump lines to the north will provide non-linear, varied experiences with berms, tabletops and hip jumps with varied options/routes to enhance user experience.

- **Combined Single Track Skills Trail and Walking Trail**

The combined single track skills loop and walking trail is a 5' wide shared use perimeter path that is offset 15' from the east, west and southern property boundary. The offset helps insure privacy and security of adjacent property owners. Two feet of the path is dedicated to bike circulation patterns in a clockwise direction, providing a ~1,400' long bike skills loop. An adjacent three foot outer path focused on pedestrian use combined with the northern access path provides a ~1,600' (just over a quarter mile) walking loop for non-bike enthusiasts.

Optional lines with prefab features are incorporated along the inside track offering progressive skill development. Proposed bike skill features include rock gardens, rock drops and ladder bridge features that challenge riders to navigate obstacles in the trail by riding over or around them.

- **Park Perimeter Path**

Park perimeter walking paths are among the top park elements Missoula residents request in their parks. Due to the shallow park depth and proximity to park neighbors, a separate perimeter path is not supported by a majority of park neighbors. In the development of a future perimeter path (proposed centerline identified on the master plan) based on need and community support, the 15' setback shall be utilized for path construction and enhanced park screening. To maintain Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles, vegetation screens are encouraged over privacy fencing on the west, south and east boundaries of the park to preserve natural park surveillance, encouraging park safety.

- **Park Vegetation and Screening**

Prior to further master plan development and construction, all current residents bordering the park on the west, south and east shall be contacted to determine their preferred level of vegetation screening. Homeowners will be encouraged to participate in field placement of vegetation for screening purposes along their property. It is recommended and encouraged that class I trees be specified within the park and limited in use. No new trees are requested within 30' of the southern property line between the park and private residents to preserve the northern view shed. Class II and class III trees are discouraged for park trees. Homeowners will be encouraged to participate in field placement of all new park trees at the time of installation.

An effort to protect existing park trees during park/trail construction is encouraged. Management of existing and future vegetation in the park will be guided by the Conservation Lands Management plan in conjunction with the City Urban Forester.

- **Park Hours**

City Conservation Park hours are from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Several park neighbors have requested a reduction in park hours. Park staff recommends Syringa Park hours be adjusted to ½ hour before sunrise and ½ hour after sunset and no later than 10 p.m. For example, June 21, the summer solstice, sunrise is 5:52 a.m. and sunset is 9:34 p.m. Park hours would be 5:22 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

- **Additional Considerations**

Syringa Park is located within the bear buffer zone as per municipal code: Chapter 8.28, Garbage and Rubbish. Any garbage bin or recycle bin will need to meet standards for a bear proof trash/recycling container.

A 35 gpm well is identified to supply water and irrigation for the site. Wooded trees and shrubs shall be watered by a drip irrigation system. An east/west mainline is recommended to bisect the park with north/south laterals with quick couplers to provide a water source for track maintenance and park vegetation that is not drip irrigated.

There is one instance of park encroachment by an adjacent property owner that was resolved in October 2016, and field verified by County Parks, Trails & Open Land staff.

Funding

Funding is not currently available for full plan implementation. The master park plan provides a basis for possible funding allocations from various sources, including City impact fees, federal Land and Water Conservation Funds, state Recreation Trails Program and the City’s Capital Improvement Program. Parks and Recreation continues to pursue government funding sources.

In addition, the department supports the fundraising efforts of the I Ride for Tanner Foundation. To date, nearly \$100,000 has been privately raised for the bike skills components of the project. When the balance has been secured through grants, private donations and other funding sources, Parks and Recreation can proceed with final design, bidding and then construction. If fundraising is successful, the design/build process could start as early as Fall, 2017.

Projected costs for park build-out with restroom facility options

On-site Restroom Option	Vault \$35,000	Green Flush \$50,000	Standard Flush \$80,000
Mobilization & Fees	\$29,317	\$30,817	\$33,817
Contingency	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Construction Cost	\$238,169	\$238,169	\$238,169
Total Projected Cost	\$322,486	\$338,986	\$371,986

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