



RPT 20-403

TITLE: Little Red Mountain Bike Skills Park Overview

DATE: September 17, 2020

TO: Executive Committee

PUBLIC: X

INCAMERA:

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the Maintenance and Operating Agreement for the Bike Skills Park once prepared by Administration on behalf of the City of Prince Albert.

TOPIC & PURPOSE:

To provide Council with additional information on the Mountain Bike Skills Park proposed for Little Red River Park.

BACKGROUND:

Community Services received correspondence from the Rock N Road Cycling Club early in 2020 with a proposal to build a natural Bike Skills Park within Little Red River Park.

The Rock N Road Cycling Club is a Prince Albert and area cycling club for all ages and skills. They exist to promote and enjoy the sport of cycling in a fun group setting and to be rewarded with great friends, health, and a safe cycling environment.

As avid users of Little Red River Park they are also active in trail maintenance and preservation of the trails and also are supportive of events within the park that help raise awareness and proceeds dedicated to making improvements in the park.

The Club has identified an opportunity within the park to provide additional bike skills training in a natural setting noting the different levels of difficulty that are provided on the over 24 KM of biking trail within the park. Rock N Road Club representative provided a brief summary of the Bike Skills Park in a presentation at Executive Committee Executive August 10.

As part of that presentation the resolution was referred to the Community Services Department for review and report.

5.4 Request to Propose the Little Red Mountain Bike Skills Park (CORR 20-74)

PowerPoint Presentation was provided by Darcy Rusk, Skills Park Designate, Rock N Road Cycling Club.

0196. **Moved by:** Councillor T. Zurakowski.

REPORT:

The Rock N Road Cycling Club has seen consistent growth over the past 5 years with over 52 members as of 2019 and an active group of volunteers. The club is busy and active with their membership and provide the following on a yearly basis within the boundaries of the Little Red:

1. Summer Race Series
2. Weekly Club Rides
3. "Race the Red" Sask Cup MTB Race
4. Pine Needle Classic
5. Maintenance of LRRP Trails
6. Mountain Bike Instruction Clinics
7. Provided winter grooming of 24 km of trail for bike users
8. Groomed trails are enjoyed in partnership with walkers, runners and snowshoe enthusiasts
9. Winter Fatbike Day in the park

As the club continues to grow and look for opportunities, they have identified a need within the park for a Mountain Bike Skills Park. With the continual evolution of mountain biking, it has led to a recent boom in popularity and the natural progression of that popularity has led to an increase of bike skills parks across North America and right here in Saskatchewan with the recent development of a Skills Park in the City of Moose Jaw. The venues are a terrific community component that provides a managed arena for beginners and experts alike.

The club sees themselves developing a supervised area within the park providing activities from simple:

Ladder bridges: a man-made surface usually made out of wood. Its primary purpose is to bridge a gap that might be un-rideable or unsafe for mountain bikers. Ladder bridges may be built over streams, ravines and fallen trees, enabling bikers to ride over obstacles.

Skinnies: the skill of riding straight-holding a line, as it's commonly called is one of the most fundamental mountain bike skills. It is not just used for riding skinnies, like the length of logs, plants, and elevated boardwalks, but staying on your line through rock gardens or along a section of narrow single track where precision matters.

Small beams/balance beams: inexpensive, easy to build, and a great learning tool, balance beams to sharpen your biking skills.

Perhaps the biggest key to successful mountain biking is body position. Mountain bike trail surfaces include rocks, roots, ruts, sand or mud. The variable terrain and the potential obstacles are all part of the fun but can be unnerving for beginners.

The Clubs proposal would provide the necessary skills to all ages and levels of expertise, teaching them:

Proper body position: whether that be neutral position (riding non-technical sections) or ready position (sometimes called the attach position) when you are riding more technical sections of trail;

Adjusting your seat position: for climbing and descending trails;

Picking a line: a beginner's mistake is looking at spots you want to avoid rather than focusing on where you want to go. Pick a path and stick to it to get over and around tricky sections of trail;

How to brake: avoiding sudden, fast squeezes to help prevent skidding;

When to brake: this allows you to focus on your technique through the turn and exit from the turn with speed and controlled momentum;

Shifting: it is good to know how to shift your gears properly. Proper shifting habits not only save wear and tear on your bike, they enable you to power yourself more efficiently up and down hills;

Falling off: proper techniques to help minimize injuries;

Hiking the bike: many trails may feature mandatory hike-a-bike sections that are too difficult to ride through, up or down, so learning not to "fight the bike" but learning how to carry your bike out of tight spot; and,

Trail Etiquette: mountain biking is often done on trails or roads shared with other users, such as hikers and horses. Teaching the property etiquette of always being courteous and a responsible rider that is in control of your bike at all times and riding only on trails open to mountain bike use.

A skills park to provide an experience to mountain bikers of all ages and levels to develop a range of skills including bike handling, balancing, jumping and turning. These skills would provide a level of managed risk that many riders and parents will find reassuring building upon a community gathering space providing a positive venue for individuals open to learning and growing their skill set.

A bike park would help build something larger for a community and helps to build a healthy, happy, outdoor lifestyle choice in a natural setting with minimal impact to the surrounding landscape. Community Services can also verify that there is no negative impact to other user groups or proposed developments and that the site is an area that is easily accessible and visible with other hiking, ski and bike trails nearby.

The Bike Skills Park would be provided at a minimal cost to users thru membership dues of \$35 per year. This would provide sense of ownership and investment into the park and provide the minimal funds required to help maintain the site.

PUBLIC AND/OR STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT:

Engagement with other users groups within the park such as the PA Ski Club (our parks biggest user) have been well received and the feedback has been positive with full support for the project.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

That the Community Services Department continues to work in partnership with the Rock N Road Cycling Club as the park develops by supporting and providing direction on signage and communication, thru the COPA website by updating the Little Red River Park Section highlighting this new development.

That a Maintenance and Operating Agreement for the site be developed in consultation with the Rock N Road Cycling Club and Community Services Department.

STRATEGIC PLAN:**The Bike Skills Park would be in line with the objectives of:**

Active And Caring Community: The City strives to provide high quality services to meet the dynamic needs and expectations of our citizens.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN:

Community Services contributes to infrastructure and sustainability efforts. Proper planning can help preserve and maintain natural and built environments. It is important to anticipate, encourage and prepare for growth in response to the needs of the community. Investing in infrastructure will support growth while planning for continuous improvement. Our connection to the natural world is important and must be considered in the delivery of community services. Likewise, maintaining and investing in the built environment with a consideration to sustainability is important.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS:

There are no other considerations/implications under Options to recommendations, Policy Implications, Financial implications or privacy implications.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Public Notice pursuant to the Public Notice Bylaw No. 24 of 2015 is not required.

Presentation:

Verbal Presentation – Timothy Yeaman, Parks Manager.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Little Red Mountain Bike Skills Training Zone Location
2. Select Pictures of Bike Skills Park
3. Bike Park Layout

Written by: Timothy Yeaman, Parks Manager

Approved by: Director of Community Services and City Manager