

From: Restore ForestPark
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Date: July 5, 2016 at 7:43:10 PM PDT
To: undisclosed-recipients: ;
Subject: From Marcy Houle about Forest Park

Hi, friends who care about Forest Park!

Dr. Catherine Thompson and I are writing you to state our huge concerns about the future of beautiful Forest Park – the only urban wilderness in the nation. Please read our heartfelt letter, share it with everyone you know who cares about Forest Park, and write letters to city officials to let them know your views. We have included their names and addresses at the end of this email.

We truly thank you and so will future generations of Oregonians!

FOREST PARK IS FACING THE GREATEST THREAT IN ITS HISTORY.

Portland City Government is taking steps to open up pedestrian-only trails in Forest Park – including Wildwood Trail -- to bicycles as a part of a plan to make Portland an *off-road, world-class cycling destination.*

City government recently allocated \$350,000 of public monies to support a narrow, single-focus group -- Off Road Cyclists – who make up a mere 8% of park users, but are requesting access to what are now designated hiking trails.

Already, the Bureau of Planning's Off Road Cycling website is referring to Forest Park pedestrian-only trails, including Wildwood, as *single-track trails*.

When questioned that this would be against land-use law and environmental code, officials have said "We can change the law."

Currently, Forest Park is everyone's park. 90% of visitors are pedestrians, who are not being represented in this critical discussion. The question that bears asking is: How can a small user group command such attention, and taxpayer dollars, and receive special treatment, especially if what is being considered is against land use law? For visitor safety and ecological preservation, single-track cycling (defined below) is not allowed in Forest Park.

Unless we let elected officials and others in government know our concerns, we will soon lose the Forest Park we all know and love forever.

Since its inception, Forest Park has had visionary land-use goals that were first described by the Olmsted Brothers in 1903. Management objectives for Forest Park are environmental code *and* land use law, as described in the Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan, Ordinance No. 168509:

- The protection of Forest Park's ecological health and preservation of its wildlife habitat are its highest priorities.
- All forms of recreation in Forest Park must be passive in nature.

- Differing from all other city parks in the nation, Forest Park's Number 3 Goal is to "Provide for Quiet, Reflective, and Spiritual Experiences."
- All visitors must feel safe when using park trails.

So, what is going on now?

The City of Portland has convened an Off Road Cycling Committee (ORCC), spending \$350,000 of public monies, to make recommendations where single-track cycling trails, skill parks and pump tracks will be developed in the city. The main objective is to determine where single-track cycling – which differs from other forms of cycling because it is **high speed and occurs on narrow trails, 1-3 feet wide** – can be brought to Portland.

The ORCC is composed overwhelmingly of mountain bikers, bike store owners, and Oregon tourist industry members, tasked to make Portland a single track, world-class cycling destination. The Mayor, three Council members, and the Bureau of Planning have all expressed that Forest Park is the prime candidate for this new active use.

Who will lose?

Pedestrians will lose. Studies show that 425,000 visitors (90% of all users) walk the trails of Forest Park every year. Children will also lose. Right now, up to 100,000 children walk with their parents on the trails each year. Currently, the law currently protects pedestrians. It specifies that all trails shared with bikes must be 8 feet wide, hard packed, and have good line of sight for safety. All bike trails are shared.

Pedestrians will not feel safe, or be safe, if high-speed, single-track cycling is allowed to occur on pedestrian-only trails in Forest Park, such as Wildwood or Maple Trails.

What's more, Forest Park currently already provides generously for cyclists. While they make up only 8% of park users, they have access to 30 miles of trails, or 30% of all park trails.

But how can the City change what is land use law?

With ease, apparently. Officials with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability have said that the City Council “will just change the law.”

What can we do to save Forest Park?

- We need to get 10,000 letters to City Hall, voicing our concerns.
- We need to tell officials that we want the Forest Park Management Plan, and the law, upheld.
- We need to tell officials they must look at other places in the region to accommodate this active new sport, and *not* in Forest Park.
- We need to fill out the City’s “Off Road Cycling Questionnaire” at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/offroadcycling>. In the comment section, ask that new single track cycling be directed to other city parks, not Forest Park.

Please write: Mayor

Hales: mayorcharliehales@portlandoregon.gov

Commissioners

Fritz: Amanda@portlandoregon.gov Fish: nick@portlandoregon.gov
Novick: novick@portlandoregon.gov Salt

zman: Dan@portlandoregon.gov

Susan Anderson, Director, Bureau of Planning of Planning and Sustainability: Susan.Anderson@portlandoregon.gov

Portland Parks Director Mike

Abbate: Mike.Abbate@portlandoregon.gov

Portland Parks Foundation Director: Jeff

Anderson: janderson@portlandpf.org

And please cc: your letter to us

at restoreportlandsforestpark@gmail.com

Please act to save beloved, beautiful Forest Park for future generations!

Gratefully,

Marcy Houle and Catherine Thompson, MD