

March 8, 2011



Flagstaff Biking Organization  
PO Box 23851  
Flagstaff, AZ 86002

Elizabeth Neumayer  
Community Enrichment Services Director  
City of Flagstaff  
Community Enrichment Services  
211 W. Aspen Ave.  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001  
Sent via electronic mail

Dear Elizabeth,

Flagstaff Biking Organization (FBO) is a group of cyclists who came together to “promote bicycling as a safe and attractive means of transportation and recreation in Northern Arizona.” Our initial project was to put on a Bike to Work Week for our community in May 2002. Building on the success we started to expand our efforts to keep people informed of cycling related issues and galvanize support for better and safer facilities, trails, and trail access. Please see <http://flagstaffbiking.org/about-fbo/> for more information.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the City of Flagstaff Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Master Plan revision. We are excited to convey some ideas regarding bicycle facilities and parks.

**Flagstaff needs mountain bike skills parks!**

Flagstaff is a bicycling oriented town with a strong proclivity for mountain biking. There are hundreds of miles of trails in the surrounding Coconino National Forest and other public lands that help to serve the needs of thousands of local mountain bikers.

Over the past decade, new trends in this sport have led to a demand for mountain bike skills parks. Numerous communities throughout the country have constructed these parks, which appeal to a broad range of riders, including kids. Some examples of other communities with bicycle skills parks are Boulder, Colorado, (Valmont Bike Park), Ocala, Florida, (Santos Skills Area), Forsyth County, Georgia, (Central Park Advanced Skills Course), and Seattle, Washington, (I-5 Colonnade Mountain Bike Park). Please see the end of this paragraph for a list of helpful links to some of these examples and some more explanations and photos of these types of facilities.

A mountain bike skills park is typically comprised of various constructed features that challenge riders' abilities. A well-constructed park will contain features of varying degrees of difficulty in order to appeal to a broad range of riders and provide for a safe progression from easier to more difficult riding. Well-constructed parks also employ safe "fall zones" and signage to limit the potential for injury to the riders. Far from being a "fad", this branch of mountain biking has been growing substantially for over a decade, with bike manufacturers, municipalities, ski resorts, and private companies investing substantial amounts of money in bike design, equipment and facilities to capitalize on and provide for this demand.

The need for these facilities in the Flagstaff area is evidenced by the substantial proliferation of illegally built stunts and dirt-jumps in the surrounding National Forest, vacant lots and other public and private land. These tracks are typically built by local kids who are enthusiastic about pursuing the otherwise positive and healthy sport of mountain biking, but who lack legitimate opportunities to ride in this way. We are aware that the local Flagstaff Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest has had to dismantle and remove several of these tracks over the past few years as they are not built with permission, are often unsafe and can otherwise adversely affect the environment and other Forest users. These issues do not detract at all from the fact that, if properly permitted, designed and constructed, this form of recreation is an extremely positive direction for kids to take in light of current societal issues with obesity, drug use, etc.

We have had informal discussions with Brian Grube with the Parks and Recreation staff regarding the potential for assisting in facilitating the design and construction of a mountain bike skills park in McPherson Park. We have also entertained the idea of a trail head hub and mountain bike skills park including a dirt-criterium or cyclocross track on the City owned land just south of the Schultz Creek Trail, although it is our understanding that this land would need some significant changes in status to execute this concept.

We are currently part of a four way Memorandum of Understanding, (MOU), with the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County and the Coconino National Forest to facilitate the construction and maintenance of non-motorized trails in the greater Flagstaff area. We

would like to work cooperatively with the City through this MOU to help to further this idea in any way possible, including filing jointly for grant money, garnishing sponsorships and coordinating volunteers for construction and maintenance.

<http://www.imba.com/resources/freeriding/emergence-bike-parks>

<http://bouldermountainbike.org/og/valmont-bike-park>

<http://www.imba.com/epics/santos-trail-system>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-sfPuRyASw> (Very good video describing the history and volunteerism at the Colonnade Bike Park in Seattle, WA)

[Photos of various mountain bike skills parks](#)

### **The Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) and Flagstaff Loop Trail should be utilized to connect the various City of Flagstaff Parks and Recreation Facilities**

As mentioned above, Flagstaff is a cycling town! Every effort should be made to tie all of the City's facilities, especially the City's Parks and Recreation facilities, together with bike-able routes. The ability to ride a bike to use City parks, the Aquaplex, or play hockey, basketball, disc golf, et cetera helps to make our town more live-able and more environmentally friendly. We understand that the FUTS is not technically under the jurisdiction of Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces, but we also understand that appropriate planning with the FMPO can help to facilitate better connectivity in any new planning.

It is also important that appropriate bicycle parking be available at all Parks and Recreation facilities. As it is important to plan a parking lot for cars at a facility, it is also important to plan for bicycle parking. Please be sure to include direction in the revised master plan to include sufficient bicycle parking at all City Parks and Recreation Facilities.

### **Route 66 Linear Park**

Flagstaff Biking Organization appreciates the work done by the Flagstaff Parks and Recreation Department in regard to maintenance of the Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS). We would like to see the four-mile section of the FUTS from the Route 66 Park (just east of Fanning) to the Downtown Visitor Center/Colton Park area designated a Flagstaff Linear Park. We believe this formal title would enhance the Route 66 corridor for all our transportation modes and more clearly establish its importance to our community. To be specific, that section of the FUTS is a vital bicycle commuter route

and we believe deserves a higher level of consideration for improvements and enhancements.

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in the planning direction for our community's parks and recreation future! Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or need any clarifications on any of our input. Please keep us informed as this process continues.

*s/Anthony Quintile*

*s/Jack Welch*

for Flagstaff Biking Organization Board of Directors