

Attention Park Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for designating Birch Trail as a shared use trail, following my review of the recent parks board meeting agenda. Currently, Birch Trail spans just 0.45 miles as a hike-only trail, situated between two existing shared use trails. Given its location, it is likely inadvertently used by cyclists seeking connectivity between these trails.

With the upcoming rework of the Bicentennial Trail, the area's recreational usage is expected to increase. Converting Birch Trail to shared use presents a valuable opportunity, especially for young riders in our community. Currently, there is a lack of accessible green trails in our region, which poses a challenge for youth who are developing their skills and confidence in mountain biking.

In reviewing letters of opposition, I noticed a tone and assumptions made about mountain bikers and mindset. As someone that would classify themselves as a hiker, biker and runner of our trails, I have a respect for our trails and variety of ways to utilize them. I frequently pause to listen to birdsong, appreciate our natural surroundings, and reflect on the beauty of our area. Choosing to bike instead of hike does not diminish my respect for nature and/or trail system; as perceived in letters of opposition.

In conclusion, I urge the board to consider the benefits of designating Birch Trail as shared use. This decision would not only enhance recreational opportunities for young riders but also promote responsible trail usage and connectivity within our trail system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Anna Stindt