



CITY OF ASHLAND

SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

PROPOSED BY

ROGUE VALLEY MOUNTAIN
BIKE ASSOCIATION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this document is to address the existing trail issues on city property located in the Ashland Watershed. The exponential growth of mountain biking in Ashland has exposed flaws in the trail network that must be addressed. Additionally, the temporary closure of the Shakespeare Festival has hurt tourism numbers in an economy dependent on attracting visitors. Some of these alignments can and will directly increase tourism through events and general ridership. (New trails bring in tourists to ride).

METHOD

Seven factors are described in detail throughout the proposal:

- User Experience
- Trail Sustainability
- Neighborhood Connectivity
- Lack of Beginner Trails
- User Safety
- Environmental Impact
- Tourism

Waterline Pedestrian/Bike Separation

Location: Waterline trail, between BTI/Jabberwocky exit and intersection with quarry road.

Primary issues addressed: User Safety

Secondary: Trail Sustainability, Environmental Impact

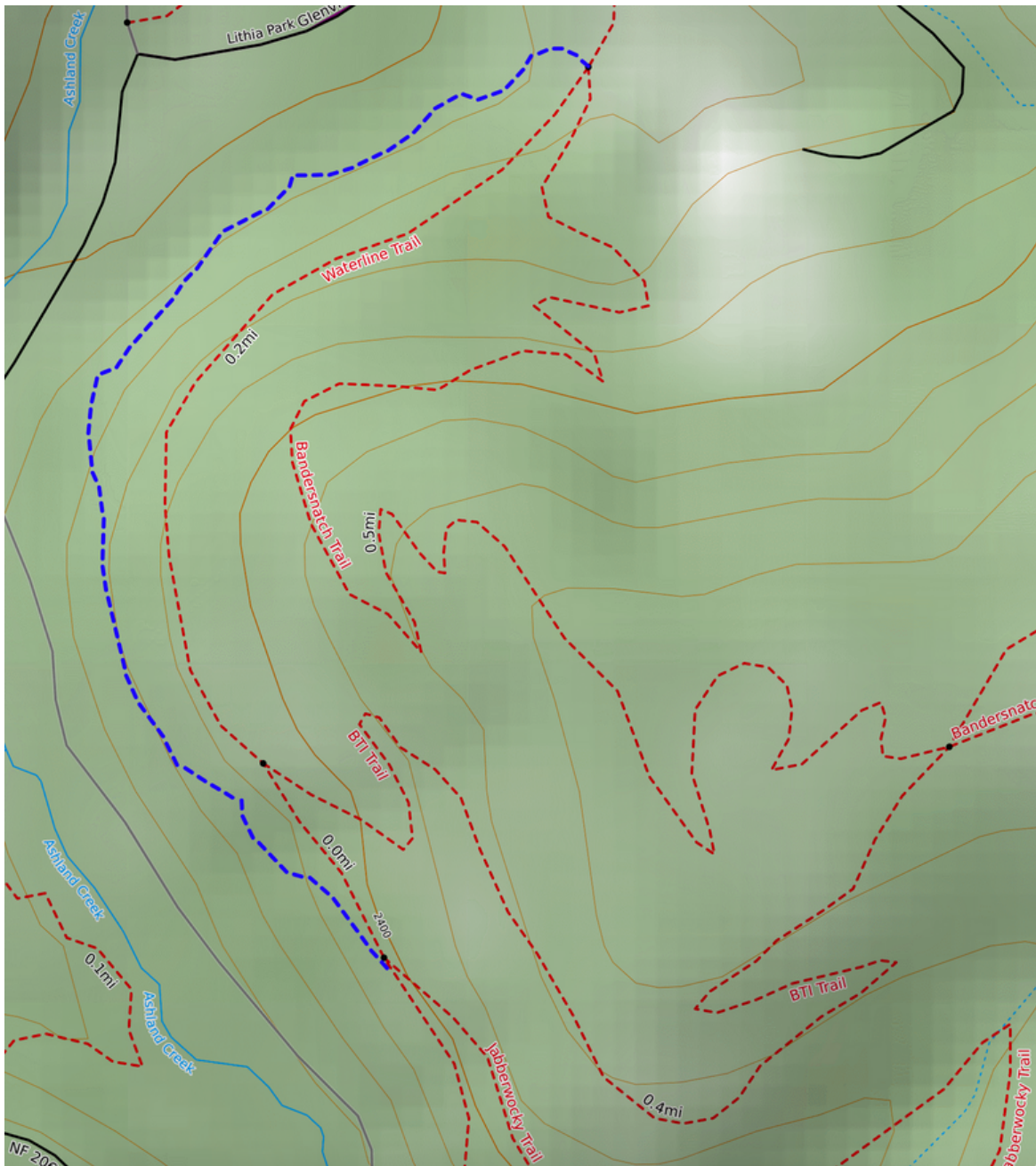
Summary: Waterline trail is currently a shared use trail seeing extremely high levels of traffic. The area is not suitable for bike/hike sharing, and should include separate trails for both uses. Approving this project would show the City of Ashland's commitment to user safety and would reduce potential user conflict.

Needs: The city has determined a soils geologist is needed to move forward with this project. RVMBA recommends that the city finds and pays for this individual due to a safety issue that needs to be remedied on city managed land. Once approval is given for the trail, it will take approximately 2 weeks to complete the trail reroute with assistance from AWTA, who is in full support of this project.

Priority: Due to the safety hazard that the mixed use trail currently offers, this is RVMBA's highest priority project.

Final Outcome and Benefits:

- ⚙️ Two separate routes of travel ensuring safe access to Bandersnatch for hikers, and Snark for hikers/bikers, and safe downhill bike access from BTI/Jabberwocky to Quarry parking area.
- ⚙️ Eliminates one of the last major conflict points on city land Utilizes volunteer labor and AWTA/RVMBA partnership to foster community building, stewardship training, and trail building.
- ⚙️ Reduces use on the most heavily used trail in Ashland.



South Ashland Connecting Climb and DH Trails

Location: Siskiyou Mtn Park land, terminating above Park Street and Oredson Todd Woods

Primary issues addressed: Neighborhood Connectivity, User Experience, Tourism

Secondary: Trail Sustainability, Environmental Impact

Summary: Siskiyou Mt. Park (SMP) is currently underutilized by mountain bikes due to a lack of enticing mountain bike trails. The south side of Ashland is severely lacking in neighborhood connections, forcing riders to congregate in the highly impacted quarry/White Rabbit parking areas. Creating viable downhill and uphill routes to and from the White Rabbit Parking area would take pressure off the current trail system by dispersing riders through the watershed. It would also provide better access for tourists who are utilizing the local shuttle business, hotels/motels on the south side of Ashland, and restaurants in that area that may not currently benefit from the current flow of mountain bike traffic.

Needs: Collaboration with SOLC, who goes off recommendations from the city to make decisions is necessary for this project. An understanding and recognition of just how many mountain bikers are using the watershed will also help to make the case for these trails. SOU is working on a usage study due out in Fall 2021 that will show the imbalance of the current trail system, and the extreme underutilization of the current bike legal alignments through SMP.

Priority/Timeline: To keep up with the influx of mountain bikes and tourists in the watershed, RVMBA would like to begin ASAP on a plan. Because this area requires the most planning and longest trail alignments, the goal would be to start construction in Fall 2022.

Final Outcome and Benefits:

A new multi-use access point from South Ashland, climbing to the heavily used area of White Rabbit will:

- ⚙ Reduce traffic and vehicle use,
- ⚙ Reduce excess bike traffic on toothpick trail
- ⚙ Keep bikes away from Mike Uthoff trail
- ⚙ Offer a fitness challenge that is difficult, yet enjoyable and rideable with practice.

A re-designated DH mountain bike only trail would:

- ⚙ Give riders a viable and preferred alternative to BTI and Jabberwocky, two highly impacted trails seeing large numbers of use leading to increased trail degradation.
- ⚙ Serve South Ashland residents as a route back to their neighborhoods
- ⚙ Give tourists quick access to Ashland Mountain Adventures as well as motels/hotels frequented by mountain bikers on the south end of town.

Alice in Wonderland Climb Trail/Ped-Bike Separation

Location: Alice in Wonderland climb trail reroute, below BTI entrance. Ped/Bike separation from BTI entrance to White Rabbit Parking Lot

Primary issues addressed: User safety, Trail sustainability, Beginner Trail Opportunity, Environmental Impact

Secondary: Connectivity, User experience

Summary: Alice in Wonderland is a heavily used multi-use alignment offering access to BTI and Bandersnatch. Many users might not know that the trail actually continues below BTI down a rutted singletrack to JubJub trail offering access to the lower loop road. By rebuilding this lower section into a useable state, we can remove bikes from the dirt portion of Ashland Loop Road because mountain bikers would have a climb trail that they could utilize. This increases user safety and user experience. The second component to this project would be above the BTI trail. It calls for separating Ped/Bike use along a wide ridge into a climb/hike trail as well as a downhill bikes only trail.

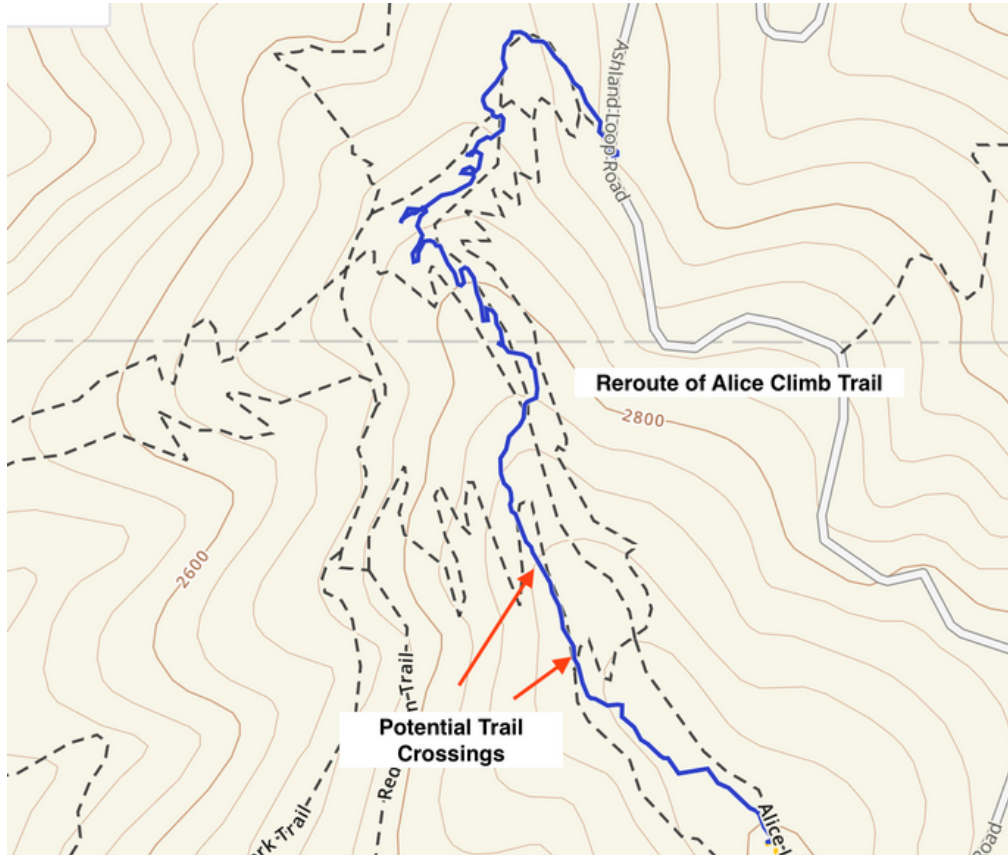
Needs: The lower portion of the project (lower Alice climb trail) should be a quick approval process. It would be a positive gain for the environment to rebuild the erosive alignment. The upper portions are covered under three different easements from three different property owners. To complicate matters more, one of these easements (Taxlot 700) is currently for sale. RVMBA and AWTA must work together with the city to ensure that these easements and trail alignments are preserved no matter who owns the land.

Priority/Timeline: While important, this project is lower priority than others. It also would require a small amount of work to complete the lower trail reroute. Given both these considerations, RVMBA would like to focus on other projects in 2021, and build the reroute in the Spring of 2022. In the meantime, RVMBA would like to continue working with property owners with help from the city to create a new trail alignment proposal. The trail could be constructed in phases, so if one property owner did not want changes, that section could remain. This work would also take place in the Spring of 2022.

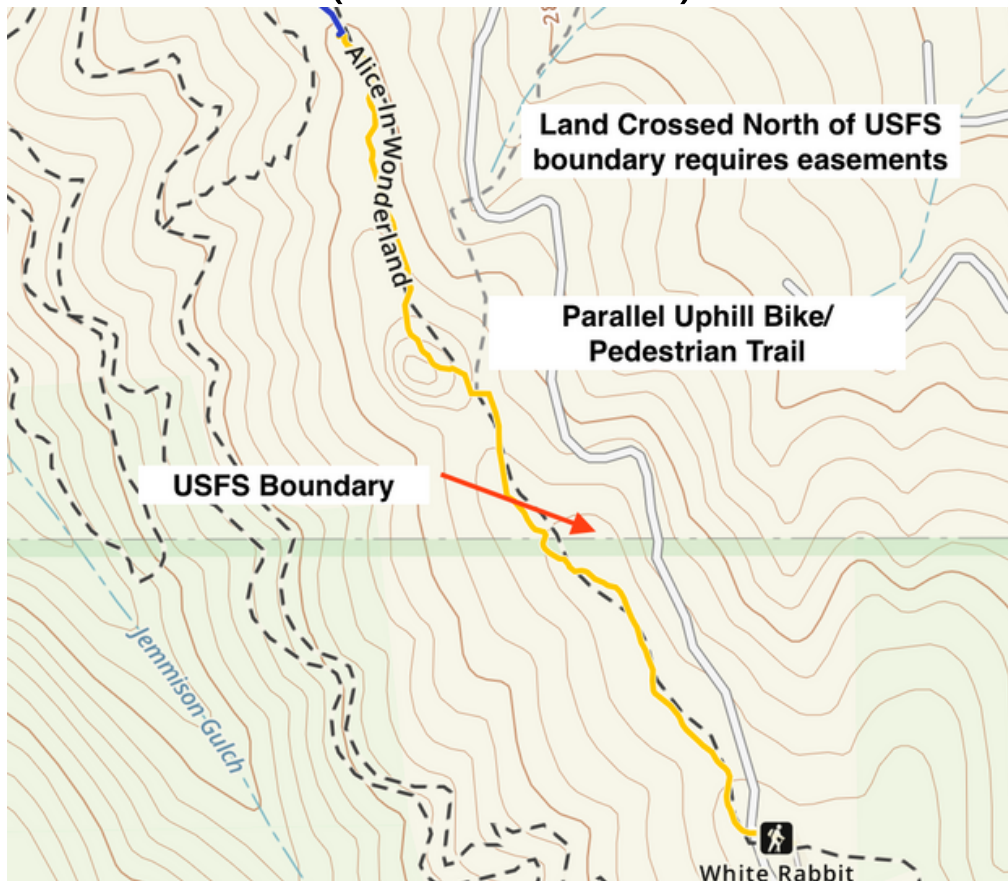
Final Outcome and Benefits:

- A useable climb trail utilizing existing legal bike trail from the Loop Road to BTI entrance, followed by a new climb/hike trail from BTI to the White Rabbit parking lot.
- Separates hikers/uphill bikes from downhill bike traffic in a highly impacted area.
- Creates the opportunity for beginner, low angle loops for kids and beginner riders. Low angle opportunities are few and far between in the watershed, yet this ridgeline is a great location.
- Fills the need for an uphill, singletrack climb trail, separating bikes and cars from the narrow, windy loop road.
- Allows riders to access via either BTI/Snark, OR the beginning of the loop road.
- Creates a positive environmental impact by decommissioning an erosive, seldom-used trail
- A collaborative design and build process with AWTA would ensure that all user groups are represented and that there is a plan that works for everyone. This also fosters community and stewardship by sharing resources, ideas, and work time with multiple land stewards.

Climb trail reroute, City Land



Uphill Climb/Pedestrian addition (Private Lands)



Lithia Park Low Angle Climb and Descending Trails

Location: Upper Lithia Park, between Glenview Road and the Eastern slope of Ashland Creek.

Primary issues addressed: Neighborhood Connectivity, Beginner Trails, Environmental impact, Tourism

Secondary: User Experience

Summary: The Upper Lithia Park hillside offers pedestrian trails, but currently no legal bike route. The proposed routes would serve several needs including beginner trails, neighborhood connectivity, and user safety by removing bikes from Glenview and Winburn Way to exit the watershed. It would also improve user experience for mountain bikers and Lithia Park users by decreasing bike traffic. Finally, it would help reduce traffic into the quarry parking area by offering mountain bikes a trail to climb from town. The trail would exit onto Pioneer Street, sending tourists and locals alike into the heart of downtown safely.

Needs: Collaboration with APRC is key to this project. RVMBA has done its best to address concerns from APRC and staff. By addressing these concerns and showing a commitment to mitigating any issues raised, we can move forward on this critical alignment.

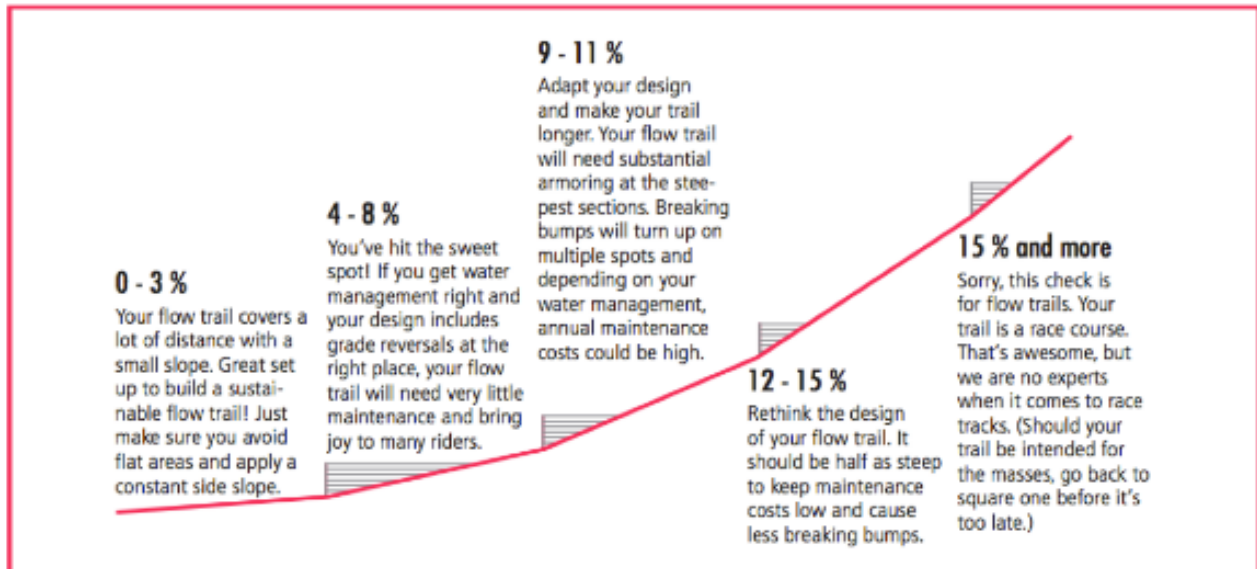
Priority/Timeline: This project would serve more users than any in this proposal as a beginner trail loop. It also would require minimal disturbances in building due to the low angle nature of the trail. It would be a visible project that would draw many volunteers. For these reasons, this is our highest priority project after the Waterline reroute. With approval, building in Fall 2021 would be our recommendation.

Final Outcome and Benefits:

- Effectively removing bikes from Glenview fire road, eliminating a significant amount of downhill bike traffic from the lower Lithia Park/ Granite Street/Winburn Way area
- Adding a much needed low-angle trail experience geared towards youth and beginners
- Greatly reducing the carbon footprint of mountain bike users who no longer will drive to the Quarry parking area, or White Rabbit lot, but instead have a viable route to pedal from town
- Reducing the threat of fire and fire ignitions by decommissioning unnecessary trails and reducing opportunities for homeless to camp in high fire risk areas.
- Creating a loop option that gives access to mountain biking to a much larger demographic than can currently access trails.
- Creating a more equitable and approachable environment for those who wish to learn but have barriers to entry.
- Improving safety for bikers, by funneling bike traffic into areas designed to handle it (city streets and trail) rather than busy, congested parking areas where mixing of incompatible modes of transportation occurs.
- Filling in a missing, critical connection link for mountain bikers, connecting the Ashland Watershed with downtown via off-road trails.

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5. CHECK YOUR PROJECT

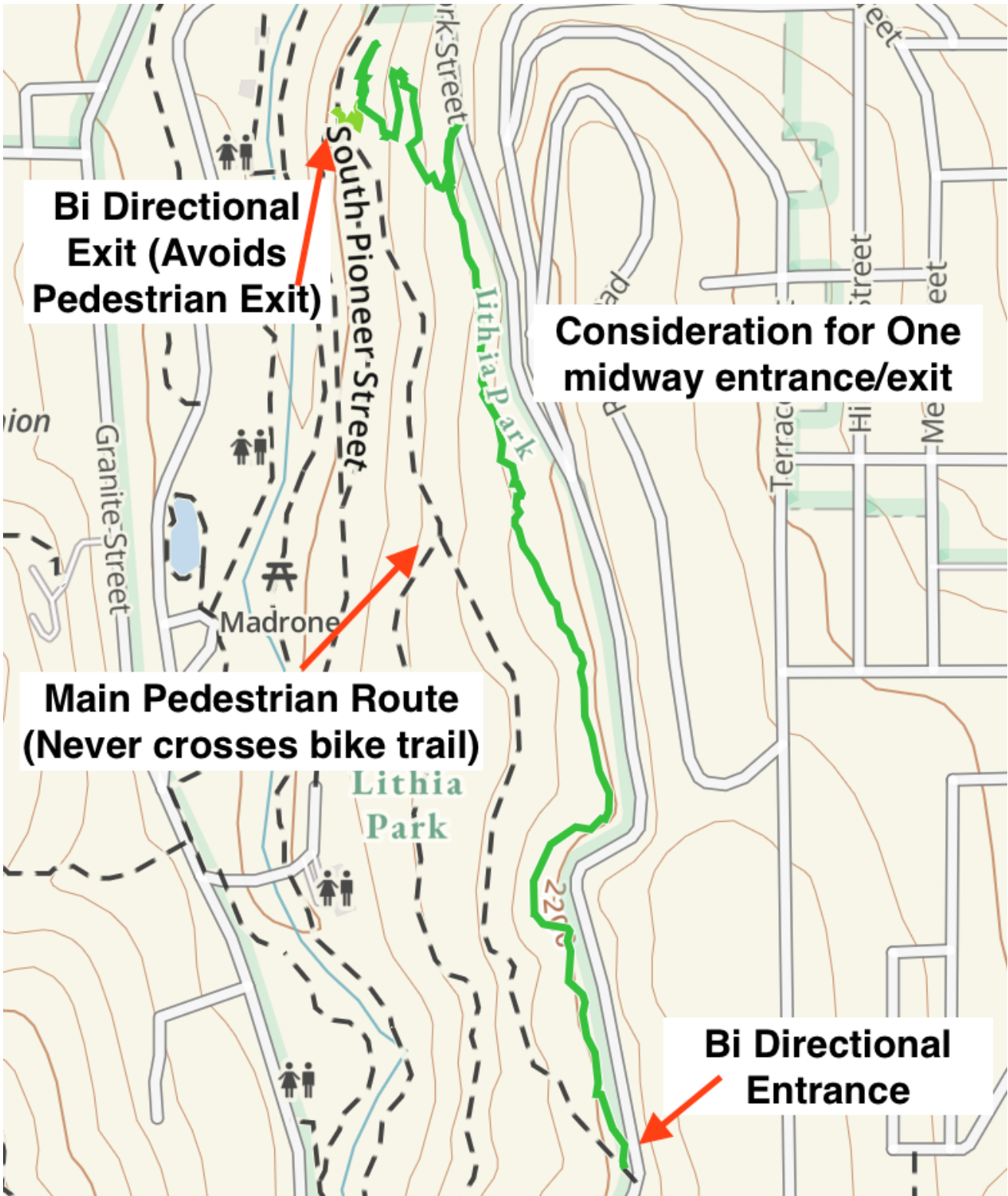


Caterpillar: 7.5% grade

BTI: 10%

Jabberwocky: 9.5%

Upper Lithia: 4.8%



Bi Directional Exit (Avoids Pedestrian Exit)

Consideration for One midway entrance/exit

Main Pedestrian Route (Never crosses bike trail)

Bi Directional Entrance

Lower Wonder Bailout Trails

Location: Lower Wonder trail, city owned section. West Side Ashland Watershed

Primary issues addressed: Connectivity, User Experience, Beginner Trails

Secondary: User Safety, Environmental Impact, Tourism

Summary: AWTa planned and built an incredible trail in Lower Wonder. The current route is open to uphill bikes only. There is no trail descent off of Lower Wonder for the entirety of the 3 mile, 900 vertical foot trail. Therefore, the trail is only accessible to riders who can complete the climb and makes the West Side of the watershed inaccessible for the majority of mountain bikers. Creating two bailout options on city land would remedy this problem. It would allow kids and those not strong enough to make the climb to “bail out” at shorter lengths along the trail, back onto city land and the 2060 loop road.

Needs: Essentially for the lower trail option, all RVMBA needs is permission to ride it. There is already a user created option that exists, tying into the fire road behind the locked gate in the Western quarry area. Often, user created trails form at natural alignments. This is one of those cases. There is a user created trail there because the area needs a trail. RVMBA would like to adopt this trail officially and make sure it is built safely, sustainably, and with the beginner in mind. The second route would require more collaboration to lay out flags with the city, but no other stakeholder exists here.

Priority: While a high priority project to continue to disperse traffic more equitably on city and USFS lands, it falls behind the projects specifically addressing user safety and neighborhood connectivity. With a lower trail already in existence, RVMBA would only need a day to make this rideable and safe. RVMBA would like to complete the lower trail in Spring 2021, and focus on the upper bailout option in the Spring of 2022.

Final Outcomes/Benefits: The “West Side” of the watershed is an underutilized area that is in need of shorter loop options for mountain bikers. Following the closure of Moai and Mystical, two popular trails on private land, there are few options on this side of the watershed. If this project was approved, it would:

- ⚙ Provide a great loop option for riders not strong enough to ride the full Lower Wonder trail.
- ⚙ Decrease the potential for wrong-way riders who cannot complete Lower Wonder and need to turn around.
- ⚙ Create a low angle, quick loop suitable for children to ride.
- ⚙ Establish another trail option to draw riders out of our most impacted trail areas, and allow easy access to a beautiful area of the watershed currently not accessible via bike for most of our members.



Siskiyou Mountain Park Low Angle Loop Trails

Location: Siskiyou Mountain Park, above the Clay Creek waterfall area, south of White Rabbit/Mike Uthoff trail heads

Primary issues addressed: Beginner trails, User Experience

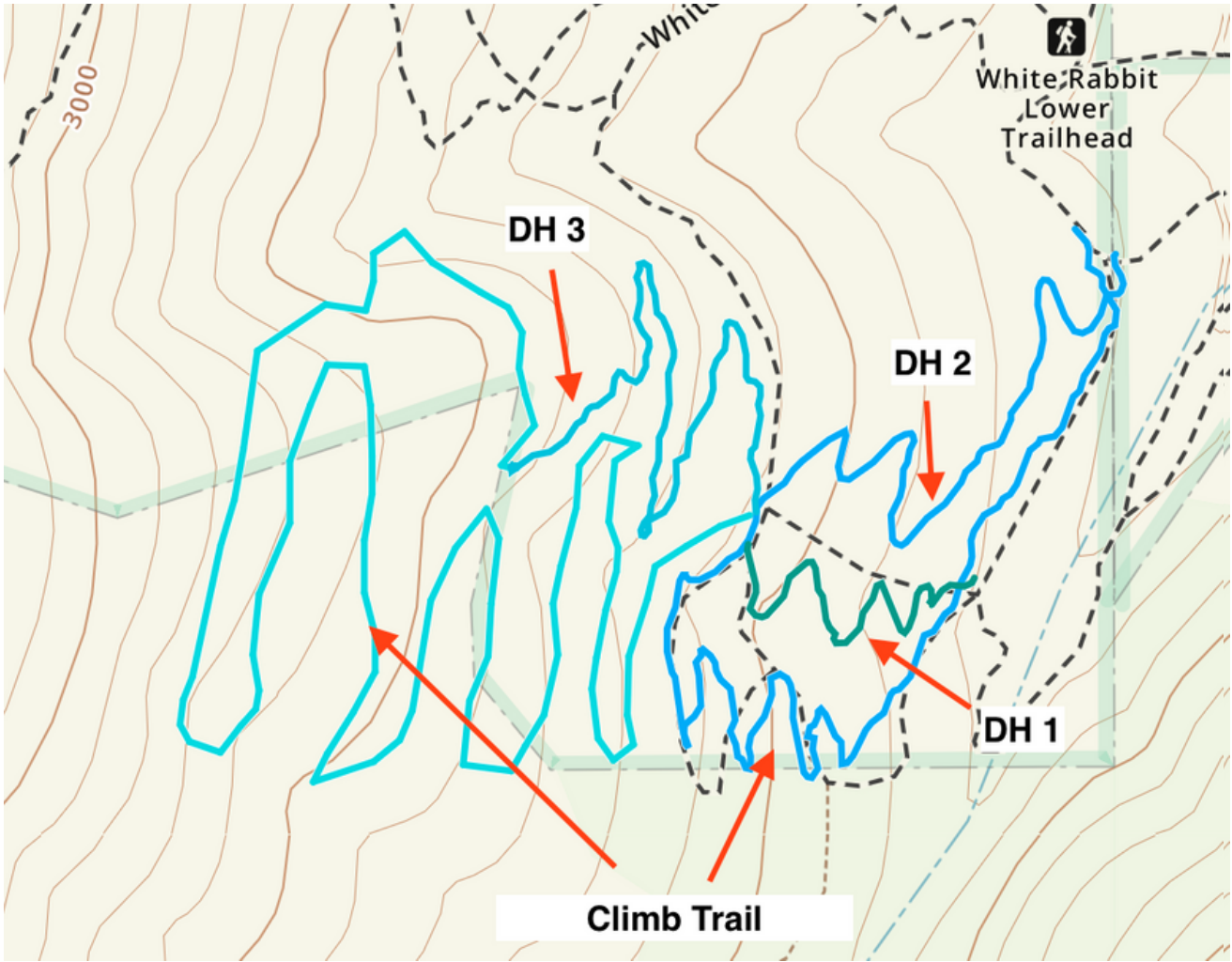
Secondary: Trail Sustainability, Environmental Impact, Tourism

Summary: It's been established throughout this document that there is a shortage of beginner trails. One reason is that most of the terrain in the Ashland Watershed is steep, and not conducive to low angle trails. Siskiyou Mt. Park is one of the few places RVMBA has identified as having low angle loop trail options for beginners. This proposal calls for 2-3 low angle loop trails in an lightly used area of SMP. The trails would be suitable for the youngest, most novice riders, and would progressively increase in difficulty. The difficulty would max out at a beginner-intermediate level trail, much easier than BTI or Jabberwocky for reference.

Needs: As for all proposals in SMP, collaboration with SOLC and the city of Ashland is necessary to ensure a sound plan on all levels. RVMBA believes it has just that, and would also go a step further by identifying non system trails in the area and decommissioning them to prevent further unsanctioned trail use. Advocating to SOLC from the city would help ensure that the city saw value in creating additional trails for our beginners on the south side of town, currently underserved by mountain bike trails.

Priority: This project would take minimal effort and funds to construct, and would not require closures of any part of the park or any heavy machinery to build. Because of the strong need and relatively short build time needed, this is a high priority project RVMBA would recommend building in Spring 2021 or Fall 2021.

- ⚙️ Fill the void needed to safely teach mountain biking in Ashland.
- ⚙️ Pull bike traffic away from the central corridor of White Rabbit Parking Lot, BTI, and Jabberwocky.
- ⚙️ Offer those on the South Side of Ashland a place to ride from home.
- ⚙️ Help reduce the amount of car traffic driving to a bike ride.
- ⚙️ It should be a goal that all Ashland residents can ride to a trail, similar to the APRC goal of having a park for every Ashland resident within ¼ mile.



Imperatrice Property

Location: 840 acres of mostly grassland, North of Interstate 5.

Primary issues addressed: Regional Connectivity, User Experience, Tourism

Secondary: Environmental Impact

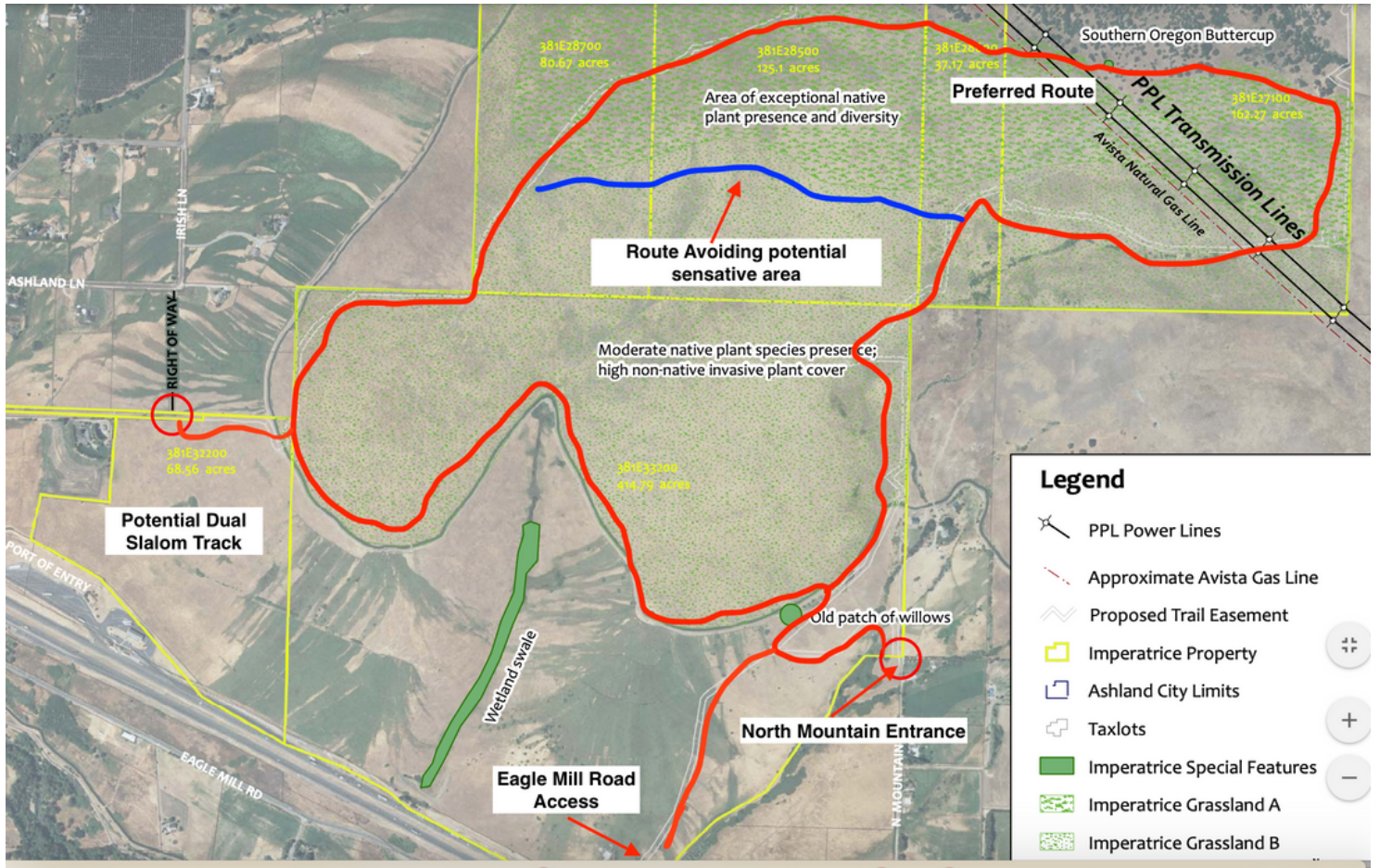
Summary: The city of Ashland owns 840 acres of land on the North side of I5. Some of this land is of significant environmental importance, and some is not. RVMBA would like to create a cross country style looped trail utilizing existing access points to the property. This would be a minimal impact trail system that would maintain a raw/primitive feel, and could include interpretive signage to teach users about the geology, wildlife, and ecology of the area. Options to tie in to Grizzly Peak BLM trails should be considered. A second plot of the land would be utilized as a dual slalom track to host events and offer downhill mountain bikers an area to practice outside of the watershed.

Needs: RVMBA is in contact with the City of Ashland regarding any use restrictions before submitting and pursuing a trail system in this area. A clear scope of what would be available is needed before any further work can occur.

Priority: The priority for this parcel in the present is to make the City of Ashland aware of our desire to build trails on this land, and advocate against any sales or development that we may not be aware of currently. Beyond this, the project would be considered low priority until other aforementioned projects are started and/or completed. RVMBA recommends moving forward with planning this project in Spring 2023 at this time.

Final Outcomes/Benefits:

- ⚙ Draw Ashland tourists and residents to ride somewhere other than the highly impacted watershed trails.
- ⚙ Give both downhill and cross country adventure riders alike a fun, new experience.
- ⚙ Allow users to enjoy an extra hour of sunlight on dark winter days.
- ⚙ Create the ability to link bigger options into the vast BLM/Grizzly Peak areas, which in turn could be an important regional asset.
- ⚙ Foster partnerships with environmental groups to bring users in an area with unique environmental assets learning opportunities. As a 1% for the planet member, these partnerships would further RVMBA's mission of stewardship and environmental awareness.
- ⚙ A Dual Slalom track could bring a yearly event to Ashland while serving the downhill and BMX riding crowds in an area just for those disciplines.



Original mapping created by Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. RVMTA added overlay bike routes.

Pioneer Street Mountain Bike Promenade

Location: Pioneer Way: the dirt, closed road bisecting Lithia Park.

Primary issues addressed: Beginner trails, Environmental Impact, User Experience, Tourism

Secondary: User Safety

Summary: The fire road from Pioneer Street to the Ashland Parks and Recreation offices offers the potential for a reconstructive build focusing on creating a beginner trail experience for riders. The project would involve utilizing a section of the road to create a pathway of berms/rollers/features using a professional bike park building company. The project would be low impact and built to blend into natural surroundings. It would offer children and bikes an area within APR land to hone skills and play in a safe environment before venturing into the upper watershed trails.

Needs: Collaboration with APR and a careful analysis to make sure the trail would work for the area. The trail would make much more sense if it was a continuation to the Outer Lithia trail alignment. Even so, the trail would work without it for those looking to do a close-to-town loop.

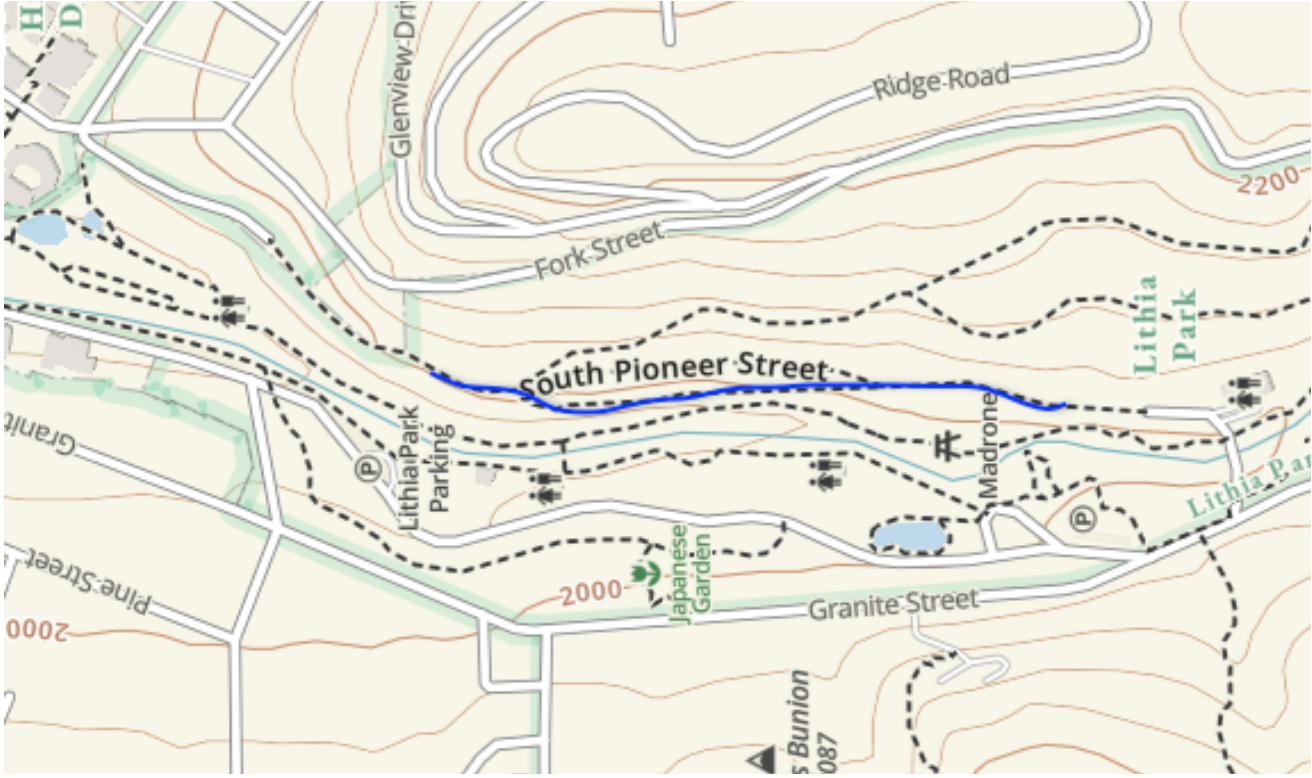
Priority: Because of RVMBA's desire to build the Outer Lithia Loop Trails, and the costs associated with a professionally built trail, this project is of medium priority, and would need to be signed off by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission. It would be the goal of RVMBA to get this project on the 2021-2023 goals list in 2021, then raise funds and construct the trail in 2022 as funds allowed.

Final Outcomes/Benefits:

- ⚙️ Provide children of all abilities an easily accessed bike play area.
- ⚙️ Allow parents to stroll along the youngest strider/balance bike aged kids, while the child developed bike skills.
- ⚙️ Give older, pedal-bike kids, a bike play area to develop bike skills,
- ⚙️ Provide kids with car-free, parent-free access, for the development of independence
- ⚙️ Reduce trips up the Ashland Loop Road to the Alice parking lot (and reduce congestion in the Alice lot itself).

In addition, the Promenade—particularly if integrated with a future East Lithia trail—would:

- ⚙️ Provide a car-safe route back to town.
- ⚙️ Give all riders descending from BTI and Jabberwocky a final, fun riding experience.
- ⚙️ Give existing, pedestrian users an enhanced experience, as the existing drainage, fencing and other aspects would all be improved as part of the project.



Acid Castles

Location: Location: West Side Ashland Watershed

Primary Issues Addressed: Connectivity

Secondary: User Safety, Trail Sustainability, User Experience

Summary: Recently, there has been a grassroots push to build an official, hiker only trail from Granite Street to Acid Castles along Hitt Road. RVMBA would support this designation IF a parallel bike only trail is created OR the current access utilized is preserved for bikes, including potential designation into the official trail system. Another option would be to design the new trail as open to Bikes Uphill only. Any reduction or loss of access to Granite Street would be a major issue in terms of connectivity from the West Side Trails.

Proposal: RVMBA's request would be that our group be consulted regarding any changes to the current state of trails in the area, including the addition of a hike only trail. Mountain bike needs should be considered in the same light as hiker needs, and any proposal affecting mountain bikes in any way should involve input from RVMBA.

Outcomes/Benefits:

- ⚙️ Preserving current trail status keeps a viable outlet for mountain bikers from Hitt Road, gaining an additional 600 feet of elevation drop from Hitt Road to Granite Street.
- ⚙️ Moving mountain bikers to the road through trail closures or re-designations would be unsafe, un-connective, and advocated opposed by RVMBA.
- ⚙️ A shared use or parallel trail project would create designated access to Acid Rocks, which RVMBA strongly supports.

Private Landowner Opportunities

Location: Various parcels throughout Ashland Watershed and adjacent to Watershed

Summary: The City of Ashland has expressed that they do not want to continue purchasing lands adjacent to the town, but the revenue generation of an area like this may help change the feeling on this. Southern Oregon Land Conservancy has been approached about working on conservation easements in conjunction with providing recreation, similar to Siskiyou Mountain Park.

Potential outcomes: RVMBA envisions a trail system that the city of Ashland or land owner could charge day or season passes to use. RVMBA would sign a maintenance agreement with SOLC and the landowner to complete the recreation/conservation/ownership triangle. RVMBA could then build a robust trail system in the area that would significantly increase the tourism potential of Ashland. This kind of addition is what is needed to responsibly market Ashland to a wider range of audiences, and to increase trail traffic sustainably.

