

South Tahoe pedaling toward creating mountain bike park

By Kathryn Reed

Strap on a helmet and skip the wilderness, Bijou Community Park may be the place to mountain bike.

About 4 acres of this South Lake Tahoe park off Al Tahoe Boulevard may become home of the Bijou Bike Park. Proponents would like to build the pump track and kids skill zone this summer, with relocation of the BMX track coming in 2013, and a slope style course built in 2014.

The South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Commission discussed the ideas at its meeting last week, with the City Council expected to vote on the idea at the March 20 meeting.



Proposed components of Bijou Bike Park.

Rendering/Design Workshop

“It could be a great thing for the community and no cost to the city,” Community Services Director Stan Sherer told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said with adventure sports growing, the facility would

provide an opportunity to draw events that would lure tourists to the area while at the same providing locals with a place to play.

Other than the land and possibly some maintenance and in-kind labor, the city will not put money out for the project.

To-date, conceptual plans have been put together by Design Workshop. South Lake Tahoe BMX and TAMBA, the local mountain biking club, are spearheading the movement.

When TAMBA was resurrected last year many people talked about creating a pump track on the South Shore.

According to Bikes and Berms, "A pump track is a continuous loop that can be ridden on a bike without pedaling. Tracks consist of a series of rolling bumps (rollers) and banked corners (berms) that allow the rider to gain momentum and reach speeds of up to 20 mph. Basic pump tracks are an oval shape with a berm at each end and rollers in between to make the straights. More advanced pump tracks will be irregular shapes with lots of different lines and sections with several berms in a row or even rollers that can be jumped over."

Having the BMX track in the same area would make for a natural complement for cyclists. Plus, Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials want to have that land back.

"I can tell you that the land where the BMX track sits is identified as part of expanding track and field amenities, specifically a discus course. However, there is no time line set for the move as of now. The BMX Association will continue to operate hosting races and practices on a weekly basis in 2012," Lauren Thomaselli, president of South Lake Tahoe BMX, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This is the 11th year the track has been open. And it's the only sanctioned BMX track in the country on public school property.

“The BMX track would consist of a series of earth berms, jumps and table tops with a mechanized starting gate and some form of bleachers for spectator seating. The mountain bike skills park would be comprised of more ‘built’ features that are obviously design[ed] and engineered,” according to material supplied by the cycling groups. “The focus of the bike park is to provide skill graded progression for beginner to expert riders by helping to develop a wide range of bike skills including balancing, bike handling and jumping.”

The only things likely to be disturbed in Bijou Park are a couple exercise stations.

Sherer said the cost of the bike park is unknown. But he also said it could be a revenue source for the city if it were to be built.