

Syringa Bike Park Proposed Safety Improvements



**Rattlesnake Transportation Committee
October 2023**

Location of Syringa Bike Skills Park

1465 Lincoln Hills Dr., Missoula, MT 59802



Syringa Bike Park Master Plan



<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2274/Bike-Skills-Parks>

Concerns Regarding the Present Configuration of Syringa Bike Skills Parks:

- The Syringa Bike Skills Park is very popular, especially for families.



Concerns Regarding the Present Configuration of Syringa Bike Skills Parks:

- The recent expansion of the park with many new features geared toward more expert BMX riders will likely lead to increased visitation from outside the area, especially by older riders. Riders from outside the area are likely to drive to the park.



Concerns Regarding the Present Configuration of Syringa Bike Skills Parks:

- There is a limited number of legal parking places near the bike park. The 52-spot parking lot across the street is part of the Hellgate High School athletic complex. Parking is especially problematic during Hellgate High School competitions and practices. There is no legal parking along the south side of Lincoln Hills Dr.





The photos on the previous page were taken on 10/7/ 2023 during a Hellgate High School soccer game. Most of the cars shown are illegally parked along the south side of Lincoln Hills Dr. in an area with signs that read “NO PARKING ANY TIME.” Several cars were blocking the gate used by city workers to access the bike park to do maintenance. Several cars were actually parked directly on the bicycle/pedestrian path along the north edge of the bike park. A few of the parked cars were partially obstructing the eastbound driving lane of Lincoln Hills Drive. Along the north side of Lincoln Hills Dr., there were many cars parked on the grass and in the borrow pit.

Concerns Regarding the Present Configuration of Syringa Bike Skills Parks:

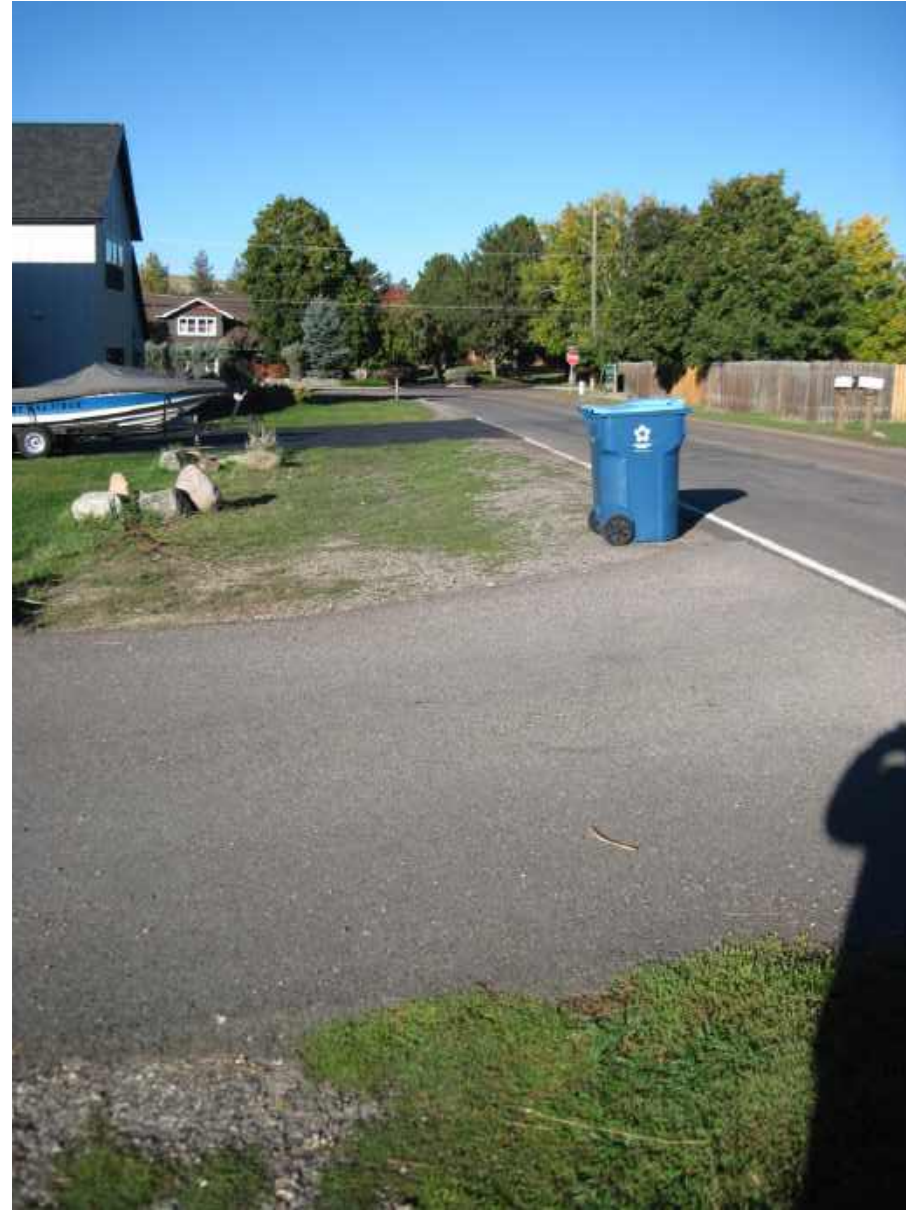
- At present there is no safe way to cross Lincoln Hills Drive from the parking lot to the bike park. Given the lack of any crosswalks, bike park users are forced to cross the busy Lincoln Hills Dr. in the middle of the block. This is especially dangerous for children and persons with disabilities.



Concerns Regarding the Present Configuration of Syringa Bike Skills Parks:

- There are no sidewalks on either the north or south sides on Lincoln Hills Drive.
- There is a bicycle/pedestrian path along the north side of the bike park. However, the path ends at the northeast and northwest corners of the bike park and does not connect with Sunflower Drive or with Rattlesnake Drive where there are existing bike paths, sidewalks, and bus stops.





The Bike/Ped path peters out heading west. A social trail has developed across a lawn. Extending this path to Rattlesnake Dr. would link the bike park to bike lanes, sidewalks, and bus stops on Rattlesnake Dr.



The Bike/Ped path also peters out heading east. A social trail has developed that forces pedestrians and cyclists to descend into a grassy borrow pit or walk on the street to get to Sunflower Dr. or beyond.

Concerns Regarding the Present Configuration of Syringa Bike Skills Parks:

- Given its steep grade, vehicles traveling westbound on Lincoln Hills Dr. coming down from the Lincoln Hills often build up excessive speed through the Syringa Bike Park and Hellgate Fields area.



Proposed Raised Crosswalk Location



The proposed crosswalk would be positioned to connect the parking area at the Hellgate Fields with the opening in the bike park fence that serves as the main entrance to the park. Installing a striped crosswalk at this location would provide a much safer way for cyclists and pedestrians to cross Lincoln Hills Drive. A slightly raised crosswalk would make it easier for drivers to see those crossing and would discourage motor vehicles from speeding as they drive through this crowded area. Pedestrian-activated flashing lights would alert drivers approaching the crosswalk.

The University of Montana recently installed a raised crosswalk with flashing lights on Campus Drive near the new Montana Museum of Art and Culture that could serve as a model.

Sample Crosswalk with Ped-Activated Flashing Lights (at U.M.)



Looking East on
Campus Drive



Looking West on
Campus Drive



The proposed extensions of the existing Bike/Ped path would link the bike park with Rattlesnake Drive to the west and Sunflower Drive to the east. This would provide safer connections to bike lanes, sidewalks, and bus stops.



Bike Lanes, Sidewalks, and Bus Stops on Rattlesnake Dr. Looking North and South of Lincoln Hills Dr.



← Looking South



↑ Looking North

Proposed Other Marked Crosswalks





**The
Intersection of
Rattlesnake
Drive, Lincoln
Hills Drive, and
Brookside Way,
Looking North**

Painting marked crosswalks at the intersection of Rattlesnake Dr., Lincoln Hills Dr., and Brookside Way would make it easier and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists to access the park without having to drive. This (along with the proposed path extensions) would directly connect the bike park to the bike lanes along both the east and west sides of Rattlesnake Drive, allowing cyclists to travel to and from the bike park to much of the city via already established bike lanes. Pedestrians would benefit because they could more safely walk to or from the bike park to or from places like Rattlesnake School or Pineview Park via the sidewalks that run along the west side of Rattlesnake Dr. It would also facilitate access to the bus stops just north of the intersection. The #5 Mountain Line bus runs between downtown and the north end of Lincolnwood. Since the buses have bike racks, riders could potentially take the bus to the bike park rather than driving.

Marking a crosswalk at the intersection of Lincoln Hills Dr. and Sunflower would provide an alternative place to cross Lincoln Hills Dr. and would connect the bike park to a trail that runs to the north along the east side of the athletic fields.

It is the hope of the Rattlesnake Transportation Committee that the suggested changes outlined on the previous pages will decrease the need to build additional parking lots by facilitating and encouraging more bike park patrons and Hellgate High event attendees to arrive using bicycle/pedestrian paths, sidewalks, bike lanes, or the bus. The most severe parking shortages occur occasionally, primarily during Hellgate High School softball, soccer, and lacrosse games.

However, if it is determined that more paved parking is needed to discourage illegal parking that blocks the bike/pedestrian paths and impedes access to the bike park, the areas shown on the following pages could potentially provide additional paved parking. These areas are already frequently but haphazardly used as overflow parking. These areas are currently not marked or paved and the surface consists of a mix of grass, gravel and weeds.

Another possible location for additional Hellgate High School Athletic Complex parking would be north of the fields. If a parking lot was built there, it could be accessed from Rattlesnake Dr. near Rattlesnake Court.

Potential Additional Parking





**Potential West Parking
Addition**



**Potential East Parking
Addition**

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Note that most of the suggested safety improvements proposed above are listed as “high priority” in the 2021 Rattlesnake Valley Transportation Plan Update:

<https://rattlesnaketransportation.org/>

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**Thank you for considering
these suggestions!**

Rattlesnake Transportation Committee

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