

**Overland Mountain Bike Association -  
2021 City of Fort Collins Mayoral & City Council Candidate Questions  
Regarding Parks/Open Spaces & Non-Motorized Singletrack Trails**

1. Do you ever ride a mountain bike on our local trails?
  - yes I do!
2. How often do you recreate in any way on our local trails and which trail is your favorite?
  - If you include walking my dog, 6 or 7 times a week. Mountain biking specifically is somewhat seasonally weather dependant and can be as often as 4 times a week in the summer. One of my favorite after work rides starts from my home in the Brown's Farm neighborhood. I get on the spring creek trail and take it west to Spring Canyon Park and climb over the ridge to the Pine Ridge Natural area. From there I have several options depending on daylight and trail conditions but always end up connecting to the Maxwell Natural area to the north. the Maxwell trail leads to the Ponds neighborhood which connects to Prospect road and takes me back home (and then reverse that route the next time out). When I have more time such as a Saturday morning one of my favorite longer rides requires a shuttle and starts with a drop-off at the Lory State Park gate and ends at the Devil's Backbone trailhead. There are several variations of that ride that I like to mix it up with as well.
3. Singletrack trails and outdoor recreation in general are a major economic component of northern Colorado. OMBA envisions trail expansion as a substantial economic driver in Fort Collins, similar to the Bentonville and northwest Arkansas area. A study completed by the Walton Family Foundation & People for Bikes demonstrated that recreational trails provide an **annual** economic benefit of \$137M to that area. How do you see recreational trails impacting our local economy & what could you do to increase this value?
  - The current trails in Fort Collins see a lot of use by local residents but I'm not aware of our trails being widely known as destination trails (maybe Horsetooth, Soapstone and the various trails in the Poudre Canyon are). All we would really need are some infrastructure upgrades and a marketing campaign and we would know soon enough if we could draw enough people to make it worth the investment to expand our trail systems and maybe construct a bike park. Hopefully it could pay for its own maintenance. If Fort Collins became a true mountain biking destination the positive impact to our economy would be significant.
4. Youth mountain biking is exploding in popularity around the state of Colorado and across the nation, but access to mountain biking trails in Fort Collins is extremely limited for non-driving youth. Current options are limited to the more advanced Foothills Trail or riding along busy roadways, such as Taft Hill towards Loveland or CR 38E around the south end of Horsetooth, thus creating significant safety concerns for younger riders. What would you do to improve the safe access to singletrack trails for youth riders & non-driving individuals from our urban areas?
  - Not only is this a concern for youth mountain biking but for the adult riders in town as well. Approximately 1/2 of the evening ride that I described in question 2 is on paved surfaces (a fact that I find slightly annoying). I have often thought that constructing single track trails that generally parallel the City's paved trail system would be a nice improvement. The College to Shields section of the Poudre River

trail does this nicely! There are some pretty significant gaps in the Fort Collins trail system as a whole (both paved and dirt trails) and I would like to see a higher priority placed on filling those in. The easy ones have been done, filling in most of the remaining gaps will require purchasing land or acquiring easements from private property owners. This takes allocated funds, patience and persistence. If any one of those components are missing it won't happen.

5. Bike parks have become active community hubs in many cities & towns across the US & the world. The City of Boulder opened Valmont Bike Park in 2011 to rave reviews, and it is now the Gold Standard for all community bike parks. With no local options, many Fort Collins residents drive themselves and their kids to Boulder and beyond nearly every weekend for this activity. Do you see this as a local need and would you support developing a large-scale municipal bike park in Fort Collins?
  - I think Fort Collins would be really receptive of a bike park and it is something the community would really benefit from. It could be a huge factor in making Fort Collins a mountain bike destination (already discussed in question 3). It would encourage more people to grow an interest in mountain biking and it could also help address the concern about trail access we talked about in question 4.
6. Expanding on the last question...as a complement to the new Poudre Whitewater Park, a downtown area bike park designed & built to fit into the natural environment along the Poudre corridor could create an "outdoor recreation hub" to go along with all the other downtown area amenities, thus providing new opportunities for many residents & families and much improved access for several underserved audiences. Do you see this as a positive or a negative for the City of Fort Collins and why?
  - This would be a great place for a bike park and a solid positive influence on the city (more detail about this in question 5). The trails along the north side of the river (see my comments in question 4) already have a bit of a bike park feel to them and are a blast to ride on! I would be really excited to see this expanded.
7. Singletrack trail systems in Fort Collins are seeing more use than ever, with demand growing rapidly every year. The past year's response to the Covid pandemic has given us a window into what our trails & trailheads will look like as our population growth continues, and without appropriate planning, it doesn't look good. It has also shown how critical trails and outdoor recreation are to the health & well-being of our residents. What will you do as a Fort Collins Mayor/City Council member to address these overcrowding issues and expand access on City singletrack trails such as Maxwell/Foothills, Coyote Ridge & Bobcat Ridge? How should the City responsibly expand access to City trails for all residents?
  - Not only do trails provide a recreational amenity for our city, they also guide users around and away from sensitive vegetation and habitats in our natural areas. The seemingly simple solution to overcrowded trails is to just add more trails in the areas we already have them. However, the dual function of these trails makes that approach a bit more complicated. Not impossible, just complicated. Continuing to look for more land to purchase or acquiring access easements on private property is a solution we will have to consider as well. As trail use increases maintenance costs will have to increase as well. A City Council that does not see the trails as a priority may see the increasing maintenance costs as easy low-hanging fruit when the budget gets tight. Overcrowded parking at the more popular trailheads will only get worse without expansion of that infrastructure (also see my comments in question 3). Improving city-wide trail connectivity would be a good parallel solution to parking area overcrowding.

8. Fort Collins has been a leader in developing a robust, interconnected paved trail system throughout our urban areas. One glaring gap, however, is the lack of connectivity to open space trails on the west side of town such as Lory State Park, Horsetooth Mountain and Coyote Ridge, where the vast majority of trail users are forced to drive to already overcrowded parking areas. OMBA's Trails Vision Plan supports the development of new multi-use singletrack trails around the south side of Horsetooth, the north side of Horsetooth, and between Cathy Fromme & Coyote Ridge to create a fully connected trail system encircling the reservoir. What benefits do you see with this interconnected system, and would you support collaborating with Larimer County and other agencies on this project? Why or why not?
- When I described one of my favorite long rides in question 2 I mentioned using a shuttle. This has been my solution to the overcrowded parking areas. I have occasionally ridden loops that start and stop at home to access these trails. Although I really enjoy an occasional road bike ride along the dam roads, for some reason it just feels extremely tedious to ride that much pavement on a mountain bike. Single track connections from Fort Collins to those "west-side" trails would be amazing! I would fully support collaboration with other jurisdictions on this project and any other large scale projects that would have a region-wide benefit.
9. "People don't need trails, the land does." Conservationists and Recreationists agree that thoughtfully planned, constructed and maintained trails better conserve the land and environment while providing a better experience for users. Mountain bikers tend to be the most engaged of all trail users when it comes to the quality of trails meeting expectations. Mountain bikers also tend to show up in large numbers to provide input for management plans/decisions as well as on-the-ground work. With tens of thousands of mountain bikers residing in Fort Collins and the real potential of significant budget issues over the next several years, what role do you see volunteers playing in regard to trail building, maintenance & patrol assistance on City of Fort Collins singletrack trails?
- As I mentioned earlier, as the trail system expands and trail use goes up maintenance costs are going to go up as well. This is especially true of the non-paved trail surfaces. A strong volunteer effort could go a long way to help mitigate this cost. From my responses I hope you can see that I am a little more than just a casual mountain biker. I am also a dedicated community volunteer and would love to be involved with trail maintenance work. Unfortunately, the first time I heard of the OMBA organization and your efforts is when you reached out to me for this survey. If we want to fully take advantage of the volunteer work force that is available we will have to build a closer relationship between the various City departments overseeing trail development and maintenance and your organization and others like yours. I am excited to work with you on making those connections when I get elected to City Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your survey!

Sincerely,  
Jeff Hansen  
Candidate for Fort Collins City Council District 5