

**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?

No though I would love to. I had a hybrid for years and took longer riders to Greeley and around Fort Collins to Loveland etc. I gave that bike to a couple needing transportation in Fort Collins. I own a very heavy cruiser. I bike mostly along the Poudre Trail especially out to Watson Lake and return through Lee Martinez Park and then to home near Beavers Market. I have many friends who are mountain bikers who extoll the experience. I also hike many of the mountain trails that mountain bikers use in Horsetooth Mountain Park, Bobcat Ridge Open Space, Lory State Park to name a few.

2. How often do you recreate in any way on our local trails and which trail is your favorite?

I recreate every day. During the colder days I usually walk around the Grandview Cemetery and City Park. During this campaign I walk to the Post Office and then down to the River and then home. I bike often on the Poudre River Trail to Watson Lake or to the Environmental Learning Center on my cruiser. Nothing is more relaxing to bike along the Poudre on a spring or fall day. Often I do errands biking and use the Poudre and Mason Trails. As Mayor I will ride to city hall and to meeting and events around town.

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?

During my previous times on city council I have a demonstrated track record of supporting recreational trails. Circa 1983 I proposed and the council supported the city's designated lottery per capita revenues for trails and open space. In the early 90s I led the effort for the development of a Natural Areas Plan. Next I worked with John Gascoyne, Kelly Ohlson and Jim (forgot his last name) to craft the citizen initiative for quarter cent tax for trails and natural areas. That measure passed. Subsequently I have worked on (canvassed) and donated funds to each of the ballot measures for taxing the citizens to provide open space, natural areas and trails. As you know the most recent county open space ballot measure passed with over 80%. In the late 80s I convinced city management that recreational trails must go under major roads. I am a strong supporter of open spaces including recreational trails. Since that time many trails that crossed roads are now under them. One in particular stands out – the Poudre Trail underpass at Prospect was included in the project to replace the bridge and not used for another 5-10 years until the trail was extended along the Poudre. This year will bring an historic change to the recreational trail system in Northern Colorado. The Poudre Trail will be connected under I-25 when the new bridge over the Poudre River is completed.

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?

Great question – two ideas. The city recreation department could work with the county to provide a regular shuttle for riders that would take them to open spaces for youth riders. The county and city need to consider this option in a larger context due to the crowding at Horsetooth Park and other open spaces such as Coyote Ridge and Bobcat Ridge Natural Areas. The other need is bike lanes along county roads. This must be a priority for the city and county. They need to work together to build this safe infrastructure.

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?

Before deciding whether I support this addition to the recreation infrastructure I would need more data on capital cost, maintenance and operation. It would be useful to know projected demand, user profiles to ensure that all Fort Collins residents can enjoy this amenity. Park safety must be ensured for all users. If the bike advocates joined forces and pledged a match as citizens did for the Poudre Whitewater Park the council would be more receptive to this amenity. I would encourage the city to collaborate with County Parks and Open Space. The capital, maintenance and operations cost could be shared as users are mostly county residents. Further I support a review of current outdoor recreation and uses and possibly repurpose one of those sites.

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?

Great idea and of course this would be a positive in many ways. A downtown bike park would provide easy access for bikers and bikes using the MAX or riding there with connections via the Poudre, Spring Creek, Mason, Fossil Creek, and Power trails as well as via the designated bike routes. Siting the park close to many underserved people is a plus. The major concern would be the acreage needed and providing the infrastructure for the park especially the parking. It would be a concept that again needs private participation. If the private commitment was assured, I am on board.

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?

We must continue to acquire additional open spaces and work with the county to do the same. The emphasis now must be on areas close to where people live. We must examine existing open spaces that have not been historically used for recreational trails such as storm water detention areas, community parks, Mineral Springs Ranch, etc. We need to find routes and trails from underserved populations to those amenities.

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?

Again I have a demonstrated track record of doing so. I am a supporter of recreational opportunities on our open spaces and their interconnectivity. I believe citizens will appreciate this improvement. I have collaborated with Larimer County on similar opportunities both during my time on council and my service for 8 years on the Larimer County Open Lands Board.

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?

The previous and future efforts by mountain bikers are essential for a well-designed and safe trail system. I have friends who have participated in the activities you describe. Only by working with Mountain bikers and other trail enthusiasts will Fort Collins be able to maintain the quality and quantity of opportunities.