

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

**Melanie Potyondy, Candidate for City Council, District 4**

1. Do you ever ride a mountain bike on our local trails?

*I do not. However, my husband is an avid mountain biker and my two young sons both enjoy the Spring Canyon bike park.*

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

*I frequently hike at Pine Ridge Natural Area, our family hikes at Reservoir Ridge and Picnic Boulders, and my four-year-old enjoys biking at Pine Ridge with my husband.*

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?

*With the continuity trails stretching from Loveland to LaPorte, our craft brewery scene, and our unique downtown, I could see Fort Collins becoming a northern Colorado mountain biking destination. Expansion of mountain biking trails and/or the creation of a bike park might help us to maximize our potential in this domain.*

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?

*Extension of the Fossil Creek Bike Trail, west of Taft, southward to Coyote Ridge might mitigate safety concerns for individuals seeking to access the single-track trails at Coyote Ridge without needing a car. In general, increased connection between City bike infrastructure and mountain bike trails might prove fruitful.*

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, should an appropriate property and adequate funds be available to the City to create a bike park like Valmont, it would be a great community resource. I have noticed that the small bike park in my neighborhood (at Spring Canyon Park) seems to be well-used by a variety of age groups.*

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?

*I am generally in favor of expanding recreational opportunities for our City, and like the idea of more trails in proximity to the whitewater park and Old Town. However, I am hesitant to support proposals for any sort of development in the North College area that have not been vetted by the existing (primarily Latinx) community that lives there. The City is currently in the process of determining a development plan for the North College corridor, in conjunction with those citizens most likely to be impacted, with specific emphasis on enhancement vs. gentrification, and I would not support deviations from that mission.*

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?

*I support the creation of additional trails in areas that are heavily used, especially in cases in which individual users are creating their own trails due to overcrowding. I believe trail expansion could be completed thoughtfully through collaboration with the Natural Areas department. I would like to note my interest in having trails in our well-used Natural Areas that are reserved for hikers, as I have fielded concerns from community members (especially those who are elderly or who are walking with children) who feel unsafe walking due to bikers passing them at high speed on shared trails.*

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?

*I am in support of trail systems that would divert bikers off of roads to the greatest extent possible, which this proposal seems to accommodate. I would support a collaborative approach to expanding our mountain biking trail system.*

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?

*Should the mountain biking community be motivated to devote time and energy to trail maintenance and patrolling, I think it would be a wonderful option to promote ownership while mitigating budgetary concerns. However, an organized system would need to be in place to ensure consistent training, uniform procedures, and adequate volunteer staffing for the tasks required.*