

The Value of Trails

Study after study, and example after example, have proven that dollars spent on trails are one of the most affordable ways to increase recreation opportunities in a town. In addition, they also have proven to be one of the simplest ways to improve/maintain property values.

Entire communities can be transformed over time when immediate access to recreation opportunities are created. The mind-set of a community in motion can become infectious to the point that bike racks begin to appear in places they were never needed, and businesses catering to those needs then become successful. The increase of folks out in the open engaging with each other strengthens neighbors and community.

Improved places to go for a bike ride, jog, walk with your family and pets, WILL improve the health and wellness of a community. Getting kids and adults off of their phones and moving around together in their down time as we all know is a great thing.

Refurbishing the "Purple Park" by Kiwanis is a great way to not only modernize the playground equipment but open the conversation about a bigger picture. A long narrow "pump track" could be created around the perimeter of the park in a way that other playground equipment could still be placed. A dirt trail pump track would be a steppingstone for kids learning to ride bike. A focus of 5-13 year olds as a target is pretty natural for a BMX style pump track. My Family lives directly across from the park and for about 2 decades I have watched kids congregate and many of them arrive on bikes after discovering the old railroad grade as a "friendly route" to get there. I think the refurbishment of the park should remain the priority as it would be fairly simple to create any outlying trail components without invading any equipment play areas.

The Big Picture!

Just above the park the city owns +- 12 acres that is underutilized and functions as little more than open space that sees very little use. I believe that while respecting the privacy of homeowners in that area, additional trails could be added in the future that would accommodate even more users, improve property values, recreation, health and wellness. Those trails could be created as a "Step 2" for kids as they grow into mountain biking. This would be for all ages but the 12-18 year olds in town would be a big target. (Step 1 being a dirt track in the park and Step 3 being the trails outside of town and all over the Black Hills). Of course, trails like this are great for hikers and they will likely be the biggest user group, and a trail over those areas will create better access to the park from the Summit St. neighborhoods.

The Purple Park just happens to be on an old railroad grade. It's quite easy to get from the Sanford Lab all the way across town to the school, then on to Lynn's with nearly no up or down gradient, making the town more walk/bike friendly than is often perceived. Adding a bike feature to the park could be unveiled with a "priority bike/pedestrian route" where markers on the street and guard rails coupled with maps would then encourage people move around town not just by car, and those in their cars to be more conscious of those on foot or bike.

Another possible area would be 4th and 5th avenues that were never developed which have potential for a trail down from Hearst Ave. just above West Cemetery. This would create a nice connection for the Hearst addition for non-motorized users while offering a more recreational feel to those neighborhoods.

On the outskirts of Deadwood, 3,700 ft of trail was just built on steep hillsides at a cost of just \$19,000 (plus the costs of the plan). I think Kiwanis has created a huge opportunity to not only refurbish our park, but to get strong momentum/action on items mentioned at our recent Lead Comprehensive plan meetings. Trails were a consistent theme at the meetings so implementing them in the near future would be consistent with the involved citizens wants.

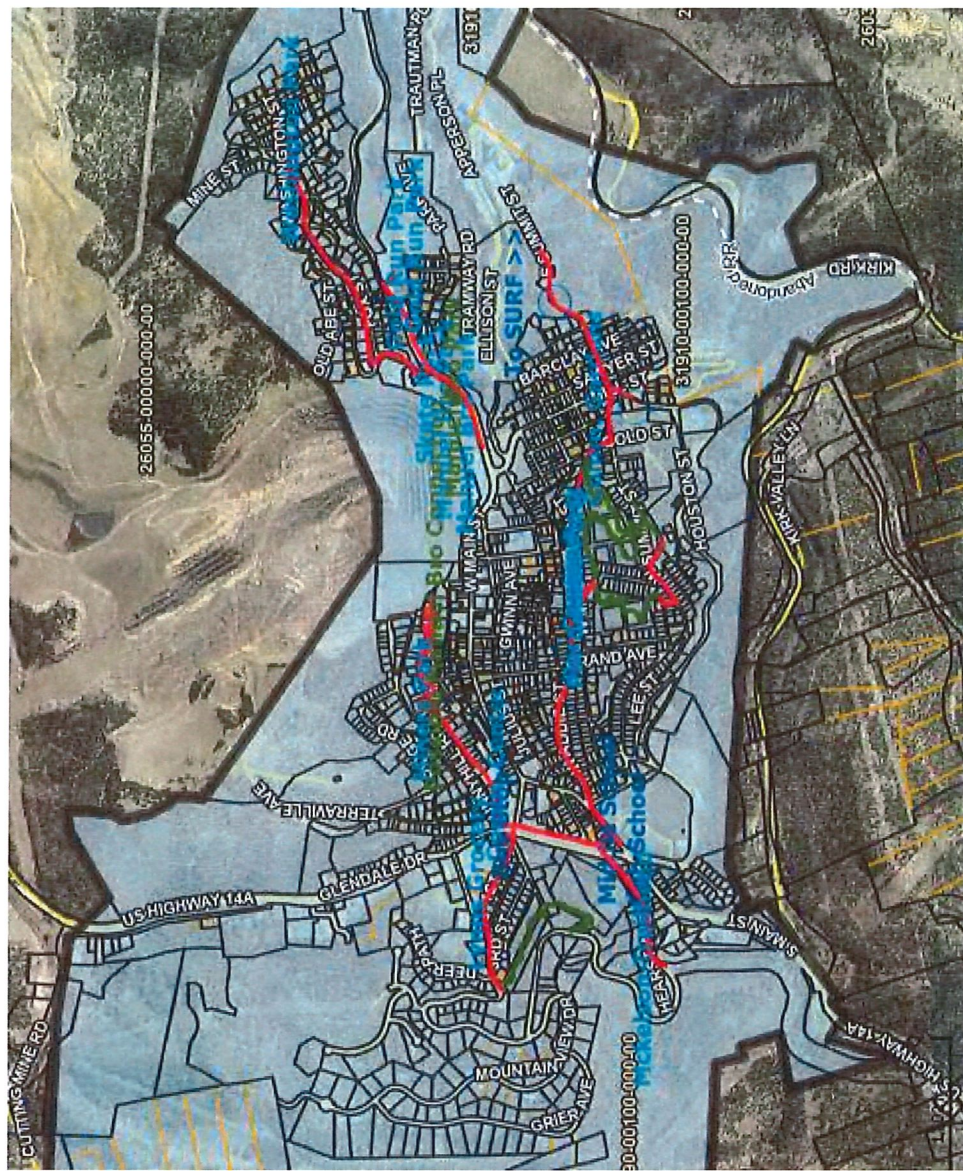
The Priority Pedestrian and Cycle Route would go from Sanford Lab, along Summit (possibly thru the cemetery) - Then follow the old railroad grade thru Par Course (Purple) park and continue along to Addie Street, to the Middle and High school then onward to Lynns Grocery Store. From there it could continue on past the Rec Center and to the Open Cut along Miners or Railroad where it could meet up with a Homestake trail connector which I believe as proposed passes the city park.

An additional Route from the Washington Park to the Homestake trail connector/Manuel Brothers Park should also be identified.

A Route down from Hearst Av. to 1st St. also has potential and would be a great way for people to have use an alternate route to walk to the store rec center or school.

The final product would be multiple wooded urban trails with pedestrian and cyclist friendly routes that connect our communities' areas that have previously been cited as not being very "bike friendly" or pedestrian friendly.

A big portion of these routes don't have sidewalks, and honestly with our narrow streets, snow removal mechanisms, and parking challenges, this is a plus as the areas where cyclists and pedestrians flow the best thru town are often in the areas without sidewalks as they offer better visibility and line of sight. The functionality of many of the sidewalks is currently as a buffer zone from yards to street or a simple connection between neighboring homes, while others are still quite functional and serviceable. In a few areas with wider sidewalks like along the highway from Lynn's to the school it should be made clear that cyclists are allowed on those sidewalks since traditionally they are not.



Red = Routes on Streets

Green = Possible New Trails

* New trails as shown
are rough ideas open to change
NOT exact requirements

