# NRH
## NORTH RICHLAND HILLS

# CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

**FROM:**   The Office of the City Manager   **DATE:**   October 12, 2020

**SUBJECT:**   Discuss Fossil Creek Park "Pump Track" conversion on Field #1 for mountain bike use.

**PRESENTER:**   Vickie Loftice, Managing Director of Community Services

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Staff is recommending converting one of three softball fields at Fossil Creek Park to a "Pump Track" for mountain bike use. The "Pump Track" will complement the mountain bike trails that are expected to be completed within the park by January 2021.

Improvements to Fossil Creek Park were identified as a top three priority in the update to the 2016 Park System Master Plan. The 58.5-acre park is bisected by Fossil Creek and is contained almost fully in the floodplain. Located within the heavily developed watershed, flooding is common during heavy rain events. Given that the park is located within the floodplain, permanent structures or any activity that increases the base flood elevation of the floodplain is not permitted.

Located south of IH 820, the park is one of the city's four original parks. The west side of the park contains three lighted girls' softball fields, a small parking lot, and a non-functioning concession building. The riparian area of the park is home to old growth Bur Oaks and other large, native deciduous trees, grasslands and natural trails.

For more than 25 years the North Richland Girls Softball League operated solely out of Fossil Creek Park. The league moved to Walker's Creek Park when the girls' softball complex opened in 1998. Since that time, the ballfields at Fossil Creek Park have primarily been used for softball practices and periodically for adult kickball leagues. As registration of girls' softball has declined, so has use of Fossil Creek Park.

With current limited use of the park, vandalism and homeless encampments have increased causing unsafe and unappealing park conditions. With these issues in mind, City Council concurred with staff's recommendation to add mountain bike trails at Fossil Creek Park. Construction of the mountain bike trails is expected to begin in November and will be completed in January 2021.

To further provide positive uses of the park, staff is recommending a mountain bike pump track on Softball Field #1. It would be the first track in NE Tarrant County and one of the few in the DFW area. The other two fields will continue to be used for practices until such time that the fields can be converted to other complementary uses of the mountain bike trails and pump track.

So what is a pump track? A pump track is a small, looping trail system that riders can ride continuously without pedaling. The speed along the pump track is dependent on the rider's ability to gain momentum by "pumping" the bike with their legs and arms along the tight terrain transitions of the track.

Once riders learn how to "pump," the track becomes a freestyle bobsled course complete with steep-bermed corners, smooth rollers, and criss-crossing interconnected lines. Well-built pump tracks allow top riders to complete a lap in less than 30 seconds while hitting top speeds over 20 mph – without a single pedal stroke. While a pump track can utilize as little as a 10 x 30 feet piece of land, a full-sized pump track requires about a 50 x 50 foot plot of flat ground.

Beginners through advanced riders enjoy pump tracks. The track helps new riders build mountain biking skills and confidence to ride on trails. Advanced riders use the pump track to train, build strength, and improve bike handling skills.

The pump track will represent more than just a place to ride. It will provide social benefits, recreation activities for a demographic that is typically difficult to reach, make good use of the park and bring visitors to our city.

Through a park use agreement, the project would be constructed and maintained by the Fort Worth Mountain Bike Association, Bonsai Bikes and volunteers. Depending on fundraising by the volunteers, the track would open in early 2021.

Staff will provide an overview of the proposed project.