



**MEMORANDUM**

Community Services Department

**DATE:** October 8, 2014

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** John Marchant, Recreation Manager  
J.P. de la Montaigne, Community Services Director

**SUBJECT:** Multimodal Forms of Transportation and Speed Limits on City Trails

**RECOMMENDATION**

Forward a recommendation to the City Council to implement a 15 miles per hour (mph) speed limit on City trails and recommend a one-year trial period to permit the use of electronic assistive mobility devices and skateboards.

**BACKGROUND**

On November 13, 2013, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) directed staff to look at the possibility of allowing zero-emission, multimodal forms of transportation on the Stevens Creek Trail that is consistent with neighboring cities, including a recommendation for a trail speed limit.

The City provides two Class I, multi-use trails called the Stevens Creek Trail and Permanente Creek Trail. Class I trails serve the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicyclists and are defined as rights-of-way completely separated from motor vehicle street and highway traffic. Both of these trails lead to the Bay Trail within Shoreline at Mountain View Park, which totals a length of 2.25 miles. The Bay Trail extends from the Palo Alto border through Shoreline at Mountain View Park to a levee trail that extends to the City of Sunnyvale.

The first section of the Stevens Creek Trail was completed in 1990 from Shoreline at Mountain View to L'Avenida and multiple segments have since been completed, including the latest segment from Sleeper Avenue over Highway 85 to the Dale/Heatherstone access point. Today, a total of 5.14 miles have been completed along the Stevens Creek Corridor. The City is currently working with the cities of Sunnyvale, Cupertino, and Los Altos to complete a feasibility study to extend the trail south to Blackberry Farm in Cupertino and beyond.

The Permanente Creek Trail extends from Shoreline at Mountain View, over Highway 101, under Old Middlefield Road and currently terminates at Rock Street. A total of 1.17 miles have been completed to date. An additional extension is scheduled to extend the trail to Middlefield Road and the completion date is approximately one year away.

There are shorter Class I trails within the City, including the Hetch Hetchy Trail which is 0.4 miles long, and the Whisman Transit-Oriented Development Trail extending 0.3 miles.

City trails provide the public recreational opportunities for hiking, walking, jogging, biking, etc. Over the past 5 to 10 years, the number of users seems to have increased significantly. Several factors are believed to have led to the increased use, including the number of employees located in the North Bayshore that use it as a commute corridor and, in 2012, additional public access was open by the extension of the Bay Trail from Shoreline at Mountain View to Sunnyvale Baylands Park. This additional access provides bike commuters and naturalists additional access to Mountain View, the Bay, and surrounding areas.

With the increasing number of users, specifically those that commute by bike, staff has received a significant increase in complaints regarding trail behavior, specifically traveling at unsafe speeds. The City has also received increased requests to allow additional modes of transportation, including electric bicycles and skateboards, which currently are not permitted and is enforced by contracted and volunteer Rangers. Members of the public have also made requests to both the PRC and City Council to review current policies related to the permitted uses on the trail system.

### **Current Mountain View City Code**

Chapter 38 of the City Code regulates the "Use of City Parks" (the trails are considered part of the park system). Currently, City Code states that motorized vehicles are not permitted on the trail system other than devices for the disabled and electronic personal assistance mobility devices (EPAMDs, also known as Segways). Staff has received several requests for additional modes of transportation to be permitted, including electric bicycles.

Staff also reviewed City Code specific to skateboards on the trails, and it was determined that within the City Code, skateboards have been prohibited from Shoreline at Mountain View. Since 1990, this restriction has been extended to all trails and is

currently enforced. Staff has received several requests for skateboards to be allowed on the City's trail system.

Finally, City Code does not refer to a specific speed limit for trails/parks, rather it states that one should not ride any wheeled apparatus faster than is reasonable and prudent under the existing conditions. This definition does not provide specific enforcement of speeds along the trails. The number of concerns about trail speed and etiquette has increased in recent years.

### **Local Agencies and Policies**

As directed by the PRC, staff has contacted several agencies to understand current Best Practices, with an emphasis to understand the policies of neighboring agencies (Attachment 1). Overall, the listed agencies that have a posted speed limit typically use 15 mph as the maximum speed for safety on the trails. Staff found that the amount of enforcement for speed varies by agency. Some have ongoing enforcement while others have targeted enforcement during specific times/days. There are some agencies that currently do not have a posted speed limit, similar to the City of Mountain View.

Some agencies do have specific language in their code regarding the use of electric bicycles, while others state no motorized vehicles allowed on trails, which would include the restriction of electric bicycles. Through discussions with staff at other agencies, it was found that there is little to no enforcement specific to electric bicycles or other modes of transportation. Multiple agencies recognize the need to review their codes, however, they have other priorities at the moment.

Due to the outreach to these agencies, the City of Mountain View is working with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to host a regional meeting regarding multi-use trails. ABAG is responsible for the Bay Trail and works with agencies throughout the Bay Area. Staff contacted ABAG for additional resources for Best Practices and found that each agency is responsible for their own policies with little communication among agencies. Staff also contacted Santa Clara County Parks to determine if they would be able to provide examples of Best Practices for trails and they were not able to direct staff to any additional resources.

### **Recommended Changes to Trail Use**

Based on the interest of the PRC and the communication received by staff from trail users, it is being recommended that skateboards and "electric assist mobility devices" be permitted on City trails for a yearlong trial period.

Electric assist mobility devices would be defined to include, but not be limited to, electric bicycles and electric scooters as defined in the California Vehicle Code (406(b) and 407.5, respectively).

The definition of electric assist mobility devices could be expanded to include electric skateboards. However, the California Vehicle Code currently prohibits motorized skateboards "...on any sidewalk, roadway, or any other part of a highway or on any bikeway, bicycle path or trail, equestrian trail, or hiking or recreational trail." This code section was enacted in 1977, but there is a proposed amendment currently in committee to allow such electrically motorized skateboards on bike paths and trails and, as currently proposed, would allow a local agency to adopt an ordinance prohibiting the use of these types of electric skateboards on bicycle paths or trails. Whether or not the proposed amendment will become law is unknown at this time. City staff has been contacted by users of the new skateboard technology requesting that electric skateboards be permitted on City trails. Should the PRC wish to recommend such use to Council, any recommendation would be dependent on whether the California Vehicle Code is actually amended to allow the use of electric skateboards on bike paths and trails.

Other appropriate-sized, human-powered vehicles will continue to be permitted such as elliptical bicycles, (a new form of transportation) as long as they do not exceed a maximum of 36" in width to ensure safety of passing on the trail. In addition, it is being recommended that skateboards (including long boards) be allowed on the trail.

One new additional human-powered vehicle to be permitted during the yearlong trial period would be the use of regular skateboards and longboards. While these have not been permitted on trails historically, other agencies do permit them and have not had any significant problems with them on the trails.

While the possibility of permitting additional modes of transportation is being considered for a yearlong trial period, the overall trail speeds and safety must be considered. Based on the current impacts of no posted speed limit, staff recommends that the PRC forward a recommendation to City Council to implement a 15 mph speed limit along all trails. The implementation of a speed limit would ensure all trail users, no matter what mode, must conform to a maximum speed to ensure safety. This speed is in line with other agencies that believe it is a reasonable limit.

The one-year trial period would allow staff, the PRC, and Council to receive feedback from trail users prior to making long-term decisions regarding use of the trails. The

City has utilized trial periods on trails in recent history. In 2008, a two-year trial period was used to assess the impacts of EPAMDs (Segways). After the two-year trial in 2010, the Council reviewed data and allowed the ongoing use.

### **Enforcement**

Should a trial period be approved, staff will create an educational campaign to educate the public of the new policies which includes communication with local businesses, especially those in the North Bayshore Area. Staff will also include educational signage at trailheads and on bulletin boards along the trail system. Trail information will also be updated on the City website.

The City will install new speed limit signs and utilize the Police Department's radar system to show trail users their speed and what the posted limit is. Rangers will utilize the radar system to encourage compliance through education. Should staff or Rangers determine ongoing speeding or safety concerns, the Police Department will be asked for assistance and citations will be given.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Should the PRC forward a recommendation to the City Council regarding speed limits on City trails and use of electronic assistive mobility devices and skateboards on the City's trail system, the recommendation will be forwarded early next calendar year.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The cost of new signage and public outreach materials is estimated at \$2,000. These costs will be absorbed by the Community Services Department's budget for the trial period.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Do not permit electric vehicles or skateboards on City trails.
2. Provide a trial period length other than one year.
3. Provide other direction.

JRM-JPdIM/CV/8/CSD  
231-10-08-14M-E-1

Attachment: 1. Agency Survey Results

## Agency Survey Results

Agency	Trail(s)	Q1. Approved modes of transportation?	Q2. Prohibited modes of transportation?	Q3. Policy on electric bikes and devises, skateboards, stride riders, EPAMO's & EPDMD's
Palo Alto	Baylands, Foothills, Aratradero, Ester Clark	Pedestrian, Bicycles, Recumbant Bikes, Kick Bikes (Equestrian at Arastrader) (Pedestrian only at Foothills)	No Coasting Devices i.e. Skateboards	No Coasting Devices
SCC Parks	Los Gatos Creek Trail	Pedestrians, Bicycles	No Motorized Vehicles	
San Jose	Guadalupe River, Cayote Creek, Hwy 87 Bikeway	Pedestrians, Bicycles, Skateboards, (Equestrian on some)	No Motorized Vehicles	Only Eletric permitted if they meet OPDMD
Foster City	Bay Trail	Pedestrian, Bicycles, In-line Skates	No Motorized Vehicles	Skateboards and Stride Riders OK
City of Monterey	Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail	Pedestrian, Bicycles, In-line Skates, Skateboards	No Motorized Vehicles	Skateboards can't ride abrest and no tricks
City of Pacific Grove	Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail	Separate trails for Bicycles vs. Predestrians	No Motorized Vehicles, No Pedestrians allowed on Bicycle Trails	
Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District	Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail	Pedestrian, Bicycles, Equestrian	No Moroized Vehicles	No
City of Half Moon Bay	Hwy 1 Trail, Coastal Trail	Not specific. Trail is used by Pedestrians, Bicycles, and motorzed vehicles without issue	No	No
City of Oakland	Bay Trail			
City of Sunnyvale	Bay Trail	Pedestrians, Bicycles	No Motorized Vehicles	No
City of Folsom	Humbug-Willow Creek Trail (HBWC)Folsom Rail Trail, the Folsom Lake Trail, and the Oak Parkway Trail	Pedestrians, Bicycles, Skateboards, EPAMD's and electric bicycles	No Motorized Vehicles, except EPAMD's and electric bicycles	skateboards, EPAMD's and electric bicycles allowed

## Agency Survey Results

Agency	Trail(s)	Q4. Any future policy changes being discussed?	Q5. Speed limits? Specific areas or trail wide	Q6. Additional enforcement costs - Speed limits - Modes of use
Palo Alto	Baylands, Foothills, Aratradero, Ester Clark	No	15mph, 5mph while passing	N/A (Educate before site)
SCC Parks	Los Gatos Creek Trail	Yes, regarding use issues	15mph, trail wide	N/A
San Jose	Guadalupe River, Cayote Creek, Hwy 87 Bikeway	Yes, adoption of OPDMD policy	15mph	\$2,200/per mile for new trail ranger services. No estimate on cost of enforcement of rules.
Foster City	Bay Trail	No	15mph	N/A
City of Monterey	Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail	Yes, may eliminate bicycles due to unsafe speeds	No, just asked to ride at safe speed	N/A
City of Pacific Grove	Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail	Yes, conflicts between bicycles and pedestrians		
Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District	Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail	Yes, in process (direction?)	15mph on shared roads	N/A
City of Half Moon Bay	Hwy 1 Trail, Coastal Trail	No	No	N/A
City of Oakland	Bay Trail			
City of Sunnyvale	Bay Trail	No	No	Only US Fish and Wildlife enforce hunting regs
City of Folsom	Humbug-Willow Creek Trail (HBWC) Folsom Rail Trail, the Folsom Lake Trail, and the Oak Parkway Trail	recently updated to include electric bicycles	15 mph	N/A