

<p>5/4/2022</p>	<p>I would like to comment on the WRA presentation presented in April and also ask about the revised plans for Hallmark Park.</p> <p>First, regarding Hallmark Park. During the discussions of various park redesigns and future plans, it was discussed and I believe pretty much agreed that there is not a desire for a bocce ball court or an "event structure" at the meadow above Hallmark. The current website does not show any revision to the original proposed plan. When will the revision be posted on the PROS Plan website?</p> <p>Regarding the Water Dog Open Space, I want to make several comments.</p> <p>The presentation by WRA was extensive and overall well done but I feel several points need to be made.</p> <p>As an Advisory Committee member, long time Belmont resident of 30+ years and daily hiker on the John Brooks, Rambler and Chaparral trails, I feel that the surveys done missed several things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Currently there are very few animals seen in the Open Space compared to prior years. In the past, it was common to see deer, rabbits, quail, coyotes and other wildlife. 2. Due to bikers now coming from all over the Bay Area as a mountain biking destination, many of my Belmont neighbors do not hike the trails as they consider it too dangerous. My wife and I have been nearly hit over a dozen times over the last 2-3 years by speeding bikers coming around blind curves. Many of the trails are only 24-36 inches wide which is not wide enough for a biker and a walker/hiker to pass safely. Certainly, many bikers are careful but many are not and view the trails as a mountain bike race competition. It's interesting to note that many residents feel it is literally safer to walk on the streets than walk on the WD trails! 3. The bikes have ravaged the trails in many cases destroying tree roots, cutting the roots and in many cases making the trails so slick that it is difficult to walk or hike them. 4. Some of the Open Space(John Brooks) was specifically granted as a donation with the proviso that it be a "preserve". Obviously this is not taken into consideration anymore and I don't understand why. <p>Currently it is almost impossible to have a quiet "nature" walk there with bikers or the fear of bikers running a person over.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Many illegally constructed trails have been cut into the Open Space by the biker community. Let's close these. 6. I strongly recommend that there be a separation of biker or multi purpose trails from hiker/walker trails. I truly believe it's important to allow bikers-young and old- to bike the area but keep these two areas separate. Bikers should only be allowed on trails 48 inches or more wide. As you probably know, many local open space parks do not allow bikers at all. <p>I'm very concerned about the future of this beautiful resource we have. Let's use it but protect it so it remains a sustainable habitat for nature and wildlife in our city.</p> <p>Thank you!</p> <p>Bob Stahl</p>	<p>Bob Stahl</p>
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	<p>Dear Parks & Recreation Commission,</p> <p>I watched the 5/4/22 Meeting and it seems to me that the consultant WRA is doing a very thorough and reasoned assessment of the open space. Their presentation was very informative, and validates what most community members have been saying all along, which is that the forests in Waterdog and San Juan are healthy, and contrary to what a tiny group of partisans keeps saying, the sky is not falling. It's becoming obvious now that the same four people in the community are the only ones who are making comments against shared multi-use access: Deniz Bolbol, Pat Cuielo, Kristen Mercer, and the woman who has the screen name of "Jennifer" or "Jenn Jenn." I feel badly that both you and the consultant have to endure their tirades at every meeting. Please know that the community as a whole appreciates your all the time and effort you've been putting into this monumental task.</p> <p>I was really taken aback at a public comment Kristen Mercer made. She said something to the effect that children and seniors can't use the Waterdog trails because they're too scared of bikes. No evidence to support this was cited of course. That is the complete opposite of my experience. I ride and hike Waterdog on at least a weekly basis, and I see plenty of seniors and young children on the trails. She tried to claim it was an equity issue, but couching an ageist statement like this in equity terms is beyond the pale. Seniors can and do ride mountain bikes. You don't need to take my word for it, please see the attached letters (which I got from the PROS plan resource page) from seniors and near-seniors who cycle the trails and support multi-use.</p> <p>"Jenn Jenn" lodged some grievance that the consultant is failing to consider the impact of "all the mountain bikers from all over the bay area who ride all the trails." This over-the-top statement belies a complete misunderstanding of the role Waterdog plays in the local trail resource system. Waterdog is a small trail system and is good for maybe a two hour or so ride. It is not a "destination" trail system. Yes, cyclists from out of town will ride Waterdog every now and again, but there's not enough there to make it a major attraction - it's not worth driving an hour plus to get to. If cyclists drive all the way from the South Bay, North Bay, or East Bay to the Peninsula, it's much more worth their while to ride the exponentially larger trail networks in the MidPeninsula Open Space District such as El Corte De Madera, Russian Ridge, Skyline Ridge, Saratoga Gap, and so on. For example, in Santa Cruz County, there is a small trail system at De La Vega Park, similarly sized to Waterdog. I've ridden there once or twice, but if I'm going to drive all the way to Santa Cruz County, it's much more worthwhile to ride the much larger trail systems at Soquel Demonstration Forest, Wilder Ranch, and so on. Anyway, if cyclists from out of town want to ride our trails, we should welcome them just as parks and open space areas in other areas welcome us.</p> <p>"Jenn Jenn" does not seem to understand the first two guiding PROS principles, which are to provide equitable access to resources and activities across the entire city, and promote inclusion to people of all backgrounds, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic position, or physical/cognitive ability. I always wonder if there is an undercurrent of racism behind these "locals only" attitudes. We saw this when this same group of folks were demanding that the Crystal Springs Cross Country Course be limited to local athletes only, which would shut out high school athletes from more diverse school districts from the East Bay and Central Valley. "Locals only" seems like a racist dog whistle for "whites only."</p> <p>It wouldn't be a Parks & Rec Meeting if Deniz Bolbol and Pat Cuielo didn't make public comment about some perceived environmental disaster, but what was unusual about this meeting was that they both made comment on the agenda item on the consultant update, and later in the meeting, after comment for that item was closed, and public comment was opened up for items not on the agenda. As soon as that comment period opened, they both took the opportunity to make public comments about the consultant report. During Ms. Bolbol's comment, a commissioner started to say "with all due respect this time is for comments on items not on the agenda..." but Ms. Bolbol talked over the commissioner and bullied her way into completing her comment. If feel the Commission should take stronger action when public commenters are abusing the process like this. The Commission would be well within its rights to cut these comments off. It is unfair to the public, when someone who has already made a comment on an agenda item takes a "Mulligan" and gets further comment in, during a period with others are not expecting those comments to be made and are not prepared to respond. I would respectfully suggest that the Commission consult with the City Attorney on how to handle this situation in the future, because it is certain to happen again.</p> <p>Thanks again for everything you're doing, and keep up the good work. I think both the Commission and WRA are doing an excellent job of moving this process to the finish line in a measured, transparent, and considerate way.</p> <p>Regards, Paul Sheng</p>	<p>Paul Sheng</p>
<p>5/9/2022</p>	<p>Dear Commissioners and PROS committee,</p> <p>I was frustrated to hear WRA consultants deny that Belmont's open spaces serve as a wildlife corridor. It appears they confused the terms "wildlife migration" (long-distance seasonal movement of entire flocks or herds) with the correct term "connectivity corridors" (daily individual travel between interconnected open spaces).</p> <p>All Belmont residents know we have wildlife in our canyons - we see them daily on trails and meadows, and our cameras capture their nocturnal ventures into our yards. And we also intuitively know they cannot survive within these open space pockets alone - they travel between canyons by crossing streets, yards, and even alleys. These open spaces are not isolated islands - they are part of a large habitat archipelago. The consultants who wrote the General Plan Open Space and Conservation Elements, and 1992 Open Space Master Plan, as well as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife all recognize Belmont open spaces as part of a network of connected open spaces, important in preserving the biodiversity of our native species. To familiarize you with these authoritative sources, and how wildlife corridors work, I've put the facts into a few slides, below, and attach here the USDA Information Sheet on the topic.</p> <p>The presence of nature and wildlife is what drew us to live in these hills. Residents decry the saddening trend of fewer and fewer wildlife sightings, as human activity increases in their habitat. We entrust you to create plans and policies that embody our General Plan and preserve the habitat and connected corridors critical to our native wildlife.</p> <p>Thank you, Kristin Mercer</p>	<p>Kristin Mercer</p>

5/18/2022	<p>My name is Richard Newhauser. I live on Wakefield Dr. in Belmont and my backyard butts up to the Waterdog park.</p> <p>I support continued multi-use access to Waterdog. Waterdog has been successfully managed as a multi-use trail system for decades, and the trails have been sustainable based in large part due to volunteer trailwork by cyclists, through the Waterdog Trailkeepers.</p> <p>My family, which includes my two sons, wife, and a dog, enjoy the trails daily through hikes, dog walks and Mt Biking. We love getting into the park as well as looking at it from our backyard.</p> <p>Please continue to allow multi-access to Waterdog.</p> <p>All the best, Richard "Rick" Newhauser</p>	Richard Newhauser
5/26/2022	<p>Brigitte, Park & Rec Commissioners and PROS Committee:</p> <p>After more than 2 years, you will be concluding the PROS Master Plan analysis and provide recommendations regarding our Open Space.</p> <p>During this time, many Belmont residents have provided informational reports, photos, videos and public comments on Waterdog summarized on our Belmont resident website (www.waterdogpreserve.org). The goal of all our efforts has been to guide this new Master Plan toward more Equity and Sustainability than past practices.</p> <p>This email presentation below summarizes the 4 main Waterdog trail issues with their solutions that allow All users to "Love Waterdog". Please take time to read it and think carefully regarding the important decisions you will make that impact us and future generations for years to come.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention.</p> <p>Jennifer Lien Belmont</p>	Jennifer Lien
5/27/2022	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I plan to attend the Belmont PROS Advisory Committee meeting #5 on May 31. As the time provided for public comment is short and I am not a Belmont resident, I would like to provide some comments via email and let the local folks speak live.</p> <p>I'm a hiker and mountain biker in Santa Clara County. I visit Waterdog periodically as I have friends in the area. I enjoy the preserve and value the opportunity to ride and hike there. I strongly believe that it should continue to support multiple use including cycling.</p> <p>More and more, we are seeing that joint engagement from multiple user groups is leading to better open space opportunities. I am an active trail advocate and a frequent volunteer with the Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship. SCMTS evolved from a mountain biking advocacy organization into a multi-use advocacy and trail building organization, and we are seeing huge benefits from the partnerships the organization has developed with land managers and between user groups. The new trail system developments at Cotoni-Coast Dairies and San Vicente Redwoods, as well as completed projects such as Glenwood Preserve, use modern thinking in trail system and trail design to manage multiple uses. The Trail Stewardship harnesses the power of hundreds of volunteers to do great work for all types of trail users, and works to ensure that all users can have good experiences simultaneously – meaning that goal interference and user conflict is minimized. While the mountain biking advocates in Belmont may not be quite this organized, I see them consistently advocating actively for better behavior, to honor the requests of the land managers, and to maintain trails.</p> <p>My point is that the route to better open space interaction and experience is to engage the broad community constructively to build better trails and systems, maintain the systems for optimal experiences, and appeal to users to interact respectfully. Mountain biking communities are often the most active and engaged in trail building and maintenance, because they care deeply about quality of trails and have historically been shut out of many trail systems. I believe that Belmont's best path will be to partner with the trail users including mountain bikers to do work in the system (maintenance; retrofitting for better experience and user interaction; or new trail building where appropriate) and to broadcast and promote the land managers' requests (trail interaction; respect for the environment; etc.) to their larger user groups.</p>	Craig Gleason
5/31/2022	<p>To Whom it May Concern,</p> <p>I just want to express my support for mountain bike access to Waterdog. Unbiased data shows very limited trail damage by mountain bikers. Data also shows minimal disruption to wildlife. Continuing access to Waterdog not only encourages a healthier lifestyle, the presence of mountain bikers also help the local economy as they support local businesses and restaurants.</p>	Ron Martin

	<p>Dear PROS Committee, I have lived in San Mateo for 10 years and now in San Carlos for 3. I regularly ride my bike at Waterdog for recreation and fitness 3-4 times a week. I have never had an encounter with anyone in the park that was negative. Hikers, Bikers and Dog walkers all get along great. Limiting access to any of them would greatly impact the local economy in my eyes. From the local bike shop to the starbucks and Lunardis all within minutes for a post ride snack. I just took my 7 year old for his first mountain bike ride last Saturday and he was hooked.</p> <p>Waterdog is an absolute gem and I would love to continue to ride there for years to come.</p>	
<p>5/31/2022</p>	<p>Thank You, A Concerned Citizen</p>	<p>Chris Bushman</p>
	<p>Dear Ms. Shearer, Parks commissioners, and staff:</p> <p>Can you please point me to the 2035 population projections that were used as inputs to the current draft PROS master plan?</p> <p>I am specifically concerned that the updated draft Housing Element, which won't be released until June 8 and won't be finalized until late summer, includes much higher population figures than those in the current General Plan or even the 2017 Belmont Village Specific Plan. It would be good to confirm that the PROS work was done with the most up-to-date population figures.</p> <p>Thank you, Joanne Adamkewicz</p>	
<p>5/31/2022</p>	<p>Yorkshire Way</p>	<p>Joanne Adamkewicz</p>
	<p>Dear Ms. Shearer,</p> <p>Thank you very much for getting back to me promptly! I really appreciate that.</p> <p>It makes sense that the PROS planning process started with the 2017 population projections. However, it is not finalized yet, and I very strongly hope that the latest figures can be incorporated somehow into this 2022 version of the PROS plan update, for two reasons.</p> <p>First, the new number is much higher than the old forecast of 30,500 residents in 2035. The current population of Belmont is 28,360 per the recent Districting process. The Housing Element projects an additional 4500 (RHNA target build out) to 8250 (full build out) residents, for a total of 32,860 - 36,610 residents by the year 2030. The total by 2035 is unknown but will be even higher - likely more than 25% greater than the 30,500 forecast.</p> <p>Second, the new population will not be evenly distributed throughout the city. In fact, 99% of the 4500-8250 new residents will be added to the eastern area of Belmont, raising the existing population of 7100 to as many as 15,000 people, with only nominal growth in the remaining areas of the city. Such lopsided development is a challenge for any city plan, including roads, sewers, schools -- and parks.</p> <p>I understand that the General Plan and the BVSP can and will be amended to address the growth envisioned in the Housing Element. But those documents deliberately leave the details up to the supporting elements, which includes the PROS master plan. But a plan based on a population forecast that is 25% too low, and with no consideration for geographic distribution of the growth -- such a plan will be obsolete within a year or two, and will fail at its goal of providing a useful blueprint for the future.</p> <p>I acknowledge that the entire planning exercise unfortunately cannot be re-done with the correct population forecast. It's too late. The table entitled "IDEAL AMENITY QUANTITIES FOR 2021 AND 2035 POPULATIONS" will remain unadjusted for the City's latest and most accurate population forecast, thus creating an obstacle to accurate planning by other City departments.</p> <p>So what I am requesting is that the text of the PROS plan acknowledge this disconnect. A statement should be added to the effect that the plan was developed with population forecasts from 2017; that the updated 2022 forecast shows growth to be faster, more dense, and more geographically concentrated than envisioned in the PROS plan; and that therefore, future modifications to the PROS master plan, the General Plan, and the BVSP should be pursued as appropriate to match this growth.</p>	
<p>5/31/2022</p>	<p>Thank you for your consideration, and thank you for passing this on to your consultants as well.</p>	<p>Joanne Adamkewicz</p>