

<p>9/6/2022</p>	<p>Hi Brigitte,</p> <p>Yesterday, I went for a ride before the heat of the day and snapped the following image...</p> <p>Thanks for everything you and your team does to maintain and protect our open spaces.</p> <p>Cheers! Eli</p> <p>Please forgive brevity and typos. Sent from my iPhone.</p>	<p>Eli</p>
<p>9/7/2022</p>	<p>Dear P&R Commission and Director Shearer,</p> <p>Thanks for the informative update on the PROS process at tonight's meeting. I almost raised my hand to speak, but I think you all deserve a little break from the exhaustive public comments you received at meetings over the past two years.</p> <p>I think you should all be proud of both the plan and the transparent process that led to it. By setting up the PROS website, doing the survey, and going through the exhaustive process of holding 35+ commission and committee meetings / focus groups. You went above and beyond to ensure the public had plenty of opportunities to be heard. The consultants have prepared an extremely well thought out plan, and the public has had ample time to read and digest it.</p> <p>I'm completely satisfied that you listened to and considered everything the public had to say. I especially appreciated having the opportunity to have two-way interaction with city staff and the consultant team at the open house event. The way you conducted the process is a testament to your diligence and out-of-the-box thinking. Our city is fortunate to have such a dedicated and insightful Parks and Rec Commission.</p> <p>Environmental review is an arduous process, and I'm sure the plan is in the good hands of the City Attorney and appropriate consultants/experts to ensure the plan is in full compliance with all of the complex environmental laws and regulations.</p> <p>Now that the plan is off to the experts and then Council for decision, I'm glad this will free up the Commission to focus on other important Parks and Recreation business. Given the weather lately, I think the public would like to see the community pool at Barrett be put at the top of the agenda!</p> <p>Best regards, Paul Sheng</p>	<p>Paul Sheng</p>
<p>9/9/2022</p>	<p>Submitting copy of this comment and study directly to PROS for the administrative record.</p> <p>Kristin Mercer ---</p> <p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>At the outset of the Parks Master Plan project residents were promised benchmarking of policies and best practices of neighboring Open Space areas. WRA did not deliver. Instead they provided half a page citing cherry-picked examples, and misrepresented those as comparable to Waterdog-San Juan Open Space. They are not. San Carlos Big Canyon supports their high trail density by banning bikes; their trails are less impacted and in far better condition than Belmont's. San Mateo's Sugarloaf allows bikes on service roads only. MidPen's Corte de Madera is eight times the size and 1/3 the trail density, with full-time rangers and a huge budget to combat mountain bike impacts, and they ban e-bikes explicitly to limit mountain-biking reach and impacts.</p> <p>WRA then went on to invent a new and meaningless statistic of "trail area", without justifying its relevance or providing any benchmark for the statistic. The correct benchmark, trail density, is widely recognized by the ecological community as a gauge for habitat fragmentation. Dozens of authoritative studies suggest that high trail density fragments habitat beyond its capacity to functionally sustain wildlife. It defies credibility that WRA is not aware of this body of knowledge.</p> <p>WRA's deception should not be legitimized in Belmont's Master Plan documents. The attached survey of every Open Space area in the entire San Mateo region (Trail Use Policy Benchmarking) tells the whole story. I shared this study with Parks staff and Commission in 2020, but now I have incorporated San Juan Canyon data, confirmed/updated all data, and expanded upon the analysis.</p> <p>I ask that Council direct Staff and Park Commission to revisit the Draft Open Space Plan to:</p> <p>Remove WRA's misleading, irrelevant and flawed statements, and Provide a data-based policy discussion, utilizing meaningful and valid benchmarks such as those in this survey.</p> <p>Belmont residents deserve honesty and transparency in City policy-making.</p> <p>Thank you, Kristin Mercer</p> <p>Attached are also 3 publications cited in the study and the 4th can be downloaded at this link https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/61721</p>	<p>Kristin Mercer</p>

<p>9/9/2022</p>	<p>Submitting copy of this email and study directly to PROS for the administrative record.</p> <p>Kristin Mercer</p> <p>---</p> <p>Dear Council,</p> <p>Early one spring morning in 2020 I was walking Lake Loop trail and spotted a lizard sunning himself on the trail. A mountain biker approached from behind, rang his bell and passed at a reasonable speed. But as he did he ran over and squished the lizard, right before of my eyes.</p> <p>That biker was not even aware that he killed a living creature, and if you asked him he would likely claim that he has never done any harm riding our trails. His perception is not accurate.</p> <p>For 20 years City officials have clung to the perception that the sport of mountain biking is “passive recreation.” That perception is not accurate.</p> <p>In fact, we have a preponderance of evidence demonstrating that the sport of mountain biking (MTB) is not passive. Since the General Plan requires that “open spaces should include more passive uses” the sport of MTB is inconsistent with our General Plan.</p> <p>Bicycling can be practiced in a passive manner when riding the levies of the bay trail or paved level paths of Sawyer Camp trail. But the sport of mountain biking (MTB) is a different class than passive bicycling. MTB is marketed and practiced in Waterdog Open Space as a fast, rugged, skilled and competitive sport. MTB employs highly specialized, technically advanced equipment and gear. Participants seek specialized tracks with technical challenges, and disdain “sanitized” trails designed for sustainability and hiker safety. MTB as it is practiced on Belmont Open Space trails is an active sport, and is not consistent with the General Plan intent of passive use.</p> <p>Attached please find the arguments and extensive evidentiary record supporting this assertion. Due to file size limitations, attachments will be sent in a series of 3 emails with subject lines accordingly.</p> <p>Thank you</p> <p>Kristin Mercer</p> <p>CC: City Clerk and City Manager for administrative record</p>	<p>Kristin Mercer</p>
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<p>9/22/2022</p>	<p>Dear City Council and Parks Commissioners</p> <p>The 2021 community PROS survey was intended to inform city policies for the new PROS Master Plan. Sadly, the survey methodology was flawed and the questions were generalized, thus yielding data of questionable use. More importantly, the process was hijacked by thousands of non-residents attempting to impose their demands upon Belmont residents. Upon introduction of the PROS survey at least one city official solicited non-resident participation by circulating the survey link via mountain-biking activist groups with a regional social media reach. As a result, 53% of respondents admitted being non-resident. Further the number claiming residency was inflated, suggesting additional falsified responses. What a shame: City credibility has been undermined and resident trust in the process dissolved.</p> <p>I know this council stresses the need for a planning perspective of regional cooperation. However ceding decisions about our priorities for Belmont's Open Space and the use of Belmont taxpayer funds crosses the line. Yes, we consider the suggestions of those visiting our home, but it's OUR home and we get to make the rules. Our guests don't tell us how to spend our money and what amenities to provide. The public PROS discussion of the priorities for our Open Spaces has brought to mind the film Parasite.</p> <p>I appreciate the City's' disclosure of the raw survey data. I took a deep dive into Excel, and the attached paper highlights some of my findings. In short, I find that the inherent survey flaws make any interpretation of the data suspect. Only meta-trends can be regarded as reliable, and even then you should seek to validate such findings by comparison with other reputable sources. For example, three reputable survey sources- regional, state and national –confirm the finding that hikers and nature seekers far outnumber those seeking the active sport of mountain biking.</p> <p>If referenced in recommendations, the inherent survey bias should be transparently disclosed in the documents. Planners should be cautioned against basing important policy decisions on flawed and biased findings.</p> <p>Kristin Mercer</p> <p>"It actually doesn't take much to be considered a difficult woman. That's why there are so many of us." – Jane Goodall</p>	<p>Kristin Mercer</p>
<p>9/22/2022</p>	<p>Dear City Council and Park Commissioners,</p> <p>Everywhere I look is evidence that other cities and agencies prioritize sustainability and visitor safety over the sport of MTB. This 37-slide Sierra Club presentation was shown at a public hearing of the East Bay Regional Parks District in 2021. The District affirmed their policy: "Bikes are allowed on most multi-use (wide) trails and prohibited on most narrow trails of allowing bikes on service roads only, not single track trails." https://www.ebparks.org/recreation/biking</p> <p>If the public was allowed to see this presentation – if Belmont residents understood what's really going on in the canyon trails – they would overwhelmingly support regulation (not banning, just limiting to wide trails!)</p> <p>When Belmont banned smoking it took courage to be the leader. In Open Space management Belmont is the laggard. It is not a controversial decision to follow best practices of every other open space district in the region.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Kristin Mercer</p>	<p>Kristin Mercer</p>
<p>9/23/2022</p>	<p>Dear City Council and Park Commissioners,</p> <p>Over the past 2 years residents who have been displaced from Waterdog trails have submitted hundreds of pages of scientific and government research and policies supporting every aspect of our position. Some of it's posted on www.waterdogperserve.org. The Commission was presented with all this evidence but chose to ignore General Plan policy* and "best practices" of every other open space steward. Faced with thousands of MTB activists, resident voices were lost in the din. Regulating the sport makes sense from every single angle: General Plan conformance, environment, safety, social equity, fiscal, staff resources, legal liability, climate change and more. There is no MTB argument that holds up to scrutiny in the face of the facts.</p> <p>Attached is a summary of 10 facts and arguments that all support regulation (NOT ban) of the sport of MTB on our trails. I have extensive research material supporting each topic if you are interested. These are followed by 4 policies that would begin to address the inequitable and unsustainable status of our Open Spaces. I ask that the Commission be directed to return with a Master Plan that conforms with the General Plan by incorporating these 4 policies.</p> <p>* General Plan Action 4.4-5a: Ensure that the updated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and implementation strategies for trail maintenance and design standards for trails through open space lands. • Measures to improve the visual quality and safety of trails and bikeways. • Identification trails that are no longer necessary or are causing resource damage such as erosion and implementation strategies to remove them. <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Kristin Mercer</p>	<p>Kristin Mercer</p>

<p>9/30/2022</p>	<p>As long time hikers on the Water Dog trails, my wife and I would like to make our views known on what we feel is an equitable solution to the controversy over the past 2+ years concerning use by hikers and bikers.</p> <p>We believe it is impossible to satisfy everyone on this matter as bikers want all trails to be multi-use and hikers are against this. Hikers know that bikers create unsafe conditions as many speed on the trails and around the blind curves plus endanger walkers and hikers as many of the trails are too narrow for a biker and hikers to pass safely. One party has to get off the trail to pass, often in poison oak. Environmentalists have noted the damage to tree roots, erosion and worn down trails from bike tires, scaring off of wildlife previously inhabiting the open space. E bikes have made the trails more unsafe as they can speed up to 28 MPH on level ground and at higher speed on hills. They are also heavier, 45-50 lbs. and do greater damage to the trails. Bikers have also created illegal and unauthorized trails and these should be closed(Soho and Riparian).</p> <p>My wife and I believe it is extremely important that Belmont City officials(City Council and Park Department) create a Master Plan which is designed to protect, preserve and maintain the Water Dog Open Space as a natural habitat for future generations but that does allow for users to enjoy it in a fair and equitable way.</p> <p>Call it a compromise but why not designate the following trails for hikers only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berry Trail Chapparral Canyon creek Lake Loop Ohlone Rambler <p>All other trails can be open, multi-use trails.</p> <p>Lake Road would be multi-use and be the only trail which would allow E bikes.</p> <p>We believe this is a fair compromise which provides all users with safe and fun enjoyment of the beautiful Open Space.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Bob and Pamela Stahl Belmont, CA</p>	<p>Bob and Pamela Stahl</p>
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