

Attachment A

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT
ON
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR E-BIKES USE ON
MONTEREY COUNTY PARKS TRAILS

Monterey County Code 14.12.060.I, currently states, “Electric bicycles are prohibited from all County park dirt trails, unless authorized by the Director”.

It is clear that e-bikes are increasingly popular with a wide range of cyclists. Having an extra boost can help with riding longer distances and tackling hills and rougher terrain. E-bikes open doors for a variety of individuals with disabilities. Bicycle riding in general is especially beneficial for all people by helping with balance, mobility and cognition while improving their overall quality of life.

Responding to requests from the public to update the County E-bike ordinance, the Parks Commission formed an Ad Hoc Committee to research the potential for modifying the current ordinance for e-bikes on trails within Monterey County Parks.

What are the issues and how are other agencies and jurisdictions approaching them?

With increased sales and use of e-bikes, many agencies/jurisdictions have reconsidered their original position of banning e-bikes on their trails and have updated their ordinances to include allowing e-bikes on public trails. These agencies and jurisdictions are deciding which classes of e-bikes should be allowed on trails, on which trails should e-bikes be allowed (single or multi-use) and how best to prevent/resolve conflict on the trails.

1.) Which classes of e-bikes should be allowed on trails - More than half of US states have coalesced around a common system classifying e-bikes:

Class 1 E-Bikes are limited to a top speed of 20 miles per hour, and the electric motor works only when the rider is pedaling.

Class 2 E-Bikes are also limited to a top speed of 20 miles per hour, but they have throttles that work whether the rider is pedaling or not.

Class 3 E-Bikes are less straight-forward. California doesn't allow Class 3 e-bikes to have throttles but pedal- assisted electric power continues up to 28 miles per hour.

In researching regional, state and federal e-bike ordinances on the internet, the Committee found that many jurisdictions are moving to allow e-bike riders access to the same trails used by mountain bike and analog bike riders.

2.) On which kind of trail should e-bikes be allowed (single or multi-use) - The committee’s research revealed that most jurisdictions find that multi-use trails best accommodate the needs of most users.

- They disperse users across the entire system reducing environmental and social impacts.

- They build a trail community by increasing cooperation to preserve and protect a common resource. Separate trails often breed ill will, territoriality and rivalries.
- They are most cost effective for land managers, requiring fewer signs, less staff and simplified monitoring and enforcement.
- They enable responsible, experienced users to educate outlaws and novices.
- Recent studies show that most e-bikes cause no more damage to trails than mountain bikes making multi-user trails all the more appropriate.

3.) *How to prevent/resolve conflict on the trails* - Preventing and resolving conflicts on the trail is essential to a successful trail system. Important components of a successful trail management strategy include:

- User Education - information about a trail's location, routing and authorized uses.
- Etiquette - guidelines for behavior on the trails.
- Signage – appropriate and adequate.
- Public support and involvement.

Community input

To assess public attitude to the issue of e-bikes, the Ad Hoc Committee surveyed Monterey County residents, asking questions regarding over-all attitudes regarding e-bikes, single vs multi-use trails and trail safety.

The survey went to county parks trail user groups (hikers, cyclists, mountain bikers, e-bikers and Equestrians).

- 180 persons responded with 72% in favor of allowing e-bikes on County Parks multi-use trails.

We also made the survey available in both English and Spanish to county residents on the Monterey County website and other appropriate social media. 1082 people responded with 55% in favor of allowing e-bikes on County Parks multi-use trails.

Recommendations for Monterey County Parks trail use ordinance

Monterey County Parks wants to assure high-quality user experiences for hikers, cyclists, mountain bicyclists, e-bike riders and equestrians, protect natural resources and maintain user safety. These challenges are interrelated and should be effectively addressed together.

Considering the internet information gleaned from groups, agencies and jurisdictions and the survey responses from local users, the Ad Hoc Committee would like to make two recommendations:

A. The first recommendation is to replace current Monterey County e-bike ordinance, Code 14.12.060.I, with an ordinance allowing Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 e-bikes on Monterey County Park trails, establishing a cycling speed limit of 20 mph and encouraging single file riding for all cycles. Although respondents differed in their view of which e-bike classifications should be allowed on park trails, we believe it would be logistically impossible for Parks personnel to adequately monitor which class of e-bikes are being ridden on park trails.

An example of such an ordinance might read:

“No person shall operate any analog or e-bicycle in a Monterey County Park other than on a path designated and signed for that purpose or on a paved vehicular road meant for motor vehicles. All bicyclists shall ride in single file, except to pass. All bicyclists shall maintain a safe speed not to exceed 20 mph.”

B. Our second recommendation is focused on helping to assure a high-quality user experience on Parks trails. We recommend that Monterey County Parks Division coordinate with local user groups to implement a Trail Management Strategy for prevention and resolution of conflict on Monterey County Parks trails employing the following components:

- User Education - information about a trail’s location, routing and authorized uses.
- Etiquette - guidelines for behavior on the trails.
- Signage – appropriate and adequate.
- Public support and involvement.