

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [web; Clerk; General Information](#)  
**Subject:** Full Board of Directors and District Clerk - Board Contact Form  
**Date:** Thursday, October 25, 2018 10:15:39 AM

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Name \* Rob Huebschmann

Select a Choice \* Full Board of Directors and District Clerk

Email \* [REDACTED]

Location: (i.e. City, Address or District Ward) Saratoga

Daytime Phone Number (if you wish to be contacted by phone) [REDACTED]

Comments: \*

Good morning everyone! As we approach the fall time change cycle I find myself again lamenting all the friends who will be losing access to enjoy open space parks during the week due to our earlier sunsets. MROSD parks are already more generous than the County of Santa Clara in terms of park closure times (30 minutes past sunset) – so thank you for recognizing the challenge already faced by many residents.

Unfortunately as traffic has dramatically worsened I'm getting more and more feedback from others that they simply can't make it through traffic to reach a park and still have an hour to go for a hike or a ride before hitting the cutoff. The result is that when we hit the winter cycle folks start driving farther to East Bay Regional Parks that are open past sunset for longer periods. The downside is this means more time in traffic, more fuel being burned, and more cars on the roads for longer distances.

I wanted to reach out to the Board to see if there has been any evaluation of doing permit access past the normal closure time? My vision is that groups could pay for a permit that would allow a group activity in specific areas past the normal closure time. This would require selecting SPECIFIC parks where this has the least impact (not all of them) and where winter usage is more likely.

For example, St Joseph's Hill is conveniently located and is already popular in the winter months because it dries out faster than most other locations. If a group could purchase a permit (say, \$5 per person?) and extend riding at St Joseph's Hill to 8 PM (instead of sunset +30) that would allow groups to still enjoy the park during the week without having to rush through traffic or trying to beat the setting sun.

My suggestion of focusing on groups rather than individuals is for safety. My thinking is that hiking and biking groups naturally do a better job of taking care of each other vs a lone hiker or biker who could be less prepared. Some guidelines could even be created as well for the groups as part of the permit – such as the group has to stick together, should have first aid training, etc.

If there is interest in this idea, I'd love an opportunity to work out the details and prototype this at one of the preserves. I know lots of folks that would love an opportunity to enjoy our open space areas after a hectic day at work. A treadmill is no replacement for the outdoors.

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**DRAFT RESPONSE FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION**

November 28, 2018

Rob Huebschmann

██████████@gmail.com

RE: Preserve Hours

Dear Mr. Huebschmann,

Thank you for contacting us and presenting your concept for after-hours permits for general hiking and mountain biking use. Although we recognize that the change in daylight savings time may require some visitors to adjust their schedules to continue accessing preserves on workdays during the early mornings and afternoons, we are unable to accommodate after-hours permits for general use due to the heightened risk associated with visiting preserves at night.

Our preserves are maintained in a natural state to protect the land's sensitive plant and wildlife resources, as well as provide the public with opportunities to connect with nature. As such, our lands are largely undeveloped with unpaved trails on rugged terrain and no lighting. Moreover, introducing flashlights into the preserves can affect and disrupt the native wildlife and potentially alarm neighbors who are not accustomed to seeing lights in the preserves. Furthermore, our ranger staffing levels and schedules are unequipped to monitor general after-hours use and respond to related after-hours emergencies.

Midpen does offer limited, organized nighttime access through our docent program. These activities are led by trained docents and scheduled in coordination with Midpen staff who monitor each activity. We encourage you to look into our popular after-hours, docent-led activities. For more information and to review our docent activity calendar, please refer to our website at <https://www.openspace.org/what-to-do/calendar>. Thank you again for your input.

Sincerely,

Jed Cyr  
President, Board of Directors

cc: Ana Ruiz, General Manger