



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: December 9, 2020

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Ana Ruiz, General Manager *AR*

FROM: Matt Anderson, Chief Ranger

SUBJECT: Update on the Electric Bicycle Pilot Implementation at Rancho San Antonio and Ravenswood Preserves

During its regular meeting on August 12, 2020, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Board of Directors (Board) approved a one-year pilot program (Pilot Program) to evaluate select paved and improved trails at Ravenswood Preserve and Rancho San Antonio Preserve and County Park where bicycles are currently allowed for use by class 1 and 2 electric bicycles (e-bikes). (R-20-89).

During the Pilot Program, visitors will be allowed to use e-bikes on the designated trails in Ravenswood and Rancho San Antonio. The Pilot Program has two primary components: public outreach and monitoring. The outreach component focuses on informing the public about the trial nature of the pilot through onsite signage and website information. The monitoring component will include intercept surveys and data collection related to compliance, accidents, trail conditions, and visitor experience/complaints. Staff will launch the Pilot Program on December 15, 2020 and run the Pilot Program through December 15, 2021.

Pilot Scope

- ❖ Collect data over a 1-year period at Rancho San Antonio Preserve and County Park on paved and improved trails and at Ravenswood Preserve along the Bay Trail to assess public opinions and perceptions, impacts to trail user experience and safety, facility impacts, compliance and enforcement, and level of use.
- ❖ Determine approximate counts of e-bike users.
- ❖ Gather public input and document visitor trail experiences.
- ❖ Gather data on trail use violations and incidents.
- ❖ Document trail conditions pre and post Pilot Program
- ❖ Analyze data and develop findings.
- ❖ Present findings to the Board for next steps and policy direction.

Methodology

- ❖ Intercept Surveys

Trained seasonal staff and volunteers will conduct intercept surveys Monday through Sunday at variable times. Surveys will be conducted for sixteen weeks, four weeks within each quarter (season). Staff anticipate doing a total of 112 survey sessions per preserve, with each session lasting approximately four hours. Visitors contacted for the intercept survey that wish to take the survey online at a later time will be able to do so if they provide an email for follow up. The

surveys will document the visitor experience, including any trail use conflicts and ask respondents about their level of support or opposition to e-bike use. Survey staff and volunteers will contact visitors hiking, running, horseback riding (at Rancho), and riding analog bicycles and e-bikes. They will maintain a neutral position towards the use of e-bikes.

❖ Observation Reports

During each of the intercept survey sessions, one of the trained seasonal staff or volunteers will make observational reports of all visitor use by activity type. These reports will be used to provide an overall view of the percentage of trail use by activity.

❖ Speed Observations

Rangers will measure bicycle speeds of analog bicycles and e-bikes with radar units during each survey week. They will conduct approximately four hours of speed observations per survey week in each preserve.

❖ Trail Assessments

Land and Facilities staff have completed pre-pilot trail assessments of all designated trails in the pilot program. Post-pilot assessments will be done in December 2021. The assessments include pictures of the trail every 500 feet, a general assessment of trail condition and of trail use impact/compaction adjacent to the trail.

❖ Incidents and citations

A comparison will be made of all reportable incidents, accidents, enforcement activity, and public comments received during the pilot period and over the last three years for each study area.

Public Notice

Staff will provide public notice of the pilot through:

- ❖ The District website and social media.
- ❖ Signs posted in each preserve at strategic locations. Signs will make visitors aware that the pilot is underway, that it is a trial program, include a map of designated trails and provide a web link for more information.
- ❖ Interested parties list. Emails have been sent to 119 individuals who have corresponded with us over the last two years regarding e-bikes, e-bike access and District e-bike policies. The email advised of the launch of the Pilot Project in December 2020 and provided links to District web information on e-bike access and regulations.

After completion of the Pilot Program staff will summarize the results of the Pilot Project in early 2022 and present to the Board for review. At that time, the Board will determine whether to designate the trails included in the Pilot Project for e-bike use or discontinue e-bike use in these preserves.

This Pilot Program is not intended to provide the data necessary for the Board to determine whether to allow e-bike access on typical *unimproved* preserve trails. If adopted as part of the FY22 action plan and budget recommendations, staff will do separate research and outreach on potential e-bike impacts for use on *unimproved* trails that make up the vast majority of District trails. This information will be presented to the Board for consideration in spring of 2022.