

From: [Jay Chesavage](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Tanaka, Greg](#)
Subject: e-bike ban on Baylands on 3/13/2023 agenda
Date: Monday, March 13, 2023 11:08:08 AM

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Honorable Palo Alto City Council:

I am opposed to the proposed e-bike ban which includes "Class 1" e-bikes, which are pedal assist electric bicycles. Class 2 (throttle operated with 20MPH limit) and Class 3 (throttle operated with ~30 MPH limit) do not require any rider effort, and more clearly fall into the category "motor driven vehicles" presently prohibited from the Baylands and other trails. A reasonable speed limit would be sensible to address the use of all types of e-bikes.

I believe an exception should certainly be made for class 1 e-bikes, and many surrounding parks are already providing signage related to allowing class 1 e-bikes where bicycles are permitted.

1) E-bikes are environmentally friendly, and Class 1 e-bikes only match some fraction of the rider's pedal effort with electric assist, are speed limited to 20MPH, and increase access for riders of all abilities while the cyclist provides most of the pedal effort.

2) My Class 1 E-bike is my primary transportation, and after spinal surgery, I prefer the smoothened ride of dual suspension with rough terrain of the Baylands. Recreational riders such as myself usually have the electric pedal assist turned off in places with flat terrain such as the Baylands, and I can't think of any reason I'd need a second dual suspension (non electric) bicycle other than this proposed legislation banning e-bikes of all types on the baylands.

3) The proposed amended ordinance does not ban the activity of riding a bicycle or how responsibly it is used, but instead bans the capability of the bicycle, whether that capability is used or not. I drive a motor vehicle which is capable of going faster than the speed limit, yet we don't ban certain cars on a roadway merely because they are capable of exceeding the speed limit. The same public safety concerns apply to both and should be sensibly addressed according to operator conduct and not operator equipment.

4) An e-bike ban should be based on some sort of specific measured metric of use that makes them unsafe for pedestrians or riders, or some specific evidence that shows e-bikes are inherently unsafe for the rider or others on the Baylands trails.

5) I believe an origin of the ban against e-bikes is based in the long standing 'motor powered vehicles prohibited' signage from the past directed to motorcycles, which have neither a 20 MPH limit, nor a pedal assist mode, and are considerably heavier than an e-bike. The predicate device relied on for this legislation is not applicable to the current one.

6) Modern e-bikes are no heavier then old steel Schwinn bicycles I've owned in the past, and cyclists typically weigh more than their bike. If total mass of a bicyclist vs a pedestrian is the safety issue that is sought to be addressed, the e-bike vs pedal bike risks to pedestrian trail walkers are identical.

My belief is that legislative changes should be made with a particular underlying principle in mind, so that the application of the legislative change is consonant with the principle it seeks to protect, which remains unarticulated with this proposed legislative change.

I request that the vote on this matter be either NO, or tabled until the underlying principle for the change is articulated and demonstrated as being an actual public hazard so that the change reflects that principle rather than the proposed current ban which identifies neither.

Here's an analogous example. Bicyclists and dog walkers are both allowed on baylands trails, and I've used both modes of transport. Some dog walkers prefer an extendable reel-style leash, and their dog may bolt across the path of a bicyclist on that reel-style leash, presenting a hazard to both. Yet, we don't ban reel-style leashes (which are capable of being locked) on the baylands. Are those next?

Jay Chesavage, avid baylands bicyclist (and baylands dog walker)
3833 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto

From: [Rachel Fussell](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Palo Alto City Council E-Bike Ban
Date: Monday, March 13, 2023 9:15:56 AM
Attachments: [Palo Alto City Council Public Comment Letter .docx.pdf](#)

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Dear Members of the Palo Alto City Council,

On behalf of the PeopleForBikes Coalition, we are writing in response to the Parks and Recreation Commission Recommendation to Adopt an Ordinance Amending PAMC Section 22.04.220 to Regulate Electric Bicycles and Electric Coasting Devices in Parks and Open Spaces, that would prohibit all classes of electric bicycles on unpaved roads in the Baylands and in open space areas like the Arastradero Preserve.

I've attached our public comment and letter below.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,
Rachel

--

Rachel Fussell

eMTB Policy & Program Manager

(she/hers)

PeopleForBikes

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[PeopleForBikes.org](https://peopleforbikes.org)





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March 13, 2023

Palo Alto City Council
Office of the City Clerk: City Hall, 7th Floor
250 Hamilton Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Palo Alto City Council,

On behalf of the PeopleForBikes Coalition, we are writing in response to the proposal to prohibit all classes of electric bicycles on unpaved roads in the Baylands and in open space areas such as the Arastradero Preserve. We respectfully request that you refrain from imposing any bans at this time, and instead fully review the facts, data, and state laws relating to electric bicycle use before you consider any new policies. We believe that thoughtful consideration of this information will lead you to conclude that electric bicycles should be regulated like traditional bicycles and that electric bicycles, especially Class 1 pedal-assist electric bicycles, should not be regulated like motorized vehicles.

The PeopleForBikes Coalition is the national advocacy group that works for better policies and infrastructure for bike riding. We are also the sole national industry association for manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors of bicycle products, including electric bicycles. Our work to make bike riding a safer and more inclusive activity for everyone, including electric bicycle riders, is supported by 50,000 individuals in California. Our organization has led national efforts to modernize and standardize electric bicycle regulation, educate users, and improve research.

As we read the proposal, it would regulate electric bicycles identically to other types of motorized vehicles that are often considered to be motor vehicles, such as mopeds, motorcycles, and scooters. This is not an appropriate regulatory framework for electric bicycles given their characteristics and how they are ridden. Existing safety research firmly supports the fact that electric bicycles should be regulated like traditional, non-motorized bicycles. Additional information on these studies can be found at the end of this letter.

Class 1 electric bicycles travel at similar speeds to bicycles and should not be regulated like high-powered and faster-motorized devices such as mopeds and motorcycles. They have been demonstrated to travel at average speeds within two miles per hour of traditional bicycles, with the faster speeds typically occurring in uphill areas.¹ Class 1 electric bicycles look, are equipped, and ride just like traditional bicycles and simply give riders – regardless of age, physical, or cognitive ability – an extra assist while pedaling. When introduced on- or off-road, studies have shown that there appear to be minimal conflicts between electric bicycle riders and other user groups, with no material safety distinctions between electric bicycle and conventional bicycle use.²

¹ Cherry, C. & MacArthur, J., E-bike safety, A review of Empirical European and North American Studies (Oct. 15, 2019)

² [Jefferson County, Colorado Electric Bicycle Study \(2017\)](#)



Additionally, studies show there is no difference in how riders of electric bicycles and conventional bicycles comply with traffic laws, or their safety and crash risks with other trail users.³ Electric bicycles are also proven to provide substantial health benefits to riders.⁴ In short, electric bicycles have significant value to your constituents and they can be an asset to your community. Additional information on these studies can be found at the end of this letter.

We understand that this proposed ban originated due to concerns regarding motorized vehicles and sensitive ecological areas. We believe that the available evidence shows that the use of electric bicycles on unpaved roads does not negatively impact the environment. We suggest that a pilot electric bicycle project and additional research on wildlife impacts could help to better understand whether any such impacts were occurring in the areas under your management. PeopleForBikes believes further research, community outreach, and education on-site with demo bikes, and a pilot program would be helpful in understanding the potential impacts of Class 1 electric bicycles on unpaved roads in the Baylands and in open space areas such as the Arastradero Preserve. We believe a more robust and on-the-ground approach will better address the concerns of the community, and an outright ban would be premature.

In California, as well as 38 other states and at the federal level, the law very clearly distinguishes low-speed electric bicycles from other types of vehicles with motors that are classified as motor vehicles.⁵ Because of their relatively limited power and speed capability, electric bicycles are afforded essentially the same legal rights and responsibilities as bicycles under these laws. Accordingly, PeopleForBikes believes that electric bicycles should generally have access to infrastructure that is designed and designated for bicycle use, such as unpaved roads. Absent evidence of actual adverse impacts from the use of electric bicycles, that access should continue.

We are also concerned about the impact such a ban would have on electric bicycle riders who use these unpaved roads to commute and as an active transportation solution. It would effectively require electric bicycles to ride on the roads, interacting with motor vehicle traffic, instead of allowing them access to safer off-road bicycling infrastructure. People are using off-road trails to ride bicycles and electric bicycles because the street is often perceived as not being as safe a place to ride.

We recognize that electric bicycle use, along with other micro-mobility products in the United States, is expanding rapidly as Americans increasingly embrace alternative modes of transportation. Americans are also embracing human-powered recreation and

³ Cherry, C. & MacArthur, J., E-bike safety, A review of Empirical European and North American Studies (Oct. 15, 2019)

Comparing physical activity of pedal-assist electric bikes with walking and conventional bicycles (2017)

⁴ Cherry, C. & MacArthur, J., Comparing physical activity of pedal-assist electric bikes with walking and conventional bicycles (October 31, 2016)

⁵ PeopleForBikes, California Electric Bicycle Law (October, 2022)



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transportation like never before, and bicycling in our country is at record levels. We believe that electric bicycles are a key component to fighting climate change, as they are an emission-free transportation alternative to cars and other fossil fuel vehicles. We also recognize that electric bicycles are bringing new riders into the world of biking, who may be less familiar with the activity. We understand that this can place stress on local communities that are seeing new or increased use of their existing infrastructure.

While these are challenges, they can be addressed effectively through education and infrastructure development. Proactive communication between city officials, bicycle dealers, and bicycle rental companies can help educate these new riders on their rights and duties while using their electric bicycles. PeopleForBikes has developed resources specifically to help retailers, rental shops, and the general public understand their obligations under the law, and remains committed to its electric bicycle education efforts. We firmly believe the local shops in your community will be good partners in these efforts to educate bike riders and keep all user groups safe.

Palo Alto's concerns are not unique. Many local governments have had concerns about electric bicycle use as more people ride them in communities throughout the United States. However, those local governments that have engaged in in-depth analyses of electric bicycle use have almost universally concluded that electric bicycles should be treated like bicycles and allowed in areas on infrastructure where bicycles are allowed. Examples of communities that have undertaken significant studies of electric bicycle rider behavior and perceptions from other user groups are attached to this letter. We believe that any objective examination of the facts leads to the conclusion that electric bicycle riders should be treated like riders of conventional bicycles.

PeopleForBikes values the safety of your community members and stands as a partner as you work to resolve this issue. We firmly believe that electric bicycles can be an asset to your community and alleviate many other problems you may be confronting with respect to traffic, congestion, parking, and climate change goals. We encourage you to closely consider the benefits of electric bicycles to your community and welcome the opportunity to provide any further information. We appreciate the chance to share our resources and knowledge.

Sincerely,

Rachel Fussell
eMTB Policy & Program Manager
PeopleForBikes Coalition
rachel@peopleforbikes.org



Additional Information on Electric Bicycle Speed, Safety, and Studies

Electric bicycles travel at bike-like speeds.

- A. Class 1 electric bicycles have a motor that cuts off after the rider reaches 20mph. This is not the average speed. On flat and uphill surfaces, electric bicycles travel on average 2-3 mph faster than conventional bicycles (i.e. around 13-14 mph). Studies show that electric bicycles do not travel significantly faster than regular bicycles, and in some instances, are slower, depending on the location and the rider.
- Langford, B. et al, Risky riding: Naturalistic methods comparing safety behavior from conventional bicycle riders and electric bike riders, Accident Analysis & Prevention (Sept. 2015) ("We find that average on-road speeds of e-bike riders (13.3 kph) were higher than regular bicyclists (10.4 kph) but shared use path (greenway) speeds of e-bike riders (11.0 kph) were lower than regular bicyclists (12.6 kph)").
 - Cherry, C. & MacArthur, J., E-bike safety, A review of Empirical European and North American Studies (Oct. 15, 2019) "[Electric bicycle] riders tend to ride at higher speeds on uphill segments, but not flat or downhill segments.").
 - Tahoe National Forest NEPA Environmental Assessment: During the EA process, TNF concluded that differences in speeds on singletrack natural surface trails are largely dictated by the rider's ability as well as trail conditions, alignment and design. Additionally, it was noted that Class 1 electric bicycles and conventional mountain bikes have almost indistinguishable frames and components, making their stopping ability similar and trail etiquette guidelines the same for both types of users. (East Zone Connectivity and Restoration Project Decision Notice & FONSI, 2021).

Electric bicycle riders comply with laws in the same way as riders of conventional bikes.

- A. Electric bicycle users are like most people and choose to respect the law of the road and be kind to others with whom they share public resources. They would respond more favorably to restrictions on use rather than an outright ban. Most critically, existing studies show that electric bicycles riders comply with laws to the same extent as bicycle riders.
- Cherry, C. & MacArthur, J., E-bike safety, A review of Empirical European and North American Studies (Oct. 15, 2019) ("For other safety surrogates (wrong way riding, stop sign and signal compliance) e-bike riders behaved in the same way as cyclists, with similar violation rates.");
 - Langford, B. et al, Risky riding: Naturalistic methods comparing safety behavior from conventional bicycle riders and electric bike riders, Accident Analysis & Prevention (Sept. 2015) ("E-bike riders exhibit nearly identical safety behavior as regular bike riders and should be regulated in similar ways.").

The safety outcomes relating to electric bicycle use and conventional bicycle use are similar.

- A. Banning electric bicycles from areas where conventional bicycles are used is not justified based on safety issues or the risk of collisions.
- Cherry, C. & Fishman, E., E-bikes in the Mainstream: Reviewing a Decade of Research, Transport Review (July 2015) ("Overall differences in safety outcomes were not dramatic between e-bike and bicycle riders.").
 - Cherry, C. & MacArthur, J., E-bike safety, A review of Empirical European and North American Studies (Oct. 15, 2019) (summarizing European studies finding that over



the same distances traveled, “e-bikes and conventional bicycles have the same crash risk.”).

An electric bicycle ban will not decrease ridership, only complicate enforcement. There is strong demand in the public for electric bicycles.

- A. Ridership is increasing, and people are using electric bicycles to recreate, replace vehicle trips and augment existing bicycle trips. In 2020, electric bicycle sales grew by 132% (Source: the NPD Group). This is the fast-growing sector of sales in the bicycle industry by a significant margin.

USDA Forest Service NEPA Analysis indicates Class 1 electric bicycles can be successfully incorporated into trails with non-motorized uses.

- A. Existing research from the USDA Forest Service and the East Zone Connectivity and Restoration Project in Tahoe National Forest indicates that pedal-assist Class 1 electric bicycles can be successfully incorporated into trails with non-motorized uses. The East Zone Connectivity’s decision notice included the designation of 35 miles of existing non-motorized trails as open for Class 1 electric bicycles and determined that their access to the trails did not significantly alter public enjoyment or affect the patterns of use on the trails for Class 1 electric bicycle recreation.
 - U.S. Forest Service, Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the East Zone Connectivity and Restoration Project (May 1, 2021)
“<https://www.tahoedonner.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Decision-Notice-East-Zone-Connectivity-Restoration-Project.pdf>.”

Studies by Local Governments

There are two in-depth studies that local governments have taken to understand electric bicycle rider behavior and craft local ordinances to regulate their use.

Fairfax County Research (2019)

- A. Overview: Fairfax County, VA worked closely with NOVA (Northern Virginia) Parks to fund a white paper to gain a better understanding of electric bicycles. This research reviewed federal and state electric bicycle laws and model legislation, the difference in safety and behavior between regular bikes vs electric bicycles, other local trail systems policies, current park regulations, and potential alternatives.
- B. Rationale: The increased use of electric bicycles within Fairfax County sparked the need to address current regulations regarding their use. The county chose to research the use of electric bicycles to inform a data-driven policy for their community.
- C. Results: This research found that electric bicycle users exhibit nearly identical behavior as regular bike users, electric bicycle speeds were observed to be lower than standard bike speeds on shared trails, electric bicycles tend to be similar to regular bikes and most trail users are unaware of the presence of electric bicycles when asked.

Jefferson County Study (2017)

- A. Overview: Jefferson County, CO conducted two studies at multiple parks to gain a better understanding of visitors’ knowledge, perceptions, and concerns related to the use of electric bicycles on urban pathways and natural surface trails. Through ‘Test Ride Surveys,’ visitors are asked four questions before and after riding an electric bicycle to determine familiarity with electric bicycles and any changes in perception and/or acceptance after riding one. Through ‘Visitor Intercept Surveys,’ random park visitors are asked about their



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perceptions, acceptance, and concerns related to electric bicycles on trails, as well as their ability to detect an electric bicycle sharing the pathway with them.

- B. Rationale: Jefferson County realized that electric bicycles are already in use on its pathways and trails, and that usage will not significantly decrease with a wholesale ban. It has opted to study the issue and engage park visitors to determine whether to allow or prohibit this technology on the transportation and recreation corridors under its jurisdiction.

From: [Richard White](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: request to offer public comment on item #4 regarding amending ordinance to ban e-bikes from certain trails in the Palo Alto Baylands
Date: Sunday, March 12, 2023 9:11:48 PM

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City Council Admin,

Could I please be added to public comments listing to provide community input on the proposed banning of e-bikes from certain trails in the Palo Alto Baylands park? My plan is to attend the meeting by Zoom. I understand the opportunity for providing this public comment will be tomorrow (Monday) sometime after 7:30.

Thanks
Richard L. White

From: [paulwtrainer](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Documents Pertaining to March 13 Meeting on Ebike Ban of Unpaved Baylands Roads
Date: Sunday, March 12, 2023 2:21:38 PM
Attachments: [Ebike Ban Counter Arguments2.pptx](#)

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I have been designated to represent a group of concerned ebikers that are not in favor of the proposed plan to ban ebikers from the Palo Alto baylands unpaved roads. We feel that we have not had adequate say in the decision that is to be taken at the City Council meeting on March 13. We therefore ask that you please allocate a 20 minute time slot so that I, as the spokesperson of our group, can present the attached documents to the city council.

Given that this is the last opportunity before the definitive vote, it is particularly urgent that we be given our say in this matter, since what is being proposed and will be decided on Monday evening, if implemented, removes our rights and access to these trails and we believe that the city council has not been properly briefed of the gravity and consequences that such a ban would produce to a large portion of the older population of Palo Alto as well as disabled citizens and those that are health impaired.

Please give us 20 minutes to present our case on March 13 City Council meeting agenda before the vote on Ebike Ban on Palo Alto baylands roads.

The document needed for my presentation and that we would like to have projected at the city council meeting are attached below.

Thank you,
Paul Trainer

Arguments for Not Banning Ebike Access to Palo Alto Unpaved Baylands Trails/Roads

Also see video at: <https://youtu.be/46u8h9RSWJ8>

**by Paul Trainer
March 2023**

Ebikes Do Not Disturb the Wildlife

- Ebikes and their motors are extremely quiet, and can be even quieter than a pedal bike
 - Ebikes have less chain noise and less derailleur noise than a pedal bike
 - Motor noise is extremely quiet
 - The noisiest ebike motors are hard to hear when more than a few feet away
 - I own every type of ebike motor, and none make significant noise, none scare wildlife
 - A Class 2 or 3 ebike is quieter than a pedal bike, because if the throttle is used, there is no more chain or derailleur noise
- Rolling noise (noise from the tires rolling on the ground) is way louder than an bike/ebike chain, derailleur, or motor noise
- Rolling noise, even on gravel, is still rather quiet and not disturbing to the wildlife
- The ebike rolling noise is the same as a pedal bike
 - Rolling noise is mostly a function of the road surface
 - Gravel is loudest, and then dirt, with paved surface the quietest
 - The tire type can affect the noise, but ebikes and pedal bike use the same bicycle tires
- Rolling noise is the same at all speeds above 5mph
- Hwy 101, airplanes, water utility trucks, and ranger carts, are way louder than bikes/ebikes
 - Some airplanes disturb very sensitive wildlife like burrowing owls (see video below)
- Many wildlife photographers, including myself, use ebikes for wildlife photos because they are so quiet
- In conclusion, bikes/ebikes do not make significant noise on the unpaved baylands roads and do not disturb the wildlife
- See the following video that demonstrates by actual tests that ebikes do not disturb the wildlife
 - <https://youtu.be/46u8h9RSWJ8>

Ebikes Do Not Go Too Fast

- Let's be clear, it is not the bike/ebike that one should worry about going too fast, but the rider that makes his vehicle go too fast
- Class 1 and 2 ebikes (the majority of ebikes, and the only ones allowed by state law to go on trails) all have to have an electronic speed controller that limits their top speed to 20mph
 - So ebikes actually go slower than pedal bikes, because pedal bikes do not have a speed controller (except the rider!)
 - A typical ebike can go 20 mph with a battery at full charge, maybe 17-18 mph at half charge, and sometimes less than 15mph at ¼ charge
 - Ebikes are not motorized vehicles! The California DMV specifically says this and that they are bicycles, not motorized vehicles
 - Power of ebikes is limited, and only provides enough assisted power to allow older people, or disabled or health disadvantaged people to have enough power to:
 - Be able to ride an ebike and go and enjoy places where pedal bikes can go
 - Be able to get up and down the hard to pedal overpasses, hills, and dirt/gravel unpaved roads and pathways that typically require more power to ride on
 - Be able to extend their ride by now having the ability to ride longer and farther
 - Be able to carry cargo like small children, groceries, trailers
- Most ebike owners have an ebike to do what is outlined above, and **not to go fast!**
- Because ebike manufacturers cater their ebike to an older population, or those in need of some electrical assist, most ebikes are designed to have an architecture that prioritizes comfort rather than for speed
 - Frame/seat/handlebars designed so rider can be in a very comfortable upright sitting position rather than a bent over, uncomfortable racing position
 - Soft riding, with comfortable seats, large comfortable and safer tire widths that are not conducive to speed
 - Step-thru frames and/or smaller frames so that riders can easily get on/off their ebike and easily put their feet on the ground when stopping
 - Woman and small child friendly with child seat or carrier options

Ebikes Do Not Go Too Fast

- The Palo Alto Baylands unpaved trails have a variety of road surfaces and conditions depending on which section of the Baylands area
- A large portion of the trails are gravel covered, some trails are less maintained dirt (and muddy) trails, and in smaller areas, hardpack sand
- In addition, the Byxbee Hills (former dump hills) are very hilly
- Ebikes are ideal for these trails because:
 - Ebikes typically have the wider, safer tires, this makes them ideal for the baylands trails
 - Wider tire have better grip in the gravel and sandy trails, so less risk of slipping and falling
 - These tires have good traction in the dirt/muddy trails
 - Wider tires tread lightly in these trails, as they do not tear up the trail because the load is distributed over a larger surface area of the wide tire
- These trail surface areas (gravel, dirt/mud/pot holes), as well as the many curves and turns in these trails, do not allow for high speeds
 - It is impossible to go even 15mph on many of these trails, especially on the gravelly trails and in most places where there is a twist or turn
 - Byxbee Hills downhill sections require good braking to keep from going too fast and crashing by slipping on the gravel
 - So many of the downhill areas, where bikes/ebikes could potentially go over 15mph, it is not possible because of the slippery gravel
- Conclusion is that it extremely rare and even not possible in many areas to go too fast in the Palo Alto Baylands unpaved trails/roads
 - Ebikes, even if they are theoretically capable of going too fast, it is highly unlikely that they will, as the ebike user profile are typically people that do not want to go fast, and their ebikes are not designed for speed and are electronically limited in top speed
 - Pedal bikers are more likely to speed on these trails, but for many of the same reasons, it is extremely rare to see them speeding

Bay Trail Philosophy

- The Bay Trail system and its reason for being created is
 - “To build a beautiful shoreline path for everyone to enjoy”
 - Multi-use, for everyone and in particular, pedestrians and bikers/ebikers
- The proposed modification of banning ebike access to the Palo Alto Baylands unpaved trails is totally against this philosophy, and would mark a devastating deviation from the Bay Trail philosophy, by banning ebikers of use of the unpaved portion of the Bay Trails through Palo Alto
- To be clear, the Bay Trail philosophy has two key words: “shoreline path”, and “everyone to enjoy”
- The proposed plan of only allowing Bay Trail ebike through traffic to be pushed out to the paved bike trails along the 101 frontage road deviates completely from the Bay Trail philosophy, as this path is not a “shoreline path”, and it is not for “everyone” as the proposal discriminates against ebikers
- Commuters would have to deviate from their shoreline path and take the much more dangerous, noisy, and unagreeable route away from the bay, thus breaking the Bay Trail philosophy for every ebiker

Ebike Myths and Untruths

~~Ebikes scare the wildlife~~ **False!**

- Previous slides and the video describe and demonstrate with evidence that ebikes do not scare the wildlife, any more than a regular pedal bike, which does not scare the wildlife, either

~~Ebikes go too fast~~ **False!**

- Previous slides explain that ebikes and pedal bikes are not the culprit for going too fast. It is the rider that makes his vehicle go too fast. Ebike rider profile, ebike construction, and built-in speed controller keeps ebikes from going too fast

~~Ebikes scare the pedestrians by riding too fast~~ **False!**

I see occasionally pedestrians get scared when past by a bike/ebike

- They get scared because they do not hear the bike/ebike rider calling out “passing left” or hear the bike bell because the pedestrian:
 - Is old and hard of hearing
 - Is listening to music with earbuds in their ears (5% or 10% of the people on the trails)
 - Is in a group of pedestrians and they are talking amongst themselves and are not paying attention
- In all cases, (and in my personal experience) the biker/ebiker slows down to a walking speed and slowly and carefully passes in complete safety the person that gets surprised (we still sometimes get cussed out!)

Ebike Myths and Untruths

- ~~Ebikes are motored vehicles like motorcycles and should not be allowed on the trails—False!~~
- California DMV specifically says ebikes are not motorized vehicles, and are bicycles
- Many anti-ebike organizations like Sierra Club and Audubon Society attempt to fool people into thinking ebikes are motorized vehicles like a motorcycle. Ebikes are Electric Bikes with Electric assist, not motorized (yes, a small electric motor is part of the electrical assist), but some anti ebike people do not clarify this, hoping that people will confuse ebikes with motorcycles
- All National Parks that are open to bikes are also open to ebikes
- California has recently passed a law saying ebikes are to be considered like pedal bikes
- ~~Effects of noise on the Wildlife is unknown, so we should ban ebikes just in case—False!~~
- Ebikes have been allowed on the unpaved trails for decades, without any ill effect on the wildlife. In fact, the bird population has hugely grown in the Palo Alto Baylands over the years. Ebikes have not at all caused any harm to the wildlife. To say we should implement a ban “because we don’t know if ebikes will harm the wildlife” is totally against our justice system that guarantees that one is “innocent until proven guilty”. Ebikers are innocent, and you have been provided proof of this in the video and in this presentation. No evidence has ever been presented that prove that ebikes harm the wildlife. Do not go against our most sacred values of justice. Do not vote guilty, without a trial or evidence of guilt.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Palo Alto should adopt measures that are inline with California State law which has recently said that ebikes should be considered like pedal bikes, and should have access everywhere that pedal bikes have access. This would include the Palo Alto Baylands unpaved trails/roads, but also the other parks, preserves, and open spaces in Palo Alto that allow bicycles. As after all, ebikes are just bicycles but with added electric assist to help people that need it. This is also what is in place in our National Parks, many other states in the US, as well as most countries around the world.
- Please consider this carefully, as any banning of ebike access would be extremely unpopular, repressive, and a regression from progressive, modern and popular thinking and wishes of Californians.
- Palo Alto has long been the cradle of electric vehicle design and thinking, from the 60's and 70's when Palo Alto engineers and students built electric vehicle in their garages, to solar powered cars winning Australia's cross country competition, to AI and self driving car technology, and to Tesla and Rivian headquarter and manufacturing/engineering located here. So banning ebikes would be extremely regressive and uncalled for, and contrary to our rich history of electric vehicle development and promotion. It would be very detrimental and embarrassing to be the City Council known for banning ebikes from popular areas in Palo Alto, especially if the rationale is not factually correct or accurate.
- I would understand if you need more time to think and discuss this issue, and I offer to any of the councilmembers and your family members to come out ebiking with me in the baylands, and you can see for yourself the fun and pleasure of ebiking, as well as enjoy the wonderful wildlife and outdoors. I have ebikes I can loan you for such an excursion.

Contact Information

Paul Trainer

Retired Technical Director-Payload Engineering from
Space Systems/Loral (now Maxar)

Email: paulwtrainer@gmail.com

Cell: (650)387-8502

Location: Palo Alto, California



I grew up in Palo Alto and went to Palo Verde Elementary School, Wilbur (now JLS), and then Cubberley High School. I built my first ebike in the metal shop at Cubberley in 1969, and went to school everyday riding my ebike. I have been ebiking for decades the baylands and foothills, and have taken 1000's of photographs of birds and animals. The Palo Alto Baylands unpaved trails are one of the best spots in the bay area for doing bird photography, and my ebike allows me to approach them without scaring them and take up-close wildlife shots.

I have a degree in Applied Physics and Information Sciences from UC San Diego and a PhD in Oceanography from the Universite de Bretagne Occidentale in France.

From: [john kunz](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: e-bikes
Date: Saturday, March 11, 2023 11:19:43 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from johnclaytonkunz@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Council members:

With shock and dismay, I learned about the e-bike ban on Baylands trails. As an 80-year old who bikes 4-6 days a week, I hereby formally request you to reconsider the total ban. There are not a lot of us who use e-bikes to enable our physical activities and our connection with nature, but those of us who do are older (I'm 80; a friend is 7) or have other significant physical limits. Please remove the ban for people who need personal mobility devices and have medical prescriptions (as I do) or, ideally, enable use of Class-1 e-bikes (pedal assist, limited speed).

Thanks for your thoughtful consideration.

John Kunz
913 el Cajon Way
Palo Alto