

**SUSTAINABLE TAMALMONTE
215 JULIA AVENUE
MILL VALLEY, CA 94941**

September 21, 2016

Marin County Board of Supervisors
Marin County Open Space Board of Directors
3501 Civic Center Drive, #329
San Rafael, CA 94903

Re: DRAFT MCOSD RTMP & Proposed Change of Use to Roads and Trails in Region 1, including the Bob Middagh Trail in the Alto Bowl Open Space Preserve.

Dear Marin County Board of Supervisors AKA Marin County Open Space Board of Directors,

Regarding the DRAFT Marin County Open Space (MCOSD) Regional Trail Management Plan (RTMP), we urge you to prohibit a change of the designated use of the Bob Middagh Trail, in the Alto Bowl Open Space Preserve, to permit mechanized users, namely bicycles, on the trail.

Such an unprecedented change would spoil the experience for current users of the trail (pedestrians and equestrians). It would result in significant, adverse environmental impacts, and create hazardous conflicts between current users (pedestrians and equestrians) and mountain bikers on the trails.

Please read our enclosed letter, dated September 27, 2015, for more details as to why we are opposed to the proposed change of use of the Bob Middagh Trail. The letter also explains why we are opposed to any change of use to the 8 miles of roads and trails in Region 1 that are currently designated for pedestrian and pedestrian/equestrian use only.

Once again, we urge you to not change but rather preserve the use of the 8 miles of roads and trails in Region 1, including the Bob Middagh Trail, that are designated for pedestrian and equestrian use only.

Thank you in advance for your conscientious consideration.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Sharon Rushton, Chairperson

Sustainable TamAlmonte

Enclosure

Cc: Carl Somers

Cc: Brian Sanford

Cc: James Raives

Cc: Max Korten

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Re: DRAFT MCOSD RTMP & Proposed Change of Use to Roads and Trails in Region 1

Dear Marin County Board of Supervisors also serving as the Marin County Open Space Board of Directors,

Regarding the DRAFT Marin County Open Space (MCOSD) Regional Trail Management Plan (RTMP), we urge you to prohibit a change in use of the 8 miles of roads and trails in Region 1 that are currently designated for pedestrian and pedestrian/equestrian use only.

Region 1 is located in the southeastern portion of Marin County and consists of 1198 acres. It includes Baltimore Canyon, King Mountain, Blithedale Summit, Camino Alto, Alto Bowl and Horse Hill Preserves. Region 1 contains approximately 26 miles of roads and trails. Eight of these miles are currently designated for pedestrian or pedestrian/equestrian use only. The remaining 18 miles of fire road and some other trails are accessible to off-road bicyclists in addition to pedestrians and equestrians.

We understand there are proposals from bike organizations to change a number of the 8 miles of roads/trails (including some in the Alto Bowl & Horse Hill preserves), which are currently designated for pedestrian and pedestrian/equestrian use only, to a new designation that would allow use for bicyclists too.

Region 1, according to the RTMP, is designated as three of the four most seriously "impacted" areas in the RTMP. In addition, it is one of the smallest regions and is most likely to see the largest increased usage if a change of use to include bicycling is made, given the close proximity to San Francisco as well as connectivity to other county, state and federal lands.

Pressure on these lands would be compounded if the MCOSD follows through with potential plans to consolidate trails. According to Carl Somers (Chief of Planning & Acquisitions), the MCOSD is considering whether or not to remove or decommission 150 miles of trails and consolidate its trail system to approximately 100 miles of trails from the current 249 miles. Per Table 3.11 below, 70 miles of trails may be decommissioned due to redundancy. Another 80 miles of trails may be decommissioned for other reasons. This would place an additional burden on the lands in Region 1. A combination of the proposed road/trail consolidation and new bicycle use would lead to thousands of new bikers, more traffic, problematic parking, augmented conflict among user groups, more

conflict with adjacent home owners, and increased adverse environmental impacts on wildlife and sensitive habitat (E.g. fragmented habitat; soil erosion and instability; sediment in streams, which adversely impacts water quality and fish habitat; soil compaction, which decreases soil pore space and water infiltration; poor road drainage, which can increase landslide hazards; etc.).

Table 3.11 Road and Trail Redundancy by Region

Region	Total Road/Trail Miles	Road and Trail Redundancy	
		Miles	% of total miles
Region 1	34	10	34%
Region 2	69	18	26%
Region 3	38	6	15%
Region 4	59	14	23%
Region 5	31	12	38%
Region 6	18	10	55%
Total	249	70	28%

Source: Based on queries from 2011 Marin County GIS Database.

We are especially concerned about a possible change of use for the roads/trails in the Alto Bowl and Horse Hill Preserves from a designation of pedestrian and equestrian use only to a designation that would also allow bicyclists. The precedent of reserving appropriate exclusive use already exists with the creation of the Stafford Lake Bike Park. The Alto Bowl and Horse Hill Preserves were paid for with residents' tax dollars and charitable contributions for the purpose of preserving open space for hikers, equestrians and horse pasturing. Allowing mountain biking alongside a horse pasture would inevitably lead to conflict. There would be both inherent danger to the horses that can spook and the bikers that can speed when sharing the same area. The addition of a multi-use trail in this location would most likely increase the MCOSD's liability due to these safety concerns.

Once again, we urge you to prohibit a change in use of the 8 miles of roads and trails in Region 1 of the RTMP that are currently designated for pedestrian and pedestrian/equestrian use only.

Thank you in advance for your conscientious consideration.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Sharon Rushton

Chairperson

Sustainable TamAlmonte