



**HELENA OPEN LANDS MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA
February 9, 2021**



GENERAL MEMBERS

- Eric Sivers
- Karen Reese
- Brian Barnes
- Claudia Clifford
- Eric Feaver (New Member)

CITY OF HELENA STAFF

- Brad Langsather, Open Lands Manager
- Kristi Ponzoso, Director, P & R, Open Lands
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

CITY-COUNTY PARKS BOARD

- David McGuire

HELENA CITIZENS COUNCIL

- T.J. Lehmann

ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Helena Tourism Alliance Representative

- Andrea Opitz

PPLT Representative

- Nate Kopp

VIA ZOOM MEETING

Topic: HOLMAC Meeting

Time: Dec 8, 2020 05:30 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92360344431?pwd=NU1ocWJiQkRCSmVJbDlpaENudWp1QT09>

Meeting ID: 923 6034 4431

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Call to Order

Welcome/Introductions/Visitors

- Welcome: Eric Feavers

Minutes Approval

- Approval of January 2021 Minutes

HOLMAC Action Items

Reports from City / Subcommittees

1. Update from City Staff on the following:
 - Budget and budget process
 - Weed control activities
 - Upcoming forestry activities
2. Report from PPLT

New Business

1. Update: Davis/DeFord Working Group
2. Presentation: E-Bike Management in Other Jurisdictions
 - ✚ **ATTACHMENT A: e-Bike Comments**
 - **ATTACHMENT A-1: PeopleForBikes Letter**
3. Discussion: Trail Attributes for Assessment Project

Public Comment

Future Agenda Items

Adjournment

ADA NOTICE

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Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the city's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact Sharon Haugen, Community Development Director, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following: Phone: (406) 447- 8490; TTY Relay Service 1-800-253-4091 or 711 Email: citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov, Mailing address & physical location: 316 North Park, Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623.

**E-BIKE USE ON TRAIL SYSTEM - FEBRUARY 02.05.2021 COMMENTS
ATTACHMENT A**

Date Submitted	Submitter	Email Address	COMMENTS
01.07.2021	Bob Balhiser	patty-bob@msn.com	No to E-bikes. Period. Full Stop. Bob Balhiser Helena
01.12.2021	Polly Pfister	ppfister@mt.net	<p>To Helena Parks Department:</p> <p>I strongly oppose allowing any e-bikes on any trails on Helena’s Open Lands, for the following reasons:</p> <p>Extreme danger to public safety: I hike on Mt. Helena regularly and frequently, and have for many years. Based on experience, I am absolutely certain that e-bikes on our trails would be terribly dangerous, and even life-threatening, for everyone else who is hiking or walking on the trails.</p> <p>E-bikes on our trails are a colossal danger to all foot traffic, including hikers, dog walkers, birdwatchers, simply because they go too fast (20 mph is minimal speed) to be able to stop or avoid hitting unsuspecting hikers and walkers, whether going downhill or uphill.</p> <p>Even though current rules state that bikes are required to yield to hikers, a large majority of bikers already refuse to stop or even slow down for hikers on our trails, especially when they are riding downhill (often out of control). These bikers on e-bikes, whether going downhill or uphill, would be a nightmare in fast motion, poised to run over anyone else on the trail, far more dangerous than the aggressive pedal-bikers we must now deal with on almost every hike we take.</p> <p>The City’s trail system has countless blind corners, where fast moving bikers already endanger us hikers, especially riding downhill. They cannot see us below them on the trail, and ride too fast to stop when they round blind corners, coming dangerously close to hitting us hikers. Our only option at that critical moment is to jump off the trail, if we can, to avoid being injured or killed by these errant, out-of-control bikers. Too often, there is nowhere to get off the trail when an out-of-control biker bears down on us, often because of steepness of the hillside. E-bikes will greatly exacerbate this already dangerous situation.</p> <p>The most recent fast-moving biker who ran me off the trail, laughed uproariously as he sped by, riding rapidly downhill. That guy, well into his 40s, epitomizes the dangerous, aggressive, irresponsible attitude of</p>

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			<p>far too many bikers on our open space right now. The City should absolutely not add e-bikes to these already dangerous encounters.</p> <p><u>City has liability for serious injury or death caused by e-bikes:</u> E-bikes going 20+ mph on our trails and causing injury or death of hikers is totally foreseeable, and highly likely to happen, if e-bikes are allowed on our Open Lands.</p> <p>Allowing e-bikes on our Open Lands exposes the City of Helena to serious liability and the considerable likelihood of expensive lawsuits for any injuries or deaths caused by e-bikes. The City would lose any such lawsuits, and be required to pay huge medical expenses, rehabilitation expenses, life care expenses, damages for extreme pain and suffering, severe emotional distress, etc., that could amount to millions of dollars per claim. This risk is simply not worth it. Keep dangerous e-bikes off our trails.</p> <p><u>E-bikes have countless other places to ride besides our Open Lands:</u> There is no shortage of trails for e-bikes outside of Helena, and they can ride elsewhere, instead of on our Open Lands.</p> <p><u>BLM and Forest Service lands are different from Helena Open Lands:</u> Helena’s Open Lands are urban parks, far more heavily used than rural BLM or FS lands. That fact alone necessitates stronger public safety measures for hikers than these federal agencies have in place. The City needs to protect, not further endanger, the hiking public. Prohibiting e-bikes is a necessary public safety measure the City must implement.</p> <p><u>Motor vehicles are prohibited on Open Lands:</u> E-bikes are motorized vehicles. Motor vehicles are prohibited on the city’s Open Lands. Therefore, e-bikes, being motor vehicles, must be prohibited on our Open Lands. Period.</p> <p>Thank you so very much for considering my comments.</p> <p>Polly Pfister</p>
01.15.2021	Bruce Newell	bruce.newell@gmail.com	<p>My name is Bruce Newell. I live with my wife Sue on the west side of Helena. I am 69 years old. In my younger days I regularly ran on and mountain-biked the Helena South Hills trail system. Now I am a daily and an passionate walker. I served for several years on Helena’s Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council.</p>

E-BIKE USE ON TRAIL SYSTEM - FEBRUARY 02.05.2021 COMMENTS

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			<p>I ride a pedal-only bicycle, I have not yet graduated to an e-bike, but given my love of cycling and my 'gracefully' aging body, it's only a matter of time before I too start riding an e-bike.</p> <p>I am fortunate to have extensively toured North America and Europe on bicycles. It was in Europe that we first saw e-bikes, they were everywhere. I have read estimates that a third of all the bicycles sold in the European Union are e-bikes. This seems about right from what we saw. By in large the e-bike riders rode with the same courtesy and competence as did the non-bike riders (which is very courteous and competent indeed).</p> <p>As you know, there are three classifications of e-bikes: Class 1 — Pedal e-assist with a maximum assisted speed of 20 mph Class 2 — Throttle e-bike that maxes out at 20 mph Class 3 — Pedal e-assist with a maximum assisted speed of 28 mph</p> <p>And then there are larger e-bikes with throttles permitting higher speeds that are essentially motor scooters or motor bikes. These are often prohibited on bicycle trails in the EU, whereas the e-assist bikes are welcomed — they are just a normal part of peoples' transportation life.</p> <p>My wife rides a Class 3 Trek, designed for shopping, light touring, and fun. And it is a fun bike to ride. It is a pedal bike with what to me feels like a dial-a-tail-wind feature. The bike doesn't go without pedaling, and depending upon the bike's setting, the motor rewards your pedaling a mild to significant boost. It feels wonderful, and I have never seen someone try an e-bike without grinning. E-bikes are like pedal-only bikes, but with a magic assist.</p> <p>I urge policy makers to try an e-bike out before setting e-bike policy. They are fun, and are no more a threat to other walkers, runners, other cyclists, and horse-back riders than a non-powered bike.</p> <p>Instead of prohibiting e-bikes, what should be formally discouraged or regulated are trail-users behaving in ways that threaten other trail users, or degrade the land upon which our beloved trails traverse.</p> <p>What should be discouraged or prohibited are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting switchbacks or corners • Running people off the trail
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E-BIKE USE ON TRAIL SYSTEM - FEBRUARY 02.05.2021 COMMENTS
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impeding others’ travel • Traveling at high speed or otherwise endangering other trail users (including dogs and horses) • Lack of courtesy, regardless of how it’s manifested <p>These are neighborhood trails and while using them we must act like good neighbors. An unpowered mountain bike can be just as discourteous as a mountain bike with e-assist. The e-assist nature of the bike does not by itself lead to increased courtesy or discourtesy, it’s on the rider. As trails continue to get more crowded, we must actively promote courtesy and consideration in all trail users.</p> <p>Electronic assist bicycles are here to stay. Most likely e-bikes will increase in number with the aging of my generation of bicycle riders, and improvements in battery life.</p> <p>I urge the City to work at actively educating and patrolling our trails, encouraging a culture (the shared expectation) of consideration, courtesy, and neighborly respect among trail users. It isn’t e-bikes that are the problem. As Walk Kelly wrote in his Pogo comic strip, “We have met the enemy, and he is us.” Singling out e-bikes misidentifies the problem and doesn’t suggest useful remedies.</p> <p>I think that Class 2 bicycles should be prohibited from most or perhaps all Helena trails. I don’t see the difference between Class 2 e-bikes and a Vespa motor scooter.</p> <p>I agree with current Forest Service regulations that bicycles of all sorts should be prohibited in wilderness areas; but of course, we’re not talking about wilderness areas when talking about Helena’s trails.</p> <p>I recommend that Class 1 and Class 3 e-assist bicycles be allowed on Helena’s trails, but that an educational campaign and enforcement strategies be employed to build a culture of courteous trail use.</p> <p>Bruce Newell; 2570 Mayrowan Court; Helena, Montana 59601; (406) 461-3206</p>
01.19.2021	William Cook	reho1951@yahoo.com	<p>Hello, I have been looking for a way to submit a comment concerning e-bikes on the South Hills trails network. Since I couldn't find anything, I thought I'd direct my comment to you. Would you please forward my comment to the appropriate people? And would you also please send me back an email confirming that? Many thanks.</p>

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			<p>My wife and I hike the South Hills trails very frequently. Personally, I hike the South Hills trails around 200 times per year. That trail network is one of the main reasons we live in Helena. We are strongly opposed to the use of e-bikes on South Hills trails.</p> <p>Anything that increases the speed of mountain bikes even a little bit (either uphill or downhill) will have a negative effect on hikers. Right now, there is a truce between mountain bikers and hikers in the South Hills. One of the things that maintains that truce is the fact that mountain bikers have to slow way, way down when ascending a slope. If you allow e-bikes, that truce will be shattered, as e-bikes will allow riders to ascend slopes much, much faster. Increased speed by bikes will inevitably lead to collisions with hikers, and people will get hurt.</p> <p>I recently saw a letter in the IR which proposed allowing Class I and III e-bikes on the South Hills trails, but not Class II e-bikes. That would be totally unenforceable. Once you legalize any class of e-bike on our trails, the practical effect will be to allow the other classes of e-bikes as well. The word will be out that "e-bikes are allowed in the South Hills," and the only way to enforce the distinction among bike classes would be to have law enforcement officers out on the trails, checking e-bikes and issuing citations. And we all know that won't happen.</p> <p>Allowing e-bikes would be the proverbial "camel's nose under the tent." Make no mistake: if e-bikes are allowed on the South Hills trails, there will be more requests to allow even more types of motorized transport on our trails.</p> <p>I am not persuaded by those who say that allowing e-bikes is necessary to accommodate those who can no longer pedal a human-powered bike. My wife and I are both in our mid-sixties. And my wife has medical problems that make it more difficult to walk and hike. We have no interest in riding e-bikes on the South Hills trails. As we get older, the last thing we want to encounter on a narrow trail is a bike moving faster than a typical human-powered bike.</p> <p>If e-bikes of any class are legalized on South Hills trails, there will be open conflict between e-bikers and some hikers. Thanks for listening, and best regards.</p> <p>Bill Cook; 1129 9th Ave.; Helena</p>
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01.19.2021	Chris Deveny	cmdeveny7@gmail.com	<p>Dear Ms Ponozzo -</p> <p>I'm an avid (daily) user and supporter of our city's open lands. I want to let you know of my position regarding the use of E-bikes. It is the following:</p> <p>E-bikes have motors and should, therefore, be considered motorized vehicles and should not be allowed on non-motorized trail systems including our open space lands. Nor should we change our trail designations (or the definition of "motorized") to accommodate them. It seems pretty straight forward to me. I think e-bikes do have a place as commuter and recreational vehicles on our streets and roads.</p> <p>Thanks for all your work and Happy New Year!</p> <p>Ms. Chris Deveny</p>
01.19.2021	Mark Meloy	mkmeloy@gmail.com	<p>Dear Mayor, Commission and Parks Director, As an older person myself I understand the need and attraction of e-bikes. They may be perfect on city streets and roads but are totally inappropriate for use on most of our forest trails, where they pose unacceptable risks to hikers and to themselves. Also, I believe that they would further compound the impacts that cyclists have already caused to area trails. Once this cat gets out of the bag there is no stopping it. It is going to be very difficult to draw any kind of a line between motorcycles and e-bikes. I feel that the two forms of motorized transportation should be governed by the same restrictions.</p> <p>Thanks for this opportunity to comment.</p> <p>Yours, Mark Meloy; 920 State Street; Helena, Montana 59601; 435-419-0116</p>
01.20.2021	Dennis McCahon	galumphant22@gmail.com	<p>Dear Mayor and Commissioners;</p> <p>I hope, and trust, that you'll put a lot of analysis into the question of whether or not to allow e-bikes onto Helena's public open-lands system. There's much to consider.</p> <p>There's the matter of carrying capacity, for one. This depends on how much traffic the trails are carrying now, how much more they're capable of carrying, the nature of various sorts of traffic as it relates to that carrying potential etc.</p> <p>As a frequent hiker, I know that the open-lands trails are heavily used by pedestrians, mostly because many trailheads are within an easy walk of thousands of households. The open-lands function as a walkable extension of</p>

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			<p>our walkable town. They're a pedestrian amenity, like the sidewalk system. That sort of urban-wildland inter-connectivity is very rare nowadays -- and it's obvious that many of us appreciate it.</p> <p>So many, in fact, that some of those trails are at their pedestrian carrying capacity (as shown by their ongoing erosion, etc.). So, given the reasonable observation that walking is the least-erosive and least-disruptive way to use a trail, it would seem that the trails can best serve the greatest number if they're limited to non-motorized (pedestrian) traffic -- like the sidewalk system.</p> <p>I'm aware that some will argue that e-bikes aren't really motorized; which, frankly, doesn't make sense (manufacturers, for example, freely discuss their "motors"). E-bikes are already designed for speeds of up to 20 mph. and they continue to be "improved", getting more efficient, more powerful, faster, better at hill-climbing etc -- a more-and-more potentially dominant presence on the trails.</p> <p>I'm also aware of the argument that e-bikes are needed to allow us to continue enjoying the trails as we age and as our "knees give out" etc. At age 73, I'm probably in that ageing category, but I surely don't expect to be given a motorized advantage over my younger fellow hikers -- thereby negatively effecting their experience of the trail. I'm reminded of an argument I heard once, that "roads should be built in the Bob Marshall Wilderness so that less-able folks can enjoy it". Even given that a few less-able folks would use e-bikes, it seems reasonable to expect that for every such less-able e-biker, there'd be a dozen more perfectly able ones who simply prefer their recreation motorized. "Why walk when an e-bike lets you go faster with less effort?"</p> <p>I'll shut up for now, but I'll probably have more to say as the e-bike discussion continues. I just happen to love our public open-lands. It's a "sense of place" issue. Is trail-use all about the place, or about the hardware?</p>
01.21.2021	Ann Ripley	aripley50@gmail.com	<p>My name is Ann Ripley and I hike in the South Hills. I am quite concerned about the possible use of E-bikes on our trail systems in the South Hills as well as the trails in the Scratch Gravels. By definition, they are motorized, allowing the person riding them to go faster and easier which makes them a hazard for hikers. The smooth talk being expressed is that e-bikers will have to be courteous. This is pie in the sky dreaming as there are several regular bikers who are not courteous. You are expecting me to believe that just because they are on an e-bike they will be courteous. I vote no e-bikes on any of our trail systems. If the person riding the e-bike can't bike on a regular bike, they should not be allowed on the trails. Perhaps it is time to talk about trails for bikes and trails for hikers.</p>
01.23.2021	Tom Kilmer	tom.montana.2011@gmail.com	<p>Attached are my comments regarding proposals to motorize our non - motorized trails. Can you please share these comments with the members of HOLMAC? Thanks so much.</p>

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		<p>Please accept these comments for the record regarding the discussion and proposal to allow motorized bicycles on Non – Motorized Trails in Helena, Montana. Background: I am a 70-year-old native of Helena, Montana. I started walking in our south hills and on Mount Helena when I was 8 years old. When I was in High School I ran in the South Hills on training runs for track and cross country. As an adult I continue walk in the South Hills and on Mount Helena.</p> <p>I also was an avid runner during my younger adult days, spending many hours running in the South Hills and on Mount Helena. When Mountain Bikes came along I started bicycling in the South Hills and on Mount Helena. I still do that on a normal human powered, non – motorized bicycle.</p> <p>Our South Hills and Mount Helena Trails (Trails) were designed and built to non – motorized standards and are currently managed for Non – Motorized use only. This is as it should be. People need areas where motor vehicles are not allowed. We need these places to enjoy nature, exercise, and test ourselves without the use of motors.</p> <p>When I am on the trails I see healthy runners of all ages testing and strengthening their bodies and relaxing their minds. I see runners who are committed to a healthy lifestyle and who use our trails for that purpose. I see people who are getting in shape by walking, running or bicycling. Perhaps they had an epiphany, or perhaps they were directed by their doctor to get in shape. Regardless of the reason, they use and enjoy the non – motorized trails. Converting our trails to motorized trails by allowing motorized bicycles would be a slap in the face, an insult, a stab in the back to those trail users. Our trails were designed and constructed to non – motorized standards. Trails designed and constructed to motorized standards are completely different. That is due to the speed, the weight and the bulk of motorized vehicles and their resulting impacts on the trail surface.</p> <p>Motorized bicycles are 30-40 % heavier than normal non – motorized bicycles. When straddled by a heavy rider the increased weight of these machines will pound our trails into submission. It is because of a simple law of physics.</p> <p><i>Force = Speed X Mass.</i> Our trails are already stressed because they are popular.</p>
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			<p>Add in the stresses from heavy motorized bicycles and our trails will be severely damaged. Our trails are simply not designed to be ridden by motorized vehicles.</p> <p>Force = Speed X Mass also relates to safety on our trails. The usual walking speed for humans on level ground is 2 miles per hour (mph). Motorized bicycles can travel in excess of 20 mph on level ground and much faster downhill due to the effects of gravity on the mass of motorized bicycle and the rider. If you allow motorized bicycles on our trails you are going to see accidents between motorized bicycles and humans. People will be severely injured or killed.</p> <p>Just as a semi –truck on the highway takes much longer to stop than does a Subaru; a speeding motorized bicycle will take much longer to stop than a normal human powered bicycle. This is due to the increased weight of the motorized bicycle /rider combination. The rider on the motorized bicycle might see a human on the trail, but the rider will not be able to stop in time to avoid hitting the unsuspecting walker or runner.</p> <p>Are you familiar with the “40 Inch Rule”? Please allow me to discuss it. For many, many years United States National Forest Service (U.S.F.S.) regulations prohibited the use of motor vehicles wider than 40 inches on National Forest Trails.</p> <p>Then along came the invention of the 4 wheeler, motorized all terrain vehicle. These things are wider than 40 inches. The manufactures of these vehicles wanted to sell millions of them to American consumers. To do that they needed to find a place where those 4 wheelers could be ridden. So what they did was go to the U.S.F.S in secret, with no public involvement, with no public comment, with no public disagreement, and convinced the U.S.F.S. to do away with the 40-inch rule.</p> <p>The result was a plague of 4 wheeler atvs unleashed on U.S.F.S. trails. The result became an utter disaster on public trails. Weeds. Rutting of trails. Widening of trails from simple single tracks to multi – tracked messes that no longer resembled trails. Non – motorized users were displaced. Wildlife was displaced. Once narrow single-track trails became high-speed motor vehicle routes. This happened because the U.S.F.S. decided that the next great shiny thing was appropriate for use on trails.</p> <p>The motorized bicycle manufacturing industry and their retail sales outlets and mountain bike promoting organizations such as the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) would like you to allow this next</p>
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		<p>great shiny thing on our non – motorized trails. To them it is about power and money. More than that, the tourism industry would like you to allow this next great shiny thing on our trails so that they can sell more motel and hotel rooms and more meals and drinks. But beware. The result would be another disaster similar to the revocation of the 40-inch rule. Our trails will break down. Non – motorized trail users will be hurt. Non–motorized trail users will have to look elsewhere for safe and pleasant trails. Sometimes land management authorities do the right thing when pressured to allow the next great shiny motorized thing access to public lands.</p> <p>A recent case in Montana proved this out. A gentleman with a motorized hovercraft approached our Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Department wanting them to change the rules to allow use of motorized hovercraft on small streams and rivers in Montana. Oh yeah, he also had a financial stake in the marketing of these devices.</p> <p>Citing the potential effect these motorized hovercraft would have on non –motorized water users, the general quiet, wildlife, water quality and vegetation our Fish Wildlife and Parks Department wisely said no.</p> <p>It is best to get In Front of these issues and look at what could happen. It does not work out well in the end to approve motorized vehicles prior to accessing the potential impacts. See the 40 Inch Rule discussion above as a warning.</p> <p>I am aware that motorized bicycles come in various stages of power. Those power stages range from fast, to faster, to Nascar fast. I am also aware that proponents of motorizing our non – motorized trails claim that they only want the low power (fast) motorized bicycles on our trails. My reaction to that is this: Who exactly is going to enforce that restriction?</p> <p>Will it be PPLT ? No, I don't think so. PPLT has the contract to maintain our trails but they have no Enforcement authority. Will it be HOLMAC ? No, I don't think so. Not unless the city pays the HOLMAC committee 24/7/365 to patrol the trails. Will it be the Helena Police Department? No, I don't think they would be interested because they are really busy policing drunks, meth heads and wife beaters. Will it be the Helena Parks and Recreation Department? No I don't think so. They don't have any Trail Rangers on staff. If the Helena City Commission votes to allow motorized bicycles will each Commission</p>
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			<p>member in turn agree to stand patrol on the trails? What about Self-Enforcement? Have motorized bicycle riders inspect each others motorized bicycle to insure they do not have too much horsepower? Ha, Ha.</p> <p>If you want to see how Self Enforcement works take a walk on our trails and count all the dog turds and bags of dog turds. Notice all the dogs running loose from the parking lot. Nope. Self Enforcement does not work for dog owners, and it would never ever work for motorized bicycle riders.</p> <p>The truth is, once you would open our trails up to motorized bicycles there would be NO control over the power and speed of motorized bicycles utilizing our trails.</p> <p>We both know that as with cars, and motorcycles and 4 wheelers and snowmobiles and airplanes and boats, basically anything motorized, these motorized bicycles will only get faster and more powerful. Harley Davidson now makes and sells an electric motorcycle. In theory those would be allowed on the trails if you open them up to motorized bikes. After all, motorcycle riders like to call their machines “Bikes” I have even read that there will soon be electric off road motocross style motorcycles out soon. That tells you how much power those electric motors are capable of.</p> <p>My Grandmother was a hiker and Wilderness walker and backpacker for many, many years. She was hiking and backpacking still at 80 years old. When she finally started to give out and was no longer capable of hiking she still supported non – motorized trails. She still donated to Wilderness groups.</p> <p>What she did not do was commence to whining and demanding that because of her advanced age and bum knees she should be allowed to utilize a motorized vehicle on non –motorized trails. I am just amazingly astounded at the self entitlement of some local trail users who think that now is their time in their “advanced age” and because of their “bum knees” to be rewarded for their history of non – motorized travel to be granted their “right” to use motorized bicycles on our trails. To that I say give it up. You had your time. Savor the memories.</p> <p>My time also will come when I can no longer hike and pedal our non – motorized trails. When that time comes I will give it up to a new younger generation.</p>
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			<p>I'm certainly not one to tell people not to purchase motorized bicycles. But I will certainly suggest more appropriate places to ride them Helena has hundreds of miles of very nice streets that are perfect for riding normal pedal bicycles and motorized bicycles. During my 30-year full time working career here in Helena I bicycled to work year round. Despite my rather advanced age (not sure how that happened) I still ride my normal pedal bike from 2nd street out to St Peters Health where I have a little occasional job 3-4 days a month.</p> <p>Out in the country motorized bicycles would be excellent on some of the hundreds of miles of unpaved Lewis and Clark County roads. The Helena National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management also have hundreds of miles of interesting un – paved roads near Helena that would be fun to explore on motorized bicycles. In summary : Please do not motorize our non – motorized trails.</p> <p>Tom Kilmer ; 621 2nd Street; Helena, Montana 59601</p>
01.27.2021	Dennis McMahon	galumphant22@gmail.com	<p>Regarding e-bikes on our open-lands trails, we should think about those trails' carrying capacity; especially in light of the fact that the trailheads are within an easy walk of thousands of households. They'll have to serve thousands of trail-users.</p> <p>A trail-user's negative effect on a trail, and upon the experience of other trail-users, will increase with the bulk and the speed of whatever hardware he's employing. The least bulky and least speedy trail-users are pedestrians, so it stands to reason that, if we want to serve the greatest number of potential users, we should favor pedestrians. This is especially true if the trails are already heavily used by pedestrians and, as I've pointed out, the trailheads are within an easy walk of so many of them.</p> <p>I've been walking those trails for half a century. I had a small part in the effort in the early 1970s when we "rediscovered" Mount Helena Park and began building our present open-lands system -- back when even mountain bikes were still a harmless curiosity. From the very beginning we thought of those trails as a pedestrian amenity, and we made a point of excluding motorized access. The trails, ever since, have functioned as a walkable extension of our walkable town -- every bit as pedestrian-friendly and motor-free as the sidewalk system. Are we now to begin thinking of them as roads?</p> <p>The argument that e-bikes aren't really motorized is the sort of definitional hair-splitting that simply doesn't make sense. The people who build e-bikes talk freely about their "motors". What else can we call them? Even the least-powerful e-bikes are built to go 20 mph, and it seems safe to assume that the average user will take full</p>

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			<p>advantage of that capacity, given the opportunity. It also seems safe to assume that e-bikes will continue to be "improved", getting more efficient, faster, better at hill-climbing, etc, until there'll be little practical difference between them and traditional dirt-bikes.</p> <p>Regarding the argument that e-bikes are needed to allow us to keep using the trails as we age and "our knees give out", I'm reminded of another argument I once heard, that "we should build roads in the Bob Marshall Wilderness so that less-able folks can get in and enjoy it". At age 73, I probably fit in that ageing category, but I certainly don't expect to be allowed the use of hardware that'll have an increased negative effect on the experience of other trail-users and upon the resource itself. I have too much respect for both.</p> <p>So, I'm sure there's room for e-bikes somewhere -- just as there's room for traditional dirt-bikes and snowmobiles -- but it's not in Helena's open-lands system. That system is for folks on foot, out to experience the resource for its own sake. It's a "sense of place" matter. Is trail-use there all about the place? --or about the hardware?.</p> <p>Thanks for considering these remarks. I really appreciate the chance to share them.</p>
02.02.2021	Margaret Regan	mregan@mt.net	<p>Dear Sirs/Madams,</p> <p>I am concerned about local trail use.</p> <p>E-bikes are motorized vehicles and should not be allowed on multiple-use, non-motorized trails. E-bikes should be considered just like motorcycles and ATVs and kept in zones designated for them.</p> <p>Hikers may have the right-of-way but who in their right mind would stand in the path of a swiftly moving bike? The hiker will always yield, which can mean scrambling off into the brush and rocks. The two forces are not equal. Tricky enough as is, without adding the motor component and even more bikers.</p> <p>Locally, there are plenty of places for e-bikes: https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/hlcnf/news-events/?cid=FSEPRD670240</p> <p>"On the Helena-Lewis and Clark there is about 2,500 miles of motorized roads and about 800 miles of motorized trails," says Jennifer Becar the Acting Public Affairs Officer for Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest.</p>

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			<p>“There is plenty of opportunities for the public to go out if that's how they like to recreate there's lots of opportunities on the Helena-Lewis and Clark for that.”</p> <p>Please do not allow e-bikes on our current non-motorized trails.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Margaret Regan; 318 Chaucer; Helena, MT</p>
02.03.2021	<p>Ashley Seaward PeopleForBikes Coalition P.O. Box 2359 Boulder, CO 80306 720.648.8376</p>	<p>ashley@peopleforbikes.org</p>	<p>Jennifer,</p> <p>Attached is a letter from PeopleForBikes commenting on behalf of the electric bicycle discussion that has recently been on the agenda of the Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee. If you could please forward our letter to the committee members or provide me with an email to contact the committee, I would greatly appreciate it.</p> <p>Thank you! (SEE “ATTACHMENT A-1”)</p>

February 3, 2021

Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee
City of Helena
316 N Park Ave
Helena, MT 59623

Dear members of the Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee,

I am writing in response to the Jan. 12 Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee meeting where the topic of electric bicycle management was discussed.

On behalf of PeopleForBikes, I respectfully request that the committee consider adopting the definition of the three classes of electric bicycles within Chapter 8-2-1 of Helena's municipal code, and allow Class 1 electric bicycle access wherever bikes are allowed on non-motorized and natural surface trails.

PeopleForBikes is the national bicycling advocacy group that works for better policies and infrastructure for bike riding. We strive to make bike riding a safer and more inclusive activity for everyone, including our 3,000 individual supporters in Montana. We engage with agencies across the country to help develop electric bicycle policies that reflect the needs of their community.

Allowing Class 1 electric bicycle access where bicycles are allowed is a fair and sensible decision. Class 1 electric bicycles are similar to traditional bicycles and simply give riders – regardless of age, or physical, or cognitive ability – an extra boost when riding. The three-class system of electric bicycles has already been defined in 28 states' motor vehicle codes¹, eight states' park codes² and in neighboring Missoula's municipal code³. A bill is also pending in the Montana legislature to define the three classes of electric bicycles as bicycles in Montana's traffic laws.

Electric bicycle use is rapidly growing and clear rules will make it easier for residents and visitors to understand where and how to ride. No studies or instances have shown that this modern outdoor experience decreases public safety or causes increased trail impacts as compared to bicycles. When electric bicycles are introduced on shared-use paths, there appear to be minimal conflicts between trail users, no observed crashes and generally safe passing. Studies have shown that electric bicycle riders are not primarily new riders but rather experienced bike riders who are looking for an extra boost when riding.

Allowing Class 1 electric bicycles wherever bikes are allowed is a policy to support your current bike riders and their continued enjoyment of trails.

For six years, PeopleForBikes has worked with agencies across the country to provide assistance as they transition their regulations to be more inclusive of electric bicycles. We would like to offer our resources to you as you consider such changes to your current policy, which include:

- An informational guide in understanding and conducting an electric bicycle pilot program.
- An electric bicycle trail etiquette guide.
- A land manager handbook, a resource for the planning and management of electric mountain bike trails.

We would be happy to share any of these materials with you via mail, and you can also find them at peopleforbikes.org/topics/electric-bikes. I welcome the opportunity to provide any further information and appreciate your time and service.

Sincerely,



Morgan Lommele
Director of State + Local Policy
PeopleForBikes
720-470-2981
morgan@peopleforbikes.org

¹ [PeopleForBikes' Electric Bicycle Webpage](#)

² [PeopleForBikes' Electric Bicycle Access in State Parks](#)

³ [Missoula Electric Bicycle Ordinance 3683](#)

Additional Information on Electric Bicycle Speed, Safety and Studies

Electric bicycles travel at bike-like speeds.

- a. Public sentiment that electric bicycles jeopardize safety and someone's enjoyment on a pathway, travel on average 20 – 28 mph or will cause accidents, is anecdotal, subjective and unsubstantiated.
- b. 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 traditional bicycles (i.e. around 13-14 mph). Five studies exist that 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.
- c. 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, and would respond more favorably to restrictions on use rather than an outright ban.
- d. The typical rider is 45 – 65 years old and generally uninterested in reaching high speeds or passing other trail users without proper warning or slowing down.
- e. Recreational or competitive cyclists frequently pass electric bicycle riders.

An electric bicycle ban will not decrease ridership, only complicate enforcement.

- a. In 2019, electric bicycles sales grew by 75%. Ridership and engagement is increasing, and people are using electric bicycles to replace vehicle trips and augment existing bicycle trips.
- b. Electric bicycles will be increasingly difficult to distinguish from traditional bikes. Manufacturers label the bikes by class.
- c. As with any vehicle or consumer product, responsible use and riding rests on the user. If public safety is a concern, proper education and enforcement should be implemented.

There are two examples of progressive electric bicycle laws and ordinances that could inform your department's management of electric bicycles.

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 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.
- c. *Results:* Results showed that 67% of park visitors changed their perception of electric bicycles after a test ride (toward acceptance), and 71% of park visitors did not detect the presence of a class 1 electric bicycle on the trail with them. In other words, trying out an electric bicycle increased a person's acceptance and reduced their uncertainty around electric bicycles, and potential concerns around speed and safety are hypothetical, as most users do not realize they are sharing the trail with an electric bicycle.