

Mountain View VOICE



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WEEKEND | P.19

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A place to catch some air

CITY TO TAKE UP PLANS
FOR BMX, MOUNTAIN BIKE
PARK AT SHORELINE

By Daniel DeBolt

After five years of delay, the city is quickly rolling towards putting in a bike park at Shoreline that could become a destination for BMX bicyclists and mountain bikers from miles around.

Proof of demand for the new park can be found at the ad hoc BMX course in Mountain View known as "Creektrails," where BMX riders and mountain bikers can be seen catching air on large jumps or just riding over them for kicks. A core group of BMX (bicycle moto-cross) riders began building the dirt jumps near the end of Central Avenue many years ago. Since then, the Stevens Creek Trail was built alongside it, revealing the course for all to see.

"I see new faces every time I go there," said Stephen Early, 23, one of six regulars who maintain and build the course of jumps and berms.

This January, the city hopes to get the green light for a new Shoreline bike park from PG&E, which has an easement for its power line towers on the two possible sites. The park would be "something larger and more formal" than Creektrails, said Paula Bettencourt, assistant community services director.

The intent to build the park was established in 2003 and funded in 2006. During the intervening years, the composition of the City Council changed significantly, and the current council's position on the park is uncertain. Mayor Laura Macias said last week that it was "worth asking



HARDY WILSON

Stephen Early, 23, of Mountain View, catches air on his BMX bike on Monday as friend Chris Ricana pedals behind at the "Creektrails" course near Central Avenue.

the question, 'Do we still need it?'" Council member Nick Galiotto voted against it in 2003 due to a perceived lack of demand.

The city is currently studying two sites for the park just east of the Shoreline main gate. One is a long strip of land adjacent to the east end of the

dog park that runs between North Road and the Shoreline Park fence. The other site is a few hundred feet farther east in a secluded area between the city's pump station and the Stevens Creek Trail. Known as the Crittenden

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Bullis bollixed

COUNTY BOARD REIGNITES
CONTROVERSY AFTER
GIVING HILLS RESIDENTS
PREFERRED ENROLLMENT
AT CHARTER SCHOOL

By Alexa Tondreau

Members of the Los Altos School District said last Wednesday they were considering suing the county over newly approved enrollment rules for Bullis Charter School.

The district board members' outrage came in response to a ruling late last month by the county Board of Education, which approved a policy giving Los Altos Hills residents preferred enrollment at the school.

The district voted unanimously at last Wednesday's board meeting to investigate the legal ramifications of the action. The LASD board may file suit against the county if its legal counsel finds the ruling to be in conflict with state law, said board member David Pefley.

Controversy is nothing new for Bullis Charter School and its predecessor, Bullis-Purissima Elementary School, which the district closed down but later promised to reopen under pressure from Los Altos Hills residents. More recently, the district became host to a fight over boundary changes which will pull about two-dozen students — including some

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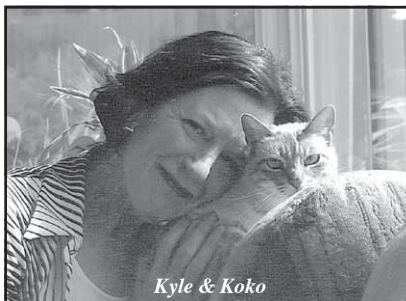
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Local News

BMX

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overflow basin, this site was unanimously recommended by the youth ad hoc committee in 2002.

Both sites are split by PG&E easements running through the middle. PG&E could have concerns about the proximity of the course to its lines and towers, Bettencourt said.

The city studied other sites that would have been more centrally located in the city, but none of them seemed to work.

"Literally, there is no [other] place," said former council member Mary Lou Zoglin in 2003.

Both Shoreline sites happen to be next to Google's Crittenden Lane campus.

"I have a friend at Google and he says, yes, he would go there on his lunch break," said Josh Moore, president of Responsible Organized Mountain Peddlers, or ROMP.

Concerns over Creektrails

Moore says the problem with places like Creektrails is that

*Moore says the
problem with places
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they open cities to lawsuits over negligence in the event of an injury. Calabazas Park in San Jose once featured a legendary set of jumps that BMX riders had worked on for decades, but the city fenced it off after settling a lawsuit brought by the father of a seriously injured rider, Moore said.

Eventually a city-approved course was built at the bulldozed Calabazas site, at a cost of over \$800,000. It was the first project of its kind in the Bay Area, and as long as the design doesn't change significantly, San Jose cannot be found negligent, Moore said.

There is an increasing demand from the mountain bike community to build "pump tracks," Moore said, which are similar to

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BMX courses but tailored more to mountain bikes and novice riders. His advocacy may be why the project was called the "mountain bike park" by staff and committee members at a recent pedestrian and bicycle advisory committee meeting. Moore believes that the 1.25-acre space along North Road is large enough to include a space for both BMX bikes and mountain bikes.

Council member Margaret Abe-Koga said she has received e-mail messages from parents who want the park, and that the original cost of \$33,000 seemed minimal (the city ended up funding it with \$60,000 last fiscal year). Moore said that if the city has \$60,000, he would be happy to bid on the project himself.

The project began in December 2001, when the council approved a recommendation from the city's youth ad hoc committee for the bike park. Participants at the Mayor's Youth Conference also expressed interest.

Early, the Creektrails regular, said he had not heard of the proposed bike park at Shoreline. He said he would go all the way out to Shoreline to support the

new park, but would probably continue to ride Creektrails more because of its proximity to his house. He also makes a regular trip to Calabazas Park in San Jose, which continues to

be a mecca for the BMX crowd after the rebuild.

The ultimate fate of Creektrails is uncertain. Moore believes the environmental and legal issues it poses could mean its demise. In

the meantime, BMX riders like Early will continue to go there.

"We've packed a lot of stuff into the small area at Creektrails," he said. "There's one more big jump we'd like to

build, but that would be a two-year project." ■

E-mail Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com



Mountain View Whisman School District

(K-8) ENROLLMENT

2008-2009 BEGINS FEBRUARY 1
DISTRICT OFFICE
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

District Kinder Info Night
(registration requirements and enrollment info)
January 9
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