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Organization: King County Executive Horse Council

Title: Board member

Comments: Regarding this proposal:

I would like to express my strong objection to considering e-bikes as anything but motorized vehicles, or allowing them onto any trail or in any designated area where motorized vehicles are not permitted. I realize this proposal only uses the word "consider" and that it does not mandate opening closed areas to e-bikes, but that should be strongly discouraged.

E-bikes are both silent and capable of going much faster than a conventional mountain bike. This combination makes them extremely unsafe for other trail users not in motor vehicles, as an e-bike could come up on them suddenly without their awareness and without giving them time to react. My official concern is for equestrians, as such an event could startle even the calmest horse, and a startled horse can do much harm to itself, its rider, and even the bike rider who startled it. But beyond equestrians, this situation would pose a danger to any trail users moving much slower than the e-bike, such as hikers, children, and pets. Speed differences between trail users are a major cause of accidents. Since e-bikes' top speeds are so great (and bike riders say that moving fast is their priority so that must be expected in planning efforts), the speed differential between an e-bike and these other categories of trail users is large enough that serious injuries could result.

For this reason I strongly urge that e-bikes remain designated as motorized vehicles and be permitted only on trails and areas that allow for motorized vehicles. Furthermore, re-designating existing non-motorized trails as motor-permitted solely to accommodate e-bikes would result in an unfair loss of trails to all other users and should not be encouraged.

Thank you.