

# TOWN OF WOODSIDE POSITION PAPER

## HUDDART AND WUNDERLICH PARKS DRAFT MASTER PLAN

On March 14, 2006, the Town Council of the Town of Woodside considered the revised version of the draft Master Plan for Huddart and Wunderlich Parks and adopted a formal position on certain aspects of its contents. There are five primary components of the Town's position:

### 1. Regional Valley-to-Skyline Bicycle Connection (Chapter 4)

The Town Council is adamantly opposed to the use of Huddart Park for the construction of either road or mountain bicycle trails. The Town Council does not condone the Master Plan's recommended Greer Road-South of Kings Mountain Road-Skyline Trail regional bicycle access nor any other bicycle trail proposal that encroaches upon Huddart Park property. The Town strongly urges the continuation of the County's policy of prohibiting bicyclists from hiking/equestrian trails.

Comment: The draft Master Plan includes a discussion of the desire within the bicycling community for a safe valley-to-Skyline connection for road bikes and mountain bikes for those who wish to access the roads and mountain biking trails located west of Skyline. The revised plan includes nine options for accomplishing this, three of which involve the use of County park lands. The plan clearly notes that no analysis has been undertaken to determine the feasibility of any of these options (note that the eighth option, which appears to be Alpine Road, is mislabeled "Old La Honda Road"). It also notes that other options may exist. One of these nine options is recommended for approval (the Greer Road-South of Kings Mountain Road-Skyline Trail option). The specific recommendations in the prior version of the Master Plan have been eliminated. The Town Council continues to be supportive of these now discarded recommendations, specifically:

- "A separate planning effort should be undertaken by the Town of Woodside and the San Mateo County Department of Public Works to arrive at a viable solution to this regional issue."
- The County Department of Public Works, the Towns of Woodside and Portola Valley, MROSD, other agencies, bicycle organizations and committees, and other interested individuals should work together to arrive at a preferred solution."

The Town Council is supportive of a collaborative approach to identifying a viable valley-to-Skyline alternative that does not utilize the lands of either Huddart or Wunderlich Park. The traditional use of the parks by hikers and equestrians should be protected from the intrusion of new and incompatible uses, such as road and mountain biking.

### 2. Trail, Trail Entrance, and Creek Crossing Closures and Prohibitions (Chapters 4 and 8)

All existing trails and trail entrances in Huddart and Wunderlich Parks should be retained, including the creek entrances for the Crystal Springs Trail and the private Flood Property trail.

Comments: Chapters 4 and 8 of the Draft Master Plan include recommendations to take the existing Crystal Springs Trail entrance out of service and to prohibit instream crossings of West Union Creek from the private trail on the Flood Property and at other locations along the creek. The basis for these recommendations is twofold. First, the Draft Master Plan describes the Crystal Springs Trail easement that runs from Raymundo Drive to the park as suffering from "severe drainage and erosion problems" that can not be solved within the confines of the twenty-foot easement. Subsequent to the publication of the revised draft Master Plan, the Town, the County, and the involved property owners have worked together to shift the trail easement(s) from the County to the Town. The Town is

committed to correcting whatever drainage and erosion problems may exist in order to ensure the continued use of this valuable trail.

The second justification for these recommendations is that horse crossings of the creek are contributing to a sedimentation and erosion problem, which threatens the steelhead trout, although there is little evidence provided in the draft Master Plan to support the recommended "solution" of prohibiting instream horse crossings. Chapter 8 of the plan includes an observation that the "Crystal Springs Trail horse trail crossing and the nearby crossing to the Flood property appear to be significant sources of sediment input to West Union Creek." This is based upon a survey of the creek that revealed that the channel downstream of these trails contains substantially more sediment than upstream. However, the plan does indicate that "other possible sources of significant sediment input in this reach are two large partially stabilized slides, a raw slump and eroded streambank, and an ephemeral tributary that has headcut about 30 feet back from the creek channel." These other seemingly major sources of sedimentation are outside of the park's boundaries and no investigations have been made to determine the extent of their contribution to the problem. Additional analysis is warranted to identify whether instream horse crossings actually have any measurable impact on the creek's sedimentation and erosion problem before the draconian measure of prohibiting these crossings is implemented.

The Town has made note of the correlated recommendations that efforts be undertaken to identify new crossing locations and to build new trail bridges. The revised draft document also indicates that the Town supports the concepts of building bridges across West Union Creek at key points. The Town Council's position is that it is in full opposition to the prohibition of in-stream horse crossings and prefers that equestrians be allowed to continue to across the creek without the need for bridges. Any specific proposal to construct bridges across West Union Creek would only be considered by the Town if and when the option of in-stream crossings has been eliminated.

- 3. Bay Area Ridge Trail (BART) Alignment on West Side of Skyline Boulevard (Chapter 4)**  
Establish a Bay Area Ridge Trail alignment on the west side of Skyline Boulevard that would be open to bicyclists, linking the Corte Madera and Purisima trail systems, at a minimum.

Comments: Chapter 4 of the draft Master Plan includes a recommendation that the County work with the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), and other interested bicycling organizations to investigate the establishment of a BART alignment on the west side of Skyline Boulevard that would be open to bicycles. The Town is fully supportive of this recommendation.

- 4. Trail User Education**  
The Town strongly believes that trail user education should be stressed to increase trail safety awareness and that all trail use rules, especially bicycle trail rules, should be vigorously enforced.
- 5. Other Matters and Concerns**  
The Town will continue to monitor the evolution of the draft Master Plan as it moves to the Board of Supervisors. Because the environmental review of the draft plan will follow the Board's public hearings, the Town may identify additional areas of concern at a later point. There are many recommended actions within the draft plan that may have negative impacts upon the Town and its residents. These issues may be the subject of future communications from the Town.