Twin Buttes eMTB Trial Period Discussion
Joint Advisory Board Presentation
February 2, 2022
Natural Lands Preservation Advisory Board, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Multimodal Advisory Board
Twin Buttes Class 1 electric motorized mountain bike (eMTB) trial period: 
June 29, 2020 through December 10, 2021

Joint advisory board meetings on November 20, 2019 and March 4, 2020 included a presentation on eMTBs by City staff and public comment periods. Twin Buttes was selected as the location for a trial period for the following primary reasons: (1) there is no conservation easement encumbering the property; (2) the trail system does not connect to other trails owned by another government entity that does not permit motorized recreation; and (3) the Twin Buttes development approved the trial period for the trails located on lands it owns.

Trial period included the following:
• Directional trail recommendations for all bikes
  • Trail etiquette specific to eMTBs
    • Trail intercept survey
  • Compiling & posting of emailed public comments
In response to increasing use of electric motorized bikes (e-bikes) and how they are considered within transportation regulations, the State of Colorado passed a bill in April of 2017 which (1) amended the definition of “motor vehicle” to differentiate “electrical assisted bicycle” and to define three classes, to (2) exempted electrical assisted bicycles from registration; and (3) gave local jurisdictions the authority to allow or prohibit electric assisted bicycles on a bike or pedestrian path. The State’s e-bike class definitions per Colorado Revised Statutes 42-1-102 are as follows:

• **“Class 1 Electrical Assisted Bicycle”** means an electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour.

• **“Class 2 Electrical Assisted Bicycle”** means an electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance regardless of whether the rider is pedaling but ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour.

• **“Class 3 Electrical Assisted Bicycle”** means an electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty-eight miles per hour.
Evaluate regulatory consistency between adjacent agency-managed trails to address visitor confusion and enforcement challenges.

- Twin Buttes trail system does not connect to trails located on non-City-owned lands that are open to bikes.
- Twin Buttes trail system is not located on conservation easement lands.
- Horse Gulch, Overend Mountain Park, and Dalla Mountain park trails are adjacent to Bureau of Land Management (BLM), La Plata County, and privately-owned lands.
  - Horse Gulch, Overend and Dalla trails are located on conservation easements. The addition of e-bike use on these conservation easements is subject to approval of amendment.
  - BLM trails do not allow motorized use. BLM process to evaluate the addition of e-bike use would require NEPA work.
  - La Plata County trails and Horse Gulch Road do not allow motorized recreation. The addition of e-bike use is subject to Board of County Commissioner approval.
Feedback from volunteers conducting intercept surveys

• Appreciation by survey respondents of the engagement of the Parks and Recreation Department and the opportunity to provide feedback.

• Acknowledgement of the emergence of electric bikes and the need to formalize a solution that promotes a positive recreational experience for all natural surface trail users.

• Support for directional travel for mountain bikes, including e-bikes, on natural surface trails that allow Class I electric bikes.

• General reluctance of trail users to allow e-bikes on all natural surface trails managed by the City and a preference to provide specific areas for eMTB use.

• Consider allowing e-bikes on natural surface trails that are predominately used by mountain bikes and avoid highly congested trails with nearby residential access to users on foot.
Public Benefits

• Expand outdoor recreational opportunities to be equitable and inclusive.
• Extend mountain biking enjoyment.
• Inspire new bikers to enjoy the sport.
• Provide opportunities for e-bikes in order to allow for mixed skill and ability of riders.
• Support local businesses that sell, rent, and otherwise feature e-bikes.
Top 3 trail intercept survey concerns:
• Safety
• Impact on user experience
• Impact on natural resources

Top emailed concerns:
• Speed
• Etiquette
• Enforcement
• e-bike = motorized

Opportunities to mitigate public concern:
• Evaluate trails for direction of travel for all bikes.
• Increase trail etiquette educational campaigns, seeking collaborative opportunities to broaden the impact of these campaigns.
• Enforcement.
• Plan new trails with e-bike use in mind where possible.
• Plan for mitigation of impacts to natural resources in partnership with adjacent land managers.

Potential Solutions
Regional opportunities for e-bike use extend beyond City-owned land to include public lands managed by the San Juan National Forest (SJNF) and the BLM.

- Natural surface trail opportunities across La Plata County and Montezuma County that are currently open to e-bikes total 165 miles of single-track trails and 130 miles of “other size” trails.

- There are 16.7 miles of hard surface trails open to e-bikes which include the Animas River, SMART 160, Florida Road, Goeglein Gulch, and Three Springs trails, which provide both recreational and alternative transportation opportunities, contributing to the City environmental and social sustainability goals to reduce the city’s carbon footprint.

- The SJNF is constructing Cutthroat Trail which will add 6 miles of natural surface single-track as well.

- Planning for future Durango Mesa Park trails includes allowing e-bikes.
Statistically valid survey data from 2020 Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan process:

- 90% of Durango households indicated a need for walking, hiking, and running trails.
- The most important areas/opportunities Durango residents desire investment in were 77% for walking, hiking and running trails and 44% of residents selected trails for biking.

Trail surveys & counts conducted during the 2021 Parks and Recreation Department Economic Impact Study indicate:

- Durango's trail visitation is comprised of an estimated 79% locals, 14% visitors, and 7% part-time residents.
- Trail counts and estimated user days from May 17 through October 8 at City-owned trail systems:
  - Animas River Trail = 66,300
  - Horse Gulch = 36,000
  - Overend Mountain Park = 11,230
  - Dalla Mountain Park = 8,410
  - Twin Buttes = 6,430
Thank you
Public Comment Zoom Instructions

If you would like up to 3 minutes to provide your input:

Step 1: Click the Reactions button, then click the Raise Hand button.
- You will be called on when it is your turn to speak.

Step 2: Click to Unmute your microphone.
- You will have 3 minutes.
- State your name and if you are a City of Durango resident.
- If you support what someone has already said, please indicate support and allow others time to speak.