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Proposed BMX Park Getting Expensive

By Cathy Tyson



LEGEND

	Bike Park (approx 1.8 acres)		Lafayette-Moraga Trail
	Las Trampas Creek		Sidewalk
	Public Parking Lots		Lafayette Community Park Trail

Map courtesy of Jennifer Russell, Director of Parks Trails and Recreation

with no exceptions for potholes or road repair.

Although this agenda item did not come up until very late at a recent City Council meeting, the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center was filled with both biking enthusiasts and naysayers.

"Frog mitigation factors suggested by the US Fish and Wildlife Department included things that I feel are doable," said Russell. "Even if we don't build the bike park - these are all positive things." The list included education for park users, building a habitat for reptiles and amphibians, and water testing.

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Blame it on the Red-Legged frog. The proposed bike park at the south end of the Community Park - basically a dirt bike track with jumps surrounded by a chain link fence - has tripled in price since it was recommended in December 2008 by the Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission. The proposed 1.8 acre park was originally slated to cost \$105,000, but currently is up to \$322,000 due mostly to extensive environmental studies and special permits because of a report of a Red-Legged Frog sighting in 1994.

As of June 15 2011, the proposed project has cost \$72,226; \$14,180 on design and planning and \$58,046 on environmental studies, permits and project management. Parks Trails and Recreation Director Jennifer Russell calls it, "obviously controversial and complicated."

The intent of the bike park is to provide a place at the south end of the Lafayette Community Park for BMX riders to enjoy their sport and to prevent youths from damaging sensitive Las Trampas Creek habitat where riders were constantly building unauthorized jumps. Russell explained that the Park Master Plan clearly states that only the south east end of the park can be designated for active uses - the majority of the park will be left in its natural state.

At a recent City Council meeting, after much public input, City Council members voted unanimously to approve \$25,800 for additional environmental study. According to Russell all of the forecast costs, "Can be covered by the Park Facilities Fund in fiscal year 2011-2012." Park Facilities monies can only be spent on parks,