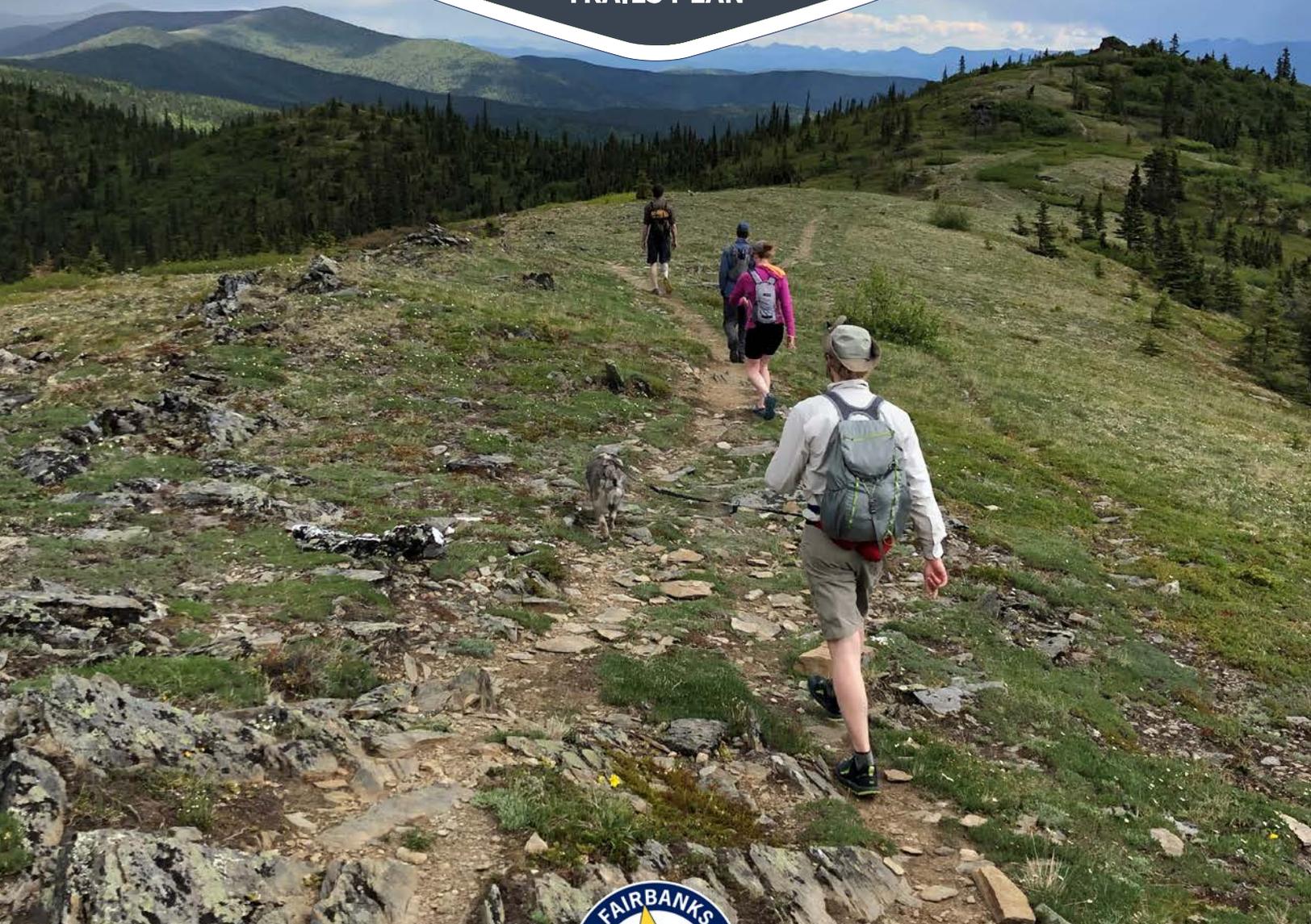




**Fairbanks North Star Borough 2022  
COMPREHENSIVE RECREATIONAL  
TRAILS PLAN**



**Prepared For**

**FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH • 907 TERMINAL STREET, PO BOX 71267 • FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99707**



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Cover photo: Angel Rocks to Chena Hot Springs Trail. (Photo courtesy of Emilie Wright)

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fairbanks North Star Borough's (FNSB) Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan (Trails Plan) is the primary decision-making tool guiding the Borough and its partners to prioritize the allocation of available resources for local trails. The Plan is used to identify, preserve, and manage important recreational trail corridors throughout the FNSB and inform Borough policies that will help facilitate the coordination of trails with other land development. The Trails Plan is part of the Borough Regional Comprehensive Plan and is primarily implemented by the Borough's Parks and Recreation Department with advisory support from the Trails Advisory Commission (TAC).

Trails are a significant part of interior Alaska's history and its future. Over 1,000 miles of trails at varying levels of development provide Borough residents and visitors opportunities to exercise, recreate, commute, and gain access to wilderness and subsistence areas. Establishing and preserving access to outdoor recreational opportunities is a priority. As the Borough continues to grow and develop, demand for outdoor experiences increases, and new trends in trail use emerge. Recreational trails' importance is reflected in other adopted Borough Plans and confirmed throughout the rigorous process by which this Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan was updated.

The Trails Plan was updated through a six-step process driven by engagement with the community. The TAC served as the steering committee, participating in nine work sessions dedicated to Plan development. Contributions from the community were gathered through multiple avenues including public work sessions at TAC meetings, in-person public workshops, a Borough-wide online survey, a web-based interactive comment map, project website, meetings with partnering agencies and Borough Departments, meetings with major landown-

ers, and presentations to the Planning Commission. The vision, goals, guiding principles, and recommendations in the Plan are the culmination of extensive public input.

The community's long-term vision for Borough recreational trails is:

The Fairbanks North Star Borough trail system is cherished and essential to our community identity, health and economy; connects our communities to each other and their surrounding wild landscapes through an expansive network; and provides all ages and abilities an unparalleled variety of high-quality experiences for every season.

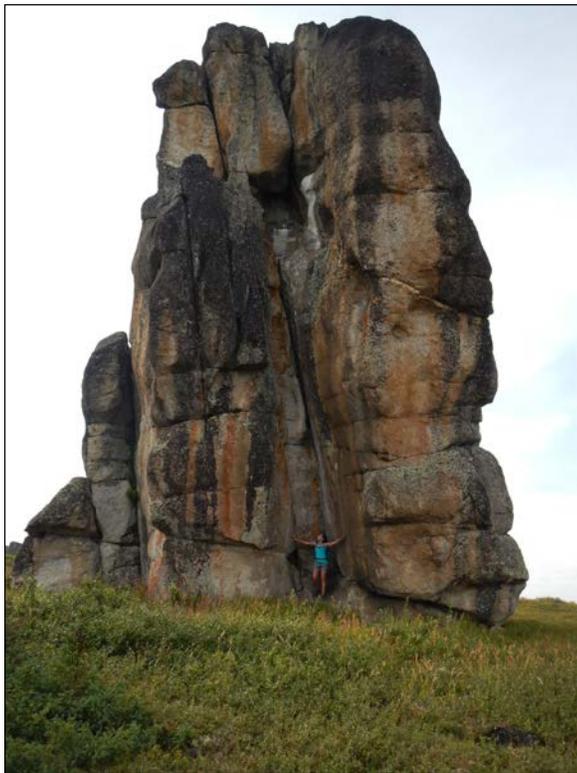
To actualize the vision, the Plan specifies eight goals and identifies actionable recommendations and implementation strategies for trail management and development within the Borough.

### Goals

1. Establish & Protect Public Access
2. Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset
3. Foster Lasting Stewardship
4. Improve Access for All Ages & Abilities
5. Increase Connectivity
6. Improve User Experience
7. Expand Recreation Opportunities
8. Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability

### System Issues

Despite the quantity of existing trail, local trail systems suffer from several issues. The most pervasive problems identified are lack of public access, poor conditions and degradation, uninviting facilities that lack basic upgrades like parking and wayfinding signage, and lack of single-use trail facilities for specific user groups. The Trails



Granite Tors Trail

Plan acknowledges and addresses these shortcomings in its recommendations.

## System Wide Recommendations

Recommendations are considered in two primary sections of the Plan: System-Wide Recommendations (Chapter 6) and Trail Recommendations (Chapter 7). System-wide recommendations include ten categories of actions applicable to the management, maintenance, and programming of Borough trails. Trail Recommendations include maps of current and future trail corridors, trail descriptions, and planning-level details of trail facilities including intended use type, seasons of use, trailheads, and dedication status.

### System-Wide Recommendations Categories

1. Approval of Trails Plan
2. Authority
3. Staff Capacity

4. Funding
5. Trail Establishment
6. Design & Maintenance Standards
7. Construction / Implementation
8. Planning
9. Education
10. Partnerships

## Trail Recommendations

Trail recommendations illustrate the issues to be addressed and the goals to be achieved. Map recommendations are to preserve future opportunities. Trails may not be developed in the short or mid-term, but their inclusion in the Plan necessitates their consideration for protection, development, and maintenance. Borough Code 17.56.040 requires that on lands through which certain categories of trails pass, the platting board shall require the dedication of easements to conform to the adopted Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan. The trail opportunities recommended in the Plan reflect the input received from the community through a multi-year planning process and focus on maintaining and expanding opportunities for a variety of experiences for a variety of users. This Plan is intended to be dynamic and should be periodically updated to accurately reflect current conditions and adapt to changing circumstances.

Trail Recommendations Summary:

- 118 Trails are in the Plan. Of those, 85 are proposed for eventual public access.
  - 29 Trails are recommended for Multi-Use / Motorized Year-Round Use
  - 39 Trails are recommended for Non-Motorized Use
  - 24 Trails are recommended for Non-Motorized Year-round with Seasonal / Winter-Motorized Use
  - 26 Trails are recommended for variable or multiple use designations



- The 2022 Trails Plan Update adds the following to the list of trails in the 2006 Trails Plan:
  - 15 Category A Trails proposed for public dedication (12 existing trails, 2 new concepts)
  - 7 Category A Trails with existing dedicated public access
  - 24 Category B Trails proposed for public dedication (10 existing trails, 14 new concepts)
  - 5 Category B Trails with existing dedicated public access
  - 5 Category C Trails proposed for public dedication



## 2. INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

The Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) set out to collaboratively develop a new Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan (Trails Plan) with a system-wide approach that will be the primary decision-making tool guiding FNSB and its partners to prioritize the allocation of available resources to local trails. This updated Plan is a product of the most recent available data and public participation; and defines a vision, goals, actionable recommendations, and implementation strategies for the next 10-20 years of trail management and development within the FNSB.



After Hours Trail, Skyline Ridge Park. PHOTO: Bryant Wright

The FNSB's Trails Plan is a tool used to identify, preserve, and manage important recreational trail corridors throughout the FNSB. The Plan identifies priority trail corridors and Borough policies that will help facilitate the coordination of trails with other land development. It also provides a framework for the recreational trails program, investments into recreation facilities and programs, and makes a connection between improved recreational opportunity and potential economic benefits for the Borough.

Part of the Plan's significance is regulated through Borough code regarding subdivisions (Title 17); trails of applicable categories included in the Trails Plan must be dedicated if land that trail crosses subdivides. This is especially apparent for areas anticipating significant development such as the Salcha-Badger area. Eielson Air Force Base has bedded down two squadrons of F-35A fighter jets resulting in approximately 3,300 new personnel and their families. The community has been planning and developing new off-base housing to ensure the

increased housing demand will be met. The significant influx in new residential housing developments presents an urgent opportunity to protect and dedicate trail alignments to provide area residents a variety of high-quality recreational opportunities.

The importance of recreational trails and need for trail access is reflected in adopted FNSB Plans and in the funding source for the updated of the Trails Plan. Funding for the development of the Trails Plan was provided by a federal grant from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation as an implementation of the Eielson Air Force Base Regional Growth Plan and Salcha-Badger Road Area Plan. Both plans identify goals, priorities, and recommendations pertaining to trails and trail access which are defined and supported by the communities, including military service members and their families.

The Trails Plan is part of the Borough Regional Comprehensive Plan which is overseen by the Planning Commission with staff support from the Community Planning



Department. The Plan is primarily implemented by the Borough's Parks and Recreation Department with advisory support from the Trails Advisory Commission (TAC).

## Background

The FNSB trail program was formally initiated in 1980 in response to local trail concerns and the continued loss of existing trails due to private development and other changes in land uses. The original Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan (Trails Plan) was adopted in 1985 to provide guidance to the Borough for the protection and management of local trails. The current Trails Plan is used frequently by staff during trail planning and development, land use planning, and the subdivision platting process. The existing Plan has three functions: it establishes a categorized system of trails, establishes maintenance policies for trails, and calls for a trail dedication authority to protect public access to trails.

The list of trails included in the Trails Plan has not been updated since 2006 and the issues, goals, strategies, and objectives identified in the Trails Plan remain artifacts from its original draft produced in 1985. Since 1985, FNSB communities have experienced considerable changes in local plans, ordinances, land uses, demographics and recreational pursuits and use patterns. These changes have impacted how Borough residents use and access recreational trails. Updating the 2006 Trails Plan will improve its usefulness and relevance, addressing the most salient needs of contemporary local trail users.

## Relationship to other Plans & Policies

The Trails Plan is a comprehensive functional plan that will become part of the Borough Comprehensive Plan upon adoption by the Borough Assembly. Planning documents provide guidance on development, change, and decision making for implementing agencies and the communities for which they apply. Guidance on the

development of lands, transportation, and the economy shape a community over time, and therefore can directly or indirectly impact the development, management, and protection of recreational trails.

As part of the Trails Plan development process, adopted plans, policies, and studies applicable to the location, dedication, maintenance, and management of trails throughout the Borough were reviewed. [Appendix C. Literature Review](#) summarizes existing plans and policies that have the potential to impact access to and use of recreational trails throughout the Borough.

Plan and Policy review focused on identifying relevant goals, objectives, and actionable recommendations of higher-level plans (such as the FNSB Regional Comprehensive Plan) that may support the content of the Trails Plan, as well as review specific actions or projects identified in area-specific plans (such as the AK DNR State Parks Recreational Trails Plan). Findings from the literature review advised the FNSB and Trails Advisory Commission during the development of the updated Trails Plan, as well as helped foster a greater understanding of plan applicability, interdependency, and functionality.

Plans, studies, Borough code and State statutes reviewed include:

1. **Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan, 2006** – This Plan is the most relevant resource for the Trails Plan update and served as a basis for comparison between past and current recreational trail needs, issues, goals, and recommendations.
2. **State Statutes and Borough Code** – codes and statutes provide the legal context and limitations of Trails Plan recommendations.
3. **Adopted Area Plans** – These plans have a legal basis for implementation due to adoption in Borough code and generally have more direct relevance to



the Trails Plan, as they affect the same geographic context (in whole for FNSB-wide plans and in part for sub-area plans). Some Area Plans, such as the FNSB Regional Comprehensive Plan, Eielson Regional Growth Plan, and recently adopted Salcha-Badger Road Area Plan include goals, objectives, and recommendations specific to recreation, trails, open-space, and other development impacting access to recreation as outdoor recreation is significant to residents' quality of life.



Angel Rocks to Chena Hot Springs Connector. PHOTO: Bryant Wright

**4. Functional Plans and Studies** – these plans focus on a specific area or aspect of a community rather than comprehensively addressing multiple facets of an area. Some of the recreation-related plans specific to areas within the FNSB are highly relevant to the Trails Plan (ex. Chena River State Recreational Area Plan and University of Alaska Interior Alaska Community Recreation Study). Statewide plans described in this section may provide useful policy guidance but offer limited recommendations specifically for

FNSB trails (ex. Alaska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Alaska Recreational Trails Plan).

**5. Ongoing Plan Updates and Initiatives** – These plans, studies, and initiatives may have significant relevance to the Trails Plan, but information is often limited since they are not yet complete. The purpose of listing these ongoing plans and initiatives is to remain apprised of relevant findings and find opportunities to complement planning work.



### 3. PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

#### Plan Objectives

The updated FNSB Trails Plan is a system-wide, comprehensive plan guiding development, preservation, management, and maintenance of the recreational trail system in the FNSB for the next 10-20 years. The Trails Plan was developed through a collaborative process to ensure it is representative of and supported by the community.

The Plan and its development process:

- Is based on the most recent available data, significant public participation, and trail and planning best practices.
- Focuses FNSB's involvements in recreational and transportation trails within its boundaries and its platting authority, land management powers, and Parks & Recreation control.
- Completed an extensive inventory of the existing trail system, public access, and trail attributes.
- Identifies trail issues and needs of the FNSB community and defines a vision and goals for the trail network.
- Establishes planning, development, and management strategies for achieving the defined goals, including identifying high-value trails to receive dedicated or protected public access.
- Developed a series of Future Recreational Trail Corridors Maps to determine locations of future trail and recreational areas.
- Defines an implementation plan to guide the FNSB Parks & Recreation Trails Office, Trails Advisory Commission, and the community to achieve the goals, objectives and overall vision of the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan and obtain the public access to recreational experiences the community desires.

#### Development Process

The FNBS Parks & Recreation Department, with assistance from a consulting team of planning and trail development professionals, completed this update of the Trails Plan with funding provided by a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (formerly the Office of Economic Adjustment).

The Trails Plan was updated through a six-stage process. Each step included significant contributions from the Trails Advisory Commission and the public that informed the products created or presented in the next stage of the process.

##### 1 Data Collection, Inventory & Analysis

###### *Understanding what we have*

The initial step in the process inventoried the condition, use, and status of existing FNSB trails and an analysis of the systems by which they are created and managed. This included asking the public to identify what trails they use, when and how they use them, the review of adopted plans and policies, assessment of Parks & Recreation Department operations and limitations, and learning from the TAC. Tools to collect data included a project website, TAC meetings and public workshops, an online interactive comment map, a community Trail User Survey (see Public Engagement Summary below), and historic trail files housed within the Parks & Recreation Department.



##### 2 Vision, Goals, Issues & Opportunities Identification

###### *Defining holistically where we want to be*

Working closely with the TAC over multiple meetings and review and contributions by the public, a rounded,





representative vision for the future of the FNSB trails network was defined. The focus of this stage was to determine what the recreational trail system should be 10-20 years from now, and what goals are most important for that future system. By identifying a vision and its supporting goals, issues and opportunities with the existing system were more easily defined. The online interactive comment map and Trail User Survey also significantly contributed to this step in the Plan development process.

### 3 Future Trail Corridors Identification

#### *Identifying physically where we want to be*

One of the most significant roles of the Trails Plan is to identify indispensable trails to be designated for formal protection and trail concepts to be pursued. This rigorous stage of the Trails Plan update included reviewing, amending, and updating existing trails data, and reviewing and considering public suggestions for altered trail alignments, new trails, and new connections for trails to be included in the final plan. Criteria for reviewing suggestions and selecting preferred trails was developed based on the defined goals and guiding principles and trail design best practices, and were applied to create the draft trail recommendations. The online interactive comment map, geographic comments on the static draft maps, and TAC public work sessions were tools used to collect data on future trail corridors. Informed conversations with major landowners in the Borough upon who's land recommended trails may cross were also part of this step of the Plan development process.



### 4 Recommendations & Implementation Strategies Determination

#### *Deciding how we are going to get there*

To achieve the community's defined goals and actualize its vision for FNSB trails, im-



provements or actions relevant to the management, maintenance, and planning of the trails system-wide should be made. This step in the process identified those recommended actions and defined implementation strategies and responsible parties. Consultation with a professional land surveyor and other FNSB departments, including Community Planning, Natural Resource Development and Legal, informed the recommendations made in addition to close work with the TAC.

### 5 Plan Development & Public Review

#### *Bringing it all together & verifying it represents our community*

Products of Steps 1-4 of the development process were compiled together into a draft Trails Plan and presented to the public for their review and comment. Two TAC work sessions and a series of in-person, open-house workshops supported the public review of the Plan. Comments on the draft Plan were reviewed and incorporated as appropriate into the final Plan.



### 6 Plan Adoption

#### *Formalizing our plan for future recreational trails*

The final stage in the Plan development process is formal review and approval by FNSB commissions and the assembly. This Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan, with a recommendation and support from the TAC, will be presented to the Planning Commission and Planning Board at a public hearing. With a recommendation of approval from the Planning Commission, the Plan will be presented to the Borough Assembly for final approval. Once approved, the Trails Plan will become an adopted element of the Borough Regional Comprehensive Plan.





## Public Engagement Summary

Contributions from stakeholders including the Trails Advisory Commission, trail users and user groups, land management agencies and major landowners, and the public informed the most essential components of the Trails Plan. The majority of the Trails Plan Update occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, which required most meetings to be held virtually. Despite the lack of physical face-to-face conversations, interactive and iterative opportunities to participate in the process resulted in higher-than anticipated levels of engagement. Primary components of the Public Engagement Process were:

- **Trails Advisory Commission (TAC):** members of the TAC served as the primary steering committee for the Trails Plan update and were an active and informed sounding board for the community throughout the Plan’s development, approval, and adoption. Nine work sessions with the TAC were dedicated to developing content for the Trails Plan. A total of fourteen TAC hosted events, including work sessions, public workshops (see TAC Public Workshops), and a meeting approving the final Plan, supported the development of the Trails Plan.

- **TAC Public Workshops:** the public was actively invited to attend and participate in six TAC Public Workshops. While all TAC meetings are open to the public, these workshops were targeted engagement opportunities for members of the public to share their ideas with the TAC and Plan development team and were advertised as such.

- **In-Person Public Open-Houses:** ahead of the formal comment period on the Draft Trails Plan, two in-person open-houses were held in tandem with the FNSB Comprehensive Roads Plan, undergoing a

concurrent update, to present the updated draft trail recommendations maps and recommendation and implementation actions. The workshops occurred over the same week, presenting the same materials, but targeted residents of different regions of the FNSB.

- **Trail User Survey:** an online survey supported issue and opportunity identification, collected user demographics, and engaged the public via self-selecting and random sampling methods. 1,213 responses were collected, including 82 respondents who were invited to participate through random selection, and the results of the survey were used to inform multiple steps in the Plan development process.
- **Project Website:** served as a hub for Plan development information, opportunities to participate, materials to review, and project team contact information ([www.fnsbtrailsplan.com](http://www.fnsbtrailsplan.com)).
- **Online Interactive Comment Map:** collected geo-located comments and input from the public and current trail users on specific existing and desired trails. Information gathered served as the base for the final trail alignments recommended in this updated Plan.

**WHAT IS GOING TO WORK?**

**WHAT'S MISSING?**

Frame 12  
 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES | Part 1

General What	What We Want to Accomplish	How to Make It Happen	Who will Make It Happen	When should it Happen	Why it Matters
TYPE / CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTING RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	GOALS BEING ADVANCED
Aspirations	Adopt the FNSB Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan	Local approval process through TAC, Planning Commission and FNSB Assembly	FNSB Parks & Recreation Department Trails Advisory Commission Planning Commission Assembly	Open	All
Borough Code updates	Establish or clarify processes defining activities in the Parks & Recreation Department that require approval and ensure user safety and access require additional review/consent by other FNSB entities or non-FNSB partnerships  Provide the FNSB Trails Office the authority to temporarily close trails for maintenance, safety, or other purposes, unless otherwise specified in the plan.  Provide the FNSB Trails Office the ability to establish use designations and a process to change them.	Update the Borough Code to define rules and responsibilities including authority of the Trails Office	FNSB Parks & Recreation Department Trails Advisory Commission FNSB Mayor's Office Assembly	Short	1. Establish & Protect Right of Access & Trail for Change Act for Sustainability
Staff Capacity	Expand staff capacity of the Parks & Recreation Trails Office to allow satisfactory performance of the following functions:  Maintain and implement the Borough's Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan Coordinate and supervise available staff, contractors, and volunteer resources to complete trail construction and maintenance projects Engage with stakeholders to facilitate trail building, use, maintenance, and establishment of legal public access Complete summer maintenance projects and winter grooming of high-priority trails Apply for and assist in managing grants (Federal, state, NDD) for trail development projects Collaborate with agencies and other partners regarding trail issues, including reviewing development plans for consistency with the Trails Plan Advise and inform public on local trail issues, resolve user conflicts, and generate trail information including maps, guides, signage and other resources Monitor trail usage, inspect trail conditions and respond to trail user concerns	Develop job descriptions for the recommended positions Recruit and fill the positions in the department budget Develop a volunteer policy Develop a volunteer program Develop volunteer training programs Acquire equipment and vehicles for staff and volunteers WHAT ELSE?	FNSB Parks & Recreation Department	Short to Mid	2. Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset 3. Foster Learning Opportunities 6. Improve User Experience

Frame 13

Workshop Miro Board



- **Coordination with Partnering Agencies & FNSB Departments:** informed recommendation and implementation strategy development and ensured continuity with other adopted plans and policies. FNSB Departments also reviewed the draft Trails Plan and provided comments that were incorporated ahead of its adoption.
- **Coordination with Major Landowners:** essential to making future trail corridor recommendations, conversations with major landowners informed final recommended trail alignments and defined reasonable paths to varying levels of trail protection, use agreements, etc. to allow the public to continue to enjoy existing recreational opportunities and provide new ones.
- **Presentations to the Planning Commission:** two work sessions on the Trails Plan development with the Planning Commission were held prior to the

Plan's formal public hearing. Political preferences and concerns were expressed which helped inform the recommendations made in the Plan.

- **News and Media Outreach:** All TAC meetings and work sessions were publicly noticed in the newspaper in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and available for the public to listen or participate. Multiple newspaper articles, television interviews, radio interviews and public service announcements were published during the process. Ample invitations and notices of project milestones and participation opportunities were shared on local social media pages for trail use and outdoor recreation as well as email list-serves and newsletters.

Documentation and summaries of public engagements are available in [Appendix E. Trail Use Survey Report](#) and [F. Public Engagement Summary](#).



## WE NEED YOU

YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN A FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH RECREATIONAL TRAILS USE SURVEY

Your response will guide future decision-making on the protection, development, and management of trails in the greater Fairbanks North Star Borough.

**SURVEY**

Fairbanks North Star Borough  
 Parks & Recreation Department, Trails Office

### Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan Update

Join Us for the Trails Advisory Commission Work Session  
 October 25th @ 6:00 PM [via Zoom](#) to  
 Review Draft Trail Recommendations for the North & West Areas

**Help us decide which trail recommendations to include in the updated Trails Plan!**

The maps presented at the work session are a product of public input to date, ground conditions and trail management best practices.

They are the **big-picture, long-term development plan** for trails in the FNSB. Trails identified on the maps and in the Plan have an opportunity to be preserved. Draft Maps illustrate the issues we are trying to address and objectives we're working to achieve.

At this stage in the process, the maps are conceptual; line widths and alignments are abstracted for graphic clarity.

We are gathering your input on draft trail recommendations over the next two months. If you can't make the TAC meetings, please see the project website for more ways to participate!



## 4. TODAY'S TRAILS

The following chapter is a summary of the existing conditions of the FNSB and its recreational trail system. Additional and more detailed information is available in [Appendix D. Status of the System](#), [E. Trail User Survey Report](#), and [A. Trail Descriptions & Recommendations](#).



Fairbanks Snow Travelers ride the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail.  
PHOTO: Fairbanks Snow Travelers

### Who the Trail System Serves

#### FNSB Demographics

The Parks & Recreation Department provides facilities and services to all residents of the FNSB, and therefore the trail system strives to provide recreational opportunities to those of all ages and abilities.

The FNSB is home to 96,849 residents over 7,444 square miles, according to the US Census Bureau's 2019 Vintage Population Estimates. Since the original CRTP was adopted in 1985, the FNSB population has grown approximately 35.6%, primarily in the urban areas of Fairbanks and North Pole (see Table 1). According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 8,517 FNSB residents (8.8% of total population) were

active-duty military in 2019. Eielson Air Force Base has brought approximately 3,300 new residents to FNSB with the arrival of two squadrons of F-35A fighter jets. This significant influx of new residents requires new housing developments outside of the Air Force Base, primarily in the Salcha-Badger Road Area, and presents an urgent opportunity to protect and dedicate trail alignments to provide area residents a variety of high-quality recreational opportunities.

According to the 2019 American Community Survey and US Census Bureau, 23.8% of FNSB residents are under 18 years of age, 7.4% are under 5 years, and 11.2% are 65 years and over; 57.6% of FNSB residents are between 18 and 64 years old. The majority of FNSB residents identify their race as White (75.6%); 8.2% Alaska Native or American Indian, 8.2% Hispanic or Latino, 6.9% two or more races, 5.3% Black or African American and 3.4% Asian. 7.2% of FNSB residents are considered in poverty and the median household income is \$76,464 (2016-2020 in 2020 dollars).



Ski for Women event at Birch Hill. PHOTO: Nordic Ski Club Fairbanks.



Table 1. FNSB Population by Year. Sources: US Census Bureau & Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

YEAR	POPULATION	ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY
1980	53,983	
1985	71,433	
1990	78,091	7,500
1995	82,515	
2000	82,944	6,861
2005	88,248	
2010	98,260	8,166
2015	99,636	
2019	96,849	8,517

### Trail Use

The FNSB covers 7,444 square miles with more than 1,000 miles of trails used for recreation and transportation. Activities enjoyed on the trails reflects historic use of the areas and growing recreation trends. Motorized, non-motorized, multi-use (all modes), and specialty or single-use trails all exist within the FNSB. A variety of developed and primitive trails provide users opportunities to exercise, recreate, commute, and gain access to wilderness and subsistence areas.

Extended winter seasons provide unique opportunities for winter recreation including dog mushing, skiing, skijoring, snowmachine riding, snowshoeing, and fat-tire biking. Trails in the summer and shoulder-season have a similar mix of motorized and non-motorized users including hikers, bikers, ATV and other off-highway-vehicle riders, horseback riders, and more. The FNSB trail system has diverse recreation potential for both traditional and trending types of trail use. Downhill or alpine skiing, fat-tire and mountain biking are gaining popularity statewide and have been identified as quickly growing trail uses in the FNSB. Motorized activities have also grown in their popularity, range, and impact

due to technological improvements and availability of snowmachines and off-highway vehicles of all shapes and sizes. Intentional consideration and planning to provide desired experiences for all users is a prominent goal of the updated Trails Plan.

A survey was conducted online in 2021 to support the update of the FNSB Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan and was distributed via randomly selected mailings as well as online advertisements. Information was gathered on FNSB residents' current and desired trail use, limitations they may have using the trails, opportunities, and how they value trails. The following was collected via the survey from 1,213 respondents (including 82 who were randomly selected) about who is using trails, how and when they are recreating, and why they do so (see [Appendix E. Trail Use Survey Report for more information](#)):

#### Who uses trails and why

- **Trails serve all ages:** Responding Trail Users' age groups are distributed relatively evenly for those 26 years and older.
- **Trails impact quality of life:** 84% of respondents said recreational trails are "Very Important" to their quality of life (13.6% said recreational trails are 'somewhat important').
- **Trails provide physical, mental, and social benefits:** Responding Trail Users identified the following top 5 reasons for why they use trails:
  - Exercise or to maintain a healthy lifestyle (86%)
  - Enjoy nature, views, fresh air (84%)
  - Reduce Stress or improve mental health (78%)
  - Spending time with family or friends (71%)
  - Escape crowds or experience solitude (55%)

#### When and how we use trails

- **Trails are used year-round:** Respondents were asked to select all seasons they used trails. Spring (April-May) ranked lowest with 83% of respondents reported using trails during the season, followed



by Winter (November-March) at 84.83% use, Fall (September-October) at 91.87%. Summer had the highest reported use of 93.78%.

- **Trails are used most frequently for non-motorized activities:** Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they participated in specific recreational activities in the last 24 months; respondents indicated that **about 80.86% of total reported trail use is for non-motorized activities.**

Table 2. Frequency of Trail Use by Mode Summary, FNSB Trails Plan Trail Use Survey Report

RESPONSES BY TRAIL USE TYPE (total number of responses and percentage of reported use type by frequency)				
Frequency	Non-Motorized Uses		Motorized Uses	
Less than once a month	1134	75%	368	25%
A few times a month	1587	77%	471	23%
A few times a week	1534	85%	270	15%
Daily or almost daily	667	85%	116	15%
<b>Combined Total Use</b>	<b>4589</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>1108</b>	<b>19%</b>

### Trail User Groups and Organizations

Groups have coalesced around almost every major mode of trail travel participated in currently. User groups advocate to improve access and experiences for their users, generate support to keep their favorite trails maintained, and host events. Groups are in various states of organization. Some are formally established as 501c3 non-profits, others informal. They host a wide array of gatherings, sojourns on trails, and competitive events. User

groups in the area communicate through email listserves, social media, websites, and online forums.

Most organized user groups center around non-motorized modes of travel. Among popular modes of travel, summer ATV riding (e.g. “four-wheelers” and side-by-sides) is one trail use currently without a formally organized club. Clubs organized around OHVs are more focused on snowmachining or off-roading in full-size 4x4 vehicles (though these groups may organize summer ATV rides), dirt bikes, and quad racing. This may be because ATV travel facilitates an especially broad range of experiences (trail riding, dirt biking, mudding, obstacles, etc.), some of which are more dominated by another destination-oriented motivating activity, such as hunting, fishing, or camping.

Certain groups have organized around a specific area or trail system and have even formalized relationships with the underlying landowners/managers. Examples include the Alaska Dog Musers Association (Jeff Studdert Sled Dog Trails, ADF&G), Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks (Birch Hill ski trails, FNSB & US Army Alaska Fort Wainwright),

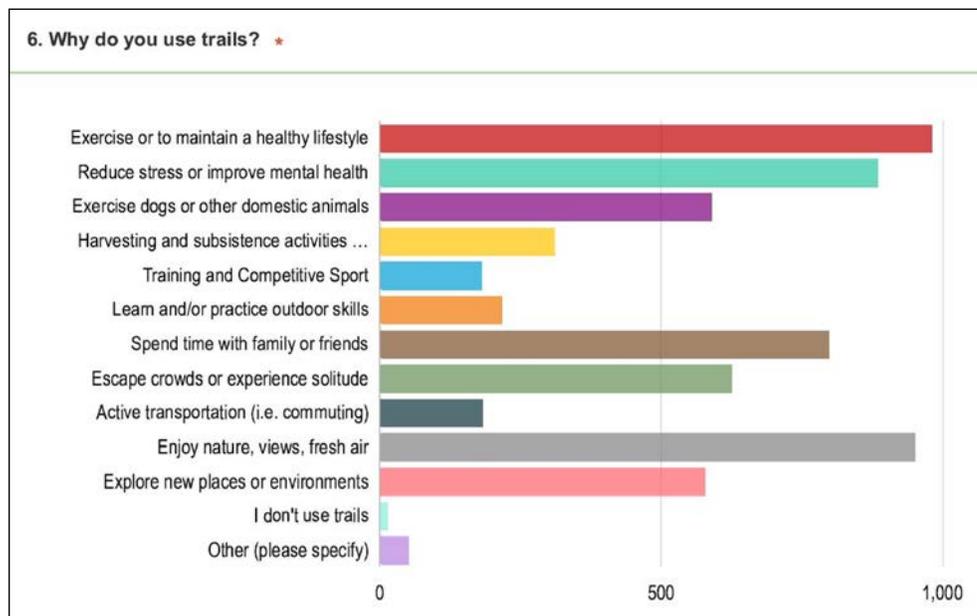


Figure 1. Self-Selecting Online Survey Question 6 Summary



Skijoring at the Jeff Stuffert Sled Dog Trails. PHOTO: Tone Deehr.

Two Rivers Ski Club (Two Rivers Ski Trails at Two Rivers Elementary, FNSB), and Salcha Ski Club (Darrell Coe Nordic Racing Trails at Salcha Elementary, FNSB). Through their agreements with landowners, these groups provide basic maintenance of the trails systems for their constituents, for special events, and the general public.

## Management Trails in the Borough

### Borough Authority

Alaska State Statute establishes the legal authority for governing bodies to exercise their appropriating and prioritization authority. The FNSB is authorized under Alaska Statute Title 29 as a second-class borough, AS 29.35.210 defines their powers. The Borough also defines its powers, privileges, rules, and regulations in the FNSB Code. Multiple titles within the FNSB Code contribute to planning, establishment, maintenance, and management of the trail system, including Title 17 *Subdivision & Trail Dedication*, Title 18 *Zoning*, and Title 20 *Land Acquisition, Management & Sale*.

The FNSB Recreational Trail Program was formally initiated in February 1980 with the adoption of Resolution

80-9. This resolution established the policy “for creation and management of a recreational trail system within the Fairbanks North Star Borough.”

There is currently no specific set of regulations in the FNSB code to direct the use of Parks and Recreation powers. Title 2 *Administration & Personnel* of the FSNB Municipal code includes a chapter on Parks & Recreation where the director position, their powers and duties, and the process for naming parks and installing memorials and plaques are described. However, this chapter is very limited and does not contain language on trails. The FNSB Parks & Recreation Department and Trails Advisory Commission are the entities primarily responsible for the FNSB recreational trails program.

### Liability

Concerns about the Borough’s level of authority and private landowners’ potential liability is especially relevant to the Trails Plan, the trail system, and programming. The existence of private landowners who allow recreational activities on their land but do not charge a fee is prevalent throughout the FNSB. Alaska Statutes Title 9.65.200-202 define Tort Immunity which is intended to provide some protection from liability for landowners who are providing access to their unimproved land or access for recreational activities. Alaska Statute Title 34.17.055 defines tort immunity from personal injuries or death arising out of the use of land subject to a conservation easement, specifically for landowners with land that has a conservation easement 50 feet or less in width. Alaska Statute 34.17.100 provides that a recorded easement may be created for the purposes of AS 9.65.202. Each of these statutes has a number of criteria, such as that the land is offered for free and exceptions, such as in cases of gross negligence. These State Statutes are the primary legal tools protecting private landowners and the FNSB from incidences occurring on the trail system. Local governments may have additional protection from liability through AS 09.65.070 and AS 09.65.290.



## Parks & Recreation Department Role

Responsibility of the recreational trails program is with the FNSB Parks & Recreation Department, specifically under the Parks Maintenance Division.

The Department's mission is to preserve and create an inclusive community culture by providing places and programs designed to enrich the quality of life.

The Parks Maintenance division provides and maintains athletic, recreational, and park facilities to meet the community's needs for healthy recreational activities that are accessible to all borough residents. The division fosters relationships and partners with civic organizations, youth and adult sports organizations, businesses, and other governmental agencies to provide cost effective and affordable recreation opportunities. The division provides facilities and locations for activities that improve physical and mental health, attract and retain community members, contribute to the economic base, and decrease deviant behavior by providing healthy alternatives for at-risk youth.

Six basic management areas make up the Parks Maintenance Division: Parks Maintenance, Birch Hill Recreation Area, Chena Lake Recreation Area, Tanana Lakes Recreation Area, Recreational Trails Office, and the Project Office. The staff performs a variety of recreation facility management, renovation, and development functions at over 130 indoor and outdoor park facilities located throughout the Borough. The division works closely with partner organizations and the community to provide recreational activities at these locations. Additionally, staff provides support for large community events and landscape beautification efforts.

### Funding

The Parks & Recreation Department is primarily funded through appropriations from the Borough's General Fund. Parks & Recreation's budget is divided between all borough recreation facilities, including parks, major rec-

reation areas, pavilions, athletic fields, ice rinks, pools, and recreation centers, and the staff needed to maintain and manage them. Aside from the Trails Coordinator position, there is no funding specifically dedicated for recreational trails in the budget.

Trail needs compete for available funding for contractual services and commodities lines within the Parks Maintenance budget (\$369,000 and \$312,000 respectively for FY2021-22). Nearly all the Parks Maintenance contractual and commodities budget is spent to take care of non-trail facilities. Depending on need, a small number (1-3) of small projects (<\$5,000) are funded through the parks maintenance budget each year to address urgent trail issues. Larger projects are typically funded through external grant programs. Separate project-specific general fund appropriations cover grantee match requirements.

Many recreational trail projects and planning, including this update of the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan, are funded through state and federal grants. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP), a Federal Highways pass-through grant administered by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, is currently the only regularly applied for grant for trail-specific projects. RTP provides reimbursable, matched funds to develop and repair recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail users and can also provide for trail related environmental protection, safety, and educational projects. One round of applications and awards occurs each fiscal year with a grant award capped between \$50K and \$100K per project; as this is a state-funded program, long term stability of the grant program and amount of potentially available funds is not guaranteed and fluctuates with administrations. To access RTP funds, the FNSB Parks Department competes against projects nominated for the State Parks system, other municipalities and Boroughs, and NGO/non-profit organizations.



Other funding sources, such as the Federal Highway Administration's Transportation Alternative Set-Aside Program (TAP) program, help fund a variety of activities related to improving surface transportation assets including on-and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, environmental mitigation, and recreation or recreational trails improvement projects. To access these funds, the FNSB Parks Department and trail users must participate in Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning's Transportation Improvement Program and Metropolitan Transportation Plan updates to ensure recreational trail projects are identified and therefore eligible for funding allocations.

#### ***Trail Staff***

The Trails Coordinator heads the Recreation Trails Office within the Parks Maintenance Division. Currently, the Trails Coordinator is the only Borough position dedicated specifically to the planning, management, and maintenance of recreational trails within the FNSB Trails Plan. Chena Lake and Tanana Lakes Recreation Areas have staff who can perform basic maintenance and grooming on their trails when time allows. The major functions of the Trails Coordinator position are to implement the Trails Plan and facilitate trail planning efforts; seek and apply for funding sources for trail development; coordinate trail maintenance or construction projects; provide technical expertise and information about trail use, design and construction; act as liaison for trail user groups; and provide staff support for Trails Advisory Commission.

#### ***Trail Maintenance***

The Parks Department relies on a combination of contracted labor, staff labor, and volunteer labor for trail maintenance and development. All maintenance and development efforts require coordination from the Trails Coordinator position. Most major trail projects are completed by contracted labor funded through external grant programs, namely the Recreational Trails Program

(see Chapter 6 for further information). In a typical year the Trails Coordinator plans one or two major projects and applies for the competitive program. If awarded, the Trail Coordinator will bid the projects and manage the contracts.

No Parks Maintenance Division labor staff (caretakers, laborers, groundskeepers, youth crews, etc.) are dedicated to Borough trail systems included in the Trails Plan outside of Chena Lake and Tanana Lakes Recreation Areas. Mobilizing a FNSB staff member or crew for trail maintenance currently requires redirecting staff, vehicles, and equipment from assigned duties at another park or recreation site.

Formal volunteer maintenance events are rare due to the relatively high time cost associated with organization and recruitment and the relatively low output. Volunteers are typically untrained and prohibited from using necessary tools like chainsaws due to risk and liability and so may be less productive than staff or contracted labor. Many trail users seem to prefer to take care of the trails on their own, outside of FNSB's knowledge, rather than deal with formalities and requirements associated with FNSB volunteer policies. Some barriers for volunteers include indemnification language, lack of formal organization or non-profit status, ability to fund insurance for the work performed, limited support, inconsistent membership, or lack of specific expertise.

#### ***Trail Challenge Program***

The FNSB Parks & Recreation Department has one primary trail program which is funded through Parks Department allocations, the Fairbanks Trails Challenge. The Fairbanks Trails Challenge is an all-ages, all-abilities, outdoor scavenger hunt designed to get residents exploring more local trails and developing new skills. Each summer and winter season, Parks & Recreation Department staff temporarily install special signs in various



Trails Challenge participants find a sign at Tanana Lakes. PHOTO: Evangeline Orr

locations along a dozen or more local trails. While the signs are up, residents are encouraged to visit the trails, find the signs, and take pictures with them to prove what trails were completed.

Part of the growing success of the Trails Challenge is due to the Trails Challenge guide, which is updated for both the winter and summer challenges. The guide provides detailed maps and descriptions of the trails included in the challenge, including difficulty level, trail distance, allowed activities, and directions on how to access the trails. Directions on how to take the challenge, contact information, tips for participating, and educational information on Leave No Trace practices and trail etiquette are also included in the guide.

### Trails Advisory Commission

The Trails Advisory Commission (TAC) was established in 1980 by ordinance and is governed by Chapter 4.112 of FNSB Code. The TAC is the advisory body to borough government matters relating to trails within the Borough and the Trails Plan, a component of the Comprehensive Plan of the FNSB. Residents of various geographic areas of the Borough with demonstrated interest in the trail system

make up the volunteer commission. The TAC replaces the duties of the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding trails and the Borough trail system.

Responsibilities and duties of the TAC include:

- Making recommendations to the Mayor concerning present and future trail needs, trail routing, and trails as part of state and Borough land disposals.
- Providing a forum for citizen input into the trails assessments and needs for the Borough and to advise the Mayor on these findings
- Encourage public and private subdividers to incorporate a trail system where needed on a voluntary basis along property boundaries, section lines and public rights-of-way.
- Provide initial review of proposed amendments to the comprehensive recreational trail plan and make recommendations to the planning commission and borough assembly on such proposed amendments.

Efforts by the TAC are frequently working to address appropriate designations of trails as motorized, non-motorized, or multi-use, and most commonly the lack of legal easements and rights-of-way for much of the trail system. Recommendations made by the TAC should support a safe and enjoyable trail system for diverse users.

### Partners

Partners throughout the FNSB provide residents and visitors with high-quality trail experiences by managing, maintaining, and otherwise supporting trail systems in their respective areas or managed lands. These partners range from the federal to local level with varying levels of effort or operational context.

#### Federal

- Bureau of Land Management
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Military Installations and Bases



- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Alaska Public Land Information Centers (made up of nine State and Federal partners)

**State**

- Alaska Department of Natural Resources: Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation; Division of Forestry; Division of Mining, Land and Water; and Division of Agriculture
- Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

**Regional**

- City of Fairbanks
- City of North Pole
- University of Alaska Fairbanks
- FNBS School District
- FNSB Departments
  - Public Works
  - Community Planning
  - Health & Social Services
  - Natural Resources Development

**Private & Local**

- Interior Alaska Trails & Parks Foundation
- Alaska Dog Mushers Association
- Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association
- Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks
- Salcha Ski Club
- Two Rivers Ski Club
- Running Club North
- Fairbanks Offroad Lions
- Fairbanks Racing Lions
- Fairbanks Cycle Club
- Alaska Trails, non-profit
- Interior Alaska Land Trust

**Trails Creating the System**

The 2006 Trails Plan contains 62 recommended trails or trail systems consisting of nearly 1,000 miles of trail. A far greater number of trails exist within the FNSB boundary than are documented in the Trails Plan. Many were inventoried in 1984, and more new trails have been developed or been used in the decades after. The most notable or unique qualities of the FNSB trail systems include extensive access in the winter due to frozen ground and waterways, extended use in the summer due to the mid-night sun, wide diversity of types of trail use, connectivity of trail systems throughout the populated area, and ultra-long-distance trail routes (50 miles or more) connecting communities to each other and to special landmarks.

Trails in the FNSB are used year-round for nearly every conceivable use or mode of travel. During winter, available trail miles increase considerably. Trails crisscross the community, taking people between neighborhoods and to and from recreation areas. Most trails have a multiple-use character, blending all kinds of trail users. There are a mix of formalized public trail systems managed by different agencies as well as trail systems meandering through and between residential neighborhoods, crossing private property, with varying levels of protection.

The 1985 FNSB CRTP categorized its trails by:

- **Public Access Status** – “proposed for dedication” or “existing publicly dedicated trails”
- **Priority / Intended Managing Authority** – Category A “State or Federal”, Category B “Proposed Components of the FNSB Trail System,” or Category C “Neighborhood Trail Networks”
- **Use Designation**– “non-motorized” and “multi-use”

The established system provides clear delineation of primary management, maintenance, and funding authority, as well as how Borough right-of-way acquisition authori-



ty and dedication processes will apply. It has been in use since its inception and is understandable by FNSB staff, other agencies, and the public.

**Public Access Status**

The FNSB and other public agencies own and operate land dedicated to public recreational use. Examples of publicly accessible Borough parks with trail systems include Birch Hill Recreation Area, Tanana Lakes Recreation Area, and Two Rivers Recreation Area ski trails. Examples of state and federal areas dedicated to public recreation include Chena River State Recreation Area (Alaska State Parks), White Mountains National Recreation Area (US Bureau of Land Management) and Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge (Alaska Dept of Fish and Game). These and other such trails fall under the categories of “existing publicly dedicated trails.”

The Trails Plan, past and present, focuses on identifying indispensable trails that lack legal public access so that they may be protected in the future. As such, most trails fall under the category of “trails proposed for public dedication.” This means the Borough will cooperate with, negotiate with, or in certain cases require that a landowner grant or “dedicate” to the public permission to travel through their property via the existing or planned trail corridor. “Dedication” to the public can be achieved by different methods, most commonly through a written easement document or a subdivision plat. As most trails in the Plan cross a great number of properties, considerable coordination, time, and resources may be required to have a trail corridor that is fully dedicated to the public across each property affected. For example, among the Category B Borough Trail System

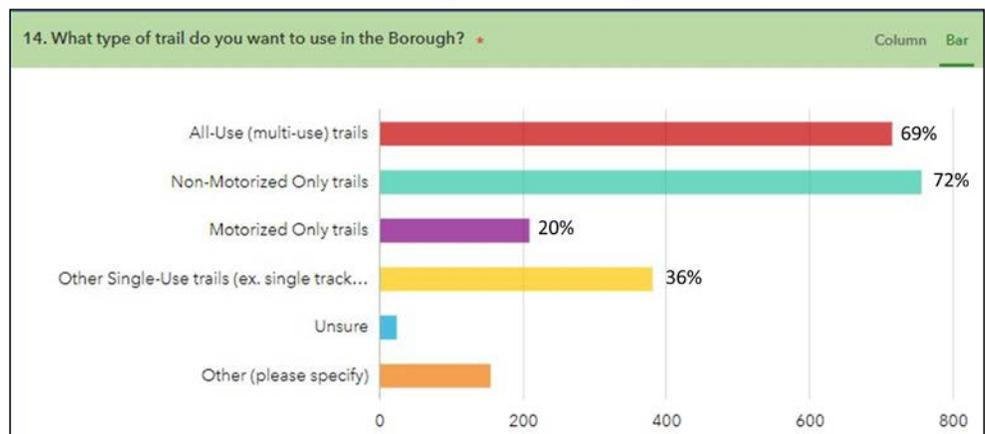
(see next section), approximately 35 miles of trail across approximately 200 private parcels currently lack public access. Until all segments of a trail are granted to the public for recreational use, the Borough will not allocate resources to develop or encourage the use of the trail, so as not to inadvertently encourage trespass. Resources must go toward securing public access prior to trail development or maintenance.

**Priority Trail Categories est. 1985**

The three-category system (A, B, C) for prioritization defines where efforts of the Borough trails program should be concentrated and where other agency responsibilities lie. The established system provides clear delineation of primary management, maintenance, and funding authority, as well as how Borough right-of-way acquisition authority and dedication processes will apply. Based on management changes, some trails may be more appropriate in different categories. Re-categorization can occur during the planning process.

**Category A:** Trails with statewide or regional significance that are located primarily on state or federal land and are therefore intended for management by state or federal authority. Dedicated easements or-rights-of-way are required to reserve these trails during any subdivision of land the trail crosses.

Figure 2. Self-Selecting Online Survey Question 14 Summary





**Category B:** Trails with community-wide significance and can cross both public and private lands that are intended or proposed to be managed by the Borough. Dedicated easements or rights-of-way are required to reserve these trails during any subdivision of land the trail crosses.

**Category C:** Trails with neighborhood or local significance and can cross both public and private lands. Maintenance and management of these trails will typically be by local trail user groups, neighborhood associations, or other volunteers. Easement dedication is not required during any subdivision of land the trail crosses. In the event rights-of-way are established, other uses may be noted as available and the Borough does not assume responsibility of these easements or trails.

### Use Designation

The 1985/2006 Trails Plan divides trails into “Multi-Use” (including motorized uses) and “Non-motorized” use designations. There is little or no more specific definition of these categories. The wide range of off-highway vehicle types and sizes are not considered in the current Plan and as such are not reflected in easement language or FNSB park regulations. While other agencies create limits based on curb weight, width, or number of drive wheels, FNSB makes no such distinction in its park rules or Trails Plan. There is also little consideration for the seasonal suitability of specific trails, though policy recommendations in the Trails Plan suggest considering seasonal closures for motorized use when applicable.

### Gaps in the System

Throughout the Plan development process and emphasized during Step 1 *Data Collection, Inventory & Analysis* and Step 2 *Vision, Goals, Issues & Opportunity Identification*, limitations, barriers or gaps in the

management and maintenance of the FNSB recreational trail system were expressed. Concepts identified by the Trails Advisory Commission were echoed at public workshops and were strongly correlated with the results of the Trail Use Survey.

Frequently expressed concerns related to poor trail conditions or lack of maintenance, confusion, or lack of information on trail locations, if a trail is on public land, insufficient signage or wayfinding and user conflicts. This is reflected in the Trail Use Survey responses summarized below (see Appendix D. Trail Use Survey Report):

The Trail Use Survey asked respondents to rate limitations or barriers to trail use on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being not limiting and 5 being very limiting. Table 3 on the following page includes limitations that were rated at or higher than 2.5. **Lack of knowledge on whether a trail is on private or public land was the highest rated limitation to trail use**, followed closely by a lack of knowledge on where trails are located.

Additionally, Trail Use Survey respondents were asked to rate potential priority activities for improving trails in the Borough. Selecting a 1 indicated the activity was “Low Priority” and selecting a 5 indicated the activity was a “High Priority.” Table 4 includes priorities that rated 3.5 or higher. **Maintaining existing trails had the highest average rating of 4.4**, followed by establishing connections to link existing trails, constructing new trails, providing more and better locational information, and improving trail conditions.



Table 3. Average Rating of Limitations to Trail Use, Trail Use Survey

LIMITATION OR BARRIER	COMBINED RESPONSE AVERAGE
Lack of knowledge if a trail is private or public	2.7
Lack of knowledge on allowed trail uses	2.7
Lack of knowledge on where trails are	2.6
Poor trail conditions or lack of trail maintenance	2.5

Table 4. Average Rating of Priorities for Trails, Trail Use Survey

PRIORITY ACTIVITY	COMBINED RESPONDENT AVERAGE
Maintain existing trails	4.4
Establish connections to link existing trails	3.9
Construct new trails	3.7
Provide more and better information on where trails are located	3.6
Improve trail conditions (ex. re-surface trails for extended use)	3.5

The desire for a variety of trails experiences, including all-use trails, non-motorized or motorized-only trails, and single-use trails (most frequently single-track mountain bike trails), was frequently expressed through all methods of public engagement. This desire for variety extended beyond activity type and included difficulty levels and experiences had while recreating on the trail. The Trail Use Survey asked respondents to identify what type of trail they want to use in the Borough, and the responses again correlated to information received through other engagement opportunities including the online interactive comment map, TAC work sessions and public workshops.

### Local Recreation Context – FNSB Parks & Recreation Niche

Public feedback indicates demand for a wide variety of available trails. An inventory of existing trails generally shows a variety of trail types, designated uses, types of



Dog mushing during the Two Rivers 200 race. PHOTO: Julien Schroeder, Arctic-Mood.com

terrain and distances available in the region. This Plan must take care, however, not to interpret this demand to mean the FNSB Parks and Recreation Department should provide every possible trail experience to every potential trail user. Other non-Borough recreation areas provide ample trail opportunities that may not need be duplicated by the FNSB. The Chena River Recreation Area (State Parks) and White Mountains National Recreation Area (BLM) provide longer distance, developed trails in a more primitive environment conducive to multiple-day trips and weekend adventures. They also offer more trails properly designed for small, motorized off-highway vehicles. These systems are farther from town and less convenient for day use during the week. The FNSB's parks and trail systems and vacant lands are in contrast much closer to the populated areas and smaller in acreage. The FNSB is uniquely suited to accommodate the need for convenience by offering proximal, short-duration, weekday recreation that is not provided by other land managers. Similar conclusions were found in the 2014 Interior Alaska Recreation Study.

### Pervasive Trail Problems

An inventory of existing trails identified the following types of issues as the most pervasive and in need of consideration when proposing a comprehensive trail system.

### **Access**

Mentioned in the previous section, a lack of public access is the number one issue throughout the local network of regularly used trails. Access is a prerequisite for all trail development and improvement.

### **Poor Conditions & Trail Degradation**

The two primary culprits of trail degradation are poor trail alignment and inappropriate uses of seasonally wet trails. Remedies in a new Trails Plan can include proposing new, sustainable alignments and designating trails for uses compatible with the underlying soils and topography (see Chapter 6). Capital improvements such as realignments and tread hardening will be necessary to make many trails viable and maintainable in the future.

### **Usability and Awareness**

Trail systems outside of developed parks generally lack developed trailheads, adequate parking, restrooms, on-site information, and wayfinding. The culprit is often lack of complete public access. Once a trail is made accessible, trailhead facilities and amenities may be developed and maintained in a way appropriate to its contextual needs to increase the trails usability.

### **Service Gaps – What We Are Missing**

**Uses** – Attempts to meet demand for trail variety may incorrectly lead to designating as many trails as possible for multiple-use. Multiple-use trails will tend to require similar design characteristics, which could lead to an overabundance of a particular trail experience, where variety is only obtained based on the chosen mode of travel. Current evaluation indicates there is a surplus of multiple use trails: roughly 66% of trail mileage in the 2006 Trail Plan is designated for motorized multiple-use and 33% for non-motorized multiple-use, despite the majority of

actual trail use being non-motorized based on the 2021 survey. Trails for specific uses and specific ability levels are also in demand but may be undersupplied near populated areas of the FNSB. With exception of multiple trail systems dedicated to cross-country skiing, a small number of systems designed for sprint dog mushing, and one singletrack mountain bike system, there are few local public trail systems designed for specific uses. Single-use systems can help increase local proficiency and investment in an activity by providing an area for safe, stepwise skill development from novice to mastery. Growing areas of interest that may lack sufficient supply are dedicated mountain biking areas, singletrack hiking trails with views near town, and dedicated motorized areas for mudding and challenge courses. Despite several bridge trail projects of the past, most of these trails have evolved to become multiple use. There is also no area in the Borough developed specifically for equestrian riding.

**Areas** – The North Pole and Salcha areas of the FNSB appear to be the most underserved with respect to both trail mileage and trail variety. There is little variety of trail terrain available, especially for summer uses, as most vacant land in the areas is flat and seasonally wet. Providing for these communities may require targeted planning and strategic connections to more varied terrain.



Wet trail on poor soils, a common sight. Eldorado Creek Trail. PHOTO: Taryn Oleson-Yelle



## 5. TRAILS FOR TOMORROW

An essential component of this updated FNSB Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan (Trails Plan) is a central vision and a set of goals that reflect the community's priorities and desire for future recreation. Recommendations made in Chapters 6 and 7 of this Plan are centered on, were developed around, and guided by the community's defined vision for recreational trails in the Borough.

The Trails Advisory Commission (TAC) worked collaboratively over multiple meetings with FNSB Staff, the project team, and the public, to develop the following vision, goals, and guiding principles to guide investments in the recreational trails system and trail program for the 20-year horizon. Goals and guiding principles reflect priorities of the community and will be a base-line consideration for evaluating trail projects and initiative in the FNSB.

### Vision for the Future FNSB Trails System

The Fairbanks North Star Borough trail system is cherished and essential to our community identity, health and economy; connects our communities to each other and their surrounding wild landscapes through an expansive network; and provides all ages and abilities an unparalleled variety of high-quality experiences for every season.

### Goals & Guiding Principles

Community-defined goals provide a roadmap to achieving the longer-term vision for the FNSB Trail System. Actionable guiding principles defined under each goal provide additional guidance for decision-makers on how available resources should be allocated. For more detail on the Goals and Guiding Principles, see Appendix F. Vision, Goals & Strategy Report.



Pearl Creek Nordic Ski Trails. PHOTO: Bryant Wright

#### 1 Establish & Protect Public Access

The FNSB has the authority and ability to (1) protect existing access, (2) establish new access, (3) maintain trails, and (4) enforce applicable regulations.

- a. Expand administrative methods to protect and establish trails beyond the FNSB Code Title 17 Subdivisions process.
- b. Clarify the level of autonomous decision-making authority of the Parks & Recreation Department and expand where needed.
- c. Develop and implement processes to ensure adequate corridor widths are secured to protect the long-term experience and goals trail users are seeking, as well as the rights of enjoyment and use of adjacent lands by their owners. Processes should include design considerations and metrics necessary to ensure safety, longevity and enjoyment of trails.

#### 2 Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset

The community & FNSB continue and expand their investments into the trail system, programs, and



planning to benefit the community, meet current needs and future demand, and support growing and dynamic use of local trails.

- a. Highlight and develop the uniquely world-class potential of our trail system.
- b. Invest in protecting and creating essential legal public access.
- c. Invest in building and developing the necessary physical access.
- d. Invest in the regular maintenance and upkeep of trail systems.
- e. Invest in programs to raise awareness of and help people access our trail system.

### 3 Foster Lasting Stewardship

The trails are cared for and valued by the community as a shared public asset and an environmental resource.

- a. Increase the availability of resources and frequency of opportunities to educate current and potential trail users.
- b. Continue to provide and expand trails programming to educate and engage more users.
- c. Increase active participation in the care and maintenance of trail facilities by local trail users, organized groups, and community partners.
- d. Leverage FNSB resources to foster partnerships and volunteer opportunities.

### 4 Improve Access for All Ages & Abilities

The FNSB trail systems provide essential, desired, and inviting trails that are accessible and enjoyable for users with differing abilities and activity preferences.

- a. Provide a system as diverse as the community it serves.
- b. Expand ADA opportunities.
- c. Strive for equitable geographic distribution of trail facilities.



Riders along Cleary-Gilmore Trails. PHOTO: Fairbanks Snow Travelers.

- d. Provide wayfinding, mapping and signage for public trails.
- e. Develop trailheads for improved accessibility, visibility, and safety, including emergency response.

### 5 Increase Connectivity

The trail system is expansive and interconnected, providing recreation and transportation opportunities between residential, urban, natural areas, and wilderness.

- a. Facilitate cooperation and coordination with public and private landowners.
- b. Consider trails as potential transportation solutions.
- c. Provide and improve safe connections across natural and man-made barriers (e.g., rivers and highways).
- d. Disperse users to reduce pressures including crowding and user conflicts.



- e. Provide opportunities for different distance trips/outings.
- f. Support regional or national destination trail connectivity projects, such as 100-Mile Loop Trail and Alaska Long Trail, to complement the local trail system.
- g. Improve access for emergency response; increase safety and make trails less intimidating.

### 6 Improve User Experience

The trail system provides desirable outdoor experiences for users of varying activity types and ability levels year-round.

- a. Improve user safety.
- b. Reduce user conflict.
- c. Maintain user experience by maintaining integrity of trail conditions.
- d. Direct users to the trails that provide the experience they are looking for.
- e. Provide facilities, amenities, and resources that support trail use and access.
- f. Create desirable experiences for varying skill levels.

### 7 Expand Recreation Opportunities

The trail network and programming are adaptable to new trends in outdoor recreation and are expanding to provide opportunities to current and future trail users.

- a. Increase dispersal of different trail types and experiences.
- b. Repair, rebuild and maintain trails where needed to retain historic use of existing trails.
- c. Prioritize new facilities that support under-served users or areas.
- d. Provide niche experiences through trail development.
- e. Extend and expand summer seasonal use.

### 8 Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability

Use, management, and maintenance of trails considers long-term sustainability, is guided by strong environmental stewardship, and is proactive to changes in climate to continue providing the community with world-class recreation opportunities.

- a. Respond to recurring and anticipated changes in trail conditions to ensure long-term usability, enjoyment, and access.
- b. Design and development of trails should consider sustainable goals and criteria
- c. Use temporary, seasonal, or permanent use closures when needed to protect user safety and the environment
- d. Use trails as educational opportunities, especially as climate change is exacerbated in areas with trails.



Skiline Ridge before restoration (far left) and after restoration (left). PHOTO Bryant Wright



## 6. SYSTEM-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Trail System of the FNSB is dependent on and comprised of more than the trails on the ground. The following system-wide recommendations, organized by a general category or type of action, are made to work toward actualizing the community-defined vision and goals for the FNSB Trails System.

### 1 Approval

The first recommended action is for **the FNSB Assembly to adopt this Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan**. Once adopted, the Plan becomes part of the Borough's Comprehensive Plan and is recognized as a guiding document for decision-making. Support by the Trails Advisory Commission and the recommendation for approval by the Planning Commission should accompany the Plan as it goes before the Assembly. The FNSB Parks and Recreation Department will represent the Plan in the approval process as it is the primary implementer.



Fairbanks Cross Country racers at Birch Hill. PHOTO Nortic Ski Club Fairbanks.

### 2 Authority

Goal 1 of the Trails Plan is to *Establish and Protect Public Access* and ensure the Borough has the authority and ability to do so where necessary. Trails in the Trails Plan cross many types of properties and may have different types or levels of protection, if any. They may be in a state of trespass, or protected by a public easement, or simply owned by the FNSB or another public landowner. Thus, the FNSB will have different roles and responsibilities for each trail, or trail section, depending on the current status or situation. **Clarification or definitions for the authority or roles of the Parks & Recreation Department and its Trail Office on various types of trails and situations is recommended.** This clarification should pertain to



its decision-making ability, maintenance and management authority, jurisdictional reach, relationships with landowners and the FNSB's role in enforcement. Beyond clarifying and defining the level of authority, **processes defining activities over which the Parks & Recreation Department have responsibility and autonomy should also be established or clarified.**

This should include which actions require additional review or concurrency by other FNSB entities or non-FNSB partners and landowners. The intended role of the FNSB regarding a certain trail is reflected in the trail Categorization (see Chapter 7 "Recommended Future Trail Corridors Categorization"), but these planning categories do not always reflect the current jurisdictional reality.

It is recommended that the Trails Office have the authority to temporarily close trails for maintenance and resource protection reasons and the ability to establish and change use designations based on seasonal conditions and evolving needs. Appropriate review processes required for permanent closures or use changes should be more clearly defined to include a public process involving the TAC at a minimum, as it will be changing an aspect of the adopted Trails Plan.



Updates to the FNSB code to define roles and responsibilities, including the authority of the Trails Office, will likely need to occur. The Parks & Recreation Department, Trails Advisory Commission, FNSB Mayor's Office and Assembly will all have implementing responsibility for these recommendations.

### 3 Staff Capacity

One of the most apparent needs for achieving the goals of this Trails Plan is the staff capacity to manage and maintain the trail system desired by FNSB residents. To invest in our community trail system as a world-class asset, foster lasting stewardship, improve access and user experience, and expand recreation opportunities, sufficient resources will need to be available. This Plan recommends the FNSB **provide sufficient staff capacity to the Parks & Recreation Trails Office to allow satisfactory performance of the following functions:**



- Maintain and implement the Borough's Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan;
- Provide facilities that encourage outdoor recreational activities for residents of all ages and abilities;
- Coordinate and supervise available staff, contractors, and volunteer resources to complete trail construction and maintenance projects;
- Engage with landowners to facilitate trail building, use, maintenance, and establishment of legal public access;
- Complete summer maintenance projects and winter grooming of high-priority trails;
- Apply for and assist in managing grants (federal, state, NGO) for trail development projects;
- Coordinate with agencies and other partners regarding trail issues. Participate in relevant planning processes, including reviewing development plans for consistency with the Trails Plan;

- Advise and inform the public on local trail issues, resolve user conflicts, and generate trail information including maps, guides, signage and other resources;
- Monitor trail usage, inspect trail conditions, and respond to trail user concerns; and
- Manage and produce trail programming; including new and ongoing educational and engagement activities.
- Provide support for the Trails Advisory Commission

Updated job descriptions are recommended for new positions that may be added to the Parks & Recreation Department. Beyond personnel, acquiring equipment and vehicles for staff and volunteers is recommended to help create and maintain satisfactory trail conditions. As they do today, volunteers will continue to play an essential role in maintaining the trail system as staff capacity is limited. The continued development of a volunteer policy, including clear insurance and liability coverages, is needed; volunteer applications and training programs should be developed. The Parks & Recreation Department will be the primary implementer of these recommendations.

### 4 Funding

Funding is an essential component of maintaining and improving the FNSB Trail System and is applicable to all stages of trail development.



An increase in funding is recommended:

- To establish and protect legal public access, including funding for surveying, acquisition (Right-of-Way, easements, land, etc.), and site planning.
- For regular maintenance and upkeep of trails. This includes funding for staff to supervise available labor (staff, contractors, volunteers,



grant-funded seasonal workers, etc.) and investing in making trails that are maintainable, then maintaining their good condition.

- For planning and design to develop skills and capacity within the Parks & Recreation Department and invest in professional services to conduct outreach and design for developing trail systems, including their access, alignments, and features.

### **Funding Sources**

Potential funding sources include the FNSB Operating Budget and Bond Packages, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) allocations, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), grant awards, private donations, user fees and other local revenue generating strategies.

FHWA funds for trails or alternative transportation corridors are allocated through a variety of discretionary and competitive programs, all of which have qualifying criteria for eligible projects, including;

- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Alaska Federal Lands Access Program
- Alaska Community Transportation Program
- Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program
- Competitive Highway Bridge Program
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act; Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP)

Close coordination with Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning, the area's metropolitan transportation planning organization, and other pass-through entities is recommended to determine upcoming funding opportunities and ensure the Trails Office and FAST Planning have identified eligible projects. The recently passed infrastructure bills and modifications to FHWA's allowable TAP alloca-

tions is expected to broaden the funding outlook for recreational trails.

Grants can be federal, state, or private, but most require matching funds; continued research and pursuit of grant programs is needed to fund project recommendations. Seeking out matching grants (i.e. state grant money can often be considered as match to federal grants) to leverage resources for trail development is recommended. Private donations, often from 501c3 nonprofits or trail user or advocacy groups, are most frequently seen as a funding source for capital projects. Meetings with park and trails foundations and individual user groups to coordinate opportunities and use of private donations is recommended. The Parks & Recreation Department should develop and install donation collection infrastructure or develop a direct working relationship with a non-profit organization that would fill that role.

Revenue generating funding sources should be researched for consideration, such as user fees or trail/park pass programs (e.g., State Park Day-Use Pass program). User fees could be applied to special use areas such as maintained ski-only trail networks or motor-parks or be implemented for a limited time until a specific funding goal is met. Other revenue sources for maintenance could be through a modification of the existing Road Service Area or creation of a new Recreation District or Parks Service Area, where borough residents pay into their service area for maintenance and upkeep of facilities within their boundary.

## **5 Trail Establishment**

To establish and protect public access and continue to expand recreation opportunities in accordance with the community's goals, **expanded admin-**





Rosie Creek Trail. PHOTO Bryant Wright

istration methods to protect and establish trails beyond the current process in FNSB Code Title 17 Subdivisions is recommended. As part of the subdivi-

sion process, FNSB Code requires that easements be dedicated for Category A & B trails. While Title 17 is a powerful tool, it is an unavoidable fact that many properties in the Borough have already been subdivided and are unlikely to undergo further subdivision. Unless a property owner wishes to subdivide their property further, the provisions of Title 17 will not protect trails.

Other methods of establishing or preserving trail corridors are necessary to maintain a viable trail network within our community. There are multiple existing techniques and strategies that can be used by the FNSB for the protection of trails to ensure their recreational uses continue, but some are more implementable, politically viable and financially preferred than others. Those strategies are identified in [Appendix B. Trail Protection Toolkit](#) which includes some benefits and drawbacks of each.

Beyond those existing techniques, there are recommendations that the FNSB Parks & Recreation Department, the Borough Assembly, and major landowners should consider and pursue to expand the protection and establishment of trails:

- Coordinate with state, federal and major landowners to **streamline easement establishment processes**. The FNSB should establish minimum standards for accepting an easement and have draft language prepared which can be modified to best fit the access agreement to the given landowners needs.
  - The development and formalization of a shorter-term agreement with Land Management for owner-management agreements should be considered. Agreements should include defining what trail use and construction activities can occur with or without the landowner's consent.
- Coordinate with utility companies and develop agreements or a standard policy to address or permit allowable recreation within utility easements, primarily extended corridors such as those for pipeline and electrical lines. Trails can be established and maintained without permanent infrastructure, allowing for unimpeded utility maintenance activities, and collaboration between utility companies, FNSB staff, and trail users could aid in trail maintenance to the benefit of all stakeholders.
- Encourage private landowners to grant easements that allow recreational use (AS 34.17.100 or other)
  - Explore the feasibility of FNSB property tax breaks or other incentive programs for private property owners to formally grant public access for trails identified in the Trails Plan.
  - Absorb costs associated with granting easements, such as surveying and platting fees.
  - Establish clear criteria easements must meet in order to be accepted by FNSB, considering duration, depiction, dimension, designation, documentation.
- Utilize FNSB Code 20.21 Land Acquisition as a primary means for proactively acquiring trail easements for the benefit of the public.



Volunteers restore trails at Skyline Ridge Park. PHOTO Brian Accola.

## “Sustainable” Trails: *Definition and Six Principles*

### **What is a Sustainable Trail?**

A sustainable trail conforms to its terrain & environment, is capable of handling its intended use without serious degradation, & requires minimal maintenance while meeting user expectations. Put more simply, sustainable trails are ecologically resilient, economically viable and socially relevant.

### **Six Sustainable Trail Principles**

Different agencies and organizations vary in their approaches to compiling these principles, but current guidelines all encapsulate the following:

#### **1 Contoured, Curvilinear Alignment**

When possible, utilize sidehill construction following topography. This enables full-bench construction where feasible, promotes proper drainage, and helps control steepness. A sustainable alignment conforms to, rather than imposes upon, the terrain.

#### **2 Controlled Grade**

Consider the steepness of the trail in its design. While there may be some exceptions, trail grades should generally follow these rules:

- a. “Half-rule:” The trail grade does not exceed half than percentage of the sideslope it crosses (otherwise it is considered a “fall-line” trail, naturally channeling water and promoting erosion).

- b. 10% Average Grade: The overall grade (calculated using absolute values) should not exceed 10%. This helps control speeds to improve trail user experience, slows water to reduce its erosive power, and helps prevent rutting from uphill travel.

- c. Maximum Sustainable Grade: For steep, short sections (typically 50 feet long or less), a maximum grade sustainable should be established based on topography, soils, climate, trail use, and desired difficulty. Sections of steep trail should be interrupted by grade reversals to channel water off the trail and control speeds.

#### **3 Integrated Water Control**

Drainage is designed and constructed into initial alignment and tread shaping via grade reversals and a surface tread that is outsloped (on sidehill) or crowned (on flat ground). This reduces dependence on structures, which can fail.

#### **4 Durable Tread Surface**

Where possible this is accomplished with full bench construction, exposing durable, native mineral soils. When bench cut isn’t possible or soils are fragile, other trail hardening methods are appropriate (on-site material, imported material, structures, geo-textiles, etc.). Simple solutions are preferred and tread improvements should follow drainage integration.

#### **5 Regular Maintenance**

While proper planning, design and construction significantly reduce trail maintenance needs and cost, even the most sustainable trail still needs maintenance.

#### **6 Integrates Well into the Environment**

Trails should strive not to destroy feel, aesthetics or ecological integrity of environment. The overall result will enhance natural features & draws user into surroundings.

*Adapted from US Forest Service, National Park Service, State Parks (multiple), American Trails, Student Conservation Association, International Mountain Biking Association, and others.*



- Refine code to address trail easements.
  - Develop minimum standards for acceptance and determine method of recording.
- Review and improve the process for fee simple land purchases.
- If this tool is improved to be more accessible to the Parks & Recreation Department, the Borough should also be prepared with funding to compensate landowners for purchases of property or easements through fee simple.

There are other actions for supporting the establishment and protection of trails that the Parks & Recreation Department, Community Planning Department, and public are recommended to pursue including:

- Review and amend the existing zoning district regulations (FNSB Code Title 18) to support trail development and expansion. District regulations to be reviewed include but are not limited to the Outdoor Recreation District (FNSB Code Title 18.20), Open Space Buffer District (18.24, and residential districts. Trails and trailheads are present and proposed within many FNSB zoning districts, therefore, the use regulations for those districts should be consistent with and supportive of such recreational opportunities. For example, currently golf courses and shooting ranges are allowed by-right uses within the Outdoor Recreation zoning district, but organized trail facilities are a conditional use. Additionally, trailheads or trail facilities are not identified as a permitted uses in residential districts nor permitted or conditional in rural districts. The departments and the public should consider if the planning, regulations, and approval processes associated with recreational trail uses accurately reflects the intent of various districts.
- Work with the Community Planning Department to consider the development of a recreational overlay district to support and encourage recreational trail development within compatible primary zoning districts.

- Consider amendments to FNSB Code language and definitions to ‘dedication,’ ‘subdivision,’ and ‘trails’ such that the granting of a trail easement does not effectuate a subdivision.
- Review FNSB Code and improve the process for addressing changes made to the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan after its adoption, including changes in use designation, trail additions and alignment modifications, and how they may need to be reflected or documented in accordance with previously recorded plats.

If any modifications to FNSB Code are found to be advantageous and supported by the community and the Assembly, they will undergo a formal public review process.

## 6 Design & Maintenance Standards

### Standards

Significant aspects of the community’s vision and goals for the FNSB trail system are applicable to the trail facilities themselves and the recreation opportunities they can offer to the community with diverse interests, ages, abilities, and desired experiences. **The development of trail standards based on intended use, safety, longevity, and enjoyment of trails is recommended.** FNSB’s Parks & Recreation Department should create a trail design and management manual based on best practices including those used by Alaska State Parks, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management that identifies standards for trail design and trail maintenance. The manual would serve as a resource for Department staff and volunteer leads, helping them develop sustainable trails that facilitate the intended use. In the absence of a manual, FNSB Parks will follow current best practices and refer to existing trail design, construction and maintenance guidelines from other organizations and agencies. As the Borough assumes management and maintenance responsibilities for certain trails, Trail



Management Objectives and standards for each trail should be established and reflect current best practices to guide the Parks Department and its partners in the ongoing maintenance and development of the trail.

Trail standards should consider:

- Principles of “sustainable” trail design, construction, and maintenance (see “Sustainable” Trails: Definition and Six Principles on page 29);
- Minimum easement widths, driven by intended trail use;
  - If pursued, codifying determined easement widths is recommended to aid in subdivision and access establishment processes.
- Minimum standards for trailheads, including signage and wayfinding, parking and other amenities;
- On-trail wayfinding and off-trail mapping for public trails; and
- Allowed uses and anticipated experiences (e.g., difficult levels, elevation changes, distances, permitted vehicle types and specifications).

**Trailheads are to be improved or developed to sufficiently support their intended purpose**, including improved accessibility, visibility, safety and emergency response. Trailheads are context-sensitive: not all require the same level of development and are dependent on type of use, season of use, volume of use, location, adjacent land uses, traffic impacts, access road conditions and more. Trailheads should facilitate access to the trail while minimizing the overall impact of its use. **The development of systematic levels or categorization of trailheads is recommended to clarify what facilities and amenities exist or are desired at different trail types.**



Trailhead kiosk installed at Eagle Trail, Tanana Lakes Recreation Area. PHOTO: Bryant Wright.

This will require an inventory of existing trailhead deficiencies, needs and opportunities and input from the public on trailhead standards for different recommended trailhead development categories. If trail standards or planned trailhead development categories are pursued, cost estimates for recommended improvements can more easily be generated, improvement projects can more readily be added to the FNSB Capital Improvements Program (CIP), and grants may be more easily applied for.

#### *Maintenance*

A primary consideration and concern of the public heard throughout the Plan development process was trail maintenance. **The development and implementation of a Trail Maintenance Program that addresses needs through a combination of staff labor, contracted services, and volunteer assistance is recommended.** While trail maintenance is an ongoing action and priority of the Trails Office, little formalization or documentation to the process has been established.

The Trail Maintenance Program would:

- Establish a policy and standards for maintenance that facilitate staff and volunteer success and meet high expectations for trail quality;
- Establish standards or a process for responding to trail maintenance needs as they are identified;
- Document designed use, managed use, and design parameters for different types of trails in the form of Trail Management Objectives for each trail for which the Borough assumes responsibility;
- Provide Parks Maintenance Division with the staff capacity to coordinate with partners, contractors, and volunteers and conduct outreach;
- Employ supervisory staff to oversee Program operations, maintenance, development, and implementation of the Trails Plan;
- Provide support, training, and equipment to volunteers to complete projects;
- Streamline the volunteer process to increase participation;
- Work cooperatively with user groups and maintain activity-specific trail systems; and
- Work cooperatively with other organizations to train lead volunteers and build trail maintenance knowledge in the community.

Defining staff and volunteer roles and responsibilities should be a priority for the Program and a focus on recruitment and utilization of volunteer services will be needed. Parks & Recreation Department should coordinate with stakeholders to discuss needs and opportunities for a trail maintenance program. Coordination should occur early in the program's development to ensure accurate priorities and community support.



Constructing multi-use trail at Isberg Recreation Area. PHOTO: Bryant Wright

## 7 Construction/Implementation

**To realize the community's vision for trails, the adopted Trails Plan, including the recommendations made in this chapter and the Trail Recommendations Map and List in Chapter 7, must be implemented.**



Implementation advances all the community's goals for the FNSB trail system and will require adequate funding resources and staff capacity. Beyond the list of trails themselves, the following guiding principles are to be considered when selecting priority projects and implementing the Plan:

- Increase connectivity to complete missing links in access, expand accessibility, improve emergency response, amplify trails' role as a transportation corridor, disperse users or reduce pressure and conflicts, and provide opportunities to travel different distances;
- Strive for equitable geographic distribution of recreational trail opportunities and increase dispersal of different trail types and experiences;
- Prioritize new facilities that support underserved users or areas;



- Expand ADA opportunities and improve major trailheads to comply with ADA requirements.

**The formalization of a Trail Improvement Prioritization Process is recommended to allocate resources for trail improvements in a way that will be defensible, transparent, and in the lasting best interest of the community.** This is anticipated to be led by the Parks & Recreation Trails Office and the Trails Advisory Commission and include prioritization criteria that includes connectivity and geographic equity to align with the above guiding principles for implementing the Trails Plan Map.

## 8 Planning

Continued and improved involvement in trail, recreation, and community planning efforts is important for the long-term success and implementation of the Trails Plan. The Parks & Recreation Department and Trails Advisory Commission, with support from other stakeholders and trail users, should:



- Actively participate in the 5-year updates to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to remain eligible for federal funding allocations and ensure FNSB trail priorities are documented;
- Actively participate in Borough planning processes for area, functional, and comprehensive plans to ensure recommended trail locations and improvements are incorporated;
- Implement applicable recommendations made in other jurisdictional plans that are consistent with the FNSB Trails Plan (e.g. Chena River State Recreation Area Management Plan, Historic Preservation Plan, Comprehensive Roads Plan, Alaska Recreational Trails Plan, etc.);
- Develop and refine plans for Trail Recreation Areas (e.g. Skyline Ridge, Peede Road Open Space, etc.) to provide a variety of trail experiences,

including areas for specific single-use or separated uses in a dedicated area with supporting facilities, wayfinding, and amenities (see Chapter 7 Recreational Trail Areas); and

- Review the Trails Plan and update, as necessary. Incremental reassessment of the Trails Plan should be done every 5 to 10 years with a full reevaluation and update every 20 years to ensure the goals, actionable guiding principles and recommendations are still relevant, compatible, and representative of the community's needs and desires.

Efforts to increase approachability to planning processes should be made by sponsoring agencies. This may include improving the process by which the public nominates trails for inclusion in the Trails Plan. Infographics and action-oriented text with explanatory attachments may increase public understanding of the process and decrease the amount of effort required for a successful nomination. An update to the *Guide to Nominating Trails to the FNSB Trails Plan* to a more user-friendly, condensed format is recommended to encourage future participation.

## 9 Education

To work towards Goal 3 Foster Lasting Stewardship and expand the care and value of the trails by members of the community, educational efforts should increase. The Parks & Recreation Department, with support from the Trails Advisory Commission and trail user groups, should consider the **development and implementation of a Trail Education Program**. The program would promote Leave No Trace ethics and education, provide instructions on trail etiquette, encourage sustainable use and enjoyment of trails, and improve approachability to recreation for new users. Information on trails and their access should be provided through digital and physical





Trails Challenge participants find a sign on Ester Dome. PHOTO Kathleen Klynstra.

resources including maps and descriptions for using FNSB trails and onsite interpretive signage.

The Trails Education Program would incorporate the existing and popular Trail Challenge program and add new programs as capacity allows. Through work with partnering organizations and businesses, equipment, and instruction for different types of recreational activities could be provided to incentivize more FNSB residents to get outdoors. Approachability should be a primary focus of the program across all aspects.

## 10 Partnerships

Partnerships are an essential component for long-term success of the FNSB Trail systems. From volunteer maintenance, to fundraising and hosting of educational events, partners help keep the trails in use. **The Parks & Recreation Department should**



continue to support other organizations seeking compatible use of the trail system for public events such as races, field trips, athletic training programs, school programs, lifelong learning, health-promoting activities and more. Consideration and development of a fee schedule for use of recreational facilities for non-Parks & Recreation sponsored events, including for-profit events, is recommended.

## Summary

The following table summarizes the recommended actions to implement the Trails Plan's goals and work toward actualizing the community-defined vision for the FNSB Trail System. The table also identifies the primary parties responsible for implementing the identified actions and a general timeframe to accomplish the recommendations.



**RECOMMENDATION AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES TABLE**

*Timeframes: Short (0-4 Years), Mid (5-9 Years), Long (10+ Years)*

Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 <b>APPROVALS</b>	<p><b>Adopt the FNSB Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Local approval process through TAC, Planning Commission and FNSB Assembly</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Department	Short	All
 <b>AUTHORITY</b>	<p><b>Clarify or define the roles and authority of the Parks &amp; Recreation Department (PRD) and its Trails Office,</b> including its decision-making ability, maintenance and management authority, jurisdictional reach relationship with landowners of public trails, and role in enforcement.</p> <p><b>Establish or clarify processes defining activities PRD has responsibility and autonomy over</b> and which actions require additional review/concurrence by other FNSB entities or non-FNSB partners/landowners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide the PRD Trails Office the authority to temporarily close trails for maintenance; clarify appropriate review processes required for permanent closures or use changes.</li> <li>▶ Provide the PRD Trails Office the ability to establish use designations, year-round and seasonal, and a process to change them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Update the Borough Code to define roles and responsibilities including authority of the Trails Office with respect to different types of trails</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, FNSB Mayor’s Office, Assembly	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Establish &amp; Protect Public Access</li> <li>8 Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability</li> </ul>



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 <b>STAFF CAPACITY</b>	<p><b>Provide sufficient staff capacity of the Parks &amp; Recreation Trails Office to allow satisfactory performance of the following functions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Maintain and implement the Borough’s Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan.</li> <li>▶ Provide facilities that encourage outdoor recreational activities for residents of all ages and abilities.</li> <li>▶ Coordinate and supervise available staff, contractor, and volunteer resources to complete trail construction and maintenance projects.</li> <li>▶ Engage with landowners to facilitate trail building, use, maintenance, and establishment of legal public access.</li> <li>▶ Complete summer maintenance projects and winter grooming of high-priority trails.</li> <li>▶ Apply for and assist in managing grants (federal, state, NGO) for trail development projects.</li> <li>▶ Coordinate with agencies and other partners regarding trail issues, including reviewing development plans for consistency with the Trail Plan and participating early in planning and land development processes where applicable.</li> <li>▶ Advise and inform public on local trail issues; resolve user conflicts; and generate trail information including maps, guides, signage, and other resources.</li> <li>▶ Monitor trail usage, inspect trail conditions and respond to trail user concerns.</li> <li>▶ Manage and produce trail programming, including new and ongoing educational and engagement activities.</li> <li>▶ Provide support to the Trails Advisory Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Develop job descriptions for recommended positions</li> <li>▶ Recommend the positions in the department budget</li> <li>▶ Revise and continue to develop a volunteer policy, including insurance and liability coverages</li> <li>▶ Develop volunteer applications</li> <li>▶ Develop volunteer training programs</li> <li>▶ Acquire equipment and vehicles for staff and volunteers</li> </ul>	<p>FNSB Parks &amp; Recreation Department</p>	<p>Short to Mid</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</li> <li>3 Foster Lasting Stewardship</li> <li>6 Improve User Experience</li> </ul>



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
  FUNDING	<p><b>Increase funding to establish and protect legal public access</b>, including funding for surveying, acquisition (ROW, easements, land, etc.), trail planning and design.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Explore and develop funding incentives for easement acquisition.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increase funding for capital improvements and development</b> including trail construction and restoration, parking areas and trailhead amenities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Build basic trail infrastructure such that it can be used and maintained with minimal effort.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increase funding for regular maintenance</b> and upkeep of trails.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Staff to supervise available labor (staff, contracts, volunteer, grant-funded seasonal, etc.)</li> <li>▶ Invest in making trails that are maintainable, then maintain their conditions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increase funding for planning and design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Develop in-house skills/capacity and invest in professional services to conduct outreach and design for developing trail systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Research grant programs to fund project recommendations.</li> <li>▶ Research user fee and park pass programs</li> <li>▶ Develop and install physical and/or web-based fee and donation collection infrastructure.</li> <li>▶ Work closely with Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning and other pass-through entities to map upcoming funding opportunities through recent infrastructure bills and Federal Highways programs.</li> <li>▶ Meet with parks and trail foundations, and individual user groups to coordinate the use of private donations</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept., Trail Users, Advocacy Groups, Trails Advisory Commission	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>② Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</li> <li>⑦ Expand Recreation Opportunities</li> </ul>



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 TRAIL ESTABLISHMENT	<p><b>Expand administrative methods to protect and establish trails beyond the current process in FNSB Code Title 17 Subdivisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Coordinate with state, federal and major landowners to streamline easement establishment processes.</li> <li>▶ Coordinate and develop agreements, plat amendments, and /or policy to permit recreation within utility easements. Likely most applicable for extended corridors (pipeline, electric lines, etc.).</li> <li>▶ Encourage private landowners to grant public recreation easements or conservation easements that allow recreational use to provide protection from liability per AS 34.17.055.</li> <li>▶ Utilize FNSB Code 20.12 Land Acquisition as a primary means for proactively acquiring trail easements for the benefit of the public.</li> <li>▶ Explore feasibility of enacting FNSB property tax breaks, including those authorized by AS 29.45.050(e) and FNSB Code 8.08.010(B), and other incentive programs for private property owners to formally grant public access for trails identified in the Trails Plan.</li> <li>▶ Review and improve processes for fee simple land purchases.</li> <li>▶ Review and amend the existing zoning district regulations where appropriate to support trail development and expansion, including but not limited to the Outdoor Recreational District (18.20), Open Space Buffer District (18.24), and residential zoning districts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Meet with key stakeholders to discuss streamlining the easement establishing process.</li> <li>▶ Draft a memorandum of understanding to solidify agreements.</li> <li>▶ Work closely with Community Planning Department to review and explore Title 18 changes to support recreational trails.</li> <li>▶ Work with Planning Commission when proposing updates to code language for 18.20 and 18.24 and overlay district if supported.</li> <li>▶ Consider amendments to FNSB Code language and definitions (e.g., “Dedication,” “Subdivision,” and “Trails”) such that the grant of a trail easement does not effectuate a subdivision.</li> <li>▶ Develop a process to efficiently accept easements that are compatible with public recreation use and trail development. Establish acceptance criteria, including standards for trails and easement terms.</li> <li>▶ Meet with Community Planning Department, platting officers, legal, and finance departments to determine opportunities for tax breaks and incentives for formally granting public access on private land.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept., Planning Department, Assembly, Utility Providers	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Establish &amp; Protect Public Access</li> <li>2 Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</li> <li>7 Expand Recreation Opportunities</li> </ul>



*(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)*

Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 <b>TRAIL ESTABLISHMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Consider development of a recreational overlay district to support and encourage recreational trail development within compatible primary zoning districts.</li> <li>▶ Review FNSB Code and improve process for addressing changes made to the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan after adoption, including changes in use designation, trail additions, and alignment modifications, and how they may need to be reflected on or documented in accordance with previously recorded plats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Formalize a process with Land Management for shorter-term owner/management agreements.</li> <li>▶ Be prepared with funding to compensate landowners for purchases of property or easements through fee simple.</li> <li>▶ Investigate options specific to FNSB-owned land.</li> </ul>	<p>FNSB Parks &amp; Recreation Dept., Planning Department, Assembly, Utility Providers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>① Establish &amp; Protect Public Access</li> <li>② Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</li> <li>⑦ Expand Recreation Opportunities</li> </ul>



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 DESIGN & MAINTENANCE STANDARDS	<p><b>Develop trail standards</b> based on intended use, including trail and easement widths, trail design considerations and metrics necessary for safety, longevity and enjoyment of trails.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ PRD standards for design and maintenance                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop achievable Trail Management Objectives to establish and document designed use, managed use, and design parameters for different types of trails.</li> <li>• Trail Design &amp; development should be driven by intended use and sustainable goals and criteria</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Codify easement width minimums (especially helpful for subdivisions).</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop &amp; implement minimum standards for trailhead signage and wayfinding.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide trailhead signage, on-trail wayfinding, and off-trail mapping for public trails.</li> <li>▶ Communicate allowed uses, anticipated experiences (e.g. difficulty levels, elevation change, distance).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Create a trail design and management manual based on best practices including those used by Alaska State Parks, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management.</li> <li>▶ As the Borough assumes maintenance responsibilities for certain trails, develop Trail Management Objectives to guide PRD and partners.</li> <li>▶ Codify minimum trail development standards, especially those applicable to easement provision including easement width needs for different types of trails to aid in the subdivision and public access establishment processes.</li> <li>▶ Include chapters on trailhead signage and wayfinding standards in the trail design and management manual.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept., Planning Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Assembly	Short to Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Establish &amp; Protect Public Access</li> <li>2 Improve Access for All Ages &amp; Abilities</li> <li>6 Improve User Experience</li> <li>7 Expand Recreation Opportunities</li> <li>8 Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Develop trailheads</b> to be used for their intended purposes, including improved accessibility, visibility, and safety, including emergency response.</p> <p><b>Develop systematic levels or categorization of trailheads</b> to clarify what facilities and amenities exist or are desired at different types of trails. Trailheads are context-sensitive; not all require the same level of development and are dependent on type of use, season of use, volume of use, location, adjacent land uses, traffic impacts and seasonality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Inventory specific trailhead deficiencies, needs, and opportunities.</li> <li>▶ Develop cost estimates for recommended improvements.</li> <li>▶ Recommend improvement projects in the CIP.</li> <li>▶ Pursue grant funding.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept.	Mid to Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</li> <li>3 Foster Lasting Stewardship</li> <li>4 Improve Access for All Ages &amp; Abilities</li> <li>6 Improve User Experience</li> <li>7 Expand Recreation Opportunities</li> </ul>



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 DESIGN & MAINTENANCE STANDARDS	<p><b>Develop &amp; implement a Trail Maintenance Program</b> that addresses needs through a combination of staff labor, contracted services, and volunteer assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Establish standards for maintenance that facilitate staff and volunteer success and meet high expectations for trail quality.</li> <li>▶ Establish standards or a process for responding to trail maintenance needs as they are identified.</li> <li>▶ Provide PRD with the staff capacity to conduct summer maintenance and winter grooming of high priority trails.</li> <li>▶ Provide PRD staff capacity to coordinate with partners, contractors, and volunteers and conduct outreach.</li> <li>▶ Employ supervisory staff to oversee Trail Program operations, maintenance, development, and implementation of the Trail Plan.</li> <li>▶ Provide support, training, and equipment to volunteers to complete projects.</li> <li>▶ Remove unnecessary administrative barriers to increase volunteerism.</li> <li>▶ Work cooperatively with user groups to maintain activity-specific trail system.</li> <li>▶ Work cooperatively with other organizations to train lead volunteers and build trail maintenance knowledge in the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Meet with stakeholders to discuss needs and opportunities of a trail maintenance program.</li> <li>▶ Define staff and volunteer roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>▶ Develop a streamlined process to recruit and utilize volunteer service.</li> <li>▶ Draft trail maintenance policy.</li> <li>▶ Budget for contractual services to address maintenance and improvement projects beyond the capabilities of staff and volunteers.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Trail Users, Trail User Groups, Volunteers	Short to Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</li> <li>3 Foster Lasting Stewardship</li> <li>6 Improve User Experience</li> <li>8 Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability</li> </ul>



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 CONSTRUCTION IMPLEMENTATION	<p><b>Implement Trail Recommendations Map &amp; List</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increase connectivity to complete missing links in access, expand accessibility, improve emergency response, amplify trails' utility role, disperse users to reduce pressure and conflicts, and provide opportunities to travel different distances</li> <li>▶ Strive for equitable geographic distribution of recreational trail opportunities, and increase dispersal of different trail types and experiences</li> <li>▶ Prioritize new facilities that support underserved users or areas</li> <li>▶ Expand ADA opportunities &amp; improve major trailheads to comply with ADA requirements</li> </ul> <p><b>Formalize a Trail Improvement Prioritization Process</b> to allocate resources for trail improvements in a way that will be defensible, transparent and in the lasting best interest of the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identify trailheads without adequate ADA accessibility</li> <li>▶ Work with transportation organizations (FAST Planning, FNSB Public Works, etc.) to identify opportunities for funding and project collaborations – alternative transportation funding, river and highway crossing projects, etc.</li> <li>▶ Develop trail improvement prioritization scoring criteria, including connectivity and geographic equity</li> <li>▶ Ensure PRD staff capacity to implement recommendation Map and List.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept.	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Establish &amp; Protect Public Access</li> <li>2 Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</li> <li>4 Improve Access for All Ages &amp; Abilities</li> <li>5 Increase Connectivity</li> <li>6 Improve User Experience</li> <li>7 Expand Recreation Opportunities</li> </ol>
 PLANNING	<p><b>Actively participate in the 5-year updates to the Statewide Comprehensive Recreational Plan</b> to remain eligible for federal funding allocations and ensure FNSB trail priorities are documented.</p> <p><b>Actively participate in Borough planning processes</b> for area, functional and comprehensive plans to ensure recommended trail locations and improvements are incorporated.</p> <p><b>Implement applicable recommendations made in other jurisdictional plans</b> that are consistent with the FNSB Trails Plan. (Ex. Chena River State Recreation Area Management Plan, Historic Preservation Plan, Comprehensive Roads Plan, Alaska Recreational Trails Plan, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Attend stakeholder meetings and provide comments.</li> <li>▶ Meet with implementing authorities to coordinate efforts.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Trail Users	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Establish &amp; Protect Public Access</li> <li>2 Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</li> </ol>



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 PLANNING	<p><b>Develop and refine plans for Trail Recreation Areas</b> (e.g., Skyline Ridge, Peede Road Open Space) to provide a variety of trail experiences, including areas for specific single-use or separated uses, in a dedicated area with supporting facilities, wayfinding and amenities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Propose trail system or recreation area master plans &amp; updates in the department budget.</li> <li>▶ Initiate area recreational plans or updates.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Planning Commission	Short-Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⑥ Improve User Experience</li> <li>⑦ Expand Recreation Opportunities</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Review Plan and Update as necessary:</b> Incremental reassessments of the CRTP should be done every 5-10 years with a full reevaluation and update every 20 years to ensure the goals, actionable guiding principles and recommendations are still relevant, compatible, and representative of the community’s needs and desires.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Improve the process or increase approachability to the process for the public to nominate trails to the FNSB CRTP. Infographics and action-oriented text with explanatory attachments may increase public understanding of the process and the amount of effort required for a successful nomination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Include periodic reassessments and updates in the department work plan and budget.</li> <li>▶ Systematically review the Plan as new census data is updated, new infrastructure projects are developed that could change the population and needs of Borough residents.</li> <li>▶ Update the Guide to Nominating Trails to the FNSB CRTP to a condensed, more user-friendly format.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept., Community Planning Dept., Trails Advisory Commission	Mid to Long	All



Type / Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 EDUCATION	<b>Develop &amp; implement a Trail Education Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Leave No Trace ethics and education</li> <li>Encourage sustainable use and enjoyment of trails</li> <li>Improve approachability to recreation for new users</li> <li>Provide digital resources and maps for accessing and using trails</li> <li>Expand use of interpretive signage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertise and promote recreation opportunities.</li> <li>Provide information on trail access (where, how, and when).</li> <li>Develop a handbook and/or programming on trail ethics, including rights-of-way, conflict reduction, Leave No Trace, etc.</li> <li>Continue the Trails Challenge and develop similar programs.</li> <li>Partner with other organizations and businesses to provide equipment, instruction and incentives needed to get outdoors.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Trail User Groups	Short to Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</li> <li>3 Foster Lasting Stewardship</li> <li>8 Plan for Change</li> </ul>
 PARTNERSHIPS	<b>Support other organizations seeking compatible use of the trail system</b> for public events such as races, field trips, athletic training programs, school programs, lifelong learning, health-promoting activities, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a list of relevant organizations and initiate coordination meetings.</li> <li>Consider and develop a fee schedule for use of facilities for non-PRD events, including for-profit events.</li> </ul>	FNSB Parks & Recreation Dept.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Foster Lasting Stewardship</li> </ul>



## 7. TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter describes the processes for evaluating trail recommendations, selecting future trail corridors, refining trail alignments, and categorizing and prioritizing trails. The chapter includes the list of trails proposed as future trail corridors in the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan along with descriptions and recommendations for each.

*Trail recommendations and maps provided are for planning and informational purposes; they are not intended for use as navigational tools as public access across the trails is not guaranteed. The Borough seeks to gain and/or protect legal public access to these trails over time through cooperation with landowners and other stakeholders.*

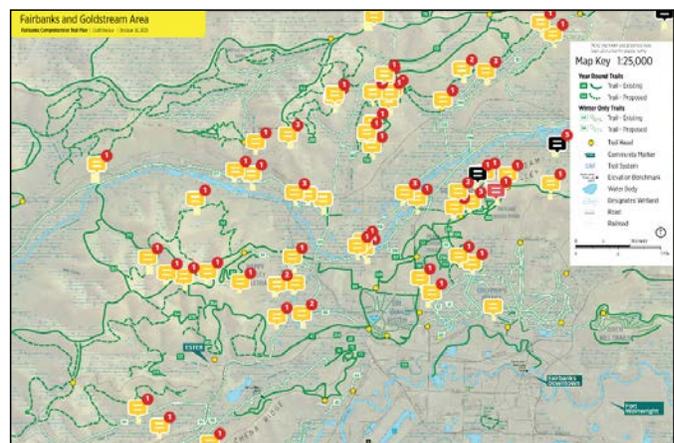
### Trail Evaluation & Recommendation Determination Process

An overwhelming number of trail recommendations came out of the online trail inventory, TAC public workshops, written responses, and verbal conversations. Recommendations from the public were for existing trails (e.g. “Save this trail!”) as well as new ideas and concepts (e.g. “We need a trail here!”). Some ideas were clear winners, and some were unfeasible, but the majority required significant investigation. A process to evaluate, refine, and ultimately recommend certain trails was developed.

### Selection Criteria & Trail Values

What makes a trail good or bad? What existing trails are worth keeping? What new ideas are worth pursuing? Answers to these questions were guided by the vision and goals, developed by the TAC with input from the public, and refined using the guiding principles and trail design and development best practices. Major considerations and preferences for selecting recommended trails included:

- **Plan History:** Trails from the 2006 Trails Plan and prior versions were kept in this update. These trails were thoroughly evaluated decades ago, and most have been in use for decades prior and since. Several trails needed updates and adjustments, but the original concepts remain.
- **Connective Potential:** Trails that connect people to each other, trail systems, and special places including neighborhoods, recreation, civic, employment, and educational centers.
- **Loop:** Trails that can be done in a contained loop or facilitate a convenient loop in combination with a nearby road or trail system.
- **Views, Scenery & Special Landmarks:** Trails that provide panoramic views or access to special features like bald ridges, tors or rocky promontories, historic mining infrastructure or culturally important sites.
- **Problem Solving:** Trails that solve an identified problem such as safety (ex. better road crossing location) or access (ex. missing connection or neighborhood impact mitigation).
- **Convenience:** Trails near populated or commercial areas that could be enjoyed with little travel cost, available time, or access to special equipment.



On-line trail inventory public comments



- ▶ **Unique Experience:** Trails that provide a new or unique experience not already offered in the Borough.
- ▶ **Addressing Disparity:** Trails in a geographic location where there are few nearby trail opportunities.

Once trails were evaluated using the selection criteria, additional considerations into a trail's viability were factored in. Land ownership limitations, conflicting planned uses of land, and concerns for trail sustainability based on location and ground conditions were the most common reasons why a particular trail was not included in the Plan. Where possible, when a trail met many selection criteria but did not pass the viability test, a new alignment or reroute for the trail was proposed. The following sections describe these factors in more detail.

### Drafting Trail Alignments

Is the trail route realistic or feasible? Even the most exciting ideas faced barriers. With trails, the ground typically determines what can be established. Land characteristics such as soil types, topography and drainage, and land ownership were carefully considered. The planning team, with technical advice from a professional trail builder, evaluated concepts and made recommendations based on the suitability of the ground for construction and proposed use. Property research, GIS analysis, and site visits for ground-truthing influenced recommendations.

### Realignments

Many existing trails and new trail ideas suffered from poor alignment. Trail alignment is one of the primary determinants for the sustainability of a trail. Sustainability means the trail, with minimal maintenance, can withstand the use it's meant for over time (See Chapter 6 for detailed definition of sustainable trails). A poorly aligned trail often suffers from erosion and entrenchment, as many of our existing trails do. Experience around the world shows it is often less expensive to build a com-

pletely new trail with a better alignment than to repair heavily eroded or deeply entrenched trails. Reducing our vulnerability to these issues in the future requires planning ahead and recommending alignments in this Plan that meet industry design standards for sustainability.

Overly steep trails, trails on a "fall-line" (straight down a hill or perpendicular to the contours and exceeding the "half rule" described in Chapter 6), and motorized trails through wet areas were abundant in the trail inventory. These trails often had an important purpose, like connecting trail users through an area. The planning team looked for and drafted sustainable realignments that could meet the trail's needs, be constructed in a way to reduce degradation and cost, and improve user experience.

### New Trail Concepts

Recognizing the potential for integrated trail systems to benefit communities and increase property values in the future, some new concepts were added. New concepts were focused primarily on vacant land owned by the FNSB and secondarily on vacant land owned by the State of Alaska. Exceptions are the mostly vacant upper Steele Creek and Alder Creek valleys owned primarily by the University of Alaska and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, respectively. New concepts are purpose-driven, and alignments depicted on maps are approximations based on preliminary analysis. Additional investigation, design, and further consultation with land managers will determine final layouts and trail mileage.

### Limitations

**Property Ownership:** Private property was avoided to every extent possible when adding trails to the updated Trails Plan. The Plan focused on identifying trails on public properties so they can be protected in the event of disposal and subdivision. If a highly valuable trail crossed



private property, substitute alignments were pursued along existing public access easements or nearby public property where available. Trails from the 2006 Trails Plan were also reevaluated. Where there were no substitutes, only the most critical connecting trails were kept in the Plan.

**Missing Trails:** The 2021-2022 planning effort was a comprehensive update and sought to evaluate as many trail suggestions as possible within a limited timeframe and budget. Certain trails may have met some criteria and presented compelling opportunities, but also had many complications. Such trails deserve more time and stakeholder engagement to consider before adding to the Trails Plan. This Plan suggests periodic updates, including reevaluating and potentially adding trails to the Plan on an individual basis. Some of these trails that may warrant future reevaluation are listed under Future Concepts.

**Bike and Ped Paths:** Bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities were generally omitted from Plan recommendations. While many miles of trail in the Plan have great transportation value, the focus and scope of this Plan is to consider recreational trails. Bike and pedestrian facilities receive planning support through the FAST Planning and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

### Public Review

The first round of draft trail concepts was developed during Step 3 of the Plan Development Process (see Chapter 3) and presented to the public and Trails Advisory Commission for review and feedback. Major public and private landowners were also contacted and sent preliminary trail data for feedback. The public and stakeholder map review process is detailed in [Appendix E. Public Engagement Summary](#). Public and landowner feedback heavily influenced the drafting, redrafting, and finalization of trail recommendation maps.

## Trail Recommendations Maps

Data for trail maps are sorted in a geographic information system database. This data was used to prepare static maps for viewing digitally or in print. The maps are separated into regions on the east and west sides of the Borough for readability and to encourage discussion during planning. The following sections describe the map information, how it was generated and how to interpret it.

### Trail Attributes

#### *Use Designation and Seasonal Distinctions*

Three primary types of trails depicting recreational use are included on the trail maps:

- **Multi-Use / Motorized:** Wheeled Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) are allowed in summer, snowmachines are allowed in winter, non-motorized uses are allowed year-round.
- **Seasonal Motorized:** non-motorized uses are allowed year-round, wheeled motorized vehicles are prohibited, snowmachines may be allowed in the winter.
- **Non-Motorized:** non-motorized uses are allowed year-round and motorized recreation is prohibited all times of the year.

The primary criteria by which trails were evaluated for use designation were the presence or absence of wetlands to determine if the ground can adequately handle motorized vehicles, and the proximity to dense residential areas to consider the significance of potential noise impacts. Map depictions of use designation are intentionally simplified into these three types to more clearly illustrate the potential impact of planned trails.

There are other trail use types not illustrated on the trail recommendation maps. Those not shown include single-use trails and those regulated and managed for specialty activities or events. Note that the Trails Plan consists of planning recommendations only and does not



supplant established regulations in any jurisdiction. More detailed information on recommended trails is provided in [Appendix A. Trail Descriptions & Recommendations.](#)

**Motorized Uses:** This planning document does not make precise distinctions between types of motorized vehicles in its recommended use designations. Rather it recommends developing more specific trail management objectives for each trail in the future while considering the applicability of broader policies on Borough land and easements. In general, “Multi-Use/Motorized – Year-Round” means wheeled motorized vehicles, smaller than a full-sized off highway vehicle, are allowed in the summer. Examples include “four-wheeler” ATVs, “side-by-sides” and dirt bikes. A few trails may be open to 4x4 highway vehicles (“jeeps”) based on state regulations. This Plan alludes to some such recommendations. Available equipment in each of these categories is expanding and evolving more quickly than trail managers and trail construction can keep pace. This topic will continue to need to be addressed.

**Motors on Non-Motorized Trails:** Use of motorized vehicles may at times be necessary for construction, repair, or maintenance of non-motorized trails. For example, hauling tools or materials for summer trails, or dragging groomers for winter skiing trails. The maps have a more

generous selection of seasonal motorized trails due to the lower impact of snowmachines on frozen, snow-covered trails and the fact that snowmachine traffic packs snow and makes winter trails more usable for all other non-motorized uses. As technology and available equipment changes, this subject should be reviewed and potentially reconsidered (e.g., e-bikes).

#### **Recommended & Existing**

‘Recommended’ trail alignments are trail sections that have not been constructed or may be only partially constructed. These are depicted on the maps as a dashed line in contrast to the solid line for ‘existing’ trails. Recommended trail alignments indicate an approximate or conceptual location and, in all cases, will require some level of additional planning and design work to determine the final, precise location. Some recommendations indicate a proposed realignment meant to address problematic layouts due to conflicting use (e.g., road development), property ownership, poor ground conditions, or topography (e.g., too steep, poor drainage, etc.). Realignments may only require design work and construction, while other recommendations display new concepts. New trail concepts show what trail opportunities are feasible in an area, solve trail problems, and complement and add value to future land development. Concepts are still meant to be protected in the event of



Sandpiper Trail, Tanana Lakes Recreation Area. PHOTO: FNSB Parks & Recreation



subdivision, highlighting the importance and urgency of investing in more substantial planning and consultation in order to be realized.

**Trailheads**

Trailhead locations were chosen to facilitate access to trails and address the impact of trail user visitation. Impacts are often concentrated around access points. Trailhead development at varying levels can reduce traffic congestion, neighborhood disturbance, litter, and vandalism while making trails easier to access and more enjoyable. Locations are typically determined by use; where trails start or end along the transportation network are natural access points. Where multiple options were available, access points along more major road classes were favored.

**Recreational Trail Areas**

Most trail recommendations represent linear corridors to be protected among surrounding land development. Some recommendations are for an area or entire parcel where a trail system is concentrated, or system layout needs to be determined through future planning. These

areas, primarily located on Borough property, may be existing parks for proposed for retention for recreational trail use. Recreational Trail Areas are identified and described in Appendix A. Trail Descriptions & Recommendations.

Trail Recommendation Maps are provided at the end of this chapter. High resolution planning maps and documents, including the Trail Recommendation Maps, can be found on the Parks and Recreation page at [www.fnsb.gov](http://www.fnsb.gov).

**Recommended Future Trail Corridors Categorization**

The future trail corridors recommended carry forward the three-category system (A, B, and C) of trails established in the original 1985 Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan (see Chapter 4). The Trail Categorization Summary Table provides a preliminary means of prioritizing the trail list with respect to Borough resources and reflect management authority.

Table 5. Trail Categorization Summary

Category	Primary Management Responsibility	Maintenance Responsibility	Funding Mechanism	Application of Borough Title 17 Subdivisions	Borough Acceptance of Grant of Trail Easement or ROW
A. Federal & State Recreational Trails	Federal or State agency. May be a cooperative agreement with FNSB	Maintenance provided through managing agency	Funding provided by Federal or State agency	Borough Subdivision Code will apply	Borough will not formally accept grant of easement or ROW. ROW remain available for public use; Borough does not assume responsibility
B. FNSB Recreational Trail System	FNSB	Maintenance by FNSB as resources allow, or by formal agreement with trail user groups	External grant sources, Parks Department budget, Capital Improvement Plan, General Fund	All Borough Subdivision authorities will apply	Trail easements formally accepted by Borough. Borough assumes primary responsibility for the trail
C. Neighborhood Recreational Trail Systems	Trail user group or neighborhood association.	Maintenance provided by trail users	Funding primarily derived through a service area or user group	Easement established on a cooperative voluntary basis	Borough may assist in recording easement and defending established access; Borough does not assume primary responsibility for trails



## Future Trail Corridors List

The following is a list of trails proposed for inclusion in the FNSB Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan. Detailed descriptions for the recommended trails can be found in [Appendix A. Trail Descriptions & Recommendations.](#)

## I. Trails Proposed for Public Dedication

The Borough seeks to gain and/or protect legal public access to these trails. These trails may be subject to Borough subdivision regulations. These trails are indicated below with the prefix “I.”

\* = Trails proposed during the 2022 update. All others added 2006 or prior.

A. STATE OR FEDERAL TRAILS		
Trail Number	Trail Name	Proposed Use Category
<b>Existing Trails</b> – Existing trails are fully or mostly constructed, though sections may need to be realigned and rebuilt		
I-A1.	Chena Hot Springs – Steese Highway	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A2.	Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A3.	Circle-Fairbanks Historic Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A4.	Davidson Ditch Hiking Trails	Non Motorized
I-A5.	North Fork of the Chena Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A6.	Old Murphy Dome Road Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A7.	Old Saulich Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-A8.	Murphy Creek Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A9.	Flood Control Levee Trail	Varies: Non Motorized; Multi-Use; Motorized Year-Round
I-A10.	Zephyr Creek Trail	Non Motorized
I-A11.	Herning Hills & Bilikin Trails	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A12.	Bev’s Loop Trail System	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A13. *	Rosie Creek Forest Trail Connections	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-A14. *	Bonanza Creek Forest Trail Connections	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-A15. *	Smallwood Creek Loop	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-A16. *	Old Chatanika Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A17. *	Far Mountain Traverse	Non Motorized
I-A18. *	Harding – Salcha River Connectors	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-A19. *	Little Salcha River Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-A20. *	Silver Fox – Pedro Dome Road	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-A21. *	Iowa – ALPA Loop	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-A22. *	Alder Creek Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-A23. *	Salcha River Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-A24. *	Nugget Creek Loop	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round



A. STATE OR FEDERAL TRAILS		
Trail Number	Trail Name	Proposed Use Category
<b>Recommended New Trails</b> – Recommended trails may be unconstructed. Additional planning and design may be necessary.		
I-AR1.	North Star Bridle Trails	Non Motorized
I-AR3. *	Creamer’s Crosstown Commuter	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-AR4. *	Fairbanks – Nenana Upland Forest Traverse	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-AR5. *	Fortune Creek Ridge Trail Loop	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round

B. PROPOSED COMPONENTS OF THE FNSB RECREATIONAL TRAIL NETWORK		
Trail Number	Trail Name	Proposed Use Category
<b>Existing Trails</b> – Existing trails are fully or mostly constructed, though sections may need to be realigned and rebuilt		
I-B1.	Big Eldorado Creek Loop Trail	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B2.	Chena – Gilmore Connector Trail	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B3.	Chena Hot Springs Road Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-B4.	Chena Lowland Winter Trail Connections	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B5.	Chena Ridge F.E. Ditch Trails	Varies: Non Motorized; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B6.	Clearly Summit – Gilmore Dome Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-B7.	Cripple Creek – Rosie Creek Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-B8.	Equinox Marathon Trail	Non Motorized
I-B9.	Eva Creek Trail	Non Motorized
I-B10.	Goose Island ORV Area	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-B11.	Jeff Studdert Sleddog Trails	Varies: Non Motorized; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B12.	O’Connor Creek Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B13.	O’Connor Creek East Ridge Trail	Varies: Non Motorized; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B14.	Sheep Creek Dredge Path Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B16.	Tanana Valley Railroad Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B17.	Skyline Ridge Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B18.	Gilmore Trail – Fairbanks Creek Connector	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-B19.	Eldorado Ridge Connector Trails	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B20.	Chena Slough Trail	Non Motorized
I-B21.	Noyes Slough Trail	Non Motorized
I-B22.	Eldorado Creek Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B23.	Little Chena River & Potlatch Creek System	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B24.	Cranberry Trail	Non Motorized



<b>B. PROPOSED COMPONENTS OF THE FNSB RECREATIONAL TRAIL NETWORK</b>		
<i>Trail Number</i>	<i>Trail Name</i>	<i>Proposed Use Category</i>
I-B25. *	Ester West Ridge Trail	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B26. *	Chena Flats Winter Trails	Varies: Non Motorized; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B27. *	Pearl Creek Commuter Trail	Non Motorized
I-B28. *	White Mountains Winter Pipeline	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B29. *	Moose Ridge Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-B30. *	Haines – Fairbanks Pipeline	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B31. *	Chena Lake to Hot Springs Winter Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-B32. *	Ace Lakes Connector	Non Motorized
I-B33.*	Social Security Mine Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-B34.*	Ester Dome Trail	Non Motorized
<b>Recommended New Trails</b> – <i>Recommended trails may be unconstructed. Additional planning and design may be necessary.</i>		
I-BR1.	100 Mile Loop Trail	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-BR2.	Ester Community Trail Network	Non Motorized
I-BR3.	Skyline Ridge to Goldstream Valley Connections	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-BR4. *	Goldstream Hills Trail Network	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized; Non Motorized
I-BR5. *	Solstice Summit Trail Area	Non Motorized
I-BR6. *	Tanana 440 Trail System	Non Motorized
I-BR7. *	Peede – Chena Lake Connector	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-BR8. *	Salchaket Bluff Scenic Loop Trail	Non Motorized
I-BR9. *	South Harding Ridge Traverse	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-BR10. *	Birch-to-Bluff Trails	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-BR11. *	Pleasant Hills Trail System	Non Motorized
I-BR12. *	Abe Lincoln Glades	Non Motorized
I-BR13. *	Alaska Long Trail	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized; Non Motorized
I-BR14. *	Farmer Mine Trail	Non Motorized
I-BR15. *	Peede Road Open Space	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized; Non Motorized
I-BR16. *	Birch Hill to Steese Highway	Non Motorized
I-BR17.	Murphy Dome Ski Trails	Non Motorized
I-BR18. *	Goldstream Valley – Skyridge Winter Trail	Varies: Non Motorized; Seasonal/Winter Motorized



C. NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL NETWORKS		
Trail Number	Trail Name	Proposed Use Category
I-C1.	Cripple Creek Trail System	Non Motorized
I-C2.	Lincoln Creek Loop Trail	Non Motorized
I-C3.	Twenty-three Mile Slough Sled Dog Trails	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-C4. *	Koponen Homestead Trails	Non Motorized
I-C5. *	Happy Valley Ski Trails	Non Motorized
I-C6. *	Alder Creek Hillside Trails	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-C7. *	Steele Creek Hillside Trails	Varies: Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-C8. *	Arctic Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve Trails	Non Motorized

## II. Existing Publicly Dedicated Trails

Public access to these trails is already granted and/or protected by an easement, public land ownership, and/or management policies. They are currently managed as

recreational facilities by their respective owner or manager. They may still be subject to subdivision regulations in the unlikely event of public land disposals.

A. STATE OR FEDERAL TRAILS		
Trail Number	Trail Name	Use Category
II-A1.	Chena Dome Trail (state)	Non Motorized
II-A2.	Chena River Flood Control Project (federal)	Varies
II-A3.	Creamer's Field Nature Path (state)	Non Motorized
II-A4.	Granite Tors Trail (state)	Non Motorized
II-A5.	Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail (federal)	Non Motorized
II-A6.	University of Alaska North Campus Trails	Non Motorized
II-A7.	White Mountains Summit Trail: Summit Trail Boardwalk (federal)	Non Motorized
II-A8.	White Mountains Winter Trail (federal)	Varies
II-A9.	Colorado Creek Trail (state)	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
II-A10.	Stiles Creek Trail and Extension (state)	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
II-A11.	Angel Creek Winter Trail (state)	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
II-A12.	East Fork Winter Trail (state)	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
II-A13.	South Fork Winter Trail (state)	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
II-A14.	Angel Rocks Trail and Connector (state)	Non Motorized
II-A15. *	Mastodon Trail (state)	Non Motorized
II-A16. *	Compeau Trail (state)	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
II-A17. *	McKay Creek Trail (state)	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round



A. STATE OR FEDERAL TRAILS		
Trail Number	Trail Name	Use Category
II-A18. *	Goldstream Valley Public Use Area Trails (state)	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
II-A19. *	Ester Dome Happy Valley Singletrack Trails (state)	Non Motorized
II-A20. *	Mike Kelly Trail (state)	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
II-A21. *	Angel Creek Hillside Trail (state)	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round

B. FNSB RECREATIONAL TRAILS		
Trail Number	Trail Name	Use Category
II-B1.	Birch Hill Recreation Area and Cross-Country Ski Trails	Non Motorized
II-B2.	Salcha Darrell L. Coe Nordic Ski Trails	Non Motorized
II-B3.	Two Rivers Recreation Area	Non Motorized
II-B4.	Lower O'Connor Creek Trail (Sauna Ave/O'Brien St Trails)	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
II-B5. *	Skyline Ridge Park Trails	Varies: Non Motorized; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
II-B6. *	Isberg Recreation Area Trails	Varies: Non Motorized; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
II-B7. *	Chena Lake Recreation Area Trails	Varies: Non Motorized; Seasonal/Winter Motorized
II-B8. *	Tanana Lakes Recreation Area Trails	Varies: Non Motorized; Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
II-B9. *	Pearl Creek Nordic Ski Trails (N)	Non Motorized
II-B15.	Skarland Ski Trail	Non Motorized

### Future Concepts

Future concepts represent trails or trail ideas that have notable recreational value or potential but require substantially more investigation and consultation with trail users and landowners to determine their feasibility. These will be offered no protection or other resources by FNSB. They are listed only as topics for further research or consideration for future amendments.

1. Engineer Creek — Gold Mine Trail Loop
2. East Birch Hill to Nordale
3. Trans-Chatanika Trail
4. Fireplug — Allen-Dunbar Trail
5. Potlatch & Jenny M Hills Trails
6. North Pole—Salcha Pedestrian Path
7. Moose Creek Bluff Trail System

8. 9-Mile Offroad Area
9. Johnson Road Hillside Trails
10. Neighborhood & Cul-de-Sac Pedestrian Connections
11. West Henderson Hillside Trail
12. True North Mine Trail Park
13. Happy Valley Ridge Trail
14. Grieme Road Winter Trails

### Priority Actions for Trail Recommendations

While the Trail Categorization (see Table 5 page 47) provides preliminary guidance on determining which trail recommendations to prioritize for implementation, additional methodology for allocating resources is needed. A draft Trail Prioritization Matrix was prepared through this process in consultation with the Trails Advisory Commis-



sion. One of the system-wide recommendations made in this Plan is for the formalization of a Trail Improvement Prioritization Process to allocate resources for trail improvements in a way that will be defensible, transparent and in the lasting best interest of the community.

### Project Development

Once a trail or trail project is identified through the prioritization process and is allocated resources for its actualization, development will follow a necessary sequence of events:

#### 1 Acquisition & Protection

The priority of any trail is to first gain legal access by coordinating and negotiating with the landowner. The Borough will not develop a trail that is in trespass across another's property, or where public access is not continuous and complete (e.g., easement ending at a property line with no continuing easement).

#### 2 Planning

Once legal access is obtained, the Borough can consult with the community about the purpose of the trail and

what is needed. Planning may also determine specific management objectives/standards and maintenance prescriptions, so expectations are clear between trail users and landowners. Nearly all 'recommended' trails will need additional planning and most trail areas will benefit significantly from a site master plan.

#### 3 Capital Improvement

Design and construction to improve, repair, realign or build new trail in a way that can sustain the intended use, reduce maintenance burden, and facilitate desired experiences. Improvements make the trail usable.

#### 4 Maintenance

Scheduled maintenance can eventually take place when the trail is legally accessible, standards and expectations are clear, and the trail is constructed and usable.

The development, maintenance, and management of trails in the Borough is guided by this Plan and trail specific recommendations (Appendix A) work in tandem with and may be dependent on system-wide recommendations.

## Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan Maps and Appendices

For the duration of the planning period, maps and appendices can be accessed online at [www.FNSBTrailsPlan.com](http://www.FNSBTrailsPlan.com).

Maps are high resolution, large format planning documents which benefit from online viewing.

1. West Side Trails Area Overview
2. Fairbanks and Goldstream Area
3. Goldstream North Area
4. Ester and Chena Ridge Area
5. Northwest and Murphy Dome Area
6. East Side Trails Area Overview
7. East Side Northern Area
8. East Side Central Area
9. East Side Southern Area
10. Chena Hot Springs Road Corridor