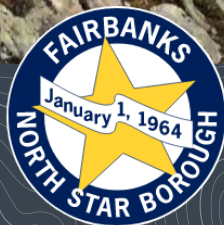




Fairbanks North Star Borough 2023
COMPREHENSIVE RECREATIONAL
TRAILS PLAN

Adopted June 20, 2023
by Ordinance No. 2022-47



Prepared For

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



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We acknowledge the Alaska Native nations upon whose ancestral lands our cherished trails reside. In and around Fairbanks, trails are located on the ancestral lands of the Dena people of the lower Tanana River.

Funding for the Borough Trails Plan update was provided by a federal grant from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (formerly the Office of Economic Adjustment). The content of the Trails Plan reflects the views of the Fairbanks North Star Borough and the participating public and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation.

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

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By: Bryce J. Ward, Mayor
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Planning
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FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

ORDINANCE NO. 2022 – 47

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE RECREATIONAL TRAILS
PLAN AS AN ELEMENT OF THE FNSB REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, The Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan was adopted as an
element of the Fairbanks North Star Borough (Borough) Regional Comprehensive Plan on
June 13, 1985 via Ordinance No. 85-053 and was updated in 2006; the plan is generally
referred to as the "Trails Plan"; and

WHEREAS, The Trails Plan is used by the Borough to identify, preserve and
manage important recreational trail corridors throughout the Borough and inform
Borough policies that will help facilitate the coordination of trails with other land
development; and

WHEREAS, The Borough is responsible for planning, zoning, and
subdivisions throughout this area and frequently considers trail use and access during
those processes; and

WHEREAS, The Borough acquired areawide parks and recreation powers by
election in 1972 and manages parks, recreational facilities and trails through those
powers; and

44 WHEREAS, The 2006 Trails Plan strongly recommends updating the Trails
45 Plan at least every five year; and

46
47 WHEREAS, Except for individual trail amendments, most recently in 2006,
48 the Trails Plan itself, including its goals, objectives, and policies, has not been updated
49 since its original adoption in 1985; and

50
51 WHEREAS, Since the adoption of the original Trails Plan in 1985, the
52 Borough population has grown by approximately 35 percent according to the US Census
53 Bureau; and

54
55 WHEREAS, Since 1985, new trends in trail use have emerged and demand
56 for trails and outdoor recreation trail use has increased in ways the original plan did not
57 anticipate; and

58
59 WHEREAS, Access to many trails in the Borough have been lost due to
60 changing land uses and land development during the 37 years since the original plan
61 adoption; and

62
63 WHEREAS, The updated Trails Plan intends to protect trail access and
64 outdoor recreation opportunities as the Borough continues to grow; and

65
66 WHEREAS, Population growth has continued in part due to the arrival of
67 two squadrons of F-35 fighter jets at Eielson Air Force Base, bringing approximately 3,300
68 new residents to the Borough; and

69
70 WHEREAS, The Trails Plan planning effort was funded in cooperation with
71 the Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation to address
72 the impacts base development can have on surrounding communities; and

73
74 WHEREAS, The Assembly passed Ordinance No. 2019-20-2C, appropriating
75 federal grant funds and a match from the general fund for the Eielson Air Force Base
76 Realignment Implementation 2 Project that includes an update of the Trails Plan; and

77
78 WHEREAS, Development of the Trails Plan was led by the Borough Trails
79 Advisory Commission (TAC) who served as the steering committee and met fifteen times
80 to invite public feedback, review, and provide input on plan topics; and

81
82 WHEREAS, The Trails Plan was developed through an extensive and well
83 attended public participation process, including fifteen TAC meetings, two public open
84 houses, a project website that included interactive maps, resident surveys, flyers
85 advertising participation opportunities, multiple post card mailings to property owners
86 affected by the Trails Plan, forums and meetings with major landowners in the Borough,
87 and a fair booth; and

88
89 WHEREAS, The Trails Plan includes a vision, goals, recommendations and
90 implementation strategies developed by the Trails Advisory Commission and the greater
91 community of trail users to guide the Borough as it manages local trail resources; and
92

93 WHEREAS, The vision statement of the Trails Plan is “The Fairbanks North
94 Star Borough trail system is cherished and essential to our community identity, health
95 and economy; connects our communities to each other and their surrounding wild
96 landscapes through an expansive network; and provides all ages and abilities an
97 unparalleled variety of high-quality experiences for every season;” and
98

99 WHEREAS, The Trails Plan recommendations are consistent with goals and
100 recommendations in other areawide adopted Borough plans including but not limited to
101 the 2010 North Pole Land Use Plan, the 2005 Regional Comprehensive Plan, 2018 Eielson
102 Regional Growth Plan, and the 2019 Salcha-Badger Road Area Plan; and
103

104 WHEREAS, The adopted 2019 Salcha-Badger Road Area Plan specifically
105 lists updating the 2006 Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan as a priority strategy
106 number 9 and transportation strategy number 8; and
107

108 WHEREAS, The Trails Plan recommendations are consistent with goals and
109 recommendations in other functional plans including but not limited to the Borough’s
110 1990 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan and the 2016 Chena Riverfront Plan,
111 and the State of Alaska’s 2000 Alaska Recreational Trails Plan; and
112

113 WHEREAS, The Trails Plan includes a categorized list of priority trails to be
114 protected for continued or eventual public access; and
115

116 WHEREAS, The Trails Plan includes a map depicting the locations of priority
117 trails, replacing the previous 2006 Trail Plan map, to guide development and inform
118 subdivision design; and
119

120 WHEREAS, The Trails Plan ensures future development is compatible with
121 trail needs, as expressed by the public during the planning process, while emphasizing
122 private property rights; and
123

124 WHEREAS, The Trails Advisory Commission, the Planning Commission, and
125 Platting Board each recommend adopting the Trails Plan as an element of the Regional
126 Comprehensive Plan; and
127

128 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Assembly of the Fairbanks
129 North Star Borough:
130

131 Section 1. This ordinance is not of a general and permanent nature and
132 shall not be codified.

133
134 Section 2. The Fairbanks North Star Borough Regional Comprehensive Plan
135 is amended by replacing the 2006 Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan with the revised
136 Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan attached hereto as Attachment 1.

137
138 Section 3. Effective Date. This ordinance is effective at 5:00 p.m. on the
139 first Borough business day following its adoption.

140
141 ADOPTED THE 20TH DAY OF JUNE 2023.



Aaron N. Lojewski

Aaron Lojewski
Presiding Officer

148 ATTEST:
149
150 *April Trickey*

151 April Trickey, MMC
152 Borough Clerk

153
154 Yeses: Kelly, O’Neill, Fletcher, Guttenberg, Wilson, Lojewski, Cash
155 Noes: Rotermond, Haney

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
Trails in the Fairbanks North Star Borough	1
Planning Process	1
Goals	1
System Issues	2
System-Wide Recommendations	2
System-Wide Recommendations Categories	2
Trail Recommendations	2
PART I: PLANNING BACKGROUND, HISTORY AND PROCESS	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
Purpose.....	5
Background	6
Relationship to other Plans & Policies	6
2. PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	7
Plan Objectives.....	7
Development Process	7
Public Engagement Summary.....	8
3. TODAY’S TRAILS: EXISTING CONDITIONS	11
Who the Trail System Serves	11
Borough Demographics	11
Trail Use	11
<i>Who uses trails and why.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>When and how we use trails</i>	<i>12</i>
Trail User Groups and Organizations.....	13
Management Trails in the Borough.....	13
Borough Authority.....	13
<i>Liability</i>	<i>14</i>
Parks & Recreation Department Role	14
<i>Funding</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Trail Staff.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Trail Maintenance</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Trail Programming</i>	<i>15</i>
Trails Advisory Commission	15
Partners	16

Trails Creating the System	16
Public Access Status	16
<i>Existing Publicly Dedicated Trails</i>	16
<i>Trails Proposed for Dedication</i>	16
Use Designation	17
Gaps in the System	17
Local Recreation Context – Borough Parks & Recreation Niche	18
Pervasive Trail Problems.....	18
Access	18
<i>Poor Conditions & Trail Degradation</i>	18
<i>Usability and Awareness</i>	18
Service Gaps- What We Are Missing.....	18
<i>Uses</i>	18
<i>Areas</i>	19

PART II: TRAILS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS 20

1. TRAILS FOR TOMORROW: VISION AND GOALS 21

Goals & Guiding Principles	21
<i>Establish & Protect Public Access</i>	21
<i>Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset</i>	21
<i>Foster Lasting Stewardship</i>	22
<i>Improve Access for All Ages & Abilities</i>	22
<i>Increase Connectivity</i>	22
<i>Improve User Experience</i>	23
<i>Expand Recreation Opportunities</i>	23
<i>Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability</i>	23

2. SYSTEM-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS 24

I. <i>Authority</i>	24
II. <i>Staff Capacity</i>	24
III. <i>Funding</i>	24
IV. <i>Trail Establishment</i>	25
V. <i>Design & Maintenance Standards</i>	26
VI. <i>Construction & Implementation</i>	28
VII. <i>Planning</i>	29
VIII. <i>Education</i>	29
IX. <i>Partnerships</i>	29

Recommendations & Implementation Strategies Table	29
---	----

3. TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS..... 40

Trail Evaluation & Recommendation Determination Process	40
---	----

Selection Criteria & Trail Values.....	40
Drafting Trail Alignments	41
<i>Realignments</i>	41
<i>New Trail Concepts</i>	41
<i>Limitations</i>	41
Public Review.....	42
Recommended Future Trail Corridors Categorization	42
Category A. Federal and State Recreational Trail Systems	42
Category B. Fairbanks North Star Borough Recreational Trail Systems	43
Category C: Neighborhood Recreational Trail Systems	43
Future Trail Corridors List	44
Trails Proposed for Public Dedication	44
Existing Publicly Dedicated Trails	47
Future Concepts	48
Priority Actions for Trail Recommendations	48
Project Development	49
<i>Acquisition & Protection</i>	49
<i>Planning</i>	49
<i>Capital Improvement</i>	49
<i>Maintenance</i>	49
Trail Descriptions & Recommendations.....	50
Trails Proposed for Public Dedication	50
Existing Recreational Trails with Established Public Access	74

TRAIL RECOMMENDATION MAPS	77
----------------------------------	-----------

Maps	78
Trail Attributes	78
<i>Use Designation and Seasonal Distinctions</i>	78
<i>Recommended & Existing</i>	78
<i>Trailheads</i>	79
<i>Recreational Trail Areas</i>	79

APPENDICES

- A. Trail Protection Toolkit
- B. Literature Review Report
- C. Status of the System Report
- D. Trail Use Survey Report
- E. Public Engagement Summary
- F. Vision, Goals, & Strategy Report



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fairbanks North Star Borough's (Borough) 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 Borough 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). This Trails Plan is divided into two parts. Part 1 details the background, history, context and public engagement process that informed and justified planning recommendations. Part 2 represents the actual planning recommendations and implementation strategies adopted by the Borough through this plan.

Trails in the Fairbanks North Star Borough

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.

Planning Process

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 landowners, 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



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

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 (parking, wayfinding, etc.)
- Lack of single-use trail facilities for specific user groups
- Under-served areas or communities with few trail opportunities

The Trails Plan acknowledges and addresses these shortcomings in its recommendations.

System-Wide Recommendations

Recommendations are considered in Part 2 of the plan as System-Wide Recommendations and Trail Recom-

mendations. 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. Authority
2. Staff Capacity
3. Funding
4. Trail Establishment
5. Design & Maintenance Standards
6. Construction / Implementation
7. Planning
8. Education
9. 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.

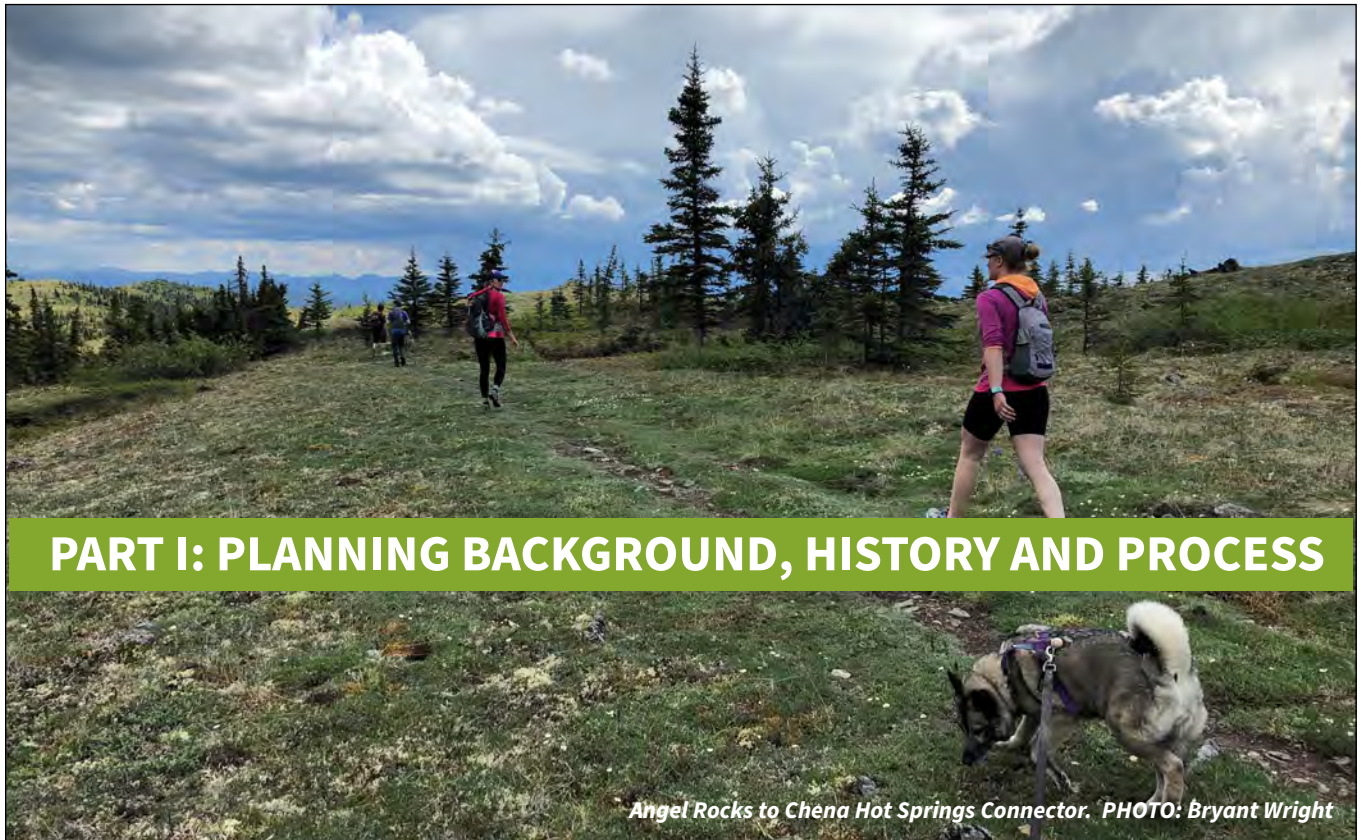


Trail Recommendations Summary:

- 118 Trails are in the Plan. Of those, 85 are proposed for eventual public access.
 - 30 Trails are recommended for Multi-Use / Motorized Year-Round Use
 - 37 Trails are recommended for Non-Motorized Use
 - 24 Trails are recommended for Non-Motorized Year-round with Seasonal / Winter-Motorized Use
 - 27 Trails are recommended for variable or multiple use designations
- The 2023 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, 3 new concepts*
 - 7 Category A Trails with existing dedicated public access
 - 23 Category B Trails proposed for public dedication: *10 existing trails, 13 new concepts*
 - 5 Category B Trails with existing dedicated public access
 - 5 Category C Trails proposed for public dedication

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT HOW THE TRAILS PLAN IS IMPLEMENTED:

- The Trails Plan identifies important trails that lack public access. It seeks to work with landowners to eventually grant public access, meanwhile discouraging trespass.
- Trail corridors in the Plan will only be mandatorily dedicated on private property at the time that landowners subdivide, and only for Category A or B trails. If land never subdivides, trails will be established on a cooperative basis or not at all.
- The subdivision process allows for some flexibility in trail alignment and design if the alternative corridor achieves the same goals as the connection identified in the Plan. Developers work closely with the Borough's Trails Coordinator and platting division to identify the optimal alignment of dedicated trails.
- The Trails Plan is intended to encourage and support the Borough and developers working together to develop a trail system that achieves the community's vision as it continues to grow.
- Establishes a categorized system of trails to prioritize the Borough's involvement in trails while not obligating the Borough to maintain other trails.
- Recommendations prioritize where to direct available funding for trails, but do not commit Borough resources to trails



PART I: PLANNING BACKGROUND, HISTORY AND PROCESS

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

Part I contains background information that led to and justified the recommendations made in Part II. Part I is contextual and not instructive. All policy recommendations made by this plan are contained in Part II.



1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Fairbanks North Star Borough (Borough) 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 Borough 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. It defines a vision, goals, actionable recommendations, and implementation strategies for the next 10-20 years of trail management and development within the Borough.

The Borough's Trails Plan is a tool used to identify, preserve, and manage important recreational trail corridors throughout the Borough. 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 is subdivided. 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



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

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 Borough Plans and in the funding source for the update of the Trails Plan: 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 Borough 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 adoption of Resolution No. 80-9 established the policy “for creation and management of a recreational trail system within the Fairbanks North Star Borough.” The original Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan was adopted in 1985 to provide guidance to the Borough for the protection and management of local trails. The Trails Plan is used frequently by staff during trail planning and development, land use planning, and the subdivision platting process. The existing Plan 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, Borough 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 improves 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 Regional 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 econ-



Circle-Fairbanks Historic Trail. PHOTO: Bryant Wright

omy 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. Review focused on identifying relevant goals and actionable recommendations that may support or influence the content of the Trails Plan, as well and previously identified actions that the Trails Plan may help implement. Appendix B. Literature Review summarizes existing plans and policies that have the potential to impact access to and use of recreational trails throughout the Borough.

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

1. **Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan, 2006**
2. **State Statutes and Borough Code**
3. **Adopted Area Plans**
4. **Functional Plans and Studies**
5. **Ongoing Plan Updates and Initiatives**



2. PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Plan Objectives

The updated Borough Trails Plan is a system-wide, comprehensive plan guiding development, preservation, management, and maintenance of the recreational trail system in the Borough 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 Borough’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 Borough 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 Borough 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 Borough 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 with significant contributions from the Trails Advisory Commission and the public.

1 Data Collection, Inventory & Analysis

Understanding what we have

An inventory of the condition, use, and status of existing Borough trails and an analysis of the systems by which they are created and managed. The public identified what trails they use and when and how they use them. The planning team reviewed adopted plans and policies, and assessed the Parks & Recreation Department operations and limitations. Interactive maps, trail user survey, TAC meetings, site visits and historic trail files helped generate trail data.



2 Vision, Goals, Issues & Opportunities Identification

Defining holistically where we want to be

A rounded, representative vision for the future of the Borough trails network was defined by the TAC and the public. Vision and goals 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

The Trails Plan identifies indispensable trails to be designated for formal protection and trail concepts to be pursued.

This rigorous stage of planning included reviewing, amending, and updating existing trails data, and reviewing public suggestions for new trails to be included in the final plan. Criteria for selecting preferred trails were developed based on the defined goals and trail design best practices, and were applied to create the draft trail recommendations.



4 Recommendations & Implementation Strategies Determination

Deciding how we are going to get there

The TAC, planning team and consultants identified recommended actions to achieve the community's goals and vision, then defined implementation strategies and responsible parties. Recommendations cover system-wide management, maintenance, planning, and construction as well as individual recommendations for each trail.



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 approvals by Borough 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. 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 focused work sessions 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 Borough 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 Borough.
- 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).
- Online Interactive Comment Map: collected geolocated 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.

- Coordination with Partnering Agencies & Borough Departments: informed recommendation and implementation strategy development and ensured continuity with other adopted plans and policies. Borough Departments also reviewed the draft Trails Plan and provided comments that were incorporated ahead of its adoption.
- Coordination with Major Landowners: Conversations with major landowners (State of Alaska, Bureau of Land Management, US Army, US Air Force, Cook Inlet Regional Corp, etc.) 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, Planning Board and Assembly: work sessions on the Trails Plan development were held by the Planning Commission (two), Assembly, and Planning Board

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
Initiatives	Adopt the FNSB Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan	Local executive approval through TAC, Planning Commission and FNSB Assembly	FNSB Parks & Recreation Department, Trails Advisory Commission, Planning Commission, Assembly	Start	1. Search & Assess Public Assets & Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability
Strategic Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable us to clarify processes defining, accessed to the Parks & Recreation Department has responsibility and authority over and what actions require additional review or approval by other FNSB entities or non-FNSB entities/department. Provide the FNSB Trails Office the necessary resources and processes for maintenance, safety, accessibility (trail) processes required for permanent closure or use changes Review the FNSB Trails Office the ability to sponsor user organizations and a process to change them. 	Update the Strategic Plan to reflect roles and responsibilities including authority of the Trails Office	FNSB Parks & Recreation Department, Trails Advisory Commission, FNSB Assembly, Assembly	Start	1. Search & Assess Public Assets & Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability
Staff Capacity	Expand staff capacity of the Parks & Recreation Trails Office to allow satisfactory performance of the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and improve the Borough's Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan Coordinate and supervise various staff functions and resources involved in completing trail construction and maintenance projects Engage with transportation facilities on routing, use, maintenance, and establishment of legal public access Coordinate summer maintenance projects and winter grooming of high priority trails Apply for and assist in managing grants (Federal, state, NGO) to all departmental initiatives Coordinate with agencies and other partners regarding trail issues involving existing development plans not consistent with the Trails Plan Advise and inform public on trail regulations, receive user feedback and generate the information including trail guides, signage and other resources Monitor trail usage, conduct trail conditions and reports for user concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop job descriptions for the recommended positions Recommend the positions to the Assembly Develop a recruitment process Develop volunteer opportunities Develop volunteer training programs Allocate equipment and vehicles for staff and volunteers WALK PLAN 	FNSB Parks & Recreation Department	Start to End	2. Make it all Community Trail, Open up a trail system, 3. Promote Learning Opportunities & Improve User Experience

Workshop Miro Board



prior to the Plan’s formal public hearings. 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. 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.

- Direct Landowner Contact: Two postcard mailings were distributed to all Borough landowners whose property might coincide with a trail in the trails plan. The first mailing announced the draft plan publishing, open-house meetings and public comment period. The second mailing announced the TAC’s approval of the draft plan and Planning Commission Platting Board public hearing dates. Staff worked directly with landowners who reached out to address concerns.

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



Fairbanks North Star Borough
Parks & Recreation Department, Trails Office

Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan Update

HELP US DECIDE WHICH TRAILS TO PUT IN THE PLAN

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!

Map Key 1:25,000

Year Round Trails

- Trail - Existing
- Trail - Proposed

Winter Only Trails

- Trail - Existing
- Trail - Proposed

Trail Head
- Community Marker
- Trail System
- Elevation Benchmark
- Water Body
- Designated Wetland
- Road
- Railroad

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



3. TODAY’S TRAILS: EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following chapter is a summary of the existing conditions of the Borough and its recreational trail system. Additional and more detailed information is available in Trail Descriptions & Recommendations (page 50) and [Appendix C. Status of the System and D. Trail Use Survey Report.](#)



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

Who the Trail System Serves

Borough Demographics

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

Since the original Trails Plan was adopted in 1985, the Borough population has grown approximately 35.6% (currently 96,849 residents), 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 Borough residents (8.8% of total population) were active-duty military in 2019. Eielson Air Force Base has brought approximately 3,300 new residents to Bor-

ough 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.

Additional demographic information can be found in [Appendix C: Status of the System](#)

Table 1. Borough 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 Borough covers 7,444 square miles with more than 1,000 miles of trails actively 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 take place within the Borough. A variety of developed and primitive trails provide 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,



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

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 Borough 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 Borough. 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 Borough Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan. Information was gathered on Borough 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 (see [Appendix D. 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:** The summer season had the highest reported use with 93.78% of respondents reporting using trails then.
- **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, Borough 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%
Combined Total Use	4589	81%	1108	19%



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

Trail User Groups and Organizations

Groups have coalesced around most major modes of trail travel. 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 list-serves, social media, websites, and online forums.

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, Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks, and Fairbanks Offroad Lions. 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 Borough is authorized under Alaska Statute Title 29 as a second-class borough. The Borough defines its powers, privileges, rules, and regulations in the Borough Code as authorized by AS 29.35.210. Multiple titles within the Borough 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.

There is currently no specific set of regulations in the Borough code to direct the use of Parks and Recreation pow-

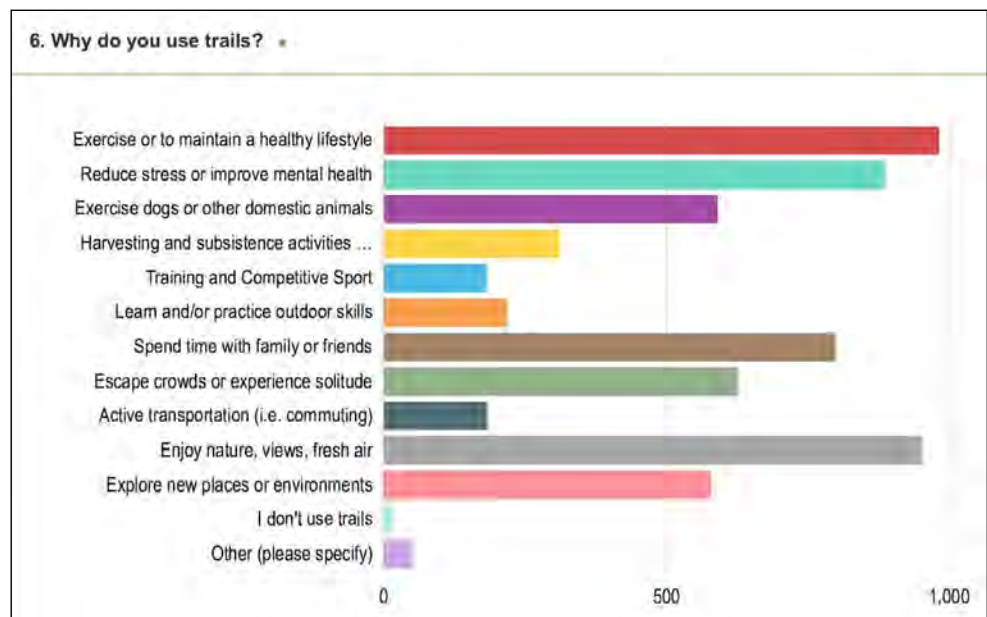


Figure 1. Self-Selecting Online Survey Question 6 Summary



ers. Title 2 Administration & Personnel of the Borough 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 Borough Parks & Recreation Department and Trails Advisory Commission are the entities primarily responsible for the Borough 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 Borough. Alaska Statutes 09.65.200-202 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 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 09.65.202. Each of these statutes has 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 Borough 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 Borough Parks & Recreation Department 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 more than 130 indoor and outdoor athletic, recreational, and park facilities to meet the community's needs for healthy recreational activities that are accessible to all borough residents. The division works closely with partner organizations and the community to provide recreational activities. 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 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. Only occasionally are small projects funded through the parks maintenance budget to address urgent trail issues.

Most large recreational trail projects and planning, including this update of the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan, are funded through competitive state and federal grants, with Borough general funds covering the grantee match requirements. In most cases, the Borough must plan and design projects prior to applying for grant funds. They must therefore ensure recreational trail needs and projects are identified in local planning documents to be eligible for available funding allocations.

Trail Staff

Currently, the Trails Coordinator is the only Borough position dedicated specifically to the planning, management, and maintenance of recreational trails within the Borough Trails Plan. This position coordinates with staff,



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

contractors, Trails Advisory Commission, volunteers, partners and landowners to implement the Trails Plan and Borough Trail Program.

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. Mobilizing another Borough staff member or crew for trail maintenance currently requires redirecting staff, vehicles, and equipment from assigned duties at another park or recreation site.

Volunteer organization and recruitment are highly time intensive and may outweigh the amount of work completed. 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 Borough’s knowledge, rather than deal with formalities and requirements associated with Borough volunteer policies. Trail systems rely heavily on these volunteers. Barriers for volunteers include indemnification language, lack of formal organi-

zation/non-profit status, ability to fund insurance for the work performed, limited support, inconsistent membership, or lack of specific expertise.

Trail Programming

The Borough Parks & Recreation Department has one primary trail program which is funded through Parks Department allocations: the Fairbanks Trails Challenge. The program is an all-ages, all-abilities, outdoor scavenger hunt designed to get residents exploring more local trails.

Participation in the Trails Challenge has grown considerably since its establishment, indicating demand for trails and trail programming. Part of its growing success is due to the seasonal Trails Challenge Guide which provides detailed maps and descriptions of the trails, including difficulty level, trail distance, allowed activities, and directions on how to access the trails.

Trails Advisory Commission

The Trails Advisory Commission (TAC) was established in 1980 by ordinance and is governed by Chapter 4.112 of Borough Code. The TAC is the advisory body to borough government matters relating to trails within the Borough and the Trails Plan. 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 trail needs for the Borough
- Encourage public and private subdividers to incorporate a trail system where needed on a voluntary basis



- Provide initial review of proposed amendments to the comprehensive recreational trails plan

Partners

Partners throughout the Borough 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. Working with partner advocates, such as the interior Alaska Trails & Parks Foundation, has proven to be critical for a thriving parks & recreation scene in communities nationwide.

Trails Creating the System

There are far more trails in the Borough than are documented in the Trails Plan. Trails in the Borough are used year-round for most major uses or modes of travel. 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 most notable or unique qualities of the Borough trail systems include extensive access in the winter due to frozen ground and waterways, extended use in the summer due to the midnight 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.

Public Access Status

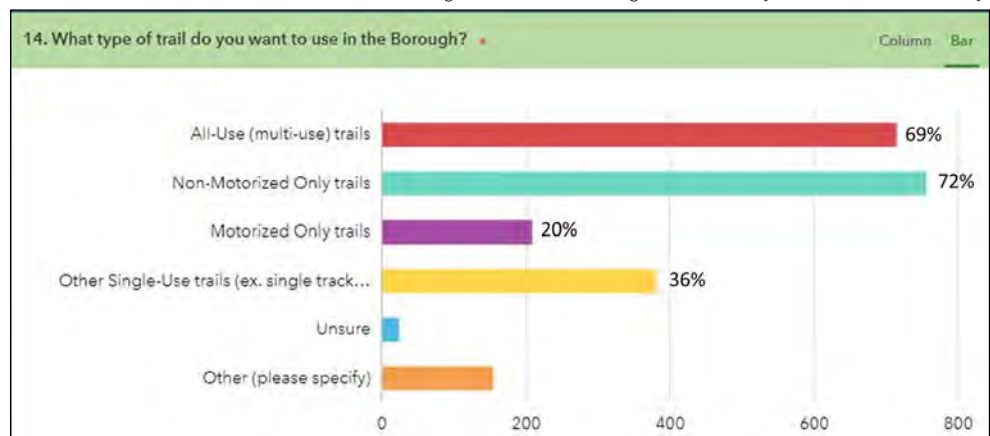
Existing Publicly Dedicated Trails

The Borough 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).

Trails Proposed for Dedication

The Trails Plan focuses on identifying indispensable trails that lack legal public access so that they may be protected in the future. The Borough cooperates with, negotiates with, or in certain cases requires that a landowner grant or “dedicate” to the public permission to travel through their property via the existing or planned trail corridor. Property owners are only required to dedicate public trail access through their property if the land is subdivided and there is a Category A or B trail (see next section) across the land. As most trails in the Plan cross

Figure 2. Self-Selecting Online Survey Question 14 Summary





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, 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 – Statewide/Regional Trails, B – Borough Community Trail System, C – Neighborhood Trails) 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. Additional detail can be found in the Trail Recommendations chapter of Part II.

Use Designation

The 1985/2006 Trails Plan divided trails into “Multi-Use” (including motorized uses) and “Non-motorized” use designations; there is no more specific definition. 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 Borough park regulations. While other agencies create limits based on curb weight, width, or number of drive wheels, Borough makes no such distinction in its park rules or Trails Plan.

Gaps in the System

Frequently expressed concerns include 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 also [Appendix D. Trail Use Survey Report](#)):

Lack of knowledge on whether a trail is on private or public land and what uses are allowed were the highest rated limitations to trail use, followed closely by a lack of knowledge on where trails are located, and finally poor trail conditions.

Maintaining existing trails highest rated priority, followed by establishing connections to link existing trails, constructing new trails, providing more and better locational information, and improving trail conditions.

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 meth-



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



ods of public engagement. This desire for variety extended beyond activity type and included difficulty levels and experiences had while recreating on the trail.

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

Local Recreation Context – Borough Parks & Recreation Niche

This plan does not interpret the demand for trail variety to mean the Borough Parks and Recreation Department should provide every possible trail experience to every potential trail user. Other non-Borough recreation areas (e.g. State Parks, BLM) provide ample trail opportunities that may not need be duplicated by the Borough, but may be farther from town. The Borough’s parks and trail systems and vacant lands are in contrast much closer to the populated areas and smaller in acreage. The Borough is uniquely suited to accommodate the need for convenience by offering proximal, short-duration, weekday recreation that is not provided by other land managers.

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

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 include proposing new, sustainable alignments and designating trails for uses compatible with the underlying soils and topography (see Chapter 2). 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, onsite information, and wayfinding. The culprit is often lack of complete public access. Once a trail is made accessible, available Borough resources can be directed toward trailhead facilities and amenities to increase the trail’s 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. Trails for specific uses and specific ability levels are also in demand but may be undersupplied near populated areas of the Borough. With some exceptions, 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 mas-



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

tery. 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 bridle trail projects of the past, most of these trails have evolved to become multiple use. There is no area in the Borough specifically for equestrian riding.

Areas

The North Pole and Salcha areas of the Borough 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 requires targeted planning and strategic connections to more varied terrain.



PART II: TRAILS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS



Airborne on the Ester Dome Single-track Trails. PHOTO: Joel Buth

The Fairbanks North Star Borough is required by state statute to provide comprehensive planning to guide the physical, social and economic development of the Borough. Part II Trails Plan Recommendations contains the instructive planning recommendations intended to satisfy this requirement with regards to recreational trails within the Borough.



1. TRAILS FOR TOMORROW: VISION AND GOALS

An essential component of this updated Borough 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 2 and 3 of Part I 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 Borough 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 Borough.

Vision for the Future Borough 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 Borough 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 Borough 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 Borough 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 & Borough continue to 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 Borough resources to foster partnerships and volunteer opportunities.

4 Improve Access for All Ages & Abilities

The Borough 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

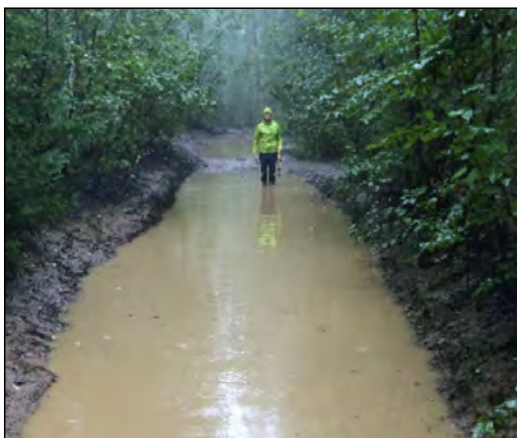
The trail network and programming are adaptable to new trends in outdoor recreation and are expanding to provide opportunities to current and future trail users.

- 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



2. SYSTEM-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Trail System of the Borough is dependent on and comprised of more than the trails on the ground. The following system-wide recommendations and implementation actions are necessary to actualize the community-defined vision and goals for the Borough Trails System. Each of nine categories of recommendations is briefly described below. Specific recommendations, implementation actions, and responsible parties are listed in the Recommendations & Implementation Strategies table on page 30. Borough resources, when available for trails, should be directed toward the implementation of these recommendations.

The first recommended action, approval, is completed when the Borough Assembly adopts 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 Planning Commission accompanies the Plan as it goes before the Assembly. The Borough Parks and Recreation Department represents the Plan in the approval process as it is the primary implementer.

I. Authority

The Borough must maintain the authorities necessary to establish, protect, defend, develop, manage and maintain trails for recreation. 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 Borough or another public landowner. Thus, the Borough will have different roles and responsibilities for each trail, or trail section, depending on the



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

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.

II. 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 Borough 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 Borough provide sufficient staff capacity to the Parks & Recreation Trails Office to allow satisfactory performance of critical functions necessary to implement the Trails Plan.



III. Funding

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





An increase in funding is recommended:

- To establish and protect legal public access
- For regular maintenance and upkeep of trails Via staff, contractor and volunteer labor
- For planning and design

Funding Sources

Potential funding sources include the Borough Operating Budget, 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)

Private donations, often from 501c3 nonprofits or trail user or advocacy groups, are most frequently seen as a funding source for capital projects. Private donations can be facilitated through park and trail foundations, user groups, and onsite donation collection infrastructure.

Revenue generating funding sources should be researched for consideration, such as user fees, trail/park pass programs, modification of the existing Road Service Area or creation of a new Recreation District or Parks Service Area, where borough res-



Rosie Creek - Cripple Creek Trail. PHOTO Bryant Wright

idents pay into their service area for maintenance and upkeep of facilities within their boundary.

IV. Trail Establishment

Goal number 1 of the Trails Plan is “to establish and protect public access.” To do this and continue to expand recreation opportunities in accordance with the community’s goals, the Borough must maintain its trail dedication, management and protection authorities as well as expand administration methods to protect and establish trails beyond the current process in Borough Code Title 17 Subdivisions. As part of the subdivision process, Borough 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





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

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 Borough to protect recreational trails, but not all are preferred or recommended. Those strategies are identified in Appendix A. Trail Protection Toolkit which includes some benefits and drawbacks of each. This plan recommends that the primary means of proactively pursuing trail access be through Title 20.12.010 Land Acquisition, specifically through negotiated purchase or lease; negotiated exchange involving Borough land; or by voluntary dedication, grant or gift. Eminent Domain powers shall not be utilized by the Borough for acquisition of recreational trail easements. Title 20 should be reviewed, and amendments considered to address trail easements more specifically. Policies should establish minimum

standards that easements must meet to be accepted by the Borough.

If any modifications to Borough Code are found to be advantageous and supported by the community and the Assembly, they will undergo a formal public review process. Other recommendations to help establish and protect trails, including possible incentives for landowners to grant easements, are included in the table.

V. Design & Maintenance Standards

Standards

Significant aspects of the community's vision and goals for the Borough 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. Trail design and maintenance standards can be housed in 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. In the absence of a manual, Borough 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 Management Objectives will document designed use, managed use, and design parameters for different types of trails.



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 slightly 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.



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

Trail standards should consider:

- Principles of “sustainable” trail design, construction, and maintenance (see “Sustainable” Trails: Definition and Six Principles on page 27)
- Minimum easement widths, driven by intended trail use
- Minimum standards for trailheads, including signage and wayfinding, parking and other amenities
- On-trail wayfinding and off-trail mapping for public trails
- Allowed uses and anticipated experiences (e.g., difficult levels, elevation changes, distances, permitted vehicle types and specifications)

Trail standards must also consider trail access needs and ensure sufficient trailhead development to 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.

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.

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.

VI. Construction & Implementation

To realize the community’s vision for trails, the adopted Trails Plan, including the recommendations made in this chapter and Trail Recommendations and Maps, must be implemented. Implementation advances all the community’s goals for the Borough trail system and will require adequate funding resources and staff capacity. Principles of connectivity, equitable distribution, serving underserved areas, and expanding ADA accessibility will help guide the selection of priority projects when implementing the Plan.



Ultimately, 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.



VII. 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 should continue to participate in local and statewide plan reviews that affect trails. Specific planning needs highlighted by this plan include developing master plans for trail systems and trail recreation areas, and consistent review and update of this Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan.



The Borough should also make efforts to make the planning process more approachable. This may include updating and improving the Guide to Nominating Trails to the Borough Trails Plan to a more user-friendly, condensed format to decrease the amount of effort required for a successful nomination.

VIII. 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 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 resources including maps and



descriptions for using Borough 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 borough residents to get outdoors. Approachability should be a primary focus of the program across all aspects.

IX. Partnerships

Partnerships are an essential component for long-term success of the Borough 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.




Recommendations & Implementation Strategies Table

The following table lists the recommended actions to implement the Trails Plan's goals and work toward actualizing the community-defined vision for the Borough 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)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 I. AUTHORITY	<p>A. Clarify or define the roles and authority of the Borough, the Parks & Recreation Department (PRD) and its Trails Office, including its decision-making ability, maintenance and management authority, jurisdictional reach relationship with landowners of public trails, and role in enforcement.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Borough powers and authorities for Parks & Recreation, Planning, Platting, Land Management, and Protection of Public Areas that are necessary to implement this plan. Borough seeks principal management authority for Category B Trails through ownership, easement, or other agreement. <p>B. Establish or clarify processes defining activities PRD has responsibility and autonomy over and which actions require additional review/concurrence by other Borough entities or non-Borough partners/landowners.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the PRD Trails Office the authority to temporarily close trails for maintenance; clarify appropriate review processes required for permanent closures or use changes. Provide the PRD Trails Office the ability to establish use designations, year-round and seasonal, and a process to change them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Update the Borough Code if necessary to define roles and responsibilities including authority of the Trails Office with respect to different types of trails 	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Mayor’s Office, Assembly	Short	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish & Protect Public Access Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability




(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 II. STAFF CAPACITY	<p>A. Provide sufficient staff capacity within the Parks & Recreation Trails Office to allow satisfactory performance of the following functions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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, contractor, 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, including reviewing development plans for consistency with the Trails Plan and participating early in planning and land development processes where applicable. 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. Manage and produce trail programming, including new and ongoing educational and engagement activities. Provide support to the Trails Advisory Commission 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop job descriptions for recommended positions Recommend the positions in the department budget Revise and continue to develop a volunteer policy, including insurance and liability coverages Develop volunteer applications Develop volunteer training programs Acquire equipment and vehicles for staff and volunteers 	Borough Parks & Recreation Department	Short to Mid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset Foster Lasting Stewardship Improve User Experience



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 III. FUNDING	<p>A. Increase funding to establish and protect legal public access, including funding for surveying, acquisition (ROW, easements, land. etc.), trail planning and design.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore and develop funding incentives for easement acquisition. <p>B. Increase funding for capital improvements and development including trail construction and restoration, parking areas and trailhead amenities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build basic trail infrastructure such that it can be used and maintained with minimal effort. <p>C. Increase funding for regular maintenance and upkeep of trails.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff to supervise available labor (staff, contracts, volunteer, grant-funded seasonal, etc.) 2. Invest in making trails that are maintainable, then maintain their conditions. <p>D. Increase funding for planning and design</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop in-house skills/capacity and invest in professional services to conduct outreach and design for developing trail systems. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research grant programs to fund project recommendations. 2. Research user fee and park pass programs 3. Develop and install physical and/or web-based fee and donation collection infrastructure. 4. 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. 5. Meet with foundations and individual user groups to coordinate private donations 6. Consider Service Areas or Park Districts for residents to pay for local trail maintenance. 	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Trail Users, Advocacy Groups, Trails Advisory Commission	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset 7 Expand Recreation Opportunities




(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 IV. TRAIL ESTABLISHMENT	<p>A. Preserve and Expand administrative methods to protect and establish trails</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the Borough Subdivision Code requirement to dedicate trail easements for Category A and B trails in new subdivisions, providing flexibility for realignments that reduce impact on subdivision design while preserving continuity and usability of the trail for its intended purpose. In case of realignment, subdivider is responsible to clear new path. Encourage subdividers to grant access to Category C trails or establish new trail corridors to enhance subdivision design. On private lands not undergoing the subdivision process, acquire trail access on a cooperative basis. Utilize Borough Land Acquisition Code, specifically negotiated purchase or lease; exchange for land; or dedication, grants, or gifts as a primary means for proactively acquiring trail easements for the benefit of the public. Trail realignment will be pursued if an easement cannot be negotiated. Eminent Domain powers shall not be utilized by the Borough to acquire recreational trail easements. Coordinate with state, federal and major landowners to streamline easement establishment processes. Trails easements should generally be established in separate locations from road and utility rights of way to avoid collisions, driveway crossings, and other conflicts. Where trails must coincide with other ROW (such as utilities and RS2477 corridors)C coordinate and develop agreements, plat amendments, and /or policy to provide for recreational use within the corridor. 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. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with key stakeholders to discuss streamlining the easement establishing process. Draft a memorandum of understanding to solidify agreements. Work closely with Community Planning and Planning Commission to review zoning district code language. Ensure use regulations support proposed recreational opportunities; pursue zoning change if necessary. Explore possibility of a recreation overlay district if supported by Planning Commission. Consider amendments to Borough Code language and definitions (e.g., “Dedication,” “Subdivision,” and “Trails”) such that the grant of a trail easement does not effectuate a subdivision. 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 for duration, depiction, dimension, designation, and documentation. Perpetual easements are recommended. Consider amending or expanding Chapter 20.12 Land Acquisition to address trail easements more specifically. 	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Planning Department, Assembly, Utility Providers	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish & Protect Public Access Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset Expand Recreation Opportunities




(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">IV. TRAIL ESTABLISHMENT</p>	<p>7. Explore feasibility of enacting borough property tax breaks, including those authorized by AS 29.45.050(e), and other incentive programs for private property owners to formally grant public access for trails identified in the Trails Plan.</p> <p>8. Review and improve processes for fee simple land purchases.</p> <p>9. 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, Open Space Buffer District, and residential zoning districts.</p> <p>10. Consider development of a recreational overlay district to support and encourage recreational trail development within compatible primary zoning districts.</p> <p>11. Review Borough 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.</p> <p>12. Trails across Borough-owned property scheduled for disposal will be reserved in fee rather than by placing easement restrictions on land going into private ownership. This should be recommended but not required for state and federal public lands being disposed of.</p> <p>13. Pursue trailhead area at trail entrances for parking and trail access. Consider acquisitions, requiring dedication, or reserving Borough property as necessary to facilitate access and reduce impact on neighbors.</p>	<p>8. 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.</p> <p>9. Formalize a process with Land Management for shorter-term owner/management agreements.</p> <p>10. Be prepared with funding to compensate landowners for purchases of property or easements through fee simple and to absorb surveying and platting costs associated with granting easements.</p> <p>11. Review proposed Borough land disposals for consistency with Trails Plan. Investigate reservation options specific to Borough-owned land.</p>	<p>Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Planning Department, Assembly, Utility Providers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Establish & Protect Public Access ② Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset ⑦ Expand Recreation Opportunities



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 V. DESIGN & MAINTENANCE STANDARDS	<p>A. Develop trail standards based on intended use, including trail and easement widths, trail design considerations and metrics necessary for safety, longevity and enjoyment of trails.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> PRD standards for design and maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop achievable Trail Management Objectives to establish and document designed use, managed use, and design parameters for different types of trails. Trail design & development should be driven by intended use and sustainable goals and criteria Codify easement width minimums (especially helpful for subdivisions). <p>B. Develop & implement minimum standards for trail signage and wayfinding.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide trailhead signage, on-trail wayfinding, and off-trail mapping for public trails. Communicate allowed uses (consistent with recording instrument) and, anticipated experiences (e.g. difficulty levels, elevation change, distance). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. As the Borough assumes maintenance responsibilities for certain trails, develop Trail Management Objectives to guide PRD and partners. 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. Include chapters on trailhead signage and wayfinding standards in the trail design and management manual. 	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Planning Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Assembly	Short to Mid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish & Protect Public Access Improve Access for All Ages & Abilities Improve User Experience Expand Recreation Opportunities Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability
	<p>C. Develop trailheads to be used for their intended purposes, including improved accessibility, visibility, and safety, including emergency response.</p> <p>D. Develop systematic levels or categorization of trailheads 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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory specific trailhead deficiencies, needs, and opportunities. Develop cost estimates for recommended improvements. Recommend improvement projects in the CIP. Pursue grant funding. 	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept.	Mid to Long	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset Foster Lasting Stewardship Improve Access for All Ages & Abilities Improve User Experience Expand Recreation Opportunities




(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 V. DESIGN & MAINTENANCE STANDARDS	<p>E. Develop & implement a Trail Maintenance Program that addresses needs through a combination of staff labor, contracted services, and volunteer assistance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish standards for maintenance that facilitate staff and volunteer success and meet high expectations for trail quality. 2. Establish standards or a process for responding to trail maintenance needs as they are identified. 3. Provide PRD with the staff capacity to conduct summer maintenance and winter grooming of high priority trails. 4. Provide PRD staff capacity to coordinate with partners, contractors, and volunteers and conduct outreach. 5. Employ supervisory staff to oversee Trail Program operations, maintenance, development, and implementation of the Trails Plan. 6. Provide support, training, and equipment to volunteers to complete projects. 7. Streamline the volunteer process to increase participation. 8. Work cooperatively with user groups to maintain activity-specific trail system. 9. Work cooperatively with other organizations to train lead volunteers and build trail maintenance knowledge in the community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet with stakeholders to discuss needs and opportunities of a trail maintenance program. 2. Define staff and volunteer roles and responsibilities. 3. Develop a streamlined process to recruit and utilize volunteer service. 4. Draft trail maintenance policy. 5. Budget for contractual services to address maintenance and improvement projects beyond the capabilities of staff and volunteers. 	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Trail Users, Trail User Groups, Volunteers	Short to Mid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset 3 Foster Lasting Stewardship 6 Improve User Experience 8 Plan for Change, Act for Sustainability



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">VI. CONSTRUCTION IMPLEMENTATION</p>	<p>A. Implement Trails Plan system-wide recommendations and trail recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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 2. Strive for equitable geographic distribution of recreational trail opportunities, and increase dispersal of different trail types and experiences 3. Prioritize new facilities that support underserved users or areas 4. Expand ADA opportunities & improve major trailheads to comply with ADA requirements 5. Utilize Public Area Encroachment authority to protect passage and integrity of Trails Plan trails. <p>B. Formalize 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.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus primary efforts and available resources for recreational trail toward Category B trails intended to be components of the Borough Recreational Trails System. 2. Prioritize ensuring trails for which the Borough is responsible are reasonably safe for their intended uses in order to minimize liability. 3. Work cooperatively with State and Federal agencies to encourage development of Category A trails. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify trailheads without adequate ADA accessibility 2. Work with transportation organizations (FAST Planning, Borough Public Works, etc.) to identify opportunities for funding and project collaborations – alternative transportation funding, river and highway crossing projects, etc. 3. Develop trail improvement prioritization scoring criteria, including connectivity and geographic equity 4. Ensure PRD staff capacity to implement recommendation Map and List. 	<p>Borough Parks & Recreation Dept.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Establish & Protect Public Access 2 Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset 4 Improve Access for All Ages & Abilities 5 Increase Connectivity 6 Improve User Experience 7 Expand Recreation Opportunities





(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
VII. PLANNING	<p>A. Actively participate in the 5-year updates to the Statewide Comprehensive Recreational Plan to remain eligible for federal funding allocations and ensure Borough trail priorities are documented.</p> <p>B. Actively participate in Borough planning processes for area, functional and comprehensive plans to ensure recommended trail locations and improvements are incorporated.</p> <p>C. Implement applicable recommendations made in other jurisdictional plans that are consistent with the Borough Trails Plan. (Ex. Chena River State Recreation Area Management Plan, Historic Preservation Plan, Comprehensive Roads Plan, Alaska Recreational Trails Plan, etc.).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Attend stakeholder meetings and provide comments. Meet with implementing authorities to coordinate efforts. 	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Trail Users	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish & Protect Public Access Invest in our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset
	<p>D. Develop and refine plans for Trail Recreation Areas (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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Propose trail system or recreation area master plans & updates in the department budget. Initiate area recreational plans or updates. 	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Planning Commission	Short-Mid Term	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improve User Experience Expand Recreation Opportunities
	<p>E. Review Plan and Update as necessary: Incremental reassessments of the Trails Plan 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> <p>1. Improve the process or increase approachability to the process for the public to nominate trails to the Borough Trails Plan. 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.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Include periodic reassessments and updates in the department work plan and budget. 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. Update the Guide to Nominating Trails to the Borough Trails Plan to a condensed, more user-friendly format. 	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Community Planning Dept., Trails Advisory Commission	Mid to Long	All



(Recommendation and Implementation Strategies Table Continued)

Category	Recommendations	Implementing Actions	Implementing Responsibility	Timeframe	Goals Being Advanced
 VIII. EDUCATION	A. Develop & implement a Trail Education Program 1. Promote Leave No Trace ethics and education 2. Encourage sustainable use and enjoyment of trails 3. Improve approachability to recreation for new users 4. Provide digital and physical resources and maps for accessing and using trails 5. Expand use of interpretive signage 6. Inform landowners how trails and easement can affect property	1. Advertise and promote recreation opportunities. 2. Provide information on trail access (where, how, and when). 3. Develop a handbook and/or programming on trail ethics, including rights-of-way, conflict reduction, Leave No Trace, etc. 4. Continue and develop trail programming such as the Trails Challenge. 5. Partner with other organizations and businesses to provide equipment, instruction and incentives needed to get outdoors.	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept., Trails Advisory Commission, Trail User Groups	Short to Mid	2 Invest in Our Community Trail System as a World-Class Asset 3 Foster Lasting Stewardship 8 Plan for Change
 IX. PARTNERSHIPS	B. 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, etc.	1. Develop a list of relevant organizations and initiate coordination meetings. 2. Consider and develop a fee schedule for use of facilities for non-PRD events, including for-profit events.	Borough Parks & Recreation Dept.	Ongoing	3 Foster Lasting Stewardship



3. 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.

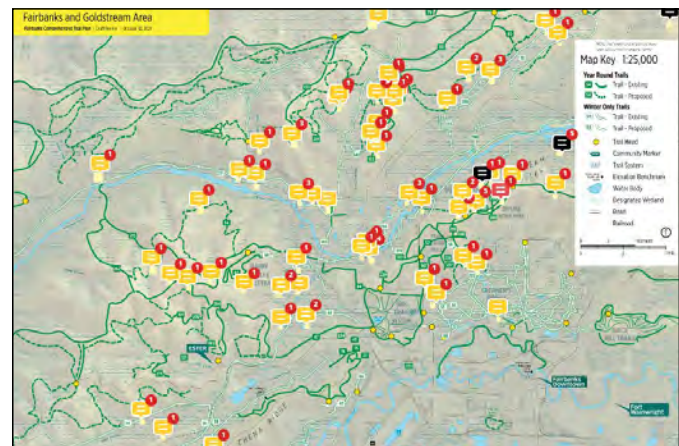
Trail Evaluation & Recommendation Determination Process

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.

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 completely 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 Borough 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.



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

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 Part I Chapter 2) 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.

Recommended Future Trail Corridors Categorization

The recommended future trail corridors are categorized as A) Federal and State recreational trails, B) trails proposed as components of the Borough recreational trail system, and C) neighborhood trail systems. These categories define priorities and responsibilities for the Borough trails program and other landowners. They help direct available Borough trail resources more effectively, meanwhile ensuring that the borough is not obligated with responsibility for trails not intended to be part of the Borough Trail System. The Trail Categorization Summary Table provides a preliminary means of prioritizing the trail list with respect to Borough resources and reflect existing or intended management authority. More detailed descriptions of each category follow.

Category A. Federal and State Recreational Trail Systems

This category of trails crosses primarily state and federal lands. Primary management authority and maintenance responsibility for these trails are of the agency having authority over the land. These agencies will normally be



the Federal Bureau of Land Management or the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Trails in this category will be subject to Borough trail rights-of-way dedication procedures. The Borough’s primary role in these trails will be to support their development through advocacy and coordination rather than by allocating resources toward capital improvements. The Borough should generally not participate in maintenance of these trails except in special cases when it directly facilitates the use of and access to Category B Trails and only under an agreement with the landowner.

Category B. Fairbanks North Star Borough Recreational Trail Systems

This Borough intends to have primary management authority and responsibility over Category B trails once legal public access to each is fully established within a Borough Park, Borough land, by a recorded easement, or by some other dedication or reservation for public use. Trails in this category will be subject to Borough trail rights-of-way dedication procedures. Borough resources, when available, may be allocated toward all phases of

development and maintenance of these trails provided the Borough has rights to do so.

Category C: Neighborhood Recreational Trail Systems

This category of recreational trails includes trails which may be used primarily by a local neighborhood with less benefit to the community at large. Neighborhood recreational trail systems could eventually be added to the Category B recreational trail systems if nominated. Primary management and maintenance responsibilities for the trails is to be with neighborhoods, use groups, service areas, and homeowner associations. The Borough may assist in identifying these trails in new subdivisions and establishing communication between the land developers and trail users. Borough rights-of-way dedication procedures do NOT apply, however Borough resources may be allocated to pursue and acquire public access where missing. The Borough may exercise its public area protection powers against encroachments upon Category C trails already dedicated to the public.

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 include a cooperative agreement with Borough	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. Borough Recreational Trail System	Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks & Recreation	Maintenance by Borough 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 will not formally accept grant of easement or ROW. ROW remain available for public use. Borough does not assume responsibility



Future Trail Corridors List

The following is a list of trails proposed for inclusion in the Borough Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan. Detailed descriptions for the recommended trails can be found in Trail Descriptions and Recommendations, pages 50-76.

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

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.”

A. STATE OR FEDERAL TRAILS		
Trail Number	Trail Name	Proposed Use Category
Existing Trails – 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-A16. *	Old Chatanika Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
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-A24. *	Nugget Creek Loop	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
Recommended New Trails – 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 BOROUGH RECREATIONAL TRAIL NETWORK		
Trail Number	Trail Name	Proposed Use Category
Existing Trails – 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	Water Trail: Multi-Use/Motorized Year Round
I-B21.	Noyes Slough Trail	Water Trail: Multi-Use/Motorized Year Round
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
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-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-B31. *	Chena Lake to Hot Springs Winter Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized



B. PROPOSED COMPONENTS OF THE BOROUGH RECREATIONAL TRAIL NETWORK

<i>Trail Number</i>	<i>Trail Name</i>	<i>Proposed Use Category</i>
Recommended New Trails – <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

<i>Trail Number</i>	<i>Trail Name</i>	<i>Proposed Use Category</i>
II-C1.	Cripple Creek Trail System	Non Motorized
II-C2.	Lincoln Creek Loop Trail	Non Motorized
II-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



C. NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL NETWORKS

<i>Trail Number</i>	<i>Trail Name</i>	<i>Proposed Use Category</i>
I-C15.*	Smallwood Creek Loop	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-C17.*	Far Mountain Traverse	Non Motorized
I-C23.*	Salcha River Trail	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-C27. *	Pearl Creek Commuter Trail	Non Motorized
I-C30. *	Haines – Fairbanks Pipeline	Seasonal/Winter Motorized
I-C32. *	Social Security Mine Trail	Multi-Use/Motorized Year-Round
I-C33. *	Ester Dome Trail	Non Motorized

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

<i>Trail Number</i>	<i>Trail Name</i>	<i>Use Category</i>
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. BOROUGH 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 Borough. 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
15. Ace Lakes Connector

Priority Actions for Trail Recommendations

While the Trail Categorization (see Table 5 on page 43) 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 Commission. 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' (e.g. conceptual or unconstructed) trails will need additional planning and most trail areas will benefit significantly from a site master plan.

3 Capital Improvement

Design and construction will be necessary 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 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.

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



Trail Descriptions & Recommendations

Trails Proposed for Public Dedication

I-A1. Chena Hot Springs – Steese Highway Trail (Map pages 138, 156, 169)

This trail connects the Chena Hot Springs Road near the West Fork of the Chena River to the Steese Highway at Twelve-mile Summit. This trail is partially coincident with the Circle-Fairbanks Historic Trail. The trail was originally proposed by citizens as a non-motorized hiking trail in the 1985 Trail Plan but use over time has evolved to include motorized travel. The terrain is suitable for ATV travel and the current recommendation supports motorized use. The portion of the trail extending south from the Circle-Fairbanks Trail has a protected 60 ft public access easement via ADL 402674. Another portion of the route travels through the BLM-managed Steese National Conservation Area (SNCA). The 2016 Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan (including the SNCA) record of decision designates the BLM area “semi-primitive, motorized” until a travel management plan is complete. A Travel Management Plan is being developed and draft Environmental Assessment published, but there is not yet a record of decision or preferred alternative selected. This trail could be approached as a joint federal and state effort and proposed use designations should ultimately reflect adopted regulations. The southern end accessed from Chena Hot Springs Road utilizes a private material site and takes a fall-line trail straight up the hill face. This plan recommends a realignment to provide better access from the nearby trail parking west of the gravel pit and east of West Fork. A trail can gain the ridge with a lesser grade and multiple switchback turns.

I-A2. Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail (Map pages 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 92, 95, 97, 99, 101, 103, 118, 119, 137, 138)

The Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail is a portion of the route used in the 1,000 mile “Yukon Quest” Sled Dog Race and is recommended for legislative designation as a State Recreation Trail in the draft Tanana Basin Area Plan. The trail lies mainly on state lands and should most-logically be the primary responsibility of the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Access corridors and trail heads need to be established between the trail and Chena Hot Springs Road and the North Pole Badger Road area. Primary routes are recommended as the Chena Lowland Winter Connections. The route has been designated a RS2477 trail #278. A 2007 effort to map the trail and understand use patterns and impact on property owners remains a useful resource. Portions through neighborhoods in Two Rivers have nearly been abandoned in favor of the Baseline trail. The historic crossing of the Little Chena River is no longer usable. Trail users have been routed around at the courtesy of private landowners. This bypass route, or some alternative, needs to be formally established in consultation with landowners.

I-A3. Circle –Fairbanks Historic Trail (Map pages 132, 133, 151, 153-155, 166-169, 176-178, 182)

The Circle-Fairbanks Historic Trail is a long-standing priority of the Borough Trails Advisory Commission. Because this trail lies almost entirely on state land it should be within the jurisdiction of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, though the Borough can maintain an active role in coordinating trail use with mineral development in the Cleary Summit area and promoting the route’s recreational potential. The Borough should consider establishing a cooperative agreement with the Department of Natural Resources to clarify responsibilities for the trail and to establish necessary parameters to ensure that recreational designation of the route does not limit access to or development of mining claims. When mining claim development requiring surface disturbance occurs in this area in the future, the trailhead should be relocated. This route is popular with motorized users and has great potential as a premier, renowned, long distance 4x4 trail.



The soils are mostly well-draining along the ridgeline route. Careful realignments of steep, wet, or fall-line sections will improve the sustainability of the trail. One recommended reroute is to construct a contoured trail or switchbacks below the first high point in Section 12, FM T6N R8E, to avoid a badly eroded fall-line section. Another possibility for investigation is a new contoured alignment around Mt. Ryan, south of Smith Creek, to bypass the wet, fragile sections crossing Smith Creek.

I-A4. Davidson Ditch Hiking Trails (Map pages 149, 163-168, 175)

The Davidson Ditch Hiking Trails have been proposed by the Bureau of Land Management as access routes into the White Mountains National Recreation Area. Portions of these trails have been reserved and identified as “no staking areas” in the state’s White Mountain Remote Parcel disposal. The Davidson Ditch corridor and some of the existing BLM recreation sites along the Steese Highway may be transferred to the State in the future. Until final land ownership is determined, the project should be approached cooperatively by the State and BLM. In addition to the proposed hiking trails, a major aspect of this project is acquisition, restoration and development of interpretive information on the Davidson Ditch and its siphon structures. Trailheads with interpretive displays should be established adjacent to one or more restored siphons. The Davidson Ditch Corridor provides a link to create a series of loops between the ridge line hiking trails. The remainder of the ditch corridor should be retained as a greenbelt through the Chatanika Valley. This includes the portion of the Ditch from approximately 32 through 67 mile Steese Highway and crosses entirely on land owned by the State and BLM. Coordination between the Borough and these two agencies to establish protective rights-of-way and management guidelines focusing on historical and recreational enhancement should be pursued. The Davidson Ditch structures and corridor have the potential to provide a variety of historic and recreational opportunities ranging from small historic waysides to an extensive trail and greenbelt corridor.

I-A5. North Fork of the Chena Trail (Map pages 138, 139, 157)

The North Fork of the Chena Trail is an extension of the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail which is used for the Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race. The trail lies mainly on state lands and should be established as part of the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail project. Near Chena Hot Springs Road, the trail is used to access remote recreational parcels, and as such sees a variety of vehicular traffic. The ridge between the North Fork and the headwaters of Birch Creek marks the boundary of the BLM Steese National Conservation Area and restrictions on summer off-highway vehicle use. It is recommended for the State and BLM to work together to make the boundary and change in regulations clear to trail users.

I-A6. Old Murphy Dome Road Trail (Map pages 88, 108, 109, 111, 113, 115)

The Old Murphy Dome Road is heavily used as a recreational trail and is also the legal access to several state subdivisions. The trail is important for its use as a link between other trails in the Goldstream Valley such as the O’Connor Creek and Big Eldorado Creek Trails. It is recommended that the southern twenty feet of the Old Murphy Dome Road right-of-way be designated for recreational purposes. If the present road/trail clearing is upgraded to regular vehicle standards in the future, a new trail clearing should be provided as part of the project. Well-used trails exist and crisscross on the north and south sides of the road in the conveniently cleared firebreak and the aerial powerline utility.



I-A7. Old Saulich Trail

(Map pages 84, 86, 88, 102, 104, 127)

The Old Saulich Trail identified in the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan maps is a combination of the Martin-Dunbar Trail and Allen Creek-Dunbar Trail listed in the 1984 Jurisdictional Responsibilities and Trail Inventory background paper and includes the Ester-Dunbar trail designated under RS2477 as trail #70. This combined route is the approximate location of the main recreational trail now in use in the lower Goldstream Valley. The route takes winter trail users, motorized and not, west to the Dunbar Trail, facilitating for ultra-long-distance travel beyond the Borough boundary. Much of the route in the Goldstream Valley closely follows the Alaska Railroad and likely exists within its right of way. Portions of this trail may require realignment due to being displaced by residential developments, or to avoid conflict with the railroad or other land development. The intent of this recommendation is to retain a major recreational corridor in the lower Goldstream Valley which is accessible from both the north and south sides of the valley. The eastern extent of the trail is more accessible from the north via Murphy Dome Road (along the Martin Siding Road) and Cache Creek Road. As the trail travels west, this plan recommends crossing south at the established railroad crossing at Standard Creek Road and continuing west on the Ester Dunbar trail.

I-A8. Murphy Creek Trail

(Map page 113)

The Murphy Creek Trail provides an important connecting link between the old Murphy Dome Road Trail and the Chatanika River. This trail receives a wide variety of summer and winter recreational use. It also provides access to the Chatanika Valley for property owners, loggers, hunters, and trappers. Because this trail lies entirely on State land it is within the jurisdiction of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. The Borough should consider establishing a cooperative agreement with the Department of Natural Resources to clarify responsibilities for the trail and to establish necessary parameters to ensure that recreational use of the route will continue but does not limit access needs such as logging, mining, or access to State land disposals.

I-A9. Flood Control Levee Trail

(Map pages 96, 98, 99, 121, 122, 124)

The flood control levee stretches 18 miles across the southern edge of Fairbanks from the Chena Flood Control Project to the mouth of the Chena River. The levee was constructed to protect Fairbanks from flooding and any recreational trail use on the levee should be compatible with that purpose. For many years the Flood Control Levee Trail has been the main recreational trail connection between South Fairbanks and North Pole. It receives a great deal of winter use. The Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan recognizes this route as the primary option to connect the southern portion of the 100 Mile Loop Trail. A three-mile segment of the levee crosses property owned by Fort Wainwright being used as an Army firing range. The levee trail must be rerouted around the firing range. The most likely proposal would be to reroute the trail to the north and then adjacent to the Richardson Highway to avoid any conflict with the range. A reroute along the Richardson Highway would also be beneficial to connect to the Badger Road community and could utilize the Richardson Highway Mile 356-362 Pedestrian Path proposed in the 2021 FAST Planning Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Users of the Flood Control Levee Trail must coordinate with the Borough, State of Alaska, Fort Wainwright, and Army Corps of Engineers to address issues of safety and maintenance. Signing road crossings, ramping the reroute connection, and providing ways to encourage use of the reroute are some of these issues.



I-A10. Zephyr Creek Trail (Map pages 176, 181)

The Zephyr Creek Trail provides a connecting link between the Steese Highway corridor and the Alpine Tundra uplands, northeast of Fairbanks. From the uplands area, trail users can travel east to the Pinnell Mountain and Circle-Fairbanks Trails or west to the Mount Prindle area within the BLM Steese National Conservation Area. The trail is located on state and federal land and provides access for a variety of recreational trail users, including hunters, backpackers, and rock climbers. The area in the vicinity of the Zephyr Creek Trail has significant mining history and potential. Recreational trail use should be coordinated with the present and future mineral developments.

I-A11. Herning Hills & Bilikin Trails (Map pages 81, 83)

The Herning Hills & Bilikin Trails provide important connecting links between residential areas in the Chena Hot Springs Road and Nordale Road area and the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail. These two connecting trails are located on state land and receive a wide variety of recreational trail use.

I-A12. Bev's Loop Trail System (Map pages 115, 134, 135)

The Bev's Loop Trail System provides an important connecting link between Murphy Dome and the Chatanika / Washington creek drainages. The 7-Mile trail, Bev's Loop Trail, Blueberry Trail, Ralf's Ridge Trail and Wounded Thumb Ridge Trail make up the majority of this trail system. These trails were linked together over the years and provide a wide variety of year-round use including skiing, trapping, snow machining and access to private parcels. All the trails in the Bev's Loop Trail System exist except for a three-mile proposed trail from a parking area off Murphy Dome Road to the 7-Mile Trail. This three-mile proposed segment of trail is intended to provide a re-route around the Military's Murphy Dome Radar Station. The proposed re-route is on land owned by the State and would need to be constructed in order to provide public access from Murphy Dome Road to the rest of the trail system.

I-A13. Rosie Creek Forest Trail Connections (Map pages 100, 125)

Forestry roads in the Tanana Valley State Forest south of the Parks Highway are valued for recreational trail use. Many of the forest roads are suitable for summer trail use, including for off-road vehicles, while those at lower elevations are suitable for winter use only. Existing and proposed connections to the forestry trails from the Cripple Creek Road communities, via the Cripple Creek—Rosie Creek Winter Trail, from the Parks Highway are critical to preserving access to the forest trails. These connections are encompassed in this trail recommendation. Recreational use of the existing trails is a byproduct and secondary to timber harvest. As forestry operations continue and the landscape changes, existing routes may be altered or abandoned. This plan recommends continued collaboration with the Division of Forestry to identify and maintain recreational access to important routes. Connectors from the Cripple Creek-Rosie Creek Winter trail to the upland trails, and especially to the proposed Alaska Long Trail route should be protected.

I-A14. Bonanza Creek Forest Trail Connections (Map page 125)

This area is currently designated a research forest for long term study of forestry practices, ecology, wildlife management and recreation. A substantial portion of this forest land is to be conveyed to the University of Alaska in the year 2055 via Alaska Senate Bill 96 from 2005. After the transfer the University of Alaska may, with certain provisions, disestablish the research forest and develop, dispose of, or retain the land as it suits the University. Prior to any conveyance, it is recommended that the trail user community work with the state forest to identify high value, priority trail connections that can be preserved for



recreational use and enjoyment. Maintaining an east-west route for the proposed Alaska Long Trail, as well as connections between the Long Trail and the Cripple Creek-Rosie Creek winter trail, will be most important. In the event of sale and subdivision, these routes can be dedicated to the public for recreation via the platting process or other reservation methods.

I-A16. Old Chatanika Trail (Map pages 130, 132)

The Old Chatanika Trail connects the Circle-Fairbanks Historic Trail from its southern end at Fairbanks Creek to Chatanika at its northern end. The route is important to connect the many multi-use trails and roads near Cleary Summit and Fairbanks Creek to the Chatanika River area, including to the Chatanika Gold Camp, Chatanika River Lodge, and the historic Chatanika gold dredge #3. The trail is also established as RS2477 trail #1929 as the Old Chatanika-Cleary-Fairbanks Creek trail. Portions of the trail at the north end near the roadhouse and historic gold camp are used as access roads. It is recommended to conserve the ability to use this trail as a recreational route.

I-A18. Harding – Salcha Connectors (Map pages 171, 172)

A handful of trails conveniently connect the Harding Lake and Salcha communities to the Salcha River Trail, also known as the Salcha-Caribou Sled Road or RS2477 Trail #322, and cabins along the river. Primary connections exist on the northeast side of Harding Lake near the end of Salcha Drive, at the northwest end near the Harding Lake State Recreation Site and campground, and the Hollies Acres subdivision in Salcha, north of Harding Lake. Like the Salcha River trail, the Harding-Salcha connectors are best suited for winter access. They are primarily used by snowmachiners traveling long distances along the Salcha River, or to and from cabins. Connections cross properties under a variety of land ownerships: Fairbanks North Star Borough, University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority land, and a private parcel with a trail easement. The University of Alaska properties are “subject to existing trails.” This plan can serve to document current use and location of the primary trails and aid in the eventual formal public dedication of those routes.

I-A19. Little Salcha River Trail (Map pages 159, 160)

This trail provides winter recreational access along the Little Salcha River, from the Richardson Highway in the west to the Yukon Flats Training Area in the east. The trail runs north of the Little Salcha River, south of Johnson Road, and features multiple spurs that connect to Johnson Road. An easement for the main trail is recorded as ADL 39870, described as a “60 ft ROW, Public Access Trail and Road” for the “Little Salcha Military Trail.” It is recommended that if Borough land along Johnson Road in T4S-R5E is developed, additional public access connections to the Little Salcha River trail be established through the property.

I-A20. Silver Fox – Pedro Dome Road (Map pages 108, 130)

Silver Fox Road and Pedro Dome Road combine to connect northwest and northeast trail systems by spanning the upland terrain between the Elliott and Steese Highways south of the Chatanika River. The road, popular for ATV and off-road vehicle riding, begins across the Elliott Highway from Old Murphy Dome Road and follows ridgelines to Pedro Dome and to the Steese Highway near Cleary Summit. Although the beginning and end of the route are all-weather gravel roads, the connector is cleared with a natural surface that has been eroded over the years, with several large mudholes in summer. Both roads are established RS2477 trails and are maintained as dirt roads by nearby mining operations. The 2022 trail planning process identified this as a northern connection for the proposed 100 Mile Loop Trail, preferred over the previously suggested Engineer Creek route due to established public access, separation from residential communities, and more durable, better draining soils. While the dirt road character is suitable for summer off-roading and biking, coordi-



nation with mining activity during winter will be important to maintain a snow-covered corridor for trail users. There is a small, informal parking area at the gated entrance to the mine, at the base of the uphill stretch that is cleared but not an all-weather road. If use of this route increases, the parking area could be expanded.

I-A21. Iowa Creek – ALPA Ridge Loop

(Map pages 85, 110, 112)

The Iowa Creek-ALPA Road connection makes possible an impressively long winter loop. The loop encircles the Fort Knox open pit mine and connects three major area high points: Iowa Dome, under Gilmore Dome, and Cleary Summit. This also connects two other major trails. On the southern end, the Iowa Creek trail begins at the confluence of Iowa Creek and Smallwood Creek, heads north along the creek and ridge to Iowa Dome, and follows the timber road along the ridge before dropping into Fish Creek In T2N3E Section 4. The route crosses an active mining area in the Fish Creek valley before gaining the ridge to a decommissioned Alaska Long Period Array (ALPA) site between Solo Creek and Bear Creek. Trail users follow the ALPA access road right-of-way across University of Alaska, Mental Health Trust Authority and State of Alaska properties. This is primarily a winter route used by long distance snowmachiners and dog mushers. The trail from Iowa Creek to Cleary Summit is roughly 20 miles. Combined with the Chena-Gilmore Connector and Smallwood Creek trails, this trail facilitates a winter loop around 40 miles. Both trails utilize active timber harvest and mining access routes along the Iowa Dome Ridge and across Fairbanks Creek, respectively. As the area may continue to develop for mining and forestry, trails must be coordinated with other land uses so that a recreational corridor for this long-distance loop is preserved. Most of the route is on dry, well drained soils at higher elevations, but wet creek crossings are prohibitive for summer motorized travel. This could possibly be developed into a future summer ATV route through coordination with other landowners, and upgraded creek crossings, strategic tread hardening and minor realignment.

I-A22. Alder Creek Trail

(Map pages 98, 100)

This trail is located in the Alder creek drainage immediately southwest of Ester, north of the Parks Highway. It provides winter trail recreation for the growing community of residents living off Old Nenana Highway ridge. The historic trail, identified as RS2477 Trail #1824, is in the lower elevations of Alder Creek and suitable only for winter use. The trail can serve to connect the Old Nenana Highway community to Ester and to the Cripple Creek-Rosie Creek trail and Isberg Recreation Area south of and across the Parks Highway. The historic RS2477 route parallels a major powerline that is kept clear, and thus attractive for trail use.

I-A24. Nugget Creek Loop

(Map page 86)

This trail is designated under RS2477 as the “Ester Dome – Nugget Creek Trail” or trail #1602. It is mostly used for mine access and recreation. The trail utilizes ridges to form a loop around Nugget Creek. The trail offers views and has generally well-drained soils, making it suitable for summer motorized recreation. A lower elevation trail along Nugget Creek is recommended for winter use only but forms a valuable connection to the trails spanning Goldstream Valley.

I-AR1. North Star Bridle Trails

(Map page 87)

The North Star Bridle Trails is a recommendation to establish a system of trails to support equestrian use in the Two Rivers- Pleasant Valley area. A trail network can span trails within the Tanana Valley State Forest, Chena River State Recreation Area, the Borough’s Two Rivers Recreation Area and on other vacant Borough land. The trails can utilize the historic Governors Cup North Star Competitive Trail Ride route, part of which is incorporated in the proposed Pleasant Hills Trail



System (I-BR11). The trail network may have multiple uses depending on the underlying management, though some sections should be non-motorized. A proposed non-motorized ridgeline connection between the Pleasant Hills Trails concept and the existing Mike Kelly trail has potential to facilitate riding loops of different lengths. This proposed trail location can also provide good scenic qualities with fewer adjacent intensive land uses for a better recreational experience.

I-AR3. Creamer’s Crosstown Commuter Winter Trails (Map pages 82, 96)

Multiple routes are proposed to facilitate access to and through Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in the winter. These could be developed as combinations of existing trails within the Jeff Studdert Sled Dog Trails and new recommended trails. Connections on the east and west sides, across Farmer’s Loop near North Tanana Drive and across the Steese Highway near the Johansen Expressway, respectively, would serve to connect the two major cross-country ski systems at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Birch Hill Recreation Area. North-to-South connections could expedite winter trail commuting between neighborhoods off Farmer’s Loop Road and commercial areas along and south of College Road. Access locations off Farmer’s Loop may exist across from Shuros Drive, at the Musher’s Hall, and near McGrath Road. Locations along College Road could include Hayes Avenue and at Creamer’s Field off Danby Road. Specific alignments are not yet determined and will require additional planning. The Jeff Studdert Trail System is used and maintained primarily by the Alaska Dog Musers Association via an agreement with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Snowmachining can be permitted by Fish and Game, but is at times a source of conflict. This trail recommendation may serve to delineate a limited number of specific corridors open to snowmachine commuting. These trails could channel that use and be developed (widened) in such a way as to reduce conflict between user groups. ADF&G is the primary landowner and manages the majority of trail miles in this area. Trail development and use must be consistent with the mission of the Refuge. The Borough can facilitate the concept by working with neighboring landowners to gain and develop access routes.

I-AR4. Fairbanks – Nenana Upland Forest Traverse (Map pages 100, 125-127, 142, 143)

A major component of the Alaska Long Trail concept, the Fairbanks-Nenana upland Forest Traverse proposes to be the primary connection between Nenana and the Fairbanks North Star Borough. The hilly, forested uplands between the two communities, south of the Parks Highway, are ideal for multiple-use trail recreation and a long-distance connection. Views, south-facing aspects, well-draining soils, varied terrain, and many miles of existing forestry roads make this a favorable route. The concept may be realized as a combination of new trail sections and existing forestry roads. The alignment depicted on planning maps is conceptual only, based on preliminary analysis and site visits. Further planning and design are needed to identify a final alignment. This plan recommends working with the Division of Forestry to identify a corridor and connections that can be dedicated to recreational access for the Alaska Long Trail. Several options exist for an eastern connection to Cripple Creek Road and the Isberg Recreation Area. The existing Cripple Creek – Rosie Creek trail off Sonata Drive is a viable winter connection if extended west. Reconstructing a portion of Cripple Creek – Rosie Creek trail to accommodate summer use is preferred, though may not be feasible due to ground conditions and cost. The all-season trail should remain within Tract G of Cripple Creek II Subdivision, plat #84-186, for as long as is practicable given the soil conditions. Further investigation is recommended. Existing easements in the Aspenwood Subdivision offer higher elevations and more favorable ground conditions for summer use that can eventually connect each neighborhood to public lands and the developing recreational trail system.



I-AR5. Fortune Creek Ridge Trail Loop

(Map pages 88, 90)

A ridgeline connection between the Murphy Dome and Cache Creek area has potential to become an exceptional long distance trail route close to town, popular for multiple uses. Most long-distance trail routes suitable for summer motorized travel are situated east of Fairbanks and may require significant drive times. The route begins nearly 6 miles down the Murphy Dome Road Extension, also known as the Bennett Highway, which begins just below the summit of Murphy Dome. From an alpine high point off the road, the route follows bare ridges south for 5.5 miles before turning east and entering the forested ridge south of Fortune Creek. Users can exit the ridge to drop down to Cache Creek logging road. A loop more than 35 miles long can be made via Cache Creek Road, Murphy Dome Road, and the Bennet Highway. There are sections of existing trail along the route, though some miles may need realignment or drainage improvements to provide a sustainable path. Other sections, such as along the bald ridge, lack designated trail completely. This plan recommends that, as further development or permitted access occurs through these lands, Alaska DNR MLW and Forestry coordinate with recreational trail users to achieve an enjoyable, sustainable route alignment to connect to the ridgeline. Two small clusters of remote private parcels exist along the route: near the Murphy Dome Road Extension and on the southern ridge of Fortune Creek. While an improved route can enhance access for owners, care should be taken with a new alignment to avoid unwanted disturbance of these properties. If the trail is not constructed and aligned properly, it has the potential to be degraded and rendered unusable for all due to errant off-road vehicle use. Development of this trail route will require planning and consultation with landowners and trail professionals to ensure it is designed and constructed in a way that can sustain continuous off-road vehicle use in the appropriate seasons. A formally established trail can serve to corral trail use to the most suitable location and reduce the impact on adjacent, sensitive alpine vegetation.

I-B1. Big Eldorado Creek Loop Trail

(Map pages 82, 109)

This trail lies in the Big Eldorado Creek drainage and the ridge line to the east in the Goldstream Valley. The trail also ties in with the Old Murphy Dome Road Trail via a short section of the Alyeska Pipeline. This trail is designated by RS2477 as trail #1596 and is subject to other uses such as vehicular access to mining claims. Because of potential conflict between recreational use and mineral access, and because of the seasonally wet ground, this plan recommends hardening the first $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the trail and realigning for motorized use a portion of trail at a higher elevation along the north hillside. The east ridgeline trail is owned mostly by the University of Alaska. This section may also require a realignment where a road corridor is planned. In the case of a land disposal, subdivision, or road development, the trail should be realigned to a lower elevation, where a sustainable contour trail can be built, driveway crossings minimized, and saleable parcels accommodated. Completing the loop has been a challenge. In the summer, trail users can travel the 2.5-mile distance along the Goldstream Road shoulder between Waterford Road and the trailhead, but the first three miles of trail north from Goldstream Road are extremely wet and not suitable for summer use. In the winter the trail is usable, but the Goldstream Road distance is unenjoyable or unpassable depending on conditions and mode of travel. Remaining public land north of the Goldstream Alaska subdivision is not suitable for a contoured trail connection. A connection across Eldorado Creek to the east of the subdivision is proposed to accommodate a loop. Coordination with landowners to determine the precise location of the connection is an urgent need if it is to be viable. This plan recommends that a primary eastern trailhead be developed off Goldstream Road rather than Molly & Waterford to reduce traffic and congestion in the subdivision.



I-B2. Chena – Gilmore Connector Trail

(Map pages 81, 83, 108)

This trail forms a connecting link between trails in the Gilmore Dome area and the Chena Hot Springs Road Trail. It is also part of the proposed 100 Mile Loop Trail. The trail historically follows a steep ridgeline to eventually reach Amanita Road from where the unbuilt concept followed miles of section line easements and road rights of way to reach Chena Hot Springs Road. A new route (in addition to a spur connecting to Amanita Road) is proposed instead to leave the ridge after the high point in T1NR1E Section 7. A new trail is proposed to contour and switchback down a ridge south of Rex Creek, take the undeveloped road right-of-way for Hopper Creek Road in the Smallwood Creek Valley, then follow the Smallwood Creek Trails across State of Alaska property to reach Adventure Road via a Section Line Easement. Additional planning is recommended to determine the best method of connecting trail users from Smallwood Creek or Adventure Road to Chena Hot Springs Road. The proposed realignment intends to preserve a recreational corridor in an area underlaid with mining claims and thus reduce potential conflicts between mining and recreational trail activity.

I-B3. Chena Hot Springs Road Trail

(Map pages 81, 83, 85, 87)

This is a dirt path in the Chena Hot Springs Road right-of-way which should eventually link the Steese Highway to the Chena River State Recreation Area. The majority of the trail was first upgraded in 1984 when a cooperative agreement between Alaska Department of Transportation, Fairbanks North Star Borough and a telephone utility was executed for use and maintenance of the path. The original scope of the project started the trail at 4.5 mile Chena Hot Springs Road. This plan recommends extending the trail all the way between the Steese Expressway and Chena Hot Springs Resort.

Major needs for this trail include developing a pedestrian crossing or widened shoulder at the Little Chena River bridge and filling in many low, wet sections of trail, especially between miles 8 and 13. Some sections may need to be rerouted to the north side of the road due to thawing ground, which may necessitate an additional agreement with the Department of Transportation.

I-B4. Chena Lowlands Winter Trail Connections

(Map pages 83, 85, 87, 95, 97, 99)

There are many trails in the Badger Road area which make potential links to the winter trail network along the Chena River and the area to the north. The primary intent of this recommendation is to reserve multiple connecting routes so that residents of the North Pole Badger Road area and Two Rivers can have access to the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail and reserved public lands such as the Peede Road Open Space, the Chena Flood Control Project and the Chena River State Recreation Area, and more. Additional trails could be identified in this area if requested by local citizens. This proposal identifies multiple segments of an extensive network which lie mainly on public land or navigable waterways. These trails are primarily winter trails.

I-B5. Chena Ridge F.E. –Ditch Trails

(Map page 98)

Both the upper and lower Chena Ridge F.E. Ditches are used as recreational trails. Portions of these trails have been reserved in state and private subdivisions or alternative routes have been provided. Most of the historic F.E. Ditch Trails are not protected as trails, and many have already been built over by subdivision roads. The existing trails are at risk of a similar fate, and their use as trails should be protected from conversion to subdivision roads. These trails have unique character and are some of the few public trails remaining in the heavily developed Chena Ridge area. These trails can provide connecting routes to the Cripple Creek-Rosie Creek Trail and 100 Mile Loop Trail for residents of Chena Ridge.



I-B6. Cleary Summit- Gilmore Dome Trail (Map pages 108, 110, 132)

This trail provides an important link between the Cleary Summit area and trails around Gilmore Dome. This route can also connect the Circle-Fairbanks Trail to the 100 Mile Loop Trail. In 2017 the RS2477 protected portion of this trail was rerouted due to the Fort Knox Mine's westward expansion. A long-term plan for this trail should be considered in the face of possible continued expansion of Fort Knox.

I-B7. Cripple Creek – Rosie Creek-Trail (Map pages 100, 125, 126, 142)

The Cripple Creek – Rosie Creek Trail is a primary component of the proposed 100 Mile Loop Trail and connects the Isberg Recreation Area west to the Tanana River. Portions of the trail have been reserved in Borough land disposals. Parts of the trail extend into the Tanana Valley state Forest and will have to be coordinated with the forest management plan. The trail is suitable for winter use only due to wet and changing ground. Current access points have inadequate parking, causing traffic congestion, and have seen significant damage from wheeled ATV use. A new trailhead on Cripple Creek Road at the end of Potter Road is recommended. The connection to Isberg Recreation Area and trailhead features three road crossings: Isberg Road, Cripple Creek Road, and Sonata Drive. An additional trailhead on Borough property off Sonata Drive is recommended to improve safety, especially for winter use. Rehabilitation and summer access control at all access locations may be necessary to protect this trail.

I-B8. Equinox Marathon Trail (Map pages 82, 84, 86, 96, 98)

The Equinox Marathon Trail is a route delineated for the Equinox Marathon Race which lies largely within trail and road rights-of-way. This race is an important state-wide running event and its trail should be incorporated in future land and road developments along its course. More than the event, the trail sections making up this route are popular for year-round, non-competitive outdoor recreation. This trail should be designated non-motorized recreation except where the Trail coincides with an established road right-of-way or active mineral access trail.

I-B9. Eva Creek Trail (Map pages 84, 88)

The Eva Creek Trail is a portion of the Ester Dome – Ester Trail identified in the Jurisdictional Responsibilities and Trail Inventory background paper from 1984. This trail connects the Equinox Marathon Trail along Henderson Road to the town of Ester. This trail should be designated non-motorized recreation except where the trail coincides with an established road right-of-way or active mineral access trail. The lower portion of the trail passes through residential areas, making a non-motorized designation more desirable. Several residences have recorded public trail use easements along their property for the trail. Adjacent to Lower Stone Road, mining development has obliterated the historic route. A reroute was provided along the property line, though an alternative route west of the mining claim, on vacant State of Alaska property, should also be considered.

I-B10. Goose Island Off-Road Vehicle Area (Map page 96)

Since the establishment of Tanana Lakes Recreation Area, recreation patterns in the area have changed and some motorized use displaced. Off-roading use of Goose Island has shifted to the north and west to a new area on the east side of the South Cushman Extension, though the name remains the same in this plan. The Borough has partnered with the Fairbanks Off-Road Lions Club to lease this portion of the recreation area for off-road vehicle practice and competition under a joint agreement with the State of Alaska and the Borough's Natural Resources Development division. This land South



of the Tanana River Levee is ideal for this particular type of trail recreation. It is recommended that the Borough continue to work with the Fairbanks Off-Road Lions Club and/or other interested organizations to promote this area as a learning playground for responsible and fun motorized trail use.

I-B11. Jeff Studdert Sled Dog Trails (Map pages 82, 96)

The Jeff Studdert Sled Dog Trails are the site of the North American Sled Dog Championships and are a long standing priority of the Borough Trail Program. The vast majority of the trail system lies on state property that is part of Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. The Alaska Dog Mushers Association is the primary user group and caretaker of these trails via a cooperative agreement with the landowner, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Bordering the refuge are many private residential neighborhoods. Many easements have been platted through the Borough's subdivision code over the decades, though there are a small number of parcels remaining which do not have easements. The current trail system also crosses University of Alaska property in the southwest which has been leased developed as a peat mining pit. It is the recommendation of the University of Alaska Land Management and Borough Parks to ultimately reroute the mushing trails north and away from the lease area to avoid conflicts and reduce barriers to land development. Additional recommendations for the system can be found in recommended trail #I-AR3.

I-B12. O'Connor Creek Trail (Map pages 84, 111)

The O'Connor Creek Trail is a multi-use trail in the O'Connor Creek drainage used mainly for dog mushing, skiing, and hiking. The trail is heavily used by local residents and provides a link between the Old Murphy Dome Road and the Goldstream Valley. The route is identified by ADOT/PF as an R.S. 2477 right-of-way. Alternative vehicle access routes should be developed for any public land disposals in the area. Because the trail lies mainly on permafrost terrain it should be left a recreational route with new roads built on better terrain. Alternative trail alignments, more suitable for wheeled motorized off-highway vehicles, are proposed in the Goldstream Hills Trail Network #I-BR4.

I-B13. O'Connor Creek East Ridge Trail (Map pages 84, 109, 111)

The trail was historically used primarily for cross country skiing and now sees a variety of uses. Some degradation is occurring and likely to continue with the use of wheeled ATVs in summer. It is therefore recommended this ridgeline trail remain non-motorized in the summer. Motorized connections to the main valley trails can be accommodated instead via the proposed Goldstream Hills Trail Network, #I-BR4. A portion of the trail was accommodated in the Vista Gold subdivision the ridge. Remaining segments should be incorporated in the design of future subdivisions and public land disposals in the area. Reroutes may be necessary in the future as road development may require some of the ridgeline. It is recommended that the trail retain some of the ridgeline, and where realigned, follow a contour at high elevation on the south-east aspect, far enough from the road as to avoid multiple driveway crossings. Preferred access from the south is at the constructed end of Skyflight Road where the original trail meets the road. Reservation of the trail through state land north of Skyflight should be coordinated with DNR to minimize impact on potential developments yet maintain a sustainably designed trail corridor to connect to the ridge north. It is recommended to work with neighboring landowners to formally establish a connection west to Jones Road, utilizing Borough property as much as possible.



I-B14. Sheep Creek Dredge Path Trail (Map pages 84, 98)

This trail is extensively used for snowmachines, cross-country skiing and fat tire biking. The alignment, connecting the Goldhill Road and Ester Communities to the Goldstream Valley, has particular value for winter commuting. A few segments have had easements established at the edge of private subdivisions, though new trail has never been cleared and rerouted. Some realignment may eventually be required on other portions which do not have easements. On the north end the trail shares the Alaska Railroad right of way. It is recommended to acquire easements instead along the eastern border of the Peppler subdivision. The trail is proposed as part of the 100 Mile Loop Trail and creates an important link between the Cripple Creek – Rosie Creek Trail and the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail.

I-B16. Tanana Valley Railroad Trail (Map pages 82, 84)

The Tanana Valley Railroad Trail forms a link of the proposed 100 Mile Loop Trail and is the main arterial trail across the protected Goldstream Valley Public Use Area, east and west of Ballaine Road connecting various trails and trail systems north and south of Goldstream Creek. The main uses of the Trail are dog mushing, fat-tire biking, cross-country skiing, snowmachining. A large portion of the trail lies on state lands. Mining claim development at the eastern end of the trail near Fox has rendered the trail unusable.

I-B17. Skyline Ridge Trail (Map page 82)

The Skyline Ridge Trail lies on the ridge north of Farmer’s Loop Road and provides a link between the Skyline Ridge Road and the Skarland Ski Trail System. This trail has a long history of development. Once a mining access trail it became a military road, then began its recreational history through a cooperative effort between the Borough and ADOT/PF called the Borough Bridle Path project. A great deal of the original path, originally meant to connect to the Old Steese Highway, is now overlain by roads. Decades of residential development and hundreds of driveway crossings have made the complete connection unfeasible. Instead, recreational use is focused between the west end of Skyline Drive and the Skarland Trail. Parks and Recreation Department has completed multiple major renovation projects on this trail and others throughout the park. This plan recommends changing the use designation to accommodate winter snowmachine use due to the importance of connecting to the Goldstream Valley and packing snow for other winter activities. Additional recommendations for the park are compiled in the description for Skyline Ridge Park Trails #II-B5.

I-B18. Gilmore Trail-Fairbanks Creek Connector Trail (Map pages 108, 110)

The Gilmore Trail-Fairbanks Creek Connector Trail is a segment of a branch of the Circle-Fairbanks Trail established in the early 1900’s. It appears on a map of the Fairbanks area published by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1913 and in subsequent USGS maps. The trail was recognized in the Environmental Assessment/Land Report for the Gilmore Creek Tracking Station upon transfer of that installation from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 1985. In addition to the historic significance, this trail functions as both a recreational trail by itself and a connecting trail between longer trails within the Borough Trail System. The trail is accessible – from the Gilmore Trail Road, the entrance to the Gilmore Tracking Station on the Steese Highway, and the Fish Creek Road by way of the Cleary Summit ski area entrance on the Steese Highway. The Trail provides an excellent connection between the proposed 100 Mile Loop on Tungsten Hill to the Circle-Fairbanks Trail. The current trail crosses



areas of active and inactive mining claims, research facilities, and utilizes a fall-line alignment. For this trail to remain viable, it may need to be realigned in the future in coordination with these uses and to create a more sustainable layout.

I-B19. Eldorado Ridge Connector Trail (Map page 109)

The Eldorado Ridge Connector Trail provides an important connecting link between the Goldstream Alaska Subdivision and the Big Eldorado Loop Trail. The original trail begins at Waterford Road, close to the northeast corner of Goldstream Alaska. It then runs to the east about ¼ mile before connecting into the Big Eldorado Loop Trail. The trail's purpose is to maintain this or a similar connection to the Big Eldorado Loop for Goldstream Alaska residents in the event of future subdivisions to the east.

I-B20. Chena Slough Trail (Map pages 95, 97, 102)

The Chena Slough runs from the Richardson Highway through the North Pole Badger Road area connecting to the Chena River just east of Fort Wainwright. It has been recognized for its year-round multiple-use recreational value with an emphasis on canoeing, skiing, snowmachining, and dog mushing. The slough offers an excellent opportunity especially during the winter for North Pole residents to access the Winter trail network along the Chena River and the area to the north and east. Over the years, roads constructed over the slough without bridging or with inadequate sized culverts have impeded trail user access. This has created a segmented trail use pattern along the slough and dangerous on-grade road crossings. It is recommended that any further road crossings of the slough provide adequate passage through the roadway to accommodate all trail uses. If existing road crossings are upgraded, all possible steps should be taken to provide safe trail passage through the roadway at that time. If trail access is not feasible through proposed or existing road crossings, then the Borough should coordinate with Alaska DOT/PF and trail user groups to create safer existing on-grade crossings where necessary.

I-B21. Noyes Slough Trail (Map pages 82, 96)

Noyes Slough has long been recognized for its year-round multiple-use recreational value with a major emphasis on canoeing, skiing, snowmachining, and dog mushing. A feasibility study for the Noyes Slough Canoe Trail was prepared in 1982. This study may provide some guidance for future development but should be revisited since the community has seen much change since. The slough which runs primarily through an urban area is in some places lacking adequate buffers between development and trail use. The Borough should actively pursue negotiations with landowners to establish outdoor recreational zones and trail/greenbelt easements along both sides of Noyes Slough. Addressing safety related problems primarily dealing with non-motorized and motorized use conflicts should continually be a top priority in managing and planning for the Noyes Slough Trail.

I-B22. Eldorado Creek Trail (Map page 82)

The Eldorado Creek Trail provides an important connecting link between the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail and the Big Eldorado Creek Loop Trail. This trail is primarily used in the wintertime by dog mushers, skiers, and snowmachiners. A trail easement has been established through Call of the Wild Subdivision for a ½ mile segment of the trail just south of Goldstream Road, though it was never cleared, and the historic route is still in use as the alignment is preferred by trail users. This plan amends the original by adding the southern section of the Eldorado Creek Trail, connecting Goldstream Creek south to Eldorado Road, improving access for the Musk Ox subdivision.



I-B23. Little Chena River – Potlatch Creek Trail System

(Map pages 85, 87)

This network of trails north of Chena Hot Springs Road connects the Little Chena River Valley with the Potlatch Creek drainage west of Two Rivers Elementary School. A winter trailhead has been developed off Two Rivers Road south and west of the Elementary School. Access for summer use is needed on either side of the system, off Two Rivers woodcutting road and near Heritage Hills Road. The existing trail system suffers from damage due to fall-line alignments and a lack of separation or distinction between summer and winter corridors. This plan recommends developing a new, contoured trail along the upland hillsides to facilitate year-round, motorized trail use. As much of the higher elevation land is developable, the Borough should incorporate and retain new and existing trails and large swaths of greenspace into future subdivisions. A portion of the current recreational use is located on a State and Borough wood cutting access road which is not part of the trail system. The Borough should work with local trail users, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources on State land, to establish a safe, legal, recreational trail separated from this wood cutting access road. This system also includes an important feeder trail that connects residential areas north of Chena Hot Springs Road with the main trail systems in the area. Public access through these neighborhoods is limited as most connecting trails begin at and cross private parcels. Future planning should work with these residents to identify corridors where access can be negotiated. This trail system connects to the existing Chena Hot Springs Road Trail at two locations, one at approximately mile 13 of Chena Hot Springs Road near Heritage Hills Road and the other at Two Rivers Road at mile 18. Safe crossings of Chena Hot Springs Road need to be coordinated and established with Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

I-B24. Cranberry Trail

(Map page 84)

This trail is a 2 ½ mile loop trail that provides connecting links to the O'Connor Creek East Ridge Line Trail. The Cranberry Trail receives a variety of year-round non-motorized recreational use including skiing, biking, dog mushing, hiking and horseback riding. Local residents access the trail from multiple directions and other trail systems. Neighborhood access can be found off of September Court or Skyflight Drive, each using the O'Connor Creek East Ridgeline Trail. To facilitate access for trail users driving to the trail system from other areas, this plan recommends that a simple trailhead be developed off of the end of Pandora Drive where vacant Borough land can be utilized and impact on the neighbors reduced. The Cranberry Trail should be designated for non-motorized recreation with an exception to allow dog mushers training sled dogs with ATV's between August through October on the south segment of the trail crossing Tax Lot 104, Section 01, Township 1 North, Range 2 West, and Fairbanks Meridian.

I-B25. Ester West Ridge Trail

(Map pages 86, 100)

This trail follows the ridgeline from Ester Dome, west then south above Ester Creek, terminating on the north side of Old Nenana Highway. The trail is used year-round, popular for multiple uses. This is a primary connection proposed for the Alaska Long Trail route, helping hikers get from the Parks Highway all the way to Ester Dome and ultimately to Fairbanks. It connects the Old Nenana Highway community to the Ester area and its many trails. Despite its elevation, the southern extent of this trail crosses wet ground of a slight northern aspect. Frequent summer ATV use has resulted in trail entrenchment and ponding. Until realignments and trail hardening are possible, this southern section is not recommended for summer motorized use. The ridgeline is also sought after for future road development. Because of the potential value of this trail corridor as a highlight of the Alaska Long Trail, this trail plan recommends reducing development along the



ridgeline to preserve special views and recreational character. Two realignments are proposed for this trail. The southern leg, which currently takes a straight north-south direction along the ridge center, should be realigned to the hillside west of the ridge to provide an outslope for better integrated drainage opportunities along the trail. The northwest segment in T1NR3W Section 34 and T1SR3W Section 3 will require two or more switchbacks to rid the trail of the overly steep fall-line alignment that is subject to erosion.

I-B26. Chena Flats Winter Trails (Map page 98)

The Chena Flats are located under the Chena Ridge community, north of the Chena Landing along Chena Pump Road near Chena Point Road and below Pickering Drive. The ground is a mixture of muskeg, slough and seasonal ponds suitable only for winter use. With an improved crossing at Chena Pump Road, this trail system can become backdoor winter access to the Tanana River for much of the Chena Ridge and Chena Marina community. A relatively minor effort to develop basic access points from neighborhood roads with strategic pullouts, signage and maps, and winter grooming could result in a very popular neighborhood winter trail system.

I-B28. White Mountains Winter Pipeline (Map pages 109, 131, 147, 148)

Winter trail connectivity from Fairbanks to and through the Goldstream Valley can be extended even further to the White Mountains National Recreation Area. Long distance winter trail travel is growing in popularity especially with the advent of fat-tire biking and increasingly capable snowmachines. A popular dog mushing route from Old Murphy Dome Road Trail uses existing trails to connect to the WMNRA. A trail along the ridge above Treasure Creek takes trail-goers northeast to the pipeline corridor where they continue north across the Chatanika River. A trail then goes east across the flats of Willow Creek and across the Elliott Highway. From the Elliott, trail users traverse vacant State land to gain Haystack Mountain ridge and the popular ridge trail to the White Mountains trails just east of the Moose Creek cabin. A realignment in the Willow Creek drainage and climbing Haystack may be needed to bypass private property and utilize Borough property. A preferred location for crossing the Elliott Highway can then be established and improved with safety features such as an on-grade apron and signage.

I-B29. Moose Ridge Trail (Map pages 84, 111)

A popular ridgeline trail in winter and summer connecting the end of Moose Mountain Road, near the top of the ski resort, to the west portion of Old Murphy Dome Road. The route offers connectivity and views. A multi-use trail easement platted through the Moose Mountain subdivision ensures connectivity from the neighborhood. The current alignment is also sought after for future road development. As roads are developed, it is recommended that major viewpoints remain vacant and accessible by trail, and where the trail must be rerouted that a contoured alignment be established along the southeast aspect of the hill and that driveway crossings be minimized.

I-B31. Chena Lake to Hot Springs Winter Trail (Map page 99)

This trail connects the Chena Lake Recreation Area to the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail and the many miles of winter recreation trails. Part of the route is identified by the State of Alaska as an RS2477 trail, trail #1598. Winter use dominates the trail due to lack of a public bridge across the Chena and wet terrain north of the river. Facilitating public recreational



access across the Chena River and determining the best location for crossing is the main challenge this trail faces. The proximity to the US Army Corps of Engineers Moose Creek dam means security concerns, hydrological forces, and eroding streambanks challenge the development of a permanent crossing. A summer-accessible crossing would be highly valuable to the North Pole community. It is recommended that the Borough and landowners continue to investigate the feasibility of establishing a crossing point for the recreating public. Ground conditions around the woodcutting hills near lower Potlatch and Jenny M Creeks may prove suitable for a summer connection to Chena Hot Springs Road near Pheasant Farm Road and Grange Hall Road.

I-BR1. 100 Mile Loop Trail (Map pages 98, 100, 108, 123, 125)

The 100 Mile Loop Trail is a concept originally proposed in the Borough's draft Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. The draft Parks and Recreation Plan proposes linking existing trails within the Borough to form one major trail which other trails can connect into. It is the recommendation of the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan that this concept be adopted as a long-range objective of the Trail Program. It should be kept in mind that this proposal is a general concept and in any given segment of the trail there may be several existing trails which could provide the necessary link in the 100 Mile Loop. Decisions on the final routing of this trail should be based on potential links to other trails and recreation areas and the feasibility of incorporating the trail into the land developments occurring in the particular area. For example, the 2006 plan recommended a northern connection through Engineer Creek near Gold Mine Trail Road and Gilmore Trail Road, but the 2022 planning process has recommended a preferred route farther north via the Silver Fox and Pedro Dome roads.

I-BR2. Ester Community Trail System (Map pages 84, 86, 98, 100)

Much of the existing trail system in the Ester area is used seasonally for mining access or other road purposes. A high degree of interest in non-motorized and multi-use trails has been expressed by residents of the area during the Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan process. It is recommended that a parcel of Borough land in the general area of Moose Gulch be made available to residents of Ester for development of a trail use area. Many existing trails in the Ester Creek valley area are poorly aligned, fall-line trails destined for degradation. This concept also proposes new, contoured, sustainable trail alignments along and across the Ester Creek Valley to connect trail users between Ester and Old Nena Highway and from ridge to valley. Much of this Borough land is covered by mining claims and is not well suited for residential development at this time. Location of the trail use site should be coordinated with mining activities in order to avoid a location where future surface disturbance is known to be likely.

I-BR3. Skyline Ridge – Goldstream Valley Loop (Map page 82)

The original proposal in the 2006 plan called for the creation of what has become the legislatively designated Goldstream Public Use Area. The remaining portion of the proposal is to establish connecting trails between the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail and the Skyline Ridge Trail. This will form a large loop trail which has outstanding views of the City of Fairbanks and Alaska Range from the ridge and the more natural setting of the Goldstream Valley along the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail. Two existing trails currently provide this connection, but their alignments are problematically steep and trespass on private property. This plan recommends realignments based on sustainable trail design standards. Multiple loops at different elevations are recommended. The Goldstream Valley is fragile, permafrost-laden ground not suitable for summer trail use.



A loop cutoff at higher elevation can accommodate summer use and prevent unwanted summer traffic in the Goldstream. Means of connecting to the Ballaine Road trailhead in winter and summer should be investigated.

I-BR4. Goldstream Hills Trail Network (Map pages 84, 86, 109, 111, 113)

The Fairbanks North Star Borough owns most of the vacant land that makes up the hillsides north of Goldstream Road and Murphy Dome Road. Existing trails up these valleys and ridges are popular for winter and summer recreational trail loops, connecting the Goldstream Valley to Old Murphy Dome and beyond. Limiting trail use, however, are ground conditions, trail degradation from vehicular use, and lack of trails connecting the ridges and valleys from east to west. This plan recommends integrating sustainable designed trails into developments throughout the hills of the upper Spinach Creek, Moose Creek, O'Connor Creek and Upper Eldorado Creek valleys. Goals of these trail systems are to forge shorter and more sustainable connections across the hills and valleys, provide convenient loops for residences, reduce conflict between motorized and non-motorized use by separating uses based on ground conditions, reduce driveway crossings, separate road and trail corridors, and ultimately add considerable value to surrounding development. Alignments shown on the Trails Plan maps are at a conceptual stage informed by existing trail locations, planned road developments, topography, presence of wetlands and other ground conditions. Further planning and consultation with Borough Natural Resources Development, land developers, trail users, neighbors and trail professionals will be necessary to establish and develop these trail systems over time.

I-BR5. Solstice Summit Trail Area (Map pages 84, 86)

A high point above Spinach Creek Road and Keystone Road in Section 6 is a popular destination for views and trail recreation. A trail from Keystone known as the Solstice Trail takes hikers to the summit where the sun can be viewed touching the top of Ester Dome during solstice. As most topographical high points around Fairbanks are capped with communications equipment, this bald peak is a unique and highly sought-after recreation opportunity. This plan proposes reserving this section of Borough property for trail-based recreation and developing sustainable trails to get hikers to and from an eventual trailhead parking location at Moose Mountain Road (to reduce traffic on neighborhood roads).

I-BR6. Tanana 440 Trail System (Map page 125)

A Borough-owned vacant plot of 440 acres at the end of Cripple Creek Road boasts gentle, south facing slopes above the Tanana River. The land may be highly valuable for real estate development and is also ideal for constructing year-round trail. The Cripple Creek Road and Rosie Creek Road communities in west Fairbanks are blessed with an abundance of winter trails, but few summer trails designated for recreation, and particularly non-motorized recreation. As developments and future subdivisions are considered for this parcel, it is the recommendation of this plan that acreage and corridors for non-motorized recreational trails be integrated into the development and retained by the Borough.

I-BR7. Peede-Chena Lake Connector (Map page 97, 99)

A winter motorized connection between the Peede Road Extension and the Chena Lake Recreation Area Mike Agbaba Trail System is recommended. The route can take advantage of state and Borough lands as well as existing trail easements. This would serve to increase outdoor opportunities for the North Pole community and improve access to Chena Lake and the Chena River. The terrain is flat and wet with many slough crossings and therefore not suitable for summer motorized use.



I-BR8. Salchaket Bluff Scenic Loop Trail (Map page 171)

A rocky bluff off the Richardson Highway above Munson Slough exhibits ample opportunity for summer hiking with panoramic views of the Tanana River and the Alaska Range. Few such opportunities are available in the Salcha Area. A proposed non-motorized hiking trail loop, one or two miles length, would start at the Munson Slough Road, climb the bluff and traverse the edge of bluff near the Darrel Coe Nordic Ski Trails used by Salcha Elementary and Salcha Ski Club. At a rock outcropping near this location is a burial site which will limit alignment options for the proposed trail. A feasibility study and impact analysis is recommended prior to development.

I-BR9. South Harding Ridge Traverse (Map pages 179, 180)

A trail across is proposed to span the ridge south of Harding Lake, connecting Little Harding Lake to the Salchaket Heights subdivision. A spur trail could also connect the ridge to a material site along Salcha Drive near the Bingle Camp and retreat center. The proposed trail will cross property owned by the Borough, State of Alaska and Mental Health Trust Authority.

I-BR10. Birch-to-Bluff Trails (Map pages 183, 184)

This trail concept intends to connect visitors from the Birch Lake pullout along the Richardson Highway south to spectacular bluffs above the Tanana River. Local rock climbers, searching for rare rock-climbing opportunities, found cliffs above the Tanana suitable for roped climbing and rappelling. A makeshift trail across Borough land was cut to access the crag. A new trail system is recommended that can be constructed with a sustainably layout and create a loop with multiple spurs. The terrain may be suitable for a variety of recreation opportunities including camping and public use cabin rentals. Further investigation and planning is recommended to take best advantage of this unique area.

I-BR11. Pleasant Hills Trail System (Map pages 87, 89)

A prominent spur of hills behind the Pleasant Valley community, between Jenny M Creek and Flat Creek, shows development potential and should eventually incorporate a trail system among planned roads, future subdivisions, and other developments. The hills are vacant and owned almost entirely by the Fairbanks North Star Borough. The area has a prominent trail up the ridgeline beginning in the west at Chena Hot Springs Road across from Grange Hall Road, continuing east and ending at the topographic high points. Another trail traverses the base of the ridge behind the Pleasant Valley neighborhoods north of Chena Hot Springs Road, eventually connecting to the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail system and part of the Yukon Quest Sled Dog trail. Both Trails in the area were historically used in the Governor's Cup competitive horse ride. Developing the area may require that a major road corridor displace the existing ridge trail. The south face of the ridge is likely too steep to develop but may provide terrain suitable for a contoured trail system to be built. Further investigation is recommended. On all sides side of this area are trail systems with ample year-round motorized recreation opportunities: to the west the Two Rivers logging road and Little Chena-Potlatch Creek trails, to the north the Mike Kelly Trail, to the east the Compeau Trail and other Chena River State Recreation Area motorized trails, and to the South the final miles of the Chena Hot Springs Road multiuse trail. Due to that abundance of nearby motorized opportunities, and the proximity of this area to residences, it is recommended that this trail be designated for non-motorized uses only, with



the exception of winter use of the lower elevation trails. Additional planning and design work done by a trail professional will be necessary to identify sustainable alignments for future development. Trails Plan maps provide a preliminary conceptual layout of what a trail system here might look like.

I-BR12. Abe Lincoln Glades

(Map page 86)

Input during the comprehensive plan update revealed a desire for an area dedicated to off-piste alpine skiing. An area of Borough property between Murphy Dome Road and the Lincoln Creek subdivision off Abraham Road was identified as having the necessary qualities: steep slope angles, higher elevations, sufficient acreage, and road access at top and bottom. Skiers will be able to access runs from above near Murphy Dome and Yellowknife, off the top of Abraham Road, from below along Cache Creek Road, or potentially from a new road proposed in the draft Roads Plan. A skinning track through the glades or road shuttles up Murphy Dome Road will make ski laps possible. While the topography is suitably steep for skiing, the glades must be significantly thinned- a timber harvest project that might be managed by the Borough's Natural Resources Development division. In addition, off-street parking must be developed prior to promoting use of the area to reduce impact of traffic and nearby residential developments. This plan recommends retention of the Borough parcels for recreational use.

I-BR13. Alaska Long Trail

(Map page 100. Comprised of multiple trails; see associated maps.)

The "Alaska Long Trail" (ALT) is a concept of growing popularity to someday connect Fairbanks to Seward via recreational trails. The ALT is meant to compete with internationally recognized through-hiking routes across the world such as the Appalachian Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, Continental Divide Trail, New Zealand's Te Araroa "Long Path" and others. The Alaska concept would require building new trail segments to stitch together many miles of existing trail along the final corridor. Land managers and trail users across the state have coalesced around the common vision, gaining bipartisan political support along the way. A statewide trail non-profit, Alaska Trails, is spearheading and coordinating with stakeholders, including the Borough, to determine preferred routes for different user groups across the affected regions. Currently, the preferred route within the borough boundary brings trail goers from Nenana into the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) south of the Parks Highway, heading east across the Bonanza Creek and Rosie Creek forests on a mix of new trail and existing forestry roads. From Rosie Creek trails, trail users can head north onto proposed trails along Old Nenana Highway (ONH), then north onto the Ester West Ridge Trail and east to Ester Dome. From Ester Dome, trail users would follow their preferred route along sections of the Equinox Marathon Trail to end at the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus trails. Trails from the Isberg Recreation Area and trails in the Ester Community will also connect to this system and can serve as alternate routes. Multiple route options can provide for a variety of user groups, motorized and non-motorized, summer and winter. New trail segments needed to complete the vision include the proposed Fairbanks-Nenana Upland Forest trail connecting Cripple Creek to the TVSF, the Farmer Mine Trail connection portions of the EMT to Ester Dome, and a length of trail along the ONH to connect the Parks Highway to the Ester West Ridge trail. A precise route for the ONH segment has not yet been determined. The goal of this connection will be to separate the trail from the road; utilize existing easements, public lands, and rights of way where possible to reduce burden on private property; keep to good soils as much as possible; and reduce or avoid driveway crossings. Some miles of this section may require sharing the road right of way. Eventual development of this concept will require improved access points to sections of this trail and thorough, high-quality wayfinding.



I-BR14. Farmer Mine Trail

(Map pages 84, 86)

The Farmer Mine route proposes to connect the bottom of the “Alder Chute” portion of the Equinox Marathon Trail (EMT) to the Tri-Con mining road farther west of Ester Dome. The contoured trail along the south face of Ester Dome would provide fantastic views, gentle hiking, biking and skiing, and a more accessible means of enjoying Ester Dome than existing alternatives. The Farmer Mine route was proposed due to limited access to the Alder Chute portion of the Equinox trail; there is not public access to the Alder Chute and year-round use of other trail segments of the Equinox suffer. The proposed trail crosses Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority land. The Borough obtained a use license from the MHTA for other portions of the EMT. In order to gain access and construct the remainder of the Farmer Mine trail, a long-term easement agreement must be reached with the MHTA. Given the prevalence of mining claims along the route, any agreement must be protective of the recreational use of the proposed trail.

I-BR15. Peede Road Open Space

(Map page 97)

In 2019 a nomination to sell Borough parcels off Peede and Brock Roads failed amid outcries to protect the area for conservation and outdoor recreation. The Borough parcels have now been designated for use as open space and natural area. These Borough parcels are adjacent to what was once the Heritage Forest Outdoor Education Site. Since the Borough’s lease for that site was not renewed, the area has become increasingly popular for off-road vehicle use of all kinds. The flat and wet terrain is attractive for off-road mudding but is not able to withstand the abuse. Many trails are unusable for any other form of recreation and will eventually also be unusable for terrestrial vehicular recreation. The area needs to be rezoned to accommodate recreational development. Then a dedicated planning process is needed to consider what recreation demands the area is currently meeting, what this area can realistically supply in the long term, and what preferred substitutes may be available nearby.

I-BR16. Birch Hill to Steese Highway

(Map pages 82, 96)

As part of a larger goal to connect Birch Hill ski trails the UAF ski trails, a strong community desire to connect the Birch Hill Recreation Area with the Creamer’s Refuge Trails across the Steese Highway surfaced prior to the planning process and gained momentum during. Discussion with Borough and City representatives and neighboring landowners continued the enthusiasm with multiple formal letters of support. Talks with the Department of Transportation about incorporating a pedestrian tunnel into the Steese-Johansen interchange project have been promising, though inconclusive yet. A trail connection here should be usable year-round and designed to accommodate cross-country skiing and grooming equipment. The project is still in a conceptual phase, and no precise route has been determined, though a preference for an area north of the Johansen Expressway and south of Farmer’s Loop Road was expressed. A route through the US Army Garrison Fort Wainwright Post is not recommended and, apart from some future change in interest by the Army Post, will not be pursued. Discussion with the Army revealed security concerns, access controls and environmental stipulations that would make the southern route unattractive if not unfeasible. More northern routes will require cooperation from and compensation for other landowners if the trail is to cross their property. The Borough can play a role in providing planning support and technical expertise to determine alignment and construction standards as well as ultimately adopt any dedicated easements in trust for the public.



I-BR17. Murphy Dome Ski Trails

(Map pages 86, 88)

The Murphy Dome Ski Trails are an approximate proposed location for development of a high elevation cross-country ski trail network. This proposal is consistent with the proposed habitat and recreation designation of the north slope of Murphy Dome area in the state's draft Tanana Basin Area Plan. The actual site and plans for the trail development should be coordinated with local ski clubs to ensure the best terrain and snow conditions. These trails can provide an early season training area for competitive skiers prior to adequate snowfall at lower elevations.

I-BR18. Goldstream Valley – Skyridge Winter Trail

(Map page 82)

This winter trail concept connects the populated neighborhoods off Skyridge Road and Old Steese Highway to the expansive Goldstream Valley Public Use Area utilizing vacant State and Borough properties. No trail currently exists along this approximate alignment. Development is not recommended until there is a plan to protect the trail from ATV use and degradation. Development will require utmost care; poor and rapidly changing permafrost soils present significant challenge and risk associated with trail building. Trail development should involve minimal disturbance and avoid removal of vegetative cover. Neighborhood feedback recommended a non-motorized trail. However this plan recommends investigating the potential for an alignment that can accommodate snowmachine travel to assist in packing snow along route and for consistency in use and management with the Goldstream Valley Public Use Area.

II-C1. Cripple Creek Trail System

(Map pages 98, 100, 125)

With the development of the Borough's Cripple Creek II Subdivision, several non-motorized trail tracts were reserved which can eventually form a trail network similar to the Skarland Trail System. New state, borough, or private subdivision in this area should be encouraged to establish links to tie into this trail network. The Cripple Creek-Rosie Creek Trail is presently the primary multi-use trail in the area. Access to this trail and to the Isberg Recreation Area should be provided through new subdivisions when possible.

II-C2. Lincoln Creek Loop Trail

(Map pages 86, 88)

There are several non-motorized trail easements within the state's Lincoln Creek and Murphy Subdivisions. All the land in the area surrounding these subdivisions is owned by the State or Borough. The Trails Plan map depicts how these existing trail easements can be connected together, primarily across Borough property, to eventually form a loop trail between subdivisions. Connections between the Lincoln Creek Trail and the Old Saulich Trail and to the Murphy Dome Ski Trails should also be reserved.

II-C3. Twenty-three Mile Slough Sled Dog Trails

(Map pages 141, 158)

Both the state's Twenty-three Mile Slough Agricultural disposal and Eielson Agricultural II disposal contain reservations for trails in the area. Many of the trails are winter trails located on frozen waterways. Future road development or additional land disposals should be designed to retain the continuity of these trails to the greatest extent possible. There are two loops of this extensive Trail system which already have the majority of their legal rights-of-way established by designated tracts in state ownership, section line easements, or R.S. 2477. Retaining these loops and establishing connections to them should be the primary focus of efforts for this trail system.



I-C4. *Koponen Homestead Trails* (Map page 98)

The Koponen Homestead trails are on private land and developed for the benefit of the Koponen Homestead subdivision and neighborhood off Haman Street. The trails were constructed and improved in 2015 with Federal Highways Administration pass-through funds via the Alaska State Parks Recreational Trails Program. A Public Recreational Easement was granted for a period of 5 years from 2016-2021. Since the general public became accustomed to using the trails and they were improved with federal funds, this plan recommends renewing and recording a Public Recreational Trail Easement via AS 34.17.100 for a perpetual time period.

I-C5. *Happy Valley Ski Trails* (Map page 84)

This trail system, also known as the Goldstream Sports Classic Ski Trail, is used in winter only for classical cross-country skiing. Three loops make up the system to total a little more than 5 miles of trail. The trail weaves throughout the Happy Creek subdivisions entirely on private property. The plan recommends that the user group work with landowners to cooperatively establish public recreational trail easements for length of the trail in order to reduce potential liability. Terms can be such that recreational trail use only occur during winter. Management and maintenance should remain the responsibility of the landowner or homeowners' association. The Borough can assist with technical advice and to establish and protect legal access to the trails if granted.

I-C6. *Alder Creek Hillside Trails* (Map pages 98, 100)

The hillside north of Alder Creek and below the Old Nenana Highway, is a gently sloped woodland, south-facing, mostly vacant, and likely developable. The vacant land is mostly owned by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority with some Borough-owned acreage. This plan recommends that a basic, non-motorized trail network be incorporated through future subdivisions as this area develops to ensure current and future residents along Old Nenana Highway gain the value of nearby trail recreation and access to the Alder Creek Trail and valley. New trails should be designed and built according to sustainable trail standards to ensure they add value to the land rather than create problem. The Trails Plan map depiction should be interpreted as a conceptual layout only. Management and maintenance should remain the responsibility of the landowner, future homeowners' association or trail user group. The Borough can assist with planning, technical advice on trail layout, and to establish and protect legal access to the trails if granted.

I-C7. *Steele Creek Hillside Trails* (Map pages 81, 108)

The hillside north of Steele Creek and below the Gilmore Trail Road, is a gently sloped woodland, south-facing, mostly vacant, and likely developable. The vacant land is mostly owned by the Alaska University of Alaska with some Borough-owned and Mental Health Trust Authority acreage. This plan recommends that a basic, non-motorized trail network be incorporated through future subdivisions as this area develops to ensure current and future residents along Esro Road and Tungsten Trail gain the value of nearby trail recreation and access to the nearby trail systems along Gilmore Trail Road and Amanita Road. Given the proximity to residential development and fragile ground, a trail system should be non-motorized with one exception: a motorized contour traversing under Gilmore Trail Road to facilitate access to popular motorized trails, the Cleary-Gilmore Trail and the Chena-Gilmore Trail. This trail system can also improve neighborhood access to the Riedel Nature Preserve and trail system owned by the Arctic Audubon Society. New trails should be designed and built according to sustainable trail standards to ensure they add value to the land rather than create prob-



lems. The Trails Plan map depiction should be interpreted as a conceptual layout only. Management and maintenance should remain the responsibility of the landowner, future homeowners' association or trail user group. The Borough can assist with planning, technical advice on trail layout, and to establish and protect legal access to the trails if granted.

I-C8. Arctic Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve Trails (Map page 81)

The Arctic Audubon Society has acquired multiple parcels between Esro Road and Amanita Road for protection as a nature reserve, beginning with a 160-acre gift by the Riedel family in 1984. The Riedel Nature Reserve features several trails that offer a sanctuary for bird watching, study and nature appreciation. The Reserve's parcels are protected by deed from development, hunting, trapping, mining, and motorized vehicle use. The Reserve is currently accessed from multiple locations, including via trails on Borough-owned property off Amanita Road. This plan recommends continued public access to the Riedel Nature Reserve, Borough collaboration, and protection from trespassing uses. Access through Borough property and connections to adjacent trails should be preserved in the event of subdivision or land disposal.

I-C15. Smallwood Creek Loop (Map pages 83, 85)

Trails in the lower Smallwood Creek valley provide important connections between Gilmore Trail, Chena Hot Springs Road, and the Little Chena River-Potlatch Creek areas. Trails are primarily used in the winter for dog mushing, snowmachining, fat biking and skiing. Short connectors across the creek create a system of small loops that can accommodate short, convenient outings from the residents of the Nine Mile Hill area. Meanwhile, trails across this valley link to other major trails, facilitating long distance connections important to snowmachiners and dog mushers. Recreational uses take place alongside active forestry operations. Access to this trail from the road system, including Adventure Road, is difficult due to private property along the Chena Hot Springs Road corridor and the Little Chena River serving as a barrier. Additional access recommendations are found in the Chena-Gilmore Connector description.

I-C17. Far Mountain Traverse (Map pages 119, 120, 138, 139, 140)

The "Far Mountain Traverse" is a spectacular and challenging hiking route made even more popular in recent years by a local hiking guidebook. The ridgeline route is generally undeveloped and lacking a proper trail. It is similar in character and appeal to the alpine ridges of the Chena Dome trail, and promises comparable views, difficulty and encounters with impressive granite tors. The route starts and ends on Chena Hot Springs Resort property on either side of Monument Creek. The rugged and often steep terrain and lack of a developed trail make this route suitable primarily for summer hiking. The route is nearly 29 miles long. While almost entirely on State of Alaska land, it is not part of the Chena River State Recreation Area. Establishing easements across resort property at the north terminus achieve public access is essential for the viability of the route. The common southern terminus can be adjusted to continue along a ridgeline west and connect with the Angel Rocks-to-Chena Hot Springs trail, then follow existing public access easements through the resort property.

I-C23. Salcha River Trail (Map pages 128, 144-146, 161, 162, 171-174)

This trail is designated under RS2477 as the "Salcha-Caribou Sled Road" or trail #322. It is primarily used in winter, serving as land-based access to recreational cabin sites along the Salcha River. The trail conditions are more predictable than winter travel on the river. The historic trail route begins at the Richardson Highway, mostly stays south of the Salcha River,



crossing the river a couple times, until turning up Caribou Creek after more than 40 miles. Given the status as an RS2477 and the State Parks maintained trailhead at the Richardson Highway bridge, this is State-managed trail. The Borough is expected to have little involvement except when positioned to improve or document access, such as by protecting connecting trails or recording rights of way through the platting process.

I-C27. Pearl Creek Commuter Trail (Map page 82)

This trail is a popular connecting path between the neighborhoods off Ballaine Road and Auburn Drive and the University of Alaska. Segments of this trail were dedicated to the public in the Happy Girl Too and Pearl Creek subdivisions. It is recommended that the Borough work with remaining residents to negotiate permanent access easements. A short section of trail is perpetually wet in summer, making the full trail only viable for winter commuting. A trail hardening project could achieve a summer-accessible connection for walking, running and cycling commuters.

I-C30. Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline (Map pages 179, 180, 183)

A portion of the decommissioned pipeline corridor connects the Harding Lake community, starting at Little Harding Lake, to the Birch Lake community. The route crossing mostly undeveloped Borough property. Among a small number of private parcels, one has a platted recreational trail easement where the pipeline corridor crosses the lot. The historic pipeline corridor through this area crosses wetland terrain and is only suitable for winter recreation. Trailhead access at the Little Harding Lake end and the Birch Lake end needs development. Public access across private lots around Little Harding Lake, mostly owned by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, will need to be negotiated.

I-C32. Social Security Mine Trail (Map page 100)

This existing trail connects the Old Nenana Highway community, off Old Wood Road, to Ester Valley. The trail is clearly visible in aerial photography from 1949. Along a north-facing hillside of dense black spruce and permafrost-laden soils, this trail presents a relative oasis of stable trail tread. This trail is a viable alternative or supplement to the proposed branch of the Ester Community Trail System that serves a similar function to the west. The upper portion of the trail crosses multiple private parcels. The plan recommend working with property owners to formally document public access to the trail.

I-C33. Ester Dome Trail (Map pages 84, 98)

This trail connects Ester Village to the Equinox Trail and Ester Dome along the ridge between Eva Creek and Ready Bullion Creek. Historic US Geological Survey Bulletins from the 1910's indicate this trail may have been one of the first routes from Ester Creek to Ester Dome. Prior to residential development, this trail formed a complete loop from Ester Village by connecting the Equinox Trail and Eva Creek Trail. A new connection to Eva Creek Trail across Stone Road may be needed to make a usable loop. As land develops, the trail may need to be rerouted to the west to maintain the loop and accommodate development.



Existing Recreational Trails with Established Public Access

Most current information on trails in this list can be found through the managing agency. Selected trails or trail systems are described here to give context to planning recommendations.

II-A18. Goldstream Public Use Area Trails (Map page 82)

The Goldstream Public Use Area is a legislatively designated public use area in the Goldstream Valley, consisting of vacant State land on either side of Ballaine Road. It was created in 1990 and scheduled to sunset in 2010 but for an outcry from the public that removed the sunset clause so that it has remained protected since 2010. The state passively manages the area which contains the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail, the Eldorado Creek Trail and many other trails. Though multiple uses are statutorily permitted, the terrain is only suitable for winter use except for summer walking in rubber boots. The footprint and trails of this area have expanded in the last decade thanks to efforts of the Interior Alaska Land Trust to purchase adjacent properties and create a contiguous conservation corridor. This plan recommends that the State, Borough and Land Trust continue to coordinate to acquire or otherwise protect vacant properties within the greenbelt along the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail. The Plan also recommends two new trails: One that will connect the Eldorado Creek Trail, north of Goldstream Creek, across State Land to the southern terminus of Waterford Road; and a second trail connecting the Tanana Valley Railroad Trail eastward through State and Borough lands to Skyridge Road near the Old Steese Highway, also described in this trail plan as trail I-BR18 Goldstream – Skyridge Trail.

II-B1. Birch Hill Recreation Area Ski Trails (Map pages 81, 86)

This facility is co-managed through an agreement between the Borough, Nordic Ski Club (NSCF) of Fairbanks, and the US Army Garrison Fort Wainwright. The world-class trails are established and maintained by the NSCF and used exclusively for cross country skiing in the winter. This Plan recommends updating the management agreement and facility plan for Birch Hill. Recommendations from this plan regarding Birch Hill include: 1. To consider the developing a trailhead and ski trails within a Borough parcel off Bias Drive, north of the existing ski trails and; 2. to investigate the potential for expanded summer trail uses to include a dedicated singletrack mountain biking system. The community indicated a desire for additional mountain biking opportunities located centrally or east of Fairbanks. Birch Hill has the type of terrain necessary, but any developments must be compatible with the primary use and landowner regulations.

II-B3. Two Rivers Recreation Area (Map pages 85, 87)

The Two Rivers Recreation Area was established through the Two Rivers subdivision of 2001 when multiple large Borough parcels were retained for recreational use off Two Rivers Road. Part of the recreation area is home to the Two Rivers Ski Trails used by neighbors and the elementary school ski club. A parking lot was also developed adjacent to the winter trails along lower Two Rivers Road. This plan recommends developing a system of non-motorized loop trails in the upland hillsides of Tract F north of the subdivision. Based on a desire for singletrack biking trails east of Fairbanks, this area may present an opportunity. Further planning and consultation with the trail community in Two Rivers must take place prior to trail development.

II-B4. Lower O'Connor Creek Trail (Sauna Avenue/O'Brien Street Trails) (Map page 84)

These trails are dedicated for public use via multiple trail easements. They connect to the southern extent of the O'Connor Creek Trail which connects the Goldstream Road neighborhoods off O'Brien Street south to Sheep Creek Road. Unfor-



tunately, the trail right of way spills into the Alaska Railroad right of way before intersecting with Sheep Creek Road. This plan recommends improving this corridor for recreation and trail-based commuting, coordinating with neighboring property owners to facilitate legal access to Sheep Creek Road, and improving and/or relocating the bridge across Goldstream Creek. The feasibility of constructing this trail to a standard that can sustain summer use should be investigated.

II-B5. Skyline Ridge Park Trails (Map page 82)

The 470 acre Skyline Ridge Park contains a portion of the Skyline Ridge trail as well as other popular trails: Secret Trail, After Hours Trail, and the Goldstream Connector (AKA the “Van Trail”). The area has a long history of use from mining access to military surveillance to equestrian trails. The land was conveyed by the State of Alaska to the Fairbanks North Star Borough in 2010. The park was subsequently rezoned as Outdoor Recreation in 2017 and two Recreational Trails Program grants were completed to restore and harden the main ridge trail in 2016 and 2018. Additional needs include trailhead development, new trails, and a reroute of the Goldstream Connector around private property. A preliminary trailhead and parking area design was purchased in 2020 to address parking and traffic issues but has yet to be constructed. Park improvements are scheduled in the most recent 2021-2030 Capital Improvement Plan to address some of these needs. The most urgent need and recommendation of this plan, however, is to prepare a master plan for the park ahead of additional development. The community indicated a desire for additional mountain biking opportunities located centrally or east of Fairbanks. Skyline Ridge has the type of terrain necessary. This plan recommends that a master plan process investigate the potential for a dedicated singletrack mountain biking system.

II-B6. Isberg Recreation Area (Map pages 98, 100)

The Isberg Recreation Area was retained by the Borough for recreational use during the Cripple Creek subdivision process. A Master Plan for the area was developed in 2007 and several Recreational Trails Program grants have been completed to implement the plan. Most funding has gone toward hardening the very wet trails. This plan recommends pursuing access options at the east end of the park or from near the Isberg and Chena Ridge intersection. A section line easement currently provides access. Access could be improved, and neighborhood impact reduced by acquiring vacant land or access through the Graceland subdivision.

II-B7. Chena Lake Recreation Area (Map pages 99, 124)

Trail recommendations for Chena Lake Recreation Area are focused on facilitating access to and from the park and trails. The North Pole area is underserved with respect to outdoor recreation and trails. Chena Lake Recreation Area is a critical resource for the community, but access is made unnecessarily challenging by the commute to and around Laurance Road. This plan recommends road access from Plack Road, a trail circumnavigating the lake (accessibility from all sides), a trail connection along the river to Peede Road extension, and a trail connection across the Chena River, north to the Potlatch Creek and Jenny M logging hills and the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail network.

II-B8. Tanana Lakes Recreation Area (Map page 96)

Borough management of Tanana Lakes Recreation Area began in 2007 when it leased the area from the State of Alaska and adopted a master plan via Assembly resolution. Millions of dollars in state, federal and private grants have been invested in developing the area into one of the most-visited recreation sites in Fairbanks, including establishing a high quality recreational trail network. This plan recommends continuing to construct and complete a non-motorized trail

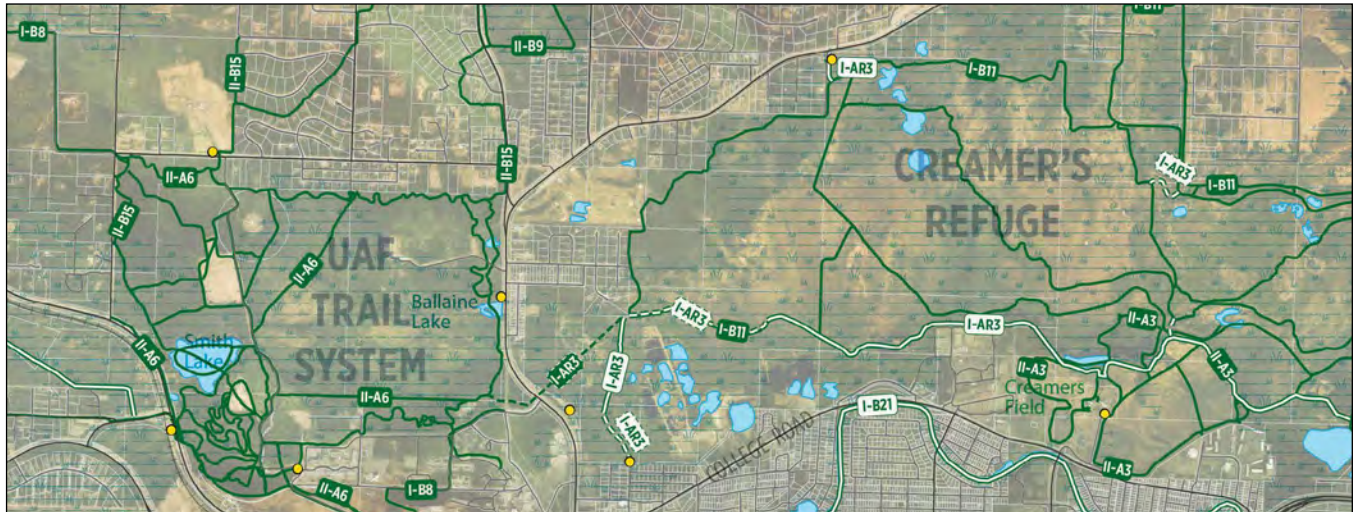


loop circumnavigating Cushman Lake and continuing to support the development of a dedicated offroad vehicle park east of South Cushman Street Extension.

II-B15. Skarland Ski Trail

(Map pages 82, 84, 96, 98)

The Skarland Ski Trail (previously Proposed Trail #I-B15) is perhaps the most well-known and firmly established trail within the Borough Trail Program. The non-motorized trail was initially developed as a recreational cross-country ski trail, but remains one of the premier singletrack summer hiking trails near Fairbanks. The trail originates on the University of Alaska Fairbanks North Campus which houses the 6 mile loop. The 9 mile and 12 mile loops extend north of campus through the Magoffin, College Hills and Musk Ox residential subdivisions. Portions of this system which lie on private property are now entirely protected via platted trail easements and used for casual recreation and occasional competitive events. Since the trail has been fully dedicated for public recreational use, it should be managed as a recreational facility. The trail is currently maintained by dedicated volunteer trail users.



TRAIL RECOMMENDATION MAPS





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. Maps are organized using the Public Land Survey System township grid within the Fairbanks Meridian. A map of each township within the Fairbanks North Star Borough that includes a trail in the Trails Plan is shown. 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 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 or proposed for retention for recreational trail use. Recreational Trail Areas are identified and described in Trail Descriptions & Recommendations on page 50.

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.