



Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River Recreational Trails Plan Update

EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES REVIEW

December 2024

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AMATS & MOA PRD

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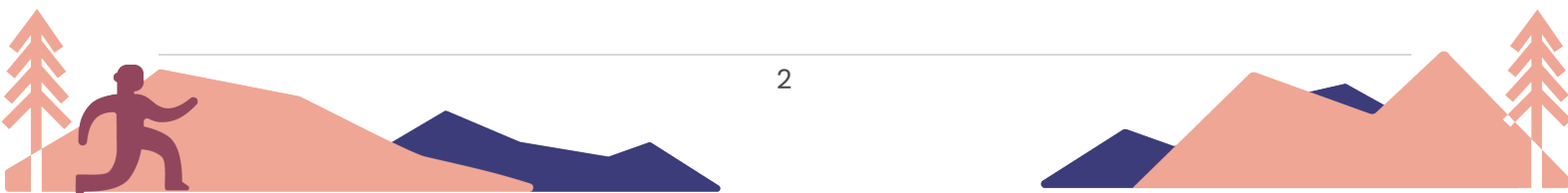


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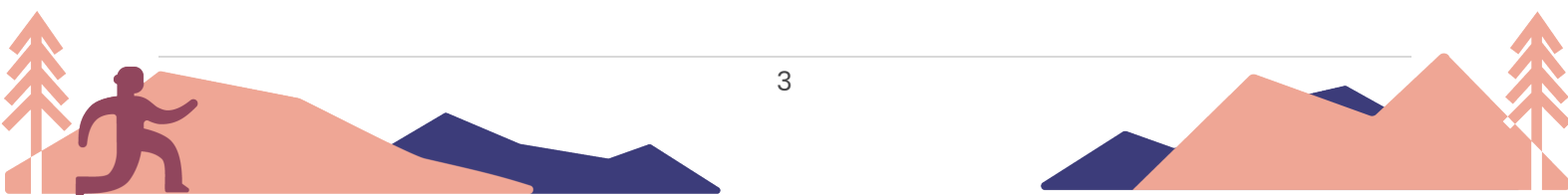


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BACKGROUND

In 1997, the Areawide Trails Plan (1997 Trails Plan) replaced the 1985 Anchorage Trails Plan (including trails identified in the 1985 Anchorage Park, Green Belt and Recreational Trails Plan) as the development plan of trails within the Municipality of Anchorage for the next 20 years. The plan's purpose is to guide local and state agencies, organizations, and private citizens in establishing trail facilities as part of an overall transportation system.

The 1997 Trails Plan is a component of and serves as the tool for implementing trail improvements recommended in several local plans: the Anchorage Bowl Development Plan, the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan, the Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan, the Girdwood Area Plan, and the Long-Range Transportation Plan of the Anchorage Bowl and the Chugiak-Eagle River Area.

NEED FOR THE PLAN UPDATE

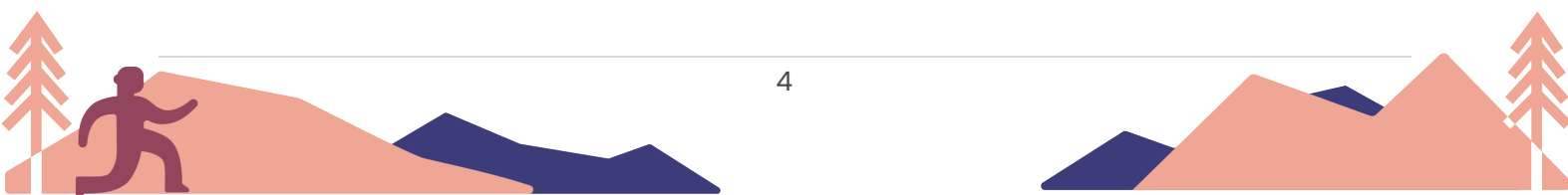
Over time communities evolve and plans must be updated to suit current needs. With a planning horizon of 20 years, the 1997 Trails Plan is past-due for an update. While the guiding principles of the 1997 Plan have largely remained relevant to Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River (C-ER), these communities and recreation trends have changed considerably in the last 27 years. The Trails Plan needs updating to reflect the current socio-economic and demographic changes to our increasingly diverse community of trail and park users.

This project's vision is to collaboratively develop a new Recreational Trails Plan (Trails Plan) with a system-wide approach. A new Trails Plan will be the primary decision-making tool guiding the MOA, AMATS, and partners in prioritizing and allocating available resources for local trails. The updated Trails Plan will be based on the most recent available data and public participation to identify goals, policies, and guidelines with actionable strategies to carry the MOA through the next 10 to 20 years of trail management and development.

PLANS & POLICIES REVIEW

Planning documents provide guidance on development, change, and decision making for implementing agencies and their communities. This literature review report summarizes adopted plans, policies, and studies most applicable to the location, dedication, maintenance, management, and use of trails throughout the MOA. To support developing content for the Trails Plan, this report will review relevant goals, objectives, and actionable recommendations of higher-level plans (e.g. Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan) as well as relevant actions or projects identified in area-specific plans (such as the AMATS Non-Motorized Plan).

Throughout the planning process, this literature review will be an important tool used to help determine what trail-specific action items, projects, or policies identified in existing planning



documents have actualized. Findings from the literature review will advise the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) and Citizen’s Advisory Group (CAG) during the development of the updated Trails Plan, as well as help foster a greater understanding of plan applicability, interdependency, and functionality.

This literature review organizes plans, studies, and relevant codes and statutes as follows:

1. Areawide Trails Plan 1997 – This plan is the most relevant resource for the Trails Plan update and requires a complete and thorough review.
2. Adopted Area Plans – These plans have a legal basis for implementation due to adoption in municipal code and generally have more direct relevance to the Trails Plan, since they affect the same geographic context.
3. Functional Plans and Studies – These plans focus on a particular function or resource rather than comprehensively addressing an area.
4. Park and Trail Master Plans – These plans make specific recommendations to guide development for individual parks or parks and trail systems.
5. Trail Design and Management Resources – These handbooks from other agencies are informative resources for trail construction, layout, design, classification, and management. Elements of these resources can be applied to or adopted for municipal trails and trail-related infrastructure.
6. Municipal Codes and State Statutes – This section discusses the most relevant codes and statutes that provide the legal context and limitations of Trails Plan recommendations.

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE AREAWIDE TRAILS PLAN 1997

The 1997 Areawide Trails Plan (1997 Plan) was developed to assist the MOA and other public agencies to identify trail user needs and to develop recommendations for each type of users.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

The Trails Plan update will draw from the 1997 version which will serve as a primary basis for comparison between past and current recreational trail needs, issues, goals, and recommendations. Elements of the vision and goals are likely relevant today—trail users still want a variety of accessible, maintained trails suitable for their desired recreational activities.

To maximize the benefit of collective institutional and local knowledge, stakeholder meetings will be conducted during the Trail Plan update process to review the recommended policies and projects in the 1997 plan to determine what has already been completed and whether incomplete recommendations remain relevant.



1997 PLAN STRUCTURE

The 1997 Areawide Trails plan is comprised of eleven chapters that establish the foundation, policies, and recommendations for all trail policies and improvements throughout the Municipality.

Chapter 1 introduces the plan purpose and scope; study area; conclusions from a public survey; goals, objectives, policies, and procedures; and planning criteria.

- Chapters 2-5 provide a comprehensive and thorough description of trails and trail users in different regions (Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak-Eagle River, Turnagain Arm, and important regional trails).
 - For each trail type or use in each region, the plan describes existing trail and facilities, demand, issues, and recommendations.
- Chapter 6 addresses trail issues, both generally and specific to certain types of trails or trail use.
 - General issues identified and described in the plan include: Attitude towards trails, funding, right-of-way issues, compatibility between activities, Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, turnouts, protection of existing trails, safety, education and etiquette, separated trail crossings, and pedestrian and bicycle friendly intersections.
 - Each specific trail type or use has its own list of issues and recommendations.
- Chapters 7-10 cover means of executing plan recommendations and orchestrating a trail program: trail design, trail maintenance, financing the trail system, and plan implementation.
 - Chapter 7 Design Standards address paving, alignment, stopping sight distance, intersections, grades, cross slopes, clearances, road separation, width of trails, striping and signage, lighting, drainage, surfacing, and trail structures. The chapter also covers maintenance considerations, design needs for specific types of trails, and references to relevant existing codes (AMC Title 21 and others).
 - Chapter 8 Maintenance covers known maintenance requirements for types of trails, organizations responsible for trail maintenance and their jurisdictions, maintenance equipment, use of volunteers (e.g. Adopt-a-Trail Program), and recommendations.
 - Chapter 9 covers how to fund trail planning, design, acquiring right-of-way or easements, construction, operation, maintenance and management. The chapter identifies agencies and departments responsible for funding various stages of trail development as well as potential sources of funding (both existing/available and proposed/potential)



- Chapter 10 discusses how the municipality must carry out the recommendations of the plan, including: identification of trail rights-of-way, the AMATS planning process's relation to trails, enforcement on trails, who is responsible to implement recommendations, other required studies, the plan revision process, and priority projects for funding.
- Chapter 11 provides maps of existing and planned/proposed trails in the system.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES

A primary component of the Trails Plan Update will be to examine the complete list of goals, objectives, and policies from the MOA 1997 Areawide Trails Plan for their applicability and accuracy for the modern MOA community.

Goals

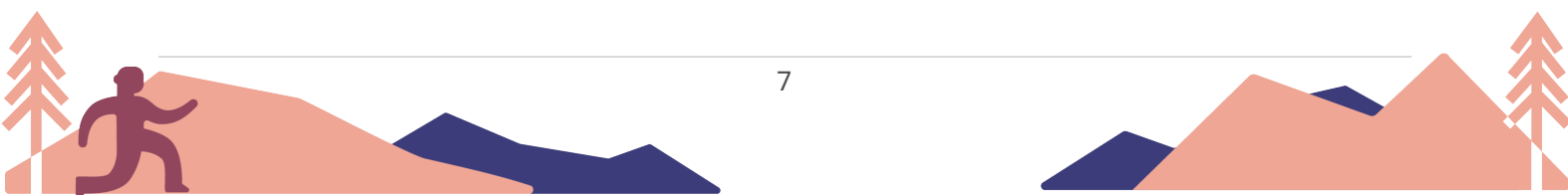
- "The goal of the Areawide Trails Plan is to establish a comprehensive trail system" that realizes many trail-related benefits including but not limited to:
 - Serving a comprehensive transportation system;
 - Providing safe, convenient, year-round access to essential community services;
 - Strengthen a sense of community through connectivity;
 - Providing recreation for all ages and abilities, including new opportunities;
 - Improving air quality and enhancing Municipality aesthetics;
 - Reducing crime;
 - Preserving wildlife habitat.

The Trails Plan update effort will necessarily reevaluate the planning goal and desired benefits through a contemporary lens. Under a new guiding vision, plan objectives and policies will be retooled as necessary to realize important benefits and goals.

Objectives

The 1997 Plan organizes plan objectives into four categories (objectives below are paraphrased):

1. Administrative Objectives
 - a. Establish a Trails Oversight Committee.
 - b. Reevaluate the Areawide Trails Plan every three years.
 - c. Establish an information and education campaign about trail uses and benefits.
2. Policy Objectives
 - a. Consider trails as integral to the transportation network.



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- b. Promote construction of trails coincident with road construction and improvements.
 - c. Accept trail activities as legitimate uses within road rights-of-way.
 - d. Require dedication of easements if a subdivision includes a Trails Plan trail.
 - e. Recognize legitimacy of all trail uses and set use priorities to address conflicts.
3. Land Use Objectives
- a. Provide for Trails Plan trails when dedicating certain easements for creek maintenance, sewer, drainage, and stream protection.
 - b. Identify utility easements where trails could be developed.
4. Design objectives.
- a. Design trails used for transportation to meet ADA Accessibility Guidelines.
 - b. Determine an appropriate challenge level and design standard for recreational trails.
 - c. Examine and amend minimum right-of-way widths recommended in the Design Criteria Manual.
 - d. Provide trail lighting, except for natural trails.

The Trails Plan update process will determine which objectives have been met, whether these objectives are still relevant, and what, if any, new objectives necessary to meet contemporary goals.

Policies

Twenty -two (22) “policy statements” support the 1997 Plan goals and objectives and are intended to supplement the goals and policies of the Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Development Plan, C-ER Comprehensive Plan, Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan, and the Girdwood Area Plan. Some example policies from the 1997 Plan include:

- Policy Statement No. 1: “The Department of Community Planning and Development, in cooperation with other municipal, state and federal departments, shall be the lead agency for trails planning...”
- Policy Statement No. 2: “Trails shall be considered integral to the Municipality of Anchorage transportation network...”
- Policy Statement No. 3: The Municipality of Anchorage shall provide a wide range of trail opportunities to accommodate varying activities, abilities, and users.
- Policy Statement No. 4: “The trail system should be geographically distributed to provide safe and convenient access to a maximum number of municipal residents.”



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- Policy Statement No. 8: "In the subdivision process the Municipality shall require provision for trails and walkways..."
- Policy Statement No. 9: "The Municipality shall develop a safe healthy environment for trail activities..."

Many of the policies are likely still relevant while others may need to be revisited and revised during the Trails Plan update. The planning process will determine which policies have been implemented, which have been effective, what new policies are needed, and where amendments should be made to meet planning objectives.

PLANNING CRITERIA

A list of planning criteria was developed to ensure that when trails are planned, they support planning goals, objectives, and policies. Some examples include:

- "Trails need to be continuous to function as an adequate transportation system,"
- "Recognize the difference in trail use experience and age of users,"
- "Recognize the potential for trail conflict with neighboring land uses and between managing authorities."

These planning criteria can be a baseline for the Trails Plan update and evolve as the planning process reveals the need for new and different approaches.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter 10 Implementation outlines guidance and responsibilities for carrying out the recommendations in the Trails Plan. The chapter discusses the following categories and the topics within them:

- Identification of trail rights-of-way
 - Trail right-of-way in utility and creek maintenance easements
 - Trail right-of-way in Alaska railroad corporation right-of-way
 - Trail right-of-way across private property
 - Trails in state section line easements
- The AMATS planning process in relation to trails
- Enforcement
 - Develop a "Trail Watch" program.
 - Develop a program for patrolling trails during identified times.
- Trail implementation responsibilities
 - Department of Cultural and Recreational Services (DCRS)



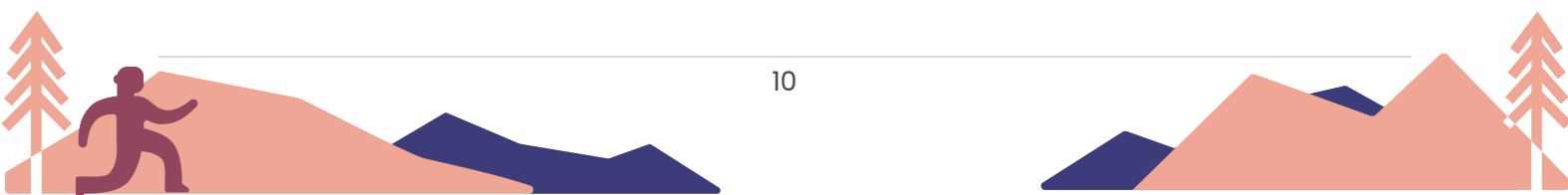
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Community Planning Development
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Trails Plan Oversight Committee
- Other required studies
 - Far North Bicentennial Park Master Plan Update
 - Pedestrian Accessibility and Mobility Assessment
 - Alaska Railroad Rails with Trails Study
 - Girdwood Trail Management Plan
 - Chugiak-Eagle River Trails
- Plan Revision Process
- Priority Projects for Funding

The seven sections in Implementation, including their recommendations, will be evaluated in-depth through the Trails Plan update process, and are anticipated to undergo the most revision. Significant changes in MOA policy, operations and structure, and community desires have occurred since 1997 when this section was adopted. Some of the sections have been implemented, some never materialized, and others are out of date and therefore lack relevance. For example, a Trails Plan Oversight Committee was conceived of and recommended by this plan, but never has been formed.

SPECIFIC TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Implementation chapter's discussion of Priority Projects for Funding describes the need to prioritize resource allocation by deciding which specific trails to construct, improve or repair. During the 1997 planning process, a Trails Plan Review Group narrowed a list of 300 trails down to 130 trails. The group decided on nine (9) prioritization criteria, such as when a trail represents a link to other trails, is a connection to another trail, or solves a safety concern. Based on those criteria, each of the 130 trails was given a numerical ranking to determine a list of the top 50 trails projects, including rough cost estimates.

The Trails Plan update process will require a thorough review of these trail projects to determine the status of each. A new effort to inventory and prioritize trail projects, including evaluating the prioritization criteria, will generate an updated list of trail projects for the community and the MOA to focus its resources during the next planning horizon.



ADOPTED AREA PLANS

ANCHORAGE 2020 ANCHORAGE BOWL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2001

The Anchorage 2020 Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage 2020) is a blueprint to guide development in the Anchorage Bowl over twenty years and provides a framework for decisions about land use, transportation, public facilities, economic development, housing, and other public issues that are vital to a healthy and livable community. The plan focuses attention on major issues facing the community, estimates future conditions, provides a general direction for future growth, and outlines patterns of development.

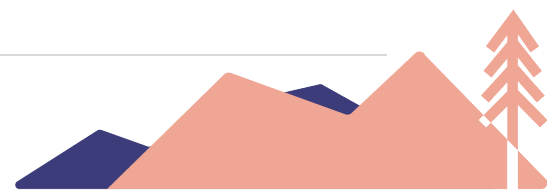
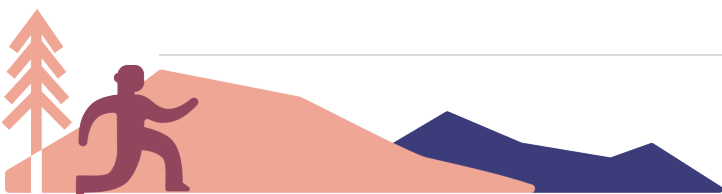
TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

Anchorage 2020 sets the overall Community Vision. Implementing an updated Trails Plan should help achieve recreation and transportation goals and objectives in the Anchorage 2020 plan and help realize the community vision. The 1997 Areawide Trails Plan is a functional plan under the Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan. Anchorage 2020 also provides an idea of how and where transportation and recreational trail issues fit in the greater context of the many challenges faced by communities in the Anchorage Bowl. For example, the Land Use Concept Plan (Anchorage 2020 chapter 4) describes ways in which trails and paths can augment various land use and development scenarios.

RELEVANT ISSUES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Pertinent issues, goals, objectives and strategies in Anchorage 2020 are paraphrased below:

- Chapter 2 – Anchorage Today
 - Issues: Bicycle & Pedestrian Travel
 - Highlights gaps in bicycle trail system as a transportation issue.
- Chapter 3 – Foundations
 - Goals: Public Improvement & Services
 - A sustainable and accessible system of recreational facilities, parks, trails, and open spaces that meets year-round neighborhood and community-wide needs.
- Chapter 4 – Land Use Concept Plan
 - Key Planning Issues that Influence Growth
 - Issue #4 Transportation Improvements addresses transportation issues by promoting multi-modal roadways and trail networks.
 - Issue #5 Natural Open Space is addressed with additional parks, trails and natural areas within and between neighborhoods.



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- Transportation Planning & Land Use:
 - Anchorage 2020 encourages integrated land use and transportation planning by incorporating trails into neighborhoods and public facilities.
- Growth Allocation Map:
 - Considers conserving natural open spaces (greenbelts and trail corridors), an important strategy to guide growth allocation.
- Chapter 5 – Plan Implementation
 - Land Use & Transportation Policies and Strategies:
 - Residential Policy #13: Directs the MOA to provide links to adjacent trail systems in new rural residential subdivisions.
 - Transportation Policy #30: Transportation and land use policies and programs shall include multi-modal access and pedestrian-to-transit linkages.
 - Transportation Design & Maintenance Policy #36: Accommodate Trails Plan trail sections and easements into new transportation projects and significant upgrades.
 - Design & Environment Policies & Strategies:
 - General Design & Environment Policy #45: Connect local activity centers with parks, greenbelts, and trails where feasible.
 - General Design & Environment Policy #55: Provide pedestrian and trail connections within and between residential subdivisions in new plats, including replats.
 - Public Facilities & Services:
 - Parks, Trails & Recreation Policy #84: Develop an acquisition strategy to secure sufficient public lands for parks, greenbelts and trails.
 - Parks, Trails & Recreation Policy #86: Encourage public/private collaboration for acquisition, development, and maintenance of recreational spaces and trails.
 - Implementation Strategies:
 - Finalize the North and South Extensions of the Coastal Trail to meet Coastal Access goals.
 - Design trails and other facilities to reduce wildlife conflicts.



ANCHORAGE 2040 LAND USE PLAN, 2017

The 2040 Land Use Plan (LUP) incorporates adopted neighborhood and district plans, public facility plans, and recent analyses regarding population, housing, commercial, and industrial needs over the next 25 years. The 2040 LUP features a land use plan map, which recommends the future land development pattern. It shows where land uses may occur within the Anchorage Bowl to accommodate anticipated growth. It also includes strategies to carry out the plan and manage growth. Adopted by the Assembly on September 26, 2017, the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan is now a part of the Municipality's Comprehensive Plan.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

The 2040 Land Use Plan considers trails and trail access in several of its land use designations in the Land Use Plan Map. The Land Use Plan Map can be a reference during the Trails Plan update to ensure trails are being considered in locations where they will enhance the character of and be consistent with designated land uses according to the LUP. Open Spaces and Greenway-Supported Development are some examples of land uses where trails are critical features.

RELEVANT GOALS & POLICIES

- Goal 5: Infrastructure-Land Use
 - Land Use Plan Policy 5.1: Implement recommended land use patterns and growth in context with existing infrastructure capacity and planned improvements, for utilities, streets, trails, public transit, parks, green infrastructure, and schools.
 - Land Use Plan Policy 5.7: Pursue alternative strategies and funding mechanisms to support investment in infrastructure, including street networks, public transit, schools, pedestrian facilities, trail connections, parks, greenways, and maintenance and operations.
- Goal 8: Open Space & Greenways
 - Land Use Plan Policy 8.2: Provide new and improved trails, greenbelts, and other pedestrian facilities as alternative travel ways connecting open spaces, neighborhoods, and centers.
 - Land Use Plan Policy 8.3: Provide greenways and trail extensions into designated centers and reinvestment focus areas, to improve their connectivity with the trails system and overcome barriers to neighborhoods.
- Strategies & Actions to Achieve the Plan
 - Action Checklist Goal 8: Anchorage maintains, improves, and strategically expands parks, greenbelts, riparian corridors, and trail corridors to enhance land values, public access, neighborhoods, and mixed-use centers.



CHUGIAK-EAGLE RIVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2006

A re-evaluation of major trends, assumptions and projections of the 1993 Plan was completed in June 2005. This section of the Comprehensive Plan Update highlights the trends in population, demographics, and land use patterns in Chugiak-Eagle River since the 1993 Plan was adopted. Updated projections for future population, employment, land use, and housing are provided. These projections form the basis for evaluating community growth and estimating future land demands and development characteristics, and for updating the Guidelines for Growth and the Land Use Plan map.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

The 2006 Chugiak-Eagle River Plan Comprehensive plan applies to the current MOA Trail plan update due to being one of the foundations for the growth and current socio-economic makeup of that area. It also approached its methods in a way that others did not specifically emphasize, that being historical and archeological resources.

GUIDELINES OF GROWTH

The section defines the goals and objectives that set the basic direction of the 2006 Chugiak-Eagle River Plan. It also indicates policies and strategies needed to assist in guiding the land development process. Many of the goals, objectives, policies, and strategies have been updated from the 1993 Plan in order to reflect today's conditions, growth trends, and community aspirations. The policies and strategies in this chapter will guide municipal actions and resource commitments needed to implement the Chugiak-Eagle Comprehensive Plan Update.

- Economic Development.
- Natural Environment
- Growth
- Public Facilities and Services
- Historic and Archaeological Resources

Each of the bulleted points above have separate sub-categories that dive more in-depth to the goals, objectives, policies/strategies, as well as breaking down each of those into more topic specific sections. Each are very in-depth and should provide an invaluable reference resource.



FUNCTIONAL PLANS

ANCHORAGE BOWL PARKS, NATURAL RESOURCE, AND RECREATION FACILITY PLAN, 2006

The purpose of the Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan is to provide a model for applying a systematic approach to the planning of parks, recreation, and natural use areas. The model ensures that a fair and equitable balance of parks and facilities are provided to all residents. The Plan is intended to be used by community leaders to improve parks and recreation for all citizens. It provides a measurable, objective, and defensible process to acquire, develop, and manage parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities in the Anchorage Bowl.

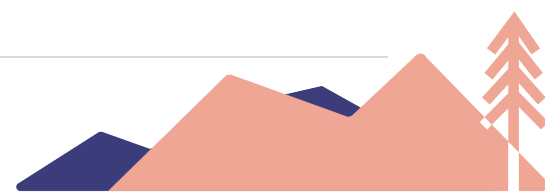
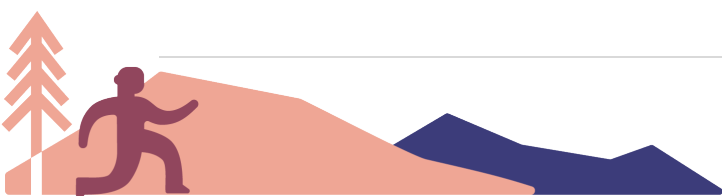
TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

The 2006 plan addresses the land needs, geographic distribution and spatial relationships of parks, recreation facilities, natural resources and trails to other land uses within the Anchorage Bowl. This plan puts trail needs in context with the entire park and recreation system, discussing trails “...only terms of their impact on providing a healthy community through recreational opportunities and linking parks, schools, and other public facilities with local neighborhoods.... The role of trails in the Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan concerns development and support for scenic trail corridors that maximize access to existing parks, especially Community Use and Special Use areas.” While dated, the 2006 plan’s Community Trends and Needs Assessment provides a valuable update from the 1997 Trails Plan. Applying the 2006 Plan model and level-of-service standards to the Trails Plan update will help achieve equitable distribution of and access to trails throughout the Anchorage Bowl.

STRATEGIES FOR TRAILS AND TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Specific strategies laid out in the plan are organized as follows:

- Existing Trails Improvements
 - Incorporate trail design and location methods that address and minimize bear conflicts, in coordination with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).
 - Continue to upgrade existing areawide trails through repairs and rehabilitation.
 - Improve pedestrian safety for access to parks and schools.
 - Improve trail safety through support of our Trail Watch volunteer patrol.
 - Continue upgrades to trailheads and trail networks at Far North Bicentennial, Russian Jack, Campbell Tract, Chester Creek, Davis, Tikishla, and Kincaid Parks.
 - Examine appropriate lighting of trails including Campbell, Chester Creek, Tikishla, Chester, and Fish Creek Trails.



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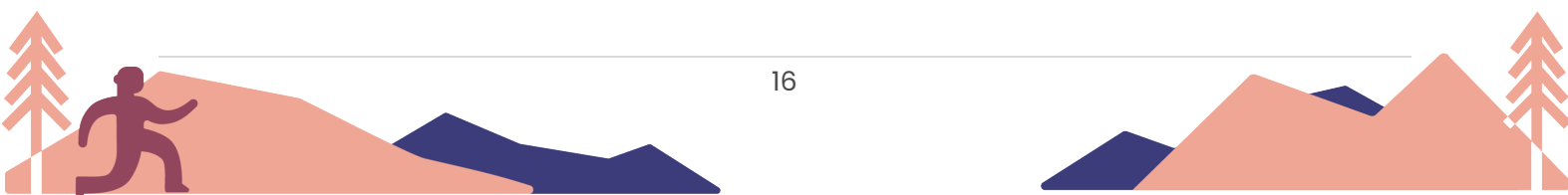
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- Acquire Land and Complete Critical Links in Trail System
 - Acquire critical trail corridors to complete overall network of trails as appropriate.
 - Acquire and enhance access points to Chugach State Park and Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge as appropriate.
 - Acquire appropriate access points to neighborhood and community parks.
 - Complete the Kincaid to Potter Marsh pedestrian corridors.
 - Complete Ship Creek Trail connecting Coastal Trail to Mountain View, Downtown, and Government Hill.
 - Complete Campbell Creek Trail connection between Lake Otis and Old Seward.
 - Complete trail connection from De La Vega Park to Campbell Creek Trail.
 - Acquire and enhance public access to Chugach State Park and Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge at sites that minimize impacts to private lands and wildlife.
- Develop and Improve Access, Trails and Connections
 - Continue to upgrade trails and path system to safely connect parks, schools, homes, and commercial areas.
 - Develop new trails along Natural Resource Use corridors.
 - Establish a scenic trail system using existing greenbelts to promote visitors to stay an extra day in Anchorage and play on trails and in parks.
 - Require access points to Chugach State Park and other natural areas at one-mile intervals.
 - Utilize Title 21 for dedication of trail rights-of-way through subdivisions.

AMATS NON-MOTORIZED PLAN, 2021

The Non-Motorized Plan (NMP) provides the vision for a network of facilities for non-motorized travel (walking, biking, rolling, and gliding) within the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) Planning Area that, when implemented, will help residents travel more safely and efficiently without the need of a motor vehicle in all seasons. The NMP merges planning efforts for on-street bicycle facilities, pedestrian sidewalks, and shared use pathways (for walking, biking, skiing, and other non-motorized modes) simultaneously. By addressing these topics together, a more comprehensive framework and vision for active transportation in the AMATS Planning area is developed.



TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

The 2021 AMATS Non-Motorized Plan was used as a guiding document to improve alternate means of transportation and is built upon the 1997 Areawide Trails Plans and ties in very well to the evolution of the Municipality of Anchorage's trail systems. The 2021 AMATS plan goes in-depth into planning for alternative non-motorized means of transportation and implementation. This plan should be consulted, and practices applied to the Chugiak-Eagle River Recreational Trails Plan Update as needed.

VISION AND GOALS

The vision of the AMATS Non-Motorized Plan is for a complete, connected, and continuous non-motorized network. This network is made up of numerous facility types including sidewalks, enhanced shared roadways, separate bikeway, shared pathway and side paths, supplemental bicycle facilities. To achieve this vision there are several goals that are used to guide the implementation process.

- Increase the use of non-motorized system
- Promote and improve health and quality of life
- Improve safety and security
- Optimized maintenance for all seasons
- Connect communities through all modes to all destinations
- Measure non-motorized use and assets
- Build community through education and involvement

Each goal has several subcategories that provide comprehensive objectives and explanations.

ANCHORAGE PEDESTRIAN PLAN, 2007

The purpose of the Anchorage Pedestrian Plan is to establish a 20-year framework for improvements that will enhance the pedestrian environment and increase opportunities to choose walking as a mode of transportation.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

This plan strives to increase public health and safety through non-motorized transportation on the Anchorage streets and trail systems. This plan should be assessed due to its focus not only on safety, but its emphasis on personal health and well-being.

GOALS

- Double the number of pedestrian trips made by Anchorage residents while simultaneously reducing the number of injuries from pedestrian-vehicle crashes.



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- Create a safer, more walkable city that will encourage year-round winter pedestrian activity and make walking a safer and more attractive activity.
- Provide barrier-free mobility for all populations.
- Reduce the number and severity of vehicle crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists by raising public and law enforcement awareness of practices, rights, and responsibilities that promote pedestrian safety.
- Improve community connectivity by providing safe, convenient, year-round pedestrian routes within and between neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, and public facilities as well as between major employment centers and adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Review the relationship of street design to the design of adjacent land uses to consider the needs of all users.
- Encourage development patterns that increase and enhance pedestrian use.
- Raise awareness of the important role of walking in promoting health and preventing disease.

ANCHORAGE BICYCLE PLAN, 2010

The purpose of the Bicycle Plan is to expand the bicycle infrastructure and the use of bicycles for transportation. This plan is intended to meet the needs of bicyclists who wish to use bicycles as a form of transportation. The 508-mile comprehensive bicycle network of on- and off-street bicycle infrastructure identified in this plan would safely and comfortably connect all parts of Anchorage.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

The 2010 Anchorage Bicycle Plan focuses on improving the bicycle users experience and safety, something that can be addressed directly in the Trail Plan Update. Although it focuses on one use of the trail system, existing bikeways are enjoyed by many user groups.

GOALS

- Improve connectivity and safety of the transportation network.
- Establish a bicycle network that adequately responds to the transportation needs and desires of Anchorage residents.
- Develop and maintain a bicycle network that enhances safety by improving compatibility among bicycles and other transportation modes.
- Achieve greater public awareness and understanding of safe bicycling and driving practices, procedures, and skills.



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- Provide support facilities and amenities designed to enhance the bicycle network and encourage the use of bicycling as a practical transportation system.
- Educate the public on the appropriate laws concerning bicycling.

AMATS METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN, 2050

The AMATS 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is the culmination of a broad-based community effort devoted to matching transportation facilities and services to the needs of our community through 2050. The MTP is based on future community building and livability expectations, forecasts of economic conditions, travel behaviors and needs, reasonable funding, and desired performance of the system.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

The AMATS MTP encourages transit access in the urban zoning districts by providing maintained sidewalks, pathways, or trails. Also provides a list of prioritized projects, including trail upgrades and connections. Implementation strategies which support the MTP goals and objectives are given, including coordinated efforts.

GOALS

- Goal 5 – Promote a Healthy Environment
 - Objective 5C. Coordinate transportation and land use planning to support connections that reduce reliance on auto trips and encourage active transportation.
 - Objective 5E. Promote healthy lifestyles by connecting everyday destinations through increased active transportation.
- Goal 6 – Advance Equity
 - Objective 6A. Improve multi-modal access to employment, education, recreation, and essential services for underserved neighborhoods.



PARK & TRAIL MASTER PLANS

FAR NORTH BICENTENNIAL PLAN TRAILS PLAN, 2009

In 2009, the Far North Bicentennial Park (FNBP) identified trail user conflicts, as well as critical missing trail links and trail amenities. This plan has evaluated the need for trailhead and parking upgrades and increased wayfinding and interpretive signage and other public amenities that will enhance the park as a four-season recreation facility. This plan develops a comprehensive and strategic trail project list endorsed by the trail community.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

This plan provides a solution to a similar problem faced within the 1997 Areawide Trails Plan update, as well as the adopted area plans. It provides a thoughtful look into a shift in user demographics and needs, while also acknowledging the need for updated amenities. It also provides some methods that may be potentially beneficial to use during the Trail Plan update process, specifically pertaining to nature and wildlife.

GOALS

- Current data on the existing trails and facilities within FNBP.
- Trail Classifications, Trail Design Parameters, and Maintenance Guidelines for the managed trails of FNBP. These guidelines will become templates for other trails throughout the MOA park system.
- A Geographic Information System (GIS) database to facilitate the management of these trails by MOA Parks and Recreation (P&R). This information will be incorporated into the city-wide GIS database, available to the public.
- Produce a Trail Improvements Plan with a list of future trail projects that will be a priority for the next 10 to 15 years and to assist MOA P&R in the management of FNBP.
- Use the Trail Improvements Plan to assist in attaining an Individual Permit (required to work in wetland areas) from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to allow project development once funding is available.
- Facilitate the funding process for trail improvements and maintenance.
- Expedite MOA permitting of trail development and maintenance.

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN, 2022

The 2022 Russian Jack Springs Master Plan contains a Natural Resource Management Plan. The Natural Resource Management Plan provides recommendations for the management of natural resources within Russian Jack Springs Park. It intends to guide Parks and Recreation land managers by outlining goals, objectives, and action items specific to forest health, water



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quality, and fish and wildlife habitat. The Natural Resource Management Plan is one part of the larger Master Plans, which aims to balance the development of recreational facilities with the preservation of natural areas.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

This plan was adopted to establish the health of the ecosystem and to balance it with recreational facilities. The Russian Jack plan fits well within the boundaries of the new AMATS Trail Plan Update due to its emphasis on the correlation between the parks' natural resources and recreational health.

GOALS

- Understand, promote, and protect natural resources at Russian Jack Springs Park
- Protect water quality resources for human and environmental health.
- Manage forests to provide clean air and water, habitat for wildlife, beautiful scenery, and places for recreation.
- To protect habitat and provide for native fish and wildlife populations.

BEACH LAKE REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN, 2011

The Update replaces the 1973 Beach Lake Regional Park Master Plan. The 1973 Plan was not an adopted element of the Comprehensive Plan. Beach Lake Park serves a regional population of approximately 35,000 residents and the park constitutes a large percentage of the municipal parkland set aside to serve this growing regional population. The Plan addresses both current needs and anticipated community recreational needs in the future.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

Beach Lake Park is home to the primary systems of mushing and Nordic skiing trails in the Chugiak-Eagle River area, maintained by Chugiak Dog Mushers Association and Chugiak-Eagle River Nordic Ski Association. The 2011 Master Plan contains a description of current use and inventory of existing trails as well as a vision, goals, and conceptual plan for future trail development. Guidance relates to land use, trail management, preferred use intensities, park access, specific projects and timelines, and more. Some development has occurred since the 2011 plan. The Trails Plan update will account for direction given in the 2011 BLMP. As Beach Lake Park is one of the largest in the Chugiak and Eagle River owned by the MOA, this property may be looked to heavily to address trail needs identified in the 2023-2025 Trails Plan update process.

GOALS

- Maintaining the park's natural, rural, and scenic attributes while supporting historical mushing and skiing activities.



- Meet community's growing needs while maintaining a high standard of respect and courtesy between users.

KINCAID PARK MASTER PLAN, 2006

Kincaid Park is home to the premier Nordic skiing trail systems in Alaska and host to statewide, national- and international-level competitions. The 2006 update was a targeted rather than comprehensive update of the 1983 master plan to address specific unfulfilled objectives. Projects that have been completed remain fully within the intent and purpose of the original plan. The Plan identifies externalities that could impact Kincaid Park including the Ted Stevens International Airport, Coastal Trail extension, road construction, and changes or trends in recreation and competitive sports.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

This plan provides insight into maximizing existing facilities and increasing efficiency. Recommendations gleaned from the Trails Plan Update process should be compared to findings in this 2006 Master Plan.

GOALS

- Maximize use of the existing facilities at the former Nike Missile site.
- Identify recreational program elements that are feasible to be sited at Pt. Campbell/Kincaid Park. These elements are primarily to be for winter recreation; however, compatible summer uses are also identified.
- Pt. Campbell/Kincaid Park is to be developed as a pedestrian park with major emphasis being to minimize potential pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.
- All ski facilities located at the Pt. Campbell/Kincaid Park site are to be developed to international standards with the objective to allow for the hosting of international winter sports competitions and for Anchorage's eligibility to be designated as an Olympic Training Center Site.



ONGOING & CONCURRENT PLANNING EFFORTS

MIRROR LAKE/EDMONDS LAKE MASTER PLAN, DRAFT 2024 (EXPECTED ADOPTION 2025)

This plan is in development and, when approved, will update the 1973 Master Plan of Park Development for Edmonds Lake. It will provide guidelines for future development with the intent to enhance the natural characteristics of the park sites and provide recreational activities for a wide variety of needs. Mirror Lake and Edmonds Lake are major trail and recreation sites for Chugiak and Eagle River and are a destination for Anchorage as well.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

This plan provides an early look into the foundational decision making of Edmonds Lake recreational sites. Though it is highly detailed and rather technical it may be of good archival use for determining past features of the site as well as allowing a glimpse into the decision-making processes of other similar parks and plans.

ALASKA LONG TRAIL - RECONNAISSANCE ENGINEERING FOR A CONNECTION BETWEEN ANCHORAGE AND THE MATANUSKA SUSITNA BOROUGH, 2024

The Alaska Long Trail Concept represents a 500-miles route extending from Seward to Fairbanks, combining different braids of existing and proposed trail. In recent years, the concept has captivated the attention and imagination of trail users and adventurers from Alaska and beyond. This study evaluates the feasibility, including benefits, challenges, and costs of several route alternatives for a non-motorized path between the existing northern terminus of the Glenn Highway bike path at Peters Creek, northeast to the Palmer and Wasilla communities. The study considers trail user needs, land owner preferences, agency management missions, and potential design and construction costs and impacts. The study recommends one of several alternative routes to pursue and justifies the recommendation based on those considerations mentioned.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

This study answers critical feasibility questions associated with the concept to assist communities and organizations in pursuing funding for rights-of-way acquisition, design, construction and eventual management of a trail corridor. Findings from this study can inform planning recommendations for trails and trail connections in the AMATS area that may one day interact with this corridor, if built, or that may benefit from or be impacted by such a corridor.



ALASKA LONG TRAIL NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, 2024

The Alaska Long NST Feasibility Study was directed by Congress in December 2022 under the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023 (P.L. 117-328). The purpose of the Alaska Long NST Feasibility Study is to evaluate the characteristics which make the proposed trail worthy of designation as a national scenic trail, as well as the feasibility, suitability, and desirability of designating the route as a national scenic trail. Findings of the trail study will be shared with Congress who has the sole authority to enact legislation to designate new national scenic trails. Route alternatives being evaluated by the BLM were originally developed by the non-profit Alaska Trails based on crowd-sourced suggestions. The BLM must complete and submit the study to Congress by the end of 2025.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

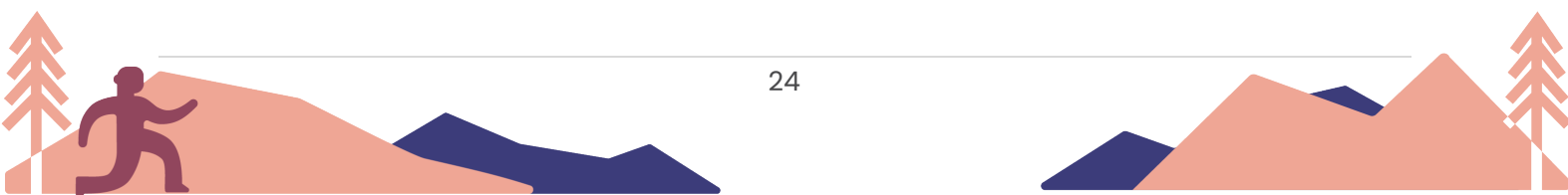
A National Scenic Trail (NST) designation, if enacted, would necessitate the creation of a comprehensive management plan designed to develop cooperative relationships, authorizations, and easements necessary for long-term management. The designation may bring new funding opportunities for developing trail segments, especially for easements or rights-of-way acquisition, within the AMATS boundary and MOA jurisdiction as well as new management directives.

EASTCHESTER PARK MASTER PLAN, DRAFT 2024 (EXPECTED ADOPTION 2025)

The Eastchester Park Master Plan outlines a 20-year vision for the park's management, maintenance, and development. Created with input from residents and park user groups, the Plan identifies and prioritizes park improvements for future funding.
<https://www.muni.org/Departments/parks/Pages/EastchesterMasterPlan.aspx>

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

Eastchester Park is an 80-acre stretch of the Chester Creek Greenbelt between the New Seward Highway and Lake Otis Parkway. Eastchester contains Woodside Park and Hillstrand Pond Park neighborhood play areas and a one-mile segment of the Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail. A short natural trail connects the Anchorage Senior Center to the Chester Creek Trail.



TRAIL DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

US FOREST SERVICE TRAIL FUNDAMENTALS AND TRAIL MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES, 2016

This publication lays out the US Forest Service's Trail Fundamentals. These five concepts are the cornerstones of U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, trail management within National Forests: Trail Type, Trail Class, Managed Use, Designed Use, and Design Parameters. The document defines and describes these principles, how to apply them to trail management, and how to develop management objectives related to each fundamental.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

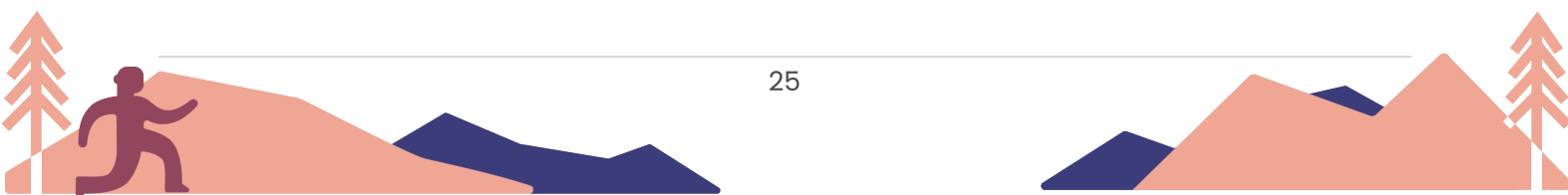
The Trail Fundamental concepts and USFS trail management principles and practices can be applied to the MOA trail system where appropriate. The Trail Fundamentals framework may be especially useful when developing design and management objectives for each trail or trail system in the greater AMATS area trail network.

ALASKA STATE PARKS TRAIL MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK, 2015

The Alaska State Parks Trail Management Handbook applies many of the same concepts found in the USFS Trail Fundamentals to the State Parks system. The Handbook is a technical document with prescriptions for trail management, design, and improvements. It is intended to be used as a practical, hands-on tool to improve consistency of trail management throughout the State. The document provides a framework for documenting Trail Management Objectives and conducting a trail Inventory and Assessment; establishes a Trail Classification System and Trail Design Parameters for different trails based on primary user type; establishes a Sustainable Trail Design Framework; details Trail Tools and Safety Equipment; and sets standards for Trail Structures and Minimum Mapping Requirements.

TRAILS PLAN APPLICABILITY

Similar to the USFS publications, the State Parks Handbook concepts and management principles and practices can be applied to the MOA trail system where appropriate. The State Parks framework may be useful when developing design and management objectives for each trail or trail system in the greater AMATS area trail network. The document is also useful for educating and training volunteers in trail management principles such as sustainable trail design.



LAW AND POLICY

MOA PROJECT MANAGEMENT & ENGINEERING DESIGN CRITERIA MANUAL, 2007

CHAPTER 4 TRAILS

This chapter provides discussion and design criteria for development of trails within the Municipality of Anchorage. While the focus is placed on multi-use paved trails (also called multi-use pathways AASHTO, 1999 design considerations for safe bicycle travel on shared roadways, signed shared roadways and bike lanes are provided at the end of this chapter. This chapter provides design guidance based on the Areawide Trails Plan (ATP). Designers should consult that document with respect to planning level decisions that affect the planning and design process.

MUNICIPAL CODE

The following section is a review of applicable MOA codes that will inform Trails Plan recommendations and how they are implemented.

TITLE 3: ADMINISTRATION

3.20.070

This section establishes the executive branches of the Municipality of Anchorage's government, including the parks and recreation department "responsible for preserving and enhancing quality of life... by providing recreational programs and maximizing use of trails, parks and recreational facilities in the Anchorage Bowl, Eagle River-Chugiak and Girdwood area."

TITLE 9: VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC

Title 9 provides guidance on how vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians interact on roadways and pedestrian paths, including some considerations for recreational trails. Some regulations in Title 9 address conflicts between multiple uses of pathways and road shoulders where different uses or pedestrians and vehicles may interact.

9.36.030

This section is dedicated to codes about driving on sidewalks, recreational trails or pathways. No person shall operate a motor vehicle upon any sidewalk, recreational trail or pathway, except to cross upon a permanent or properly authorized or temporary driveway. Electric personal motor vehicles, as defined in AS 28.90.990, are permitted to operate on sidewalks, recreational trails and pathways.



9.38.060

Riders to use right edge of roadway, riding abreast. Every person operating a bicycle upon a roadway or upon a trail or pathway shall ride as near to the right edge of the roadway or trail or pathway as practicable, exercising due care when avoiding hazards and passing or meeting other vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians or users of the roadway or trail, except in the following situations when it is unreasonable or unsafe to do so.

9.08.070

Helps clarify definition of and regulations on “non-motorized” trails to be inclusive of those who need assisted mobility devices and those providing necessary maintenance on trails using motorized vehicles.

9.38.020

Applicability of traffic laws to riders. This code specifically applies how traffic laws apply to riders of any kind. Every person operating a bicycle shall be granted all of the rights and shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to a person operating a vehicle by this title, except as to special regulations in this chapter, and except as to those provisions of this title which by their nature have no application.

9.38.070

This section goes into giving audible warnings when riding on a sidewalk. It also states that “The municipal traffic engineer is authorized to erect signs on any sidewalk or roadway prohibiting the riding of bicycles or a wheeled adjunct device thereon by any person, and when such signs are in place no person may disobey such signs.” Signs shall be based upon public health, safety, and welfare. Additionally, any time a person is riding a bicycle upon a sidewalk, they must yield the right of way to pedestrians.

9.40.170

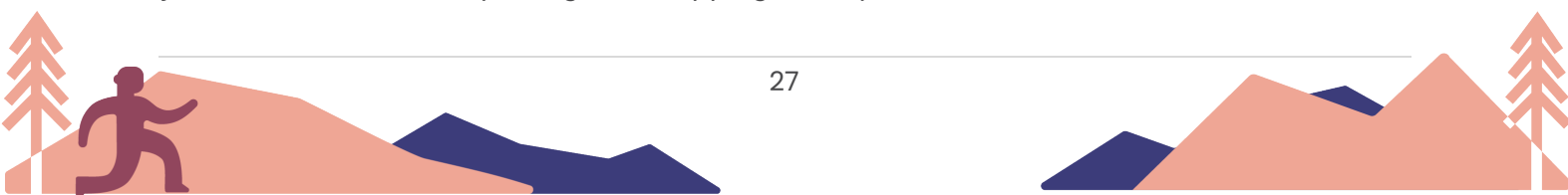
Establishes that no person may drive, operate, stop or move a motorcycle or motor-driven cycle in the following ways, which are declared to be unsafe and unlawful: in any municipal park, on private property of another, knowingly or intentionally chasing wildlife, or in violation of section 9.44.330 (details muffler and exhaust system requirements). It also describes the impoundment of a vehicle that is being a public nuisance.

TITLE 14: ADMINISTRATIVE ENFORCEMENT

Title 14 is used to exercise enforcement of municipal code and describes specific violations and an associated fine schedule.

14.70.200 – Prohibited trapping zones for safe trails

Describes zones within which trapping along trails is prohibited. Considers trail characteristics, distances, marking, applicability, as well as interactions with ADF&G’s jurisdiction and authority to regulate trapping activity.



TITLE 21: LAND USE PLANNING

21.07.010 Development & Design Standards

The development and design standards section of Title 21 applies to the physical layout and design of development in the municipality and includes encouraging physical connections to the trails network in its purpose and subsections.

21.07.060 Transportation & Connectivity

21.07.060.E.5

“Standards for Pedestrian Facilities, Trails” outlines development and design requirements, in addition to standards outlined in DCM Chapter 4, Trails, that municipal trails must meet, including signage standards, reduced motor vehicle crossings, and maintaining safe and convenient connections to the street system.

21.07.060.E.6

Outlines use restrictions and maintenance and snow removal standards for sidewalks, walkways, pathways, and trails.

21.80.030 – Dedication—Walkways

“The platting authority may require the dedication of pedestrian walkways where it finds that pedestrian walkways are necessary to convenient pedestrian circulation or to protect pedestrians from hazardous traffic. The minimum width of a walkway dedication shall be ten feet.”

21.80.060– Dedication—Trails

“The platting authority shall require the dedication of an easement for a trail designated on adopted municipal plans when it finds that the trail cannot be located in an existing dedicated easement or right-of-way. The platting authority may modify the alignment, width and scope of trail easements as necessary to integrate trail and subdivision design.”

TITLE 25: PUBLIC LANDS

25.20.027– Acquisition by eminent domain

Exercise of the power of eminent domain by the municipality, its agencies and authorities, is prohibited unless the property acquired thereby is actually used by the municipality or the public. Eminent domain is not to be used to further private economic development.

The municipality shall not use or rely upon the power of eminent domain to acquire private property, in whole or in part, or any interest in private property, for the purpose of leisure amenities, regardless of how such amenities are characterized or financed.

For purposes of this section, leisure amenities includes indoor and outdoor facilities intended for personal enjoyment including, but not limited to, parks, natural resource use areas, trails and pedestrian paths and/or trails of any kind, greenbelts, access to wilderness areas,



amusement rides, small boat facilities, personal use fisheries, sports activities of any kind, play areas, picnic areas, spectator viewing, and associated infrastructure such as parking lots and access corridors.

This section shall not apply to pedestrian facilities as amenities in the right-of-way for a road classified as local, collector, arterial, expressway or freeway.

25.70.040– Prohibited activities generally

Details activities that are prohibited on municipal land and their associated penalties/remedies, including restrictions in parks; mobile food service in municipal parks; use of motor vehicles on certain bodies of water.

25.70.060– Activities prohibited in parks

In addition to those activities prohibited on public lands by section 9.40.170, pertaining to motorcycles, section 9.42.020, pertaining to snow machines, and section 10.50.015, pertaining to alcoholic beverages, and by other provisions in Chapter 25, this section details the prohibited activities in parks.

TITLE 27: SERVICE AREAS

Details the service areas for City, Girdwood Valley, Spenard, Anchorage Building Safety (ABSSA), Anchorage Fire, Chugiak Fire, Anchorage Parks and Recreation, Chugach State Park Access, Eagle River–Chugiak Park and Recreational, Anchorage Roads and Drainage, City Service Area–Roads and Drainage Bonded Indebtedness Retirement, Service Area 35, Anchorage Metropolitan Police, Anchorage Solid Waste Disposal (ASWDSA), Eagle River–Chugiak Solid Waste Disposal, Glen Alps, Chugiak, and the Rural and Limited Road Service Areas.

ALASKA STATUTE

AS 41.21.8 ARTICLE 8. TRAILS, FOOTPATHS, AND CAMPSITES

Some definitions in this section are adopted and used in sections of Anchorage Municipal Code. Applicable to the MOA trails systems within the AMATS boundary are these subsections:

Sec. 41.21.864. Grants for the establishment of trails and footpaths.

(a) Within the limits of available appropriations, a city or borough of any class is entitled to state grants for the purpose of acquiring land or rights-of-way over land and establishing and maintaining trails and footpaths on that land or those rights-of-way.

(f) Nothing in AS 41.21.864 – 41.21.872 prohibits a city or borough for which a grant is authorized from entering into an agreement with the Department of Natural Resources for the establishment and maintenance of trails and footpaths outside cities and boroughs.



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Sec. 41.21.864. Paths and trails along highways.

The commissioner of transportation and public facilities shall administer the plan and program providing for the establishment and maintenance of footpaths, bridle paths, bicycle paths, ski trails, dog sled trails, motorized vehicle trails, and other paths and trails along certain designated existing highways, or when a highway, road, or street is being constructed, reconstructed, or relocated after June 7, 1972. Trails established under an approved plan submitted by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities may be used for those types of uses written into the plan. A uniform system of marking the paths and trails established under this section shall be established by the commissioner of transportation and public facilities.

Sec. 41.21.868. Authorization of funds.

(a) An amount of not less than three-eighths of one percent nor more than one percent of the total yearly state and federal matching sum combined, under the federal-aid highways program (23 U.S.C.), shall be appropriated annually from the general fund to the department for the purposes of providing grants to eligible cities and boroughs for trails, footpaths, and shelter construction and maintenance in appropriate areas, including but not limited to existing park and recreation areas and for the purpose of providing grants to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for developing the program specified in AS 41.21.864(b) and 41.21.866.

