

2026 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PLAN

An Updated Community Vision for Trails in Anchorage, Eagle River, and Chugiak

May 2026 Draft



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Table of Contents

1. PLAN DEVELOPMENT	1
PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE	2
RELATIONSHIP TO AMATS NON-MOTORIZED PLAN	2
RELATIONSHIP TO PARKS MASTER PLANS & OTHER AREA PLANS	3
PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	5
ADVISORY GROUPS	6
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	6
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	6
PUBLIC EVENTS & ENGAGEMENT TOOLS	7
2. TRAIL MANAGEMENT IN THE AMATS AREA	8
ANCHORAGE PARKS AND RECREATION	11
STAFF STRUCTURE	11
ANCHORAGE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION	11
FUNDING	11
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND PLANNING	12
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	12
HEALTHY SPACES	12
TRAIL MAINTENANCE	13
PROGRAMMING	17
EAGLE RIVER-CHUGIAK PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT	18
STAFF STRUCTURE	18
EAGLE RIVER-CHUGIAK PARKS & RECREATION BOARD OF SUPERVISORS	18
FUNDING	18
PARK DEVELOPMENT AND CAPITAL PROJECTS	19
TRAIL MAINTENANCE	19
PROGRAMMING	19
AMATS	19
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	20
COMMUNITY COUNCILS	20
ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION	20
COOPERATIVE USE AGREEMENTS AND LEASES	20
OTHER RECREATION AREA LANDOWNERS	21
REGULATIONS, PLANS, & POLICIES	22
APPLICABLE PLANS OVERVIEW	22
MUNICIPAL CODE: TITLE 21 TRAIL REVIEW & PUBLIC PROCESS	23
DESIGN STANDARDS	26
STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	26

3. TODAY'S TRAILS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS.....	27
ANCHORAGE BOWL TRAILS & FACILITIES	28
GREENBELT TRAILS	28
KINCAID PARK	34
FAR NORTH BICENTENNIAL PARK	35
RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK	36
RUTH ARCAND PARK	37
GOOSE LAKE PARK AND UNIVERSITY AREA	38
EAGLE RIVER/CHUGIAK TRAILS & FACILITIES	39
BEACH LAKE PARK.....	42
MIRROR LAKE AND EDMONDS LAKE PARK	43
REGIONAL TRAILS.....	44
GLENN HIGHWAY AND OLD GLENN HIGHWAY TRAILS	44
CHUGACH STATE PARK	44
MOOSE LOOP.....	44
IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.....	45
ALASKA LONG TRAIL	45
AMATS COMMUNITY PROFILE.....	46
POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS	46
AGE	46
INCOME AND POVERTY STATUS	46
VEHICLE ACCESS	46
GAPS ANALYSIS	47
ANCHORAGE BOWL.....	47
EAGLE RIVER AND CHUGIAK.....	49
COMMON THEMES.....	64
TRAIL USE	64
ISSUES & PRIORITIES	65
 4. TRAILS FOR TOMORROW	 67
1. CONNECTIVITY	68
2. SAFETY	68
3. QUALITY	69
4. WELLNESS	69
5. VARIETY	70

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	71
SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS.....	72
PLAN.....	72
POLICY.....	73
PARTNERSHIP.....	75
PROJECT.....	78
PROGRAM.....	78
PERSONNEL.....	79
MAINTENANCE RECOMMENDATIONS.....	80
PAVEMENT REPAIR.....	80
WINTER MAINTENANCE.....	80
ADDRESSING ENCAMPMENTS.....	81
TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS AND DESIGN.....	81
TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS.....	82
TRAIL STRIPING.....	83
TRAIL COUNTERS.....	83
WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE.....	84
UPDATES TO THE DESIGN CRITERIA MANUAL.....	84
EMERGING TRAIL USES.....	99
E-BIKES.....	99
WINTER-ONLY TRAIL MANAGEMENT.....	99
SNOWMAKING.....	100
TRAILSIDE FACILITIES.....	100
PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	101
PROJECT SELECTION AND PRIORITIZATION.....	101
TRAIL PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	105
SUPPORTING NON-MOTORIZED PROJECTS.....	115
MAJOR CONNECTIVITY PROJECTS.....	119
6. IMPLEMENTATION.....	129
PARK MASTER PLANNING.....	130
Funding Strategies.....	131
MUNICIPAL BONDS.....	131
Exploring New Funding Mechanisms.....	132
CHUGACH STATE PARK ACCESS SERVICE AREA (CASA).....	132
AMATS MTP & TIP.....	132
GRANTS.....	134
PRIVATE INVESTMENTS.....	134
LEGAL ACCESS: TRAIL EASEMENTS & RIGHTS-OF-WAY.....	135
WHAT IF MY PROJECT IS NOT ON THE LIST?.....	137
PLAN UPDATE PROCESS.....	137
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS.....	137
10-YEAR UPDATE.....	138

APPENDICES

- Appendix A. Trail Classifications
- Appendix B. Public Engagement Summary
- Appendix C. Existing Plans & Policies Review

ACRONYMS

AMATS	Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions
ASDRA	Alaska Sled Dog Racing Association
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CASA	Chugach State Park Access Service Area
CMBR	Chugach Mountain Bike Riders
C-ER	Chugiak Eagle-River
CSP	Chugach State Park
DOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
FHWA	Federal Highways Administration
HLB	Municipality of Anchorage Heritage Land Bank
JBER	Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson
MOA	Municipality of Anchorage
NSAA	Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage
Parks	Municipality of Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department, Anchorage and Eagle River-Chugiak
PM&E	Municipality of Anchorage, Project Management and Engineering Department
STA	Single Track Advocates



FIGURES

1. AMATS Boundary Map
2. Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area
3. Eagle River-Chugiak Parks and Recreation Service Area
4. Existing Trails, Anchorage North
5. Existing Trails, Anchorage Central
6. Existing Trails, Anchorage West
7. Existing Trails, Anchorage South
8. Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts on trails with permanent trail counters
9. Kincaid Park Overview Map
10. Far North Bicentennial Park Overview Map
11. Russian Jack Springs Park Overview Map
12. Ruth Arcand Park Overview Map
13. Goose Lake Park and University Area Trails Overview Map
14. Existing Trails, Eagle River
15. Existing Trails, Chugiak
16. Beach Lake Park Overview Map
17. Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake Park Overview Map
18. Moose Loop Overview
19. Historic Routes of the Iditarod National Historic Trail, sourced from BLM INHT Comprehensive Plan Revision Storymap
20. Total Population – Anchorage
21. Total Population – Chugiak-Eagle River
22. Percent of Population over 60 – Anchorage
23. Percent of Population over 60 – Chugiak-Eagle River
24. Percent of Population Under 18 – Anchorage
25. Percent of Population Under 18 – Chugiak-Eagle River
26. Total Number of Households – Anchorage
27. Total Number of Households – Chugiak-Eagle River
28. Median Household Income – Anchorage
29. Median Household Income – Chugiak-Eagle River
30. Percent Poverty Status of Families – Anchorage
31. Percent Poverty Status of Families – Chugiak-Eagle River
32. Percent of Households with No Vehicle – Anchorage
33. Percent of Households with No Vehicle – Chugiak-Eagle River
34. Recommended Trail Projects, Anchorage North
35. Recommended Trail Projects, Anchorage Central
36. Recommended Trail Projects, Anchorage West
37. Recommended Trail Projects, Anchorage South
38. Recommended Trail Projects, Eagle River
39. Recommended Trail Projects, Chugiak
40. Non-Motorized Projects, Chugiak-Eagle River
41. Non-Motorized Projects, Anchorage



1. PLAN DEVELOPMENT



Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) and the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department (Parks) updated the 1997 Areawide Trails Plan to reflect modern trail needs of Anchorage and Chugiak Eagle River residents and plan for the years ahead. The Recreational Trails Plan will serve as the local government's guide for the management, maintenance, and development of trails.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE

The Recreational Trails Plan is a tool that helps the community decide how to spend public dollars on building and maintaining trails. It outlines where trails should be built, improved, and connected, and provides strategies for Parks to manage and maintain trails. The Plan applies to trails within the AMATS boundary which includes the Anchorage Bowl, Eagle River, Chugiak, Birchwood, Peters Creek and Eklutna (see Figure 1. AMATS Boundary Map).

The Anchorage and Chugiak–Eagle River communities need a fresh vision for modern trail users. Our community, and the way we use trails, has changed a lot since the previous plan was adopted in 1997. An updated plan helps everyone in the community have a say and use resources fairly. Trails are used by different people who face similar problems, but each group of users has its own needs and ideas. The Recreational Trails Plan has been developed with trail users and the local government to describe common problems and suggest ways to improve trails for all users.



RELATIONSHIP TO AMATS NON-MOTORIZED PLAN

Trails are destinations -- places to play, challenge yourself, and interact with nature. And while trails can be used to get from point A to point B, this Recreational Trails Plan focuses on how trails become better destinations for recreation. The Plan is built on feedback from various kinds of trail users, like walkers, bikers, dog mushers, and skiers. The 1997 Areawide Trails Plan had a dual focus: the development of integrated trails serving multiple recreational users and the creation of a trail system that facilitates active modes of transportation. It included recommendations for trails on and off the

road network. AMATS developed a Non-Motorized Plan in 2021 that focused on the active transportation component of the 1997 Plan and prioritized incorporation of and updates to the Anchorage Bicycle Plan, 2010 and the Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, 2007.

The Non-Motorized Plan addresses how people get around town without using a vehicle. It focuses on sidewalks, pathways, bike lanes and other transportation projects primarily within public rights-of-way. While the Non-Motorized Plan was created, it recommended that recreational trails have a separate planning effort. The Recreational Trails Plan addresses building and improving trails as destinations and acknowledges the

importance of connecting to the non-motorized network. The Recreational Trails Plan is like a sibling to the Non-Motorized Plan. Together, the two plans will help Anchorage spend public dollars to improve recreation and transportation.

RELATIONSHIP TO PARKS MASTER PLANS & OTHER AREA PLANS

The 2006 Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan (Park Plan) is a primary guiding document for Anchorage Parks and Recreation. The purpose of the Park Plan was “to provide a model for applying a systematic approach to the overall planning of parks, recreation, and natural use areas.” While trails and connectors were included in the Park Plan’s analysis, implementation primarily relied on the 1997 Areawide Trails Plan. This Recreational Trails Plan will supersede the Areawide Trails Plan.

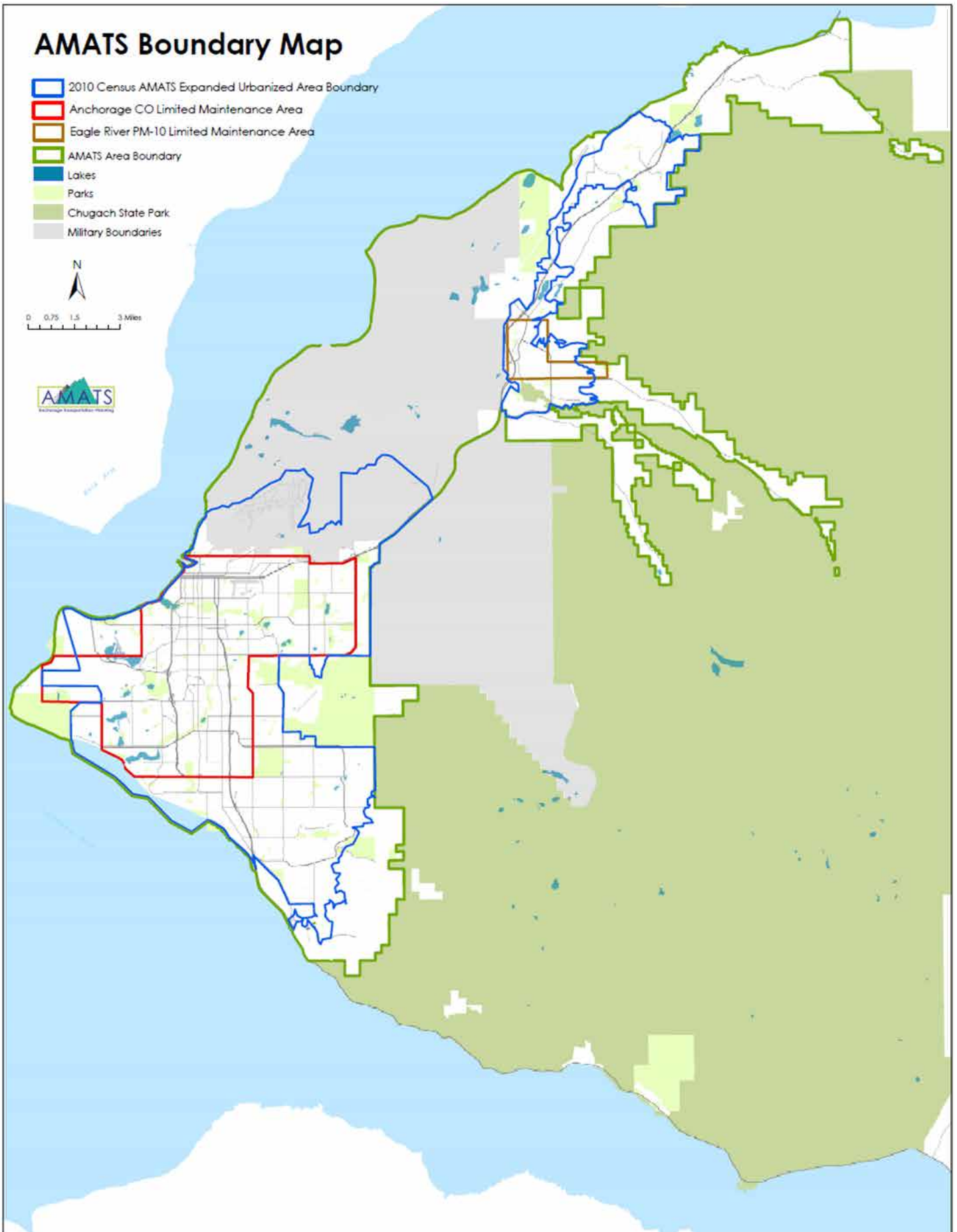
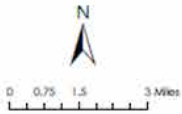
Park Master Plans focus on specific parks and define a detailed vision of park amenities and layouts, including trail locations and design. They are typically completed for Community Use, Special Use, and Natural Resource Use Areas over 30 acres in size and go through the Park Master Plan Review process (Anchorage Municipal Code 21.05.040.G(2) i). Site plans are sometimes conducted for smaller parks and neighborhood parks but are not subject to the same review processes.

This Recreational Trails Plan is a comprehensive plan, providing a broader vision for trails within the AMATS area. It makes recommendations for trails primarily outside of parks with a Master Plan, recommends updating or developing a Park Master Plan to guide trail development, or aligns with recommendations within existing Park Master Plans.



AMATS Boundary Map

- 2010 Census AMATS Expanded Urbanized Area Boundary
- Anchorage CO Limited Maintenance Area
- Eagle River PM-10 Limited Maintenance Area
- AMATS Area Boundary
- Lakes
- Parks
- Chugach State Park
- Military Boundaries



PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Recreational Trails Plan has been developed through two-and-a-half-year long process led by staff at MOA Parks and AMATS that heavily relied upon public engagement and the most current data available. A project management team of Anchorage Parks, Chugiak Eagle-River Parks, AMATS and consultants worked through the following phases to develop an updated Plan.

1. Data Gathering and Analysis

A comprehensive trail inventory was compiled using municipal and other public databases and was informed by additional data supplied by trail users. Qualitative and quantitative information was collected, compiled and analyzed to understand existing conditions and identify trail issues and recreation needs.

2. Vision, Goals & Objectives Definition

Community contributions of long-term aspirations for our future trail system were synthesized into a comprehensive vision statement supported by goals and more specific outcome-related objectives that guided the rest of the Plan's development

3. Recommendations Development and Plan Drafting

Recommendations for achieving the goals and objectives were derived from the 1997 Plan, other adopted municipal and AMATS plans, Parks staff and their institutional knowledge, and the public. Recommendations include actions with systemwide applicability (policy, programmatic, planning, etc.), improvements to trail classifications and design standards, and specific projects (on-the-ground). Trail projects were nominated and scored using criteria informed by the goals and objectives.

Multiple rounds of review with the project management team, advisory committees, and the public were completed ahead of the public review draft of the plan.

4. Public Review and Final Approvals

The Draft Recreational Trails Plan underwent a 60-day formal public comment period. During the public comment period, the Plan was presented as an informational item to the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Policy Committee (PC), and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), along with meetings and updates provided to the Federation of Community Councils, neighboring landowners, and partner agencies. Updates to the Draft Plan were made based on public and agency comments and the final Plan was presented to the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission and Chugiak Eagle-River Board of Supervisors before final approvals by the AMATS TAC and PC. Additional public review for adoption by the Anchorage Assembly may be considered following approval by the AMATS PC.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Recreational trails provide varied opportunities to a growing and diverse community of trail users. Meaningful public engagement is essential to developing an actional plan that is consistent with the wide range of community desires.

Development of the Recreational Trails Plan followed public involvement guidelines defined in AMATS's current Public Participation Plan. The Plan is a product of a collaborative effort driven by engagement with advisory groups and stakeholders at each phase of development. Information obtained through the following efforts directly informed the content of this Plan. All engagements are described in more detail in the Public Involvement Plan and meeting summaries included in Appendix B: Public Engagement Summary.

ADVISORY GROUPS

Two advisory groups were formed of volunteer members external to the project management team to steer the plan development. An application process was used to bring committed, motivated people to the table and allow the project management team to apply professional judgement to select members for balanced groups representing diverse perspectives.

The **Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)** was comprised of area residents and trail users and the **Technical Working Group (TWG)** involved members with backgrounds in planning, design, trail maintenance, and land management. The CAG met twice as a stand-alone group in the earlier stages of plan development as well as twice jointly with the TWG. The TWG met three times ahead of the joint meetings with the CAG during the recommendation development phase.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The project team held individual meetings with major landowners and user groups who have an interest in or jurisdictional responsibility for the management, development, and maintenance of

recreational trails. The first meetings occurred during the data gathering phase of development to understand current challenges and opportunities they see for trails. A second round of outreach coincided with public review to ensure implementing the Plan would be supported by those entities' future actions.

Stakeholders included:

- » Alaska Sled Dog & Racing Association (ASDRA)
- » Alaska Trails
- » Anchorage Park Foundation
- » Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- » Chugach State Park (CSP)
- » Chugiak Dog Mushing Association
- » Chugiak-Eagle River Nordic Ski Club
- » Chugach Mountain Bike Riders (CMBR)
- » Eklutna Inc.
- » Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER)
- » Native Village of Eklutna
- » Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage (NSAA)
- » Single Track Advocates (STA)

PUBLIC EVENTS & ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Public events were held during three phases of Plan development. Public workshops were held in Anchorage and Chugiak during the initial data gathering phase (November 2024) to inventory trail issues and opportunities and understand community priorities. Multiple pop-ups were held during a summer comment period (July–August 2025) to review draft systemwide recommendations and trail classifications and to collect additional project recommendations. And public open houses, one in Anchorage and one in Chugiak (January 2026), were hosted during the public review period of the Draft Plan.

A community survey was conducted through the summer and fall of 2024 to learn about participants' trail experience, identify trail use patterns, motivations, barriers and priorities. There were 2,055 responses to the survey, 98% of which were current trails users and 86% were Anchorage residents.

Survey participants were self-selecting. The survey was advertised through Parks social media, advisory group members and trail stakeholders, flyers posted in frequented public spaces, at staffed pop-up events.

AMATS hosted a **project-specific website** that was updated throughout the Plan's development. It provided links to the survey, advertised engagement opportunities, hosted meeting summaries and documents available for public review. Comments could be submitted to the project management team any time through the website contact form or directly through email.

During the summer comment period on draft recommendations, an **online interactive comment map** was used to show initial project commendations and collect feedback and new project ideas from the public. The same online interactive mapping tool as used to present trail project recommendations included in the public.



2. TRAIL MANAGEMENT IN THE AMATS AREA

To successfully plan for the future of recreational trails, an understanding of who manages trails today and how is essential. This chapter provides an overview of the main entities responsible for the ownership, management, development, maintenance, and funding of recreational trails within the AMATS area. It also outlines the regulatory and policy framework guiding those entities' actions.

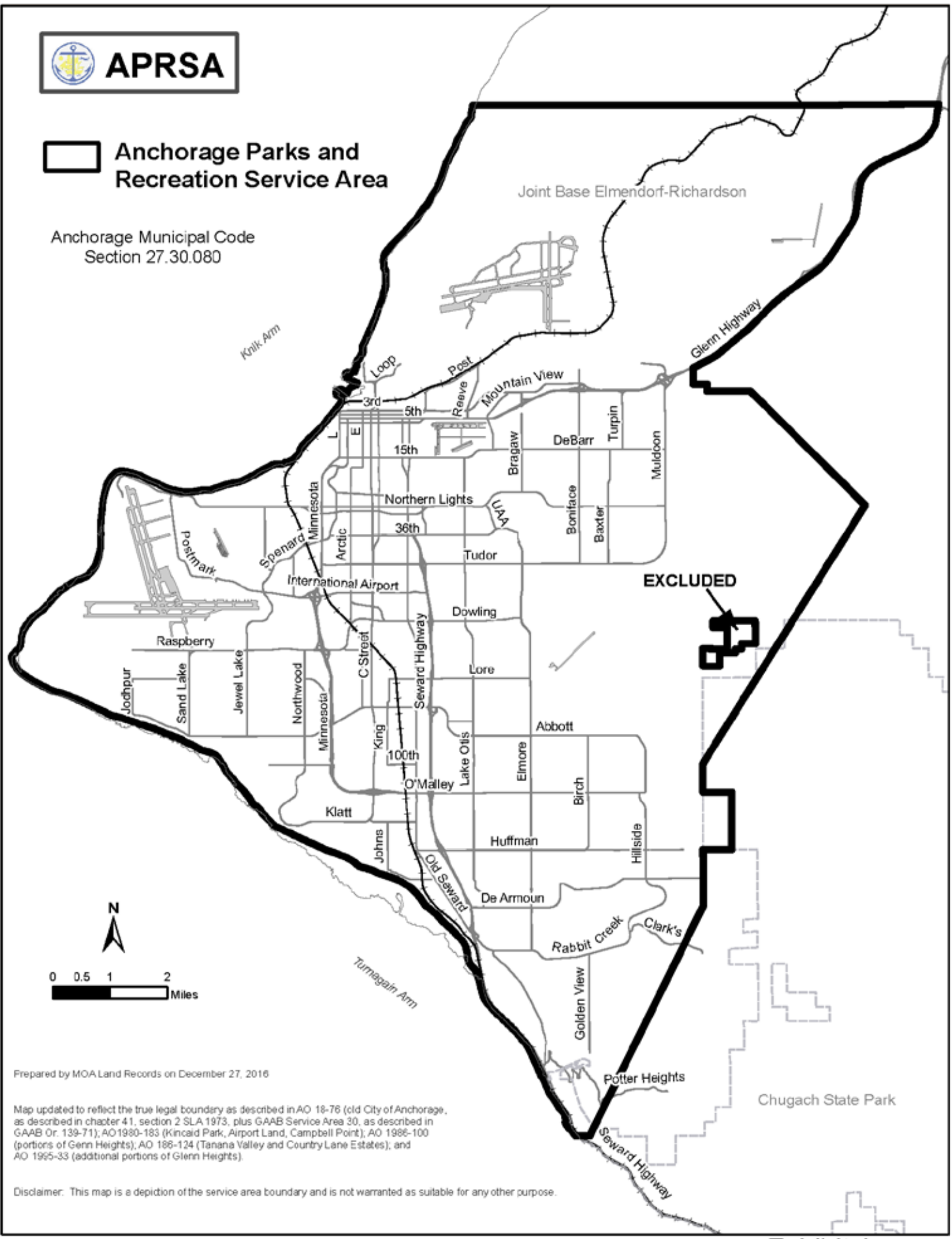
The AMATS boundary includes two park services areas and therefore two departments, one for the Anchorage Bowl and one for Chugiak/Eagle River.

The Director of Anchorage Parks and Recreation oversees both departments, but project funding and staffing structures are dedicated to each service area: the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area (Anchorage Parks) and the Eagle River-Chugiak Parks and Recreation Service Area (Eagle River-Chugiak Parks). Both service areas are guided by Title 21, the Land Use Planning and Zoning code for the Municipality of Anchorage. Title 21 was re-written and adopted in 2013. It includes process and policy guidance for the development of sustainable, accessible systems of recreational facilities, parks, and open space.



 **Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area**

Anchorage Municipal Code
Section 27.30.080

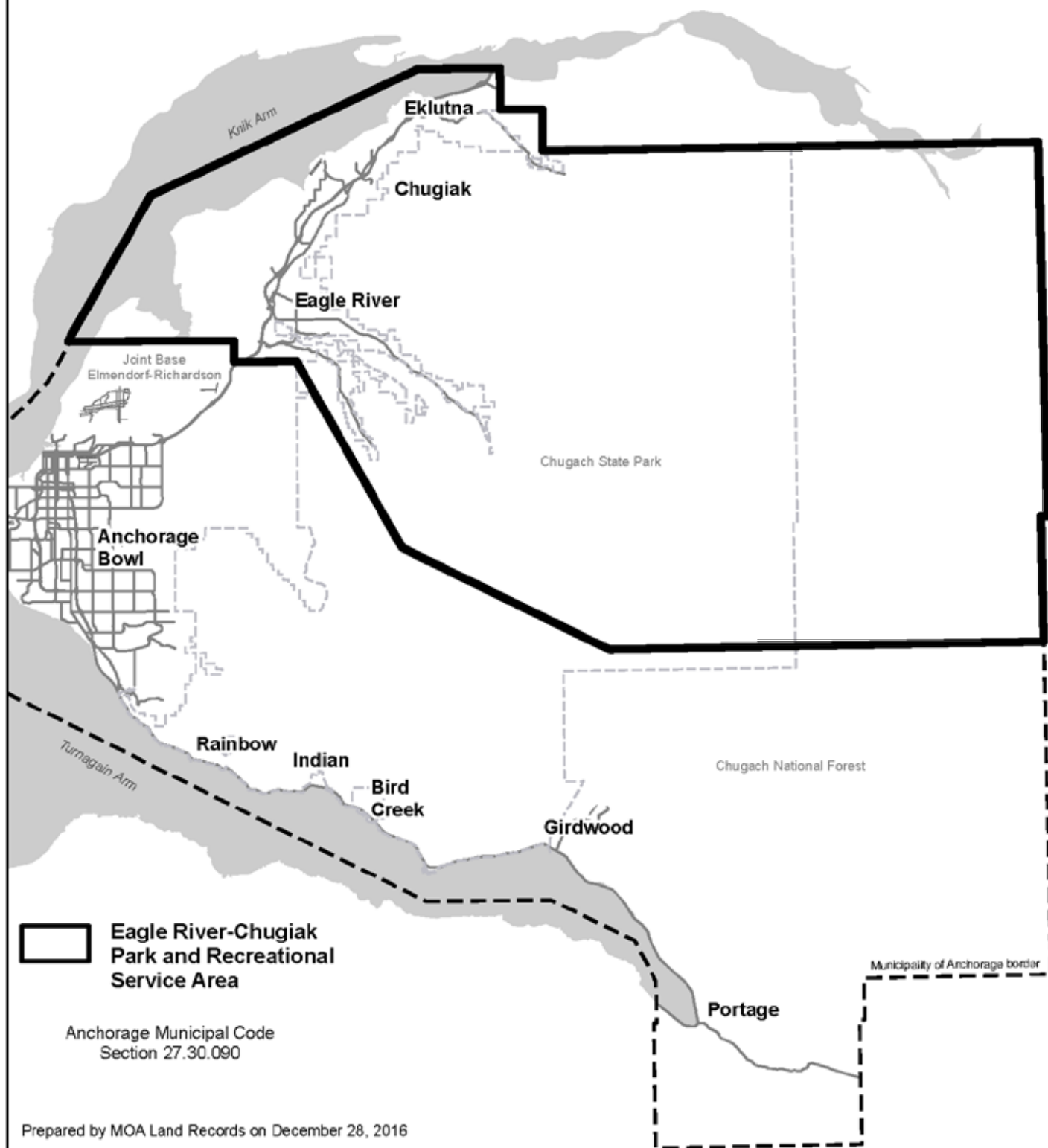


Prepared by MOA Land Records on December 27, 2016

Map updated to reflect the true legal boundary as described in AO 18-76 (old City of Anchorage, as described in chapter 41, section 2 SLA 1973, plus GAAB Service Area 30, as described in GAAB Or. 139-71); AO 1980-183 (Kincaid Park, Airport Land, Campbell Point); AO 1986-100 (portions of Germ Heights); AO 188-124 (Tanana Valley and Country Lane Estates); and AO 1995-33 (additional portions of Glenn Heights).

Disclaimer: This map is a depiction of the service area boundary and is not warranted as suitable for any other purpose.

Exhibit A



Prepared by MOA Land Records on December 28, 2016

Map updated to reflect the true legal boundary described as described in AR 94-76 (all areas of the Municipality within the area of the former Eagle River-Chugiak Borough, see ch. 145 SLA 1974).

Disclaimer: This map is a depiction of the service area boundary and is not warranted as suitable for any other purpose.



Exhibit C

ANCHORAGE PARKS AND RECREATION

STAFF STRUCTURE

Anchorage Parks and Recreation is overseen by the Director, who reports to the Municipal Manager. The Director oversees the following sections:

- » **Parks Superintendent:** Manages three divisions and provides primary oversight of park and trail improvements in the Anchorage Bowl.
 - › Maintenance and Operations (Horticulture, Healthy Spaces, and Maintenance)
 - › Capital Improvements and Planning
 - › Natural Resources
- » **Budget Manager:** Manages the operating and capital budget and oversees administrative staff including a Contracts Administrator.
- » **Recreation and Aquatics Manager:** Oversees citywide events, pools, recreational facilities, and recreation programmers.
- » **Cemetery Director:** Manages the Anchorage Memorial Cemetery.
- » **Eagle River–Chugiak Parks and Recreation Manager:** Oversees parks and trails in the Eagle River–Chugiak Park and Recreational Service Area (see following section for department structure).

ANCHORAGE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

(4.60.090) This group consists of nine commissioners appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Anchorage Assembly. The Commission is an advisory commission and deliberative body on all matters pertaining to parks and recreation within the Service Area.

FUNDING

Funding for Anchorage Parks comes primarily from property taxes collected within the Service Area. The department has two types of budgets: an annual operating budget (for staffing, maintenance, and day-to-day services) and the capital budget (one-time funds for park improvements, new facilities, and trail development). The capital budget also leverages state and federal grants, community partnerships, and volunteer contributions. Unlike Eagle River, Anchorage's capital budget is based on annual park and trail bonds, which are voted on citywide, to fund capital improvements.

The Municipality has two documents that govern planning and funding for capital projects:

- » **Capital Improvement Program (CIP):** Provides the department's 6-year capital project outlook. This is created through the department submitting its 6-year capital project request, amended as needed by the administration and then published annually by the Municipality of Anchorage's Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This document represents a longer timeline of capital improvement needs and forecasts the next six years of capital improvement requests.
- » **Capital Improvement Budget (CIB):** Identifies the capital project list and budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The CIP serves as the foundation for the CIB and represents the upcoming year's requests on the annual Parks Bond. This is also developed by the department, submitted to the department of OMB, amended by the mayor, and then potentially amended again and voted on by the Assembly.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND PLANNING

The Capital Improvements division is responsible for project planning, design, approvals, and construction across the park and trail system. Park planners may have backgrounds in landscape architecture, planning, or engineering.

The capital project workplan comes from development of the CIB and CIP. Community Councils nominate and rank projects through an annual survey submitted to the Office of Management and Budget. The project list is then evaluated internally by Parks using a scoring matrix that considers multiple factors.

The scoring matrix offers a transparent process to track funding priorities. It was reestablished in 2025 from a process previously used in the early 2000s and updated to be more consistent with the Municipality’s Project Management and Engineering Department’s (PM&E) Scoring Criteria.

Consistency with Adopted Plan (PM&E #9)	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM SCORING CRITERIA:		Property Ownership MOA or Parkland
Public Support (PM&E #2)	Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Impact (PM&E #10)	Environmental Impact	Severity of Need (PM&E #1, #7)
Support of the Project by Administration* and Parks and Recreation Department (PM&E #3)	External Funding or Partnerships	Support for Existing Infrastructure	Population Served and Park Type*** (PM&E #6)

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Natural Resource Manager oversees a Natural Resources Field Crew and the Youth Employment in Parks Program Coordinator. The Natural Resource Manager is also the key liaison between Parks and partner agencies who manage neighboring land and natural resources, such as the BLM Campbell Tract, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and state and local fire departments.

- » **Youth Employment in Parks:** An accredited program by the National Corps Network, where youth aged 16-19 work on municipal park projects including soft-surface trail construction and rehabilitation. A program coordinator oversees the hiring and supervision of the crews and team leads.
- » **Field Crew:** A result of staff restructuring in 2025, the Field Crew’s role is to support natural resource management including soft-surface trail improvements and maintenance.

** Elected Officials includes members of the Alaska State Legislature and Anchorage Assembly.
* Administration indicates the current mayor and staff of the mayor. *** Note AR 2024-323(s)



HEALTHY SPACES

The Alcoholic Beverages Retail Sales Tax Program funds the Healthy Spaces Division within the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department. The primary purpose of this is to maintain park land and facilities in a safe and usable condition for the general public to enjoy. The Healthy Spaces Division provides resources to assist in Anchorage's homelessness response through year-round clean-up of encampments within parks, trails, and greenspaces.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE

The park operations team is responsible for the beautification, care and maintenance of parks and trails. Historically the division has also been responsible for public facility and road right-of-way landscaping within the Municipality, which is currently being re-evaluated due to a lack of dedicated funding to support the ongoing and growing needs of the city. Operations staff are supported by user groups holding Cooperative Use Agreements and volunteer projects such as Adopt-a-Trail and Invasive Weed Smackdown events.

Year-round department maintenance on trails and at trailheads includes graffiti and litter removal, restocking dog waste bag stations, locking and unlocking parking lot gates, and emptying trash bins. Sanitation is also completed daily and is a primary responsibility of the Maintenance and Healthy Spaces divisions.

Summer

During summer months, operations is tasked with managing turf and horticulture assets across parks and along trails including lawns, trees, flower beds, and hanging baskets. Specific trail maintenance tasks include clearing and sweeping trails after winter snow melt, brush and debris clearing after storms, limbing trees to improve sightlines, and repairs to trail surfaces as hazards arise.

Winter

Winter trail maintenance includes two core processes: snow clearing (removal of snow from a path) and trail grooming (creating a firm, consistent snow surface for cross-country skiing and multi-use trails). A detailed description and cost analysis of the Department's winter maintenance process is available in the 2024 Winter Operations Plan for Parks and Recreation.



Trackless machine

Snow Clearing

Parks is responsible for clearing snow and ice from 65 miles of municipal facilities, sidewalks, multi-use trails, and pathways, as well as 95,000 square feet of stairs, walkways, and other pedestrian facilities. This includes assisting the Street Maintenance Division and the Alaska Department of Transportation (AKDOT) by clearing sidewalks and pathways

that are not associated with parks. It also includes select school routes, recreation centers, memorials, and high-use parks and is estimated to be approximately 25% of all municipal sidewalk and non-motorized facilities. Ship Creek Trail and Fish Creek Trail are part of the snow clearing route.

Trackless machines (small municipal tractors fitted with blower heads) are used to clear sidewalks and pedestrian pathways efficiently, especially in narrow or difficult-to-reach areas.

For trails and pathways that are cleared of snow in winter, the Winter Operations Plan provides target metrics for snow response. The goal is to have snow cleared from designated corridors and routes within 84 hours after a storm ends. This target aligns with the Street Maintenance Division’s goal of 84 hours, depending on snow volume, and allows for effective coordination with other divisions and agencies.

SNOW ACCUMULATION	PARKS PRIORITY AREA	NORMAL DEADLINE
Less than 4 inches	First pass with focus on all routes.	24-48 hours
4-15 inches	First pass with focus on high traffic routes. Second pass cleanup and widening efforts.	84-108 hours
>15 inches	Adapt to circumstances.	120 hours or more

Target metrics from the Winter Operations Plan for Parks and Recreation.

Trail Grooming

In addition to snow clearing responsibility, Parks grooms several multi-use greenbelt trails and connector trails. Groomed trails support daily use by multiple user groups, including pedestrians, fat-tire cyclists, and cross-country skiers. Parks first use snowmachines to roll and compact trails, then pull a hydraulic groomer to provide an even surface with comb and set track (two parallel tracks for classic skiing, positioned along the outer edge of the trail).

In Anchorage, nearly 35 miles of multi-use trails are groomed two to three times per week by operations and maintenance staff. Typically, this distance is completed with two passes and multiple snow machines at one time, meaning the actual mileage traversed during grooming can be upwards of 120 miles. Parks also has formal agreements with non-profits who help facilitate winter trail maintenance for specific user groups using snowmachines or snowcats. This includes the Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage (NSAA), Singletrack Advocates (STA), and the Alaska Sled Dog Racing Association (ASDRA).

Groomed trails are also used during events such as the Tour of Anchorage – one of the few point-to-point cross-country ski marathons in North America – and the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Both events take place during Fur Rendezvous, a festival that attracts hundreds of thousands of people each year. It's estimated that 100,000 spectators gather Downtown to watch Iditarod sled dogs take off toward the Chester Creek Trail. In addition to supporting daily users and special events, using snowmachines to groom snow is more effective due to staff resources, trail design, and equipment costs.

- » The equipment is significantly cheaper to procure and maintain than Trackless machines.
- » Trackless machines require more training to operate and must be repaired by the municipal Fleet Maintenance division, who serve all Anchorage municipal departments with limited resources.
- » Snowmachines can be operated safely by entry-level park caretakers with basic training and repaired in-house by the Parks mechanic.



Trail groomer pulled by snowmachine

- » Much of the recreational trail network was not designed to store cleared snow, and grooming reduces risk of damaged infrastructure.
- » Grooming avoids the need to add 30–50 extra miles of routing, as Trackless machines cannot navigate many bridges and tunnels due to height and weight restrictions.

Spring

In the spring, as sunlight hours increase, maintenance staff will assess conditions and end grooming when the snow starts to deteriorate. Typically, this is when temperatures are not freezing overnight consistently. Maintenance staff monitor conditions during this time and begin clearing snow once walking and biking becomes difficult, and the compacted surface deteriorates.



Visit Anchorage / Jack Bonney



PROGRAMMING

The Department and partner organizations run programs that activate the city's trail system year-round. These are overseen by a Citywide Events Coordinator and supported by recreation staff, the Community Engagement Coordinator, and volunteers.

Parks directly organizes and co-hosts several signature events, including the Winter Solstice Festival at Cuddy Family Midtown Park, Haunted and Enchanted Trails at Goose Lake Park, the Mayor's Marathon (in partnership with UAA) on the Chester Creek and Coastal Trails, and the annual Tuesday Night Race series (in partnership with Healthy Futures).

In addition, Anchorage Parks permits and supports partner organizations who host major community events such as the Iditarod Ceremonial Start, the Tour of Anchorage, Arctic Cyclocross competitions, and numerous other events and gatherings throughout the year. The Community Engagement Coordinator manages volunteers who conduct park and trail improvement projects or who are supporting citywide events and programs. The wide array of programs showcases Anchorage's extensive trail network, fosters community engagement, and celebrates the city's outdoor culture in every season.



Visit Anchorage / Jody O

EAGLE RIVER-CHUGIAK PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

STAFF STRUCTURE

The Eagle River–Chugiak Parks and Recreation division is overseen by a Deputy Director who reports to the Director of Anchorage Parks and Recreation. The Deputy Director supervises four direct reports:

- » A **Capital Project Manager** responsible for trail project planning, design, and construction.
- » A **Budget and Finance Manager**, who also oversees maintenance staff.
- » A **Recreation Specialist** managing trail events, user group coordination, and volunteer partnerships.
- » A **Pool Manager**, whose work does not include trails or outdoor responsibilities.

EAGLE RIVER-CHUGIAK PARKS & RECREATION BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Eagle River–Chugiak Parks and Recreational Service Area Board of Supervisors (BOS) establishes policy guidelines and priorities for the Eagle River–Chugiak Park and Recreation Departmental services (AMC 27.20.100). The BOS reviews and approves the department’s budget, and reviews and comments on proposed capital projects, adjustments to the mill levy, amendments to parks and recreation plans, and contracts for services within the service area. It consists of six seats representing Chugiak, Birchwood, Eagle River, Eagle River Valley, South Fork, and a Mayoral appointee.

The Chugiak–Eagle River Advisory Board may also review and approve actions impacting Eagle River–Chugiak Parks and projects as the Advisory Board shall serve to focus and advise on Chugiak–Eagle River area land use concerns (AMC 4.60.105). It consists of seven regular members and seven alternatives, representing Eklutna Valley, Birchwood, Chugiak, Eagle River, Eagle River Valley, and South Fork.

FUNDING

Parks and recreation services within the Eagle River–Chugiak Parks and Recreation Service Area are funded by a 1 mil property tax levy. The annual budget for Eagle River–Chugiak Parks and Recreation is approved by the BOS. This service area model was adopted in 2004 after repeated attempts to fund parks through areawide bonds failed, since they had to be voter-supported across the municipality, in addition by the residents of Eagle River and Chugiak.

Funding is provided primarily through the service area’s property tax levy, which generates a total budget of roughly \$5 million, divided approximately 80/20 between the operating and capital budgets. Trail projects are generally funded through the capital budget, while operating funds cover smaller maintenance tasks such as clearing fallen trees. Additional funding is occasionally secured through grants. Bonds are rarely used due to their historical failure in area-wide elections.

PARK DEVELOPMENT AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Capital Project Manager oversees planning, design, and construction in the Eagle River Chugiak service area.

Trail projects and initiatives are typically developed by user groups, the department, or through joint efforts, with funding requests reviewed and approved by the BOS. The BOS prioritizes projects based on documented community needs, matching funding opportunities, and the ability to leverage volunteer contributions.

Historically, trail funding requests have been met within a year or two, but with increasing demand in the Chugiak-Eagle River area, the department anticipates the need to establish more formal funding criteria in the future.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Eagle River-Chugiak Parks has its own maintenance and operations staff whose duties are similar to Anchorage Parks (see Anchorage Parks and Recreation section for summer and winter operation descriptions)

Trail maintenance and grooming are carried out through partnerships with local user groups:

- » **Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA):** Provides ski trail grooming, with financial support from ER Parks.
- » **Chugiak Dog Mushers Association:** Grooms mushing trails, with partial ER Parks assistance.
- » **Chugach Mountain Bike Riders (CMBR):** Maintains single-track trails through volunteer-led grooming.

PROGRAMMING

Programming in Eagle River-Chugiak emphasizes trail activation through partnerships with local user groups and volunteer organizations. Eagle River Parks hosts a variety of community-led events that highlight its trails and outdoor culture, such as local ski races, dog mushing competitions, and mountain bike gatherings supported by groups like the Chugiak-Eagle River Ski Club, Chugiak Dog Mushers Association, and Chugach Mountain Bike Riders. Through this collaborative model, Eagle River's trail system thrives on both community energy and municipal oversight, ensuring programs reflect local priorities and build lasting stewardship.

AMATS

AMATS is the municipality's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) tasked with the coordination of transportation decision-making between state and local agencies. AMATS Policy #3 states that non-motorized projects, including trail construction and rehabilitation, will average 15-30% of the allocation averaged over the four-year funding program, also known as the Transportation Improvement Program.

The decision-making body of AMATS is the Policy Committee, which is advised by a Technical Advisory Committee. The Technical Advisory Committee may also consider recommendations from other ad hoc and quarterly committees.

The Recreational Trails Plan originated as a recommendation from the AMATS Non-Motorized Plan. It was funded via the Transportation Improvement Program with a match provided by Parks staff time.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Community councils are “private, nonprofit, voluntary, self-governing associations composed of residents, property owners, business owners, and representatives from other entities located within geographical areas designated by the Assembly.” Community councils serve an advisory function to the Assembly in the local government process. The purpose of the establishment of community councils is to provide a direct and continuing means of citizen participation in government and local affairs

ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

Since 2005, the Anchorage Park Foundation is the mobilized public support and leveraged financial resources for Anchorage parks, trails, and recreation opportunities in partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department. Anchorage Park Foundation’s programs and initiatives focus on promoting outdoor recreation as a part of a healthy lifestyle, addressing inequalities in access to public lands, and empowering community members to get involved in improving the parks in their neighborhoods. The primary focus areas are the Youth Employment in Parks Program, Schools on Trails, Community Challenge Grants, Inclusive Playgrounds, and the Trails Initiative.

COOPERATIVE USE AGREEMENTS AND LEASES

Parks undertakes formal agreements with user groups who take responsibility for trail maintenance on park-owned land. Some groups also maintain and operate facilities and/or offer supporting education and programs on trails. Except when entry fees are noted, most of these trails remain free and open to the public and the organization may collect voluntary membership fees from trail supporters. See table below for details.

ORGANIZATION	AGREEMENT TYPE	PARK AREA
Singletrack Advocates	Cooperative Use Agreement	35.5 miles of trail maintained at Kincaid and Hillside (Far North Bicentennial) Additional trail mileage in Chugach State Park
Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage	Cooperative Use Agreement	76.5 miles of trail at Kincaid, Hillside/Tour of Anchorage Trail (Far North Bicentennial) 20.5 miles of trail groomed at Beach Lake and Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake Also provides trail maintenance at Anchorage School District properties (Bartlett High, Eagle River High, Mirror Lake Middle), Alaska Pacific University, and Glen Alps within Chugach State Park
Anchorage Sled Dog Racing Association	Cooperative Use Agreement	35.5 miles of trail maintained at Kincaid and Hillside (Far North Bicentennial)

Hilltop Ski Area	Lease	Hilltop Ski Area is a non-profit that provides and maintains a chalet, a downhill ski area, and downhill mountain bike trails (entry fees required)
Anchorage Horse Council	Lease	Equestrian facility based at Ruth Arcand Park. Surrounding trail system supports equestrian programs but is open to the public
Alaska Botanical Garden	Lease	Non-profit managing 110 acres on the edge of Far North Bicentennial (entry fees required). Provides trails (<2 miles), gardens, art installations, special events, and education programming.
Chugiak Eagle River Nordic Ski Club	In development	Have been involved in construction and improvement of cross-country ski trails at Beach Lake, Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake, and in Eagle River.
Chugach Mountain Bike Riders	In development	Builds and maintains 6.5 miles singletrack trails at Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake
Chugiak Dog Mushers Association	In development	Established and maintains over 16 miles of trails at Beach Lake

OTHER RECREATION AREA LANDOWNERS

Municipal parkland often abuts other landowners including Chugach State Park, Eklutna Inc., Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, University of Alaska, Alaska Pacific University, the Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Department of Natural Resources Mental Health Trust, Municipality of Anchorage Heritage Land Bank, and Great Land Trust. Trails may connect between different public landowners even if the user may not be aware of whose land they are on.

Eklutna Inc. is the largest private landowner in the municipality and has recently made their land more accessible to recreation, including biking, hiking and ice climbing, through their Land Access Permit program which grants access to Dena'ina Elnena. Similarly, JBER manages 74,000 acres of land in the municipality and allows recreational use on some of these installation lands through a RecAccess permit. Recreators

must be 16-years and old, are required to have an annual permit, and check in and out of recreation areas through the RecAccess online platform. Use of Eklutna Inc. or JBER installation lands without a permit is considered trespassing.

Great Land Trust (GLT) is a nonprofit organization founded to conserve lands and waters for community benefit. GLT creates new public lands or access points to public lands and executes legal agreements with landowners to place restrictions on development to protect natural habitat, open space, and opportunities for recreation. GLT is a partner to Parks and provide another avenue to establish public access and recreational trails in the municipality.

Parks works with these agencies and entities through municipal project reviews, recurring stakeholder meetings such as the Far North Bicentennial Park User Group Meeting, and through collaborative projects such as this Plan update.

REGULATIONS, PLANS, & POLICIES

APPLICABLE PLANS OVERVIEW

Planning documents guide development, change, and decision-making for implementing agencies and their communities. A review of adopted plans, policies, and studies related to trails throughout the MOA informed the development of this Recreational Trails Plan. Appendix C. Existing Plans and Policies Review, summarizes relevant goals, objectives, and actionable recommendations.

The intent of this plan is to **complement rather than supersede** trail-specific recommendations in neighborhood, district, or park-specific master plans. Some districts extend beyond Parks service areas, and like a Park Master Plan, district plans may provide more detailed guidance than this Recreational Trails Plan. These plans have each been developed through a public process and collectively provide the regulatory and community framework for decision-making and investment in recreational trails.

Consider a sandwich analogy, which generally requires two slices of bread as a foundation and a mixture of fillings including meat, cheese, vegetables and condiments.

While each component of the sandwich has individual value, together they provide a complete meal. Plans and policies have a similar relationship. No one plan or policy will provide everything a community needs on a particular subject, but when considered together, plans provide clear and understandable direction.

Our Recreational Trails Plan sandwich:

Comprehensive and adopted Neighborhood and District Plans are one foundational slice of bread, as they have a legal basis for implementation and define community values across a variety of subjects.

- » Comprehensive Plans
 - › Anchorage 2020, Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan (2021)
 - › Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (2017)
 - › Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan (2006)
- » Neighborhood and District Plans
 - › Hillside District Plan
 - › Fairview Neighborhood Plan
 - › Government Hill Neighborhood Plan
 - › Mountain View Neighborhood Plan
 - › East Anchorage District Plan
 - › West Anchorage District Plan
 - › Midtown District Plan



Functional Plans and studies focus on a particular function, resource, or aspect of a community, providing more detail than areawide plans on the subject function. They are the meat or primary protein ingredient in our sandwich.

- » Areawide Trails Plan (1997)
- » Anchorage Bowl Parks, Natural Resources, and Recreation Facility Plan (2006)
- » AMATS Non-Motorized Plan (2021)
- » AMATS Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2024)

Park and Trail Master Plans make specific recommendations to guide development for individual parks and park-specific trail systems. They provide the cheese and vegetables to our recreation plan sandwich, providing specific flavors and textures. Some examples of trail-related plans include the following.

- » Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Improvements Plan (2011)
- » Beach Lake Park Master Plan (2011)
- » Kincaid Park Master Plan (2011)
- » Campbell Creek Estuary Natural Area (2012)
- » Valley of the Moon Master Plan (2014)
- » Davis Park Master Plan (2017)
- » University Lake Park Master Plan (2017)
- » Taku Lake Master Plan (2018)
- » Tikishla Park Master Plan (2018)
- » Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan (2022)
- » Eastchester Park Master Plan (2024)
- » Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake Park Master Plan (2025)

Trail design and management resources, such as trail design and construction handbooks, are the condiments that add the final flavor, sometime required for the sandwiches identity but otherwise flexible to make it unique. Guidance from the US Forest Service and Alaska State Parks were reviewed in detail and informed the updated Trail Classifications and Design section of this Plan.

Municipal codes and state statutes are the other required foundational slice of bread. Applicable provisions are requirements for successful and legal establishment, dedication, design, and construction of trails (see following section).

MUNICIPAL CODE: TITLE 21 TRAIL REVIEW & PUBLIC PROCESS

Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) is the primary collection of laws and regulations that govern the AMATS area. Multiple sections of code apply to how recreational trails are created, managed, and used. The following sections of AMC most directly inform the recommendations in this Plan and how they will be implemented.

- » **Title 3:** Administration (3.20.070) establishes 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.”
- » **Title 4:** Boards and Commissions establishes the Chugiak Eagle-River Advisory Board (4.60.105) and the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area Commission.



- › **Title 27:** Supervisory Boards establishes the Eagle River–Chugiak Park and Recreational Service Area (21.30.090), its Board of Supervisors (27.20.100), and sets a mill rate not to exceed 1.00 million in any calendar year.
- » **Title 21:** Land Use Planning includes chapters of regulations intended to implement the comprehensive plan in a manner which protects the public health, safety, welfare, and economic vitality. Most pertinent to trails, it sets, public review processes design and development standards, and trail dedication requirements (see section below).
- » **Title 25:** Public Lands (25.20.027)
Acquisition by eminent domain prohibits the municipality from exercising the power of eminent domain for the purposes of leisure amenities, regardless of how they are characterized for financed. “Leisure amenities” as defined in this section includes parks, natural resources use areas, trails and pedestrian paths and/or trails of any kind, greenbelts, access to wilderness areas. This does not apply to pedestrian facilities as amenities in the right-of-way for a public road.

Title 21: Land Use Planning

Regulations governing land use planning and its many facets are included in Title 21. Chapter 21.10 Chugiak–Eagle River provides regulations and standards that apply only to the Chugiak–Eagle River area of the municipality to preserve and enhance their distinctive community character. The other chapters of Title 21 apply to the Chugiak–Eagle River area; where certain provisions overlap but are not in conflict, requirements in Chapter 21.10 are considered additional supplemental requirements, and where they conflict, Chapter 21.10 governs. The Chugiak–Eagle River Advisory Board reviews and makes recommendations to the municipality and its boards and commissions on actions involving the platting board, planning and zoning commission, zoning board of examiners and appeals, and the urban design commission that require public notice to multiple community councils in the Chugiak–Eagle River area (21.10.030.B.3). Trail projects in Chugiak–Eagle River are reviewed by the Eagle–River–Chugiak Parks and Recreation Board of Supervisors and have the same Title 21 requirements as projects in Anchorage. However, trail projects that undergo the Trail Review Process, are part of a major site plan review, or platting action are also reviewed by the Chugiak–Eagle River Advisory Board (21.10.030.B.3).

Review and approval procedures for land use entitlements are defined in **21.03 Review and Approval Procedures**. Trail projects that meet one or more of the following criteria, as defined in 21.03.190, go through the Trail Review process which requires a qualifying community meeting and approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission (formerly by the Urban Design Commission). Trail projects that are part of park improvements requiring Major Site Plan Review follow the same public process.

New construction or reconstruction of trails that are:

- » Over a ½ mile in length
- » A major multi-use trail (Campbell Creek, Ship Creek, Chester Creek, or Coastal Trails)
- » Located along a stream or connecting subdivisions or development, or
- » Located in a Community use, Special Use, or Natural Resource Use Area (Anchorage parks) or a Community, Large Urban, or Regional Park (Eagle River–Chugiak parks).

Community Councils are the foundation of public process in Anchorage, Chugiak and Eagle River. Parks and Recreation staff members are responsible for fulfilling a Community Meeting requirement, visiting the adjacent Community Councils, and presenting the project (21.03.020). In Anchorage, the project goes before the Parks and Recreation Commission, and in Chugiak–Eagle River, the project goes before the Chugiak Eagle River Board of Supervisors before being advanced to the Planning and Zoning Commission for public hearing.

21.07 Development and Design Standards includes provisions that inform the location, surfacing, and design of trails. For example,

21.07.020 Natural resource protection, allows for soft surface trails and elevated walkways to be permitted in the streamside zone running parallel to streams, generally located at least 10 feet from streams.

Dedication of legal access for trails as part of the subdivision process is provided in **21.08.040.D. Subdivision Standards, Dedication, Trails**. It requires dedication of access for trails designated in adopted municipal plans, unless an alternative access point within the subdivision is clearly agreed to be preferable for dedication. The platting authority may modify the alignment, width, and scope of trail access routes as necessary to integrate trail and subdivision design. Right-of-way dedication is preferred, but public use easement dedication or an access tract may be approved. Additionally, the platting authority shall require the dedication of a vehicular right-of-way and pedestrian public access for connectivity with a trail or access point to a large Community Use Area or Natural Resource Use Area (as defined in the Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan or the Chugiak–Eagle River Comprehensive Plan).



DESIGN STANDARDS

The Design Criteria Manual (DCM) is the Municipality of Anchorage's official reference for engineering, planning, and construction standards across public infrastructure. It ensures that projects meet consistent safety, accessibility, and durability requirements. The Trails chapter of the DCM sets clear standards for items like trail width, surface, safety features, and accessibility.

Construction in parks typically conforms to specifications for construction established in the Municipality of Anchorage Standard Specifications (M.A.S.S.). Park projects may include special provisions when park construction falls outside of these standards due to special recreation type or user groups served. Both the DCM and M.A.S.S. are used by municipal staff, planners, engineers, and contractors to guide public trail projects.



STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

There are additional regulatory frameworks intended to preserve park and recreational lands, beyond what is standard at the municipal level. These frameworks may instill additional allowances or restrictions of recreational uses on lands where they apply.

- » **Conservation Easements:** A legal agreement between a landowner (Parks and Recreation) and a qualified organization that permanently restricts certain types of development or land use to protect the land's natural resources.
- » **Section 4(f):** Refers to the original section within the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 requiring consideration of park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites in transportation project development.
- » **Section 6(f):** Refers to the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965. Park land acquired or developed under this fund must be protected indefinitely for "public outdoor recreation use."

3. TODAY'S TRAILS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

This chapter provides an overview of parks and trails in the AMATS area. It also describes the population in this area and the results of the community engagement process. More detailed descriptions and inventories are available in Master Plan documents associated with the different parks.

ANCHORAGE BOWL TRAILS & FACILITIES

Anchorage has an urban trail system with hundreds of miles of trails connecting neighborhoods and recreation destinations throughout the city. In the Anchorage Bowl, the Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department (Parks) maintains approximately 11,000 acres of park land, 244 individual parks, and 230 miles of trails. See Figures 4–7 for Existing Trails in the Anchorage area. Figure 8 shows average annual daily traffic (AADT) for trails in 2024 where permanent trail user counters are installed. The highest and lowest AADT for each trail are displayed.

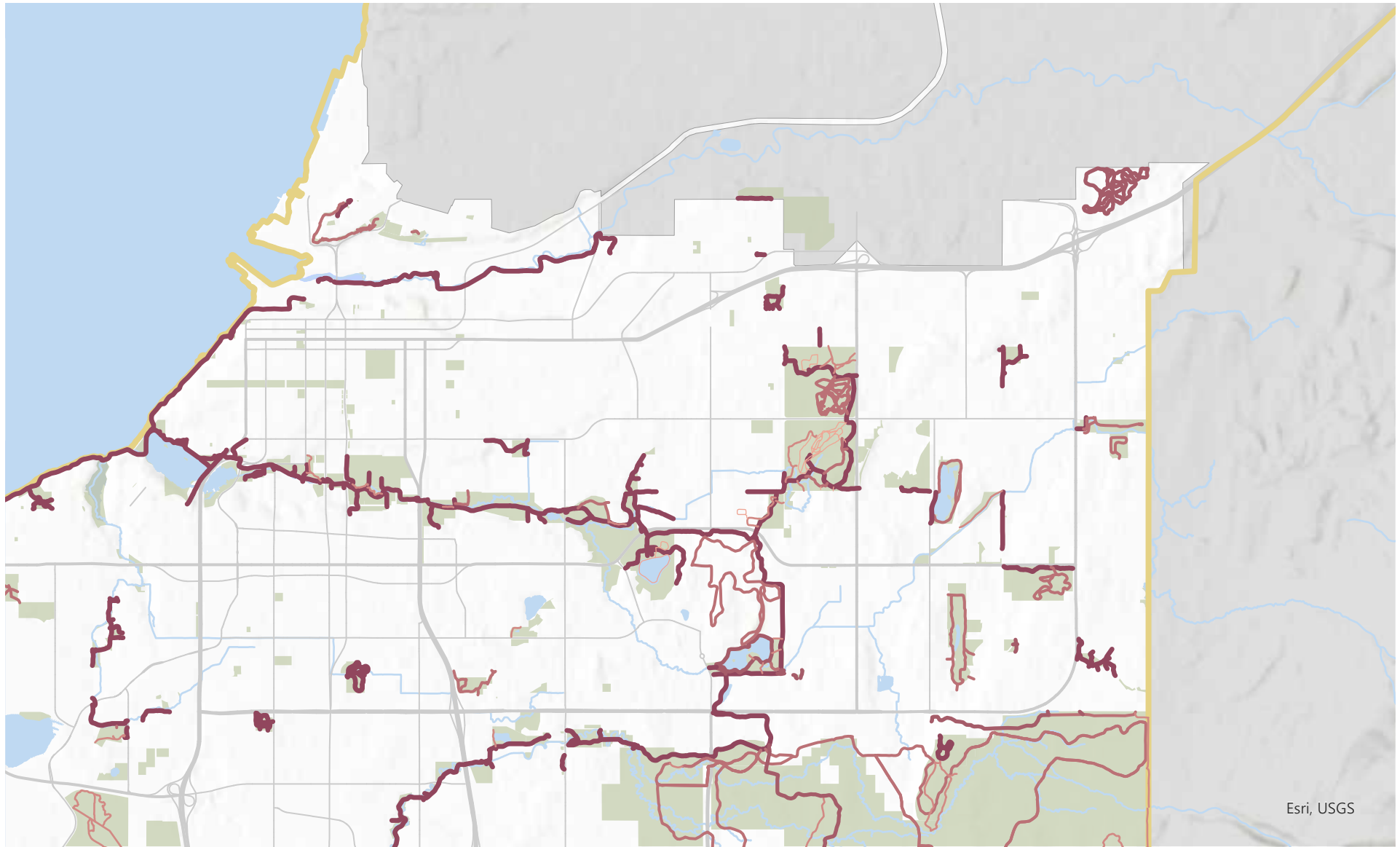
GREENBELT TRAILS

Anchorage’s greenbelt trail system is one of the city’s most valued public assets, connecting neighborhoods, parks, and natural areas through a network of paved, multi-use paths. Built primarily between the 1970s and early 2000s, the system includes the Chester Creek, Campbell Creek, Ship Creek, Fish Creek, and Tony Knowles Coastal Trails. These corridors span more than 30 miles, with most segments built to an 8–10’ paved width plus soft-surface jogging shoulders. They are multi-use and maintained in all seasons. Greenbelt multi-use trail is used throughout this document to refer to the following trails:

- » **Tony Knowles Coastal Trail:** Anchorage’s most iconic trail, this 11-mile paved path hugs the shoreline from downtown to Kincaid Park, offering sweeping views of Cook Inlet, Denali on clear days, and wildlife. While the trail serves many local and daily users, trail counts increase noticeably during the peak summer tourist season.

- » **Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail:** A central link between U-MED, midtown, and Downtown, the Chester Creek Trail spans 4 miles linking neighborhoods, parks, and the Coastal Trail. It is popular with daily commuters and recreationalists with steady year-round use.
- » **Campbell Creek Trail:** Stretching nearly 8 miles from the U-MED district to south Anchorage, this trail follows Campbell Creek alongside neighborhoods and parks. It primarily serves commuters and neighbors and also fishing access points.
- » **Ship Creek Trail:** Located near Downtown, this 3-mile trail highlights Anchorage’s industrial railroad area and offers views of salmon runs and the city skyline. It connects Downtown Anchorage to the Mountain View neighborhood.
- » **Fish Creek Trail:** A neighborhood greenbelt in west Anchorage, this trail follows Fish Creek through wetlands and wooded areas, serving as both a wildlife corridor and community pathway. An extension is currently being designed to connect to the Coastal Trail.





Anchorage - North

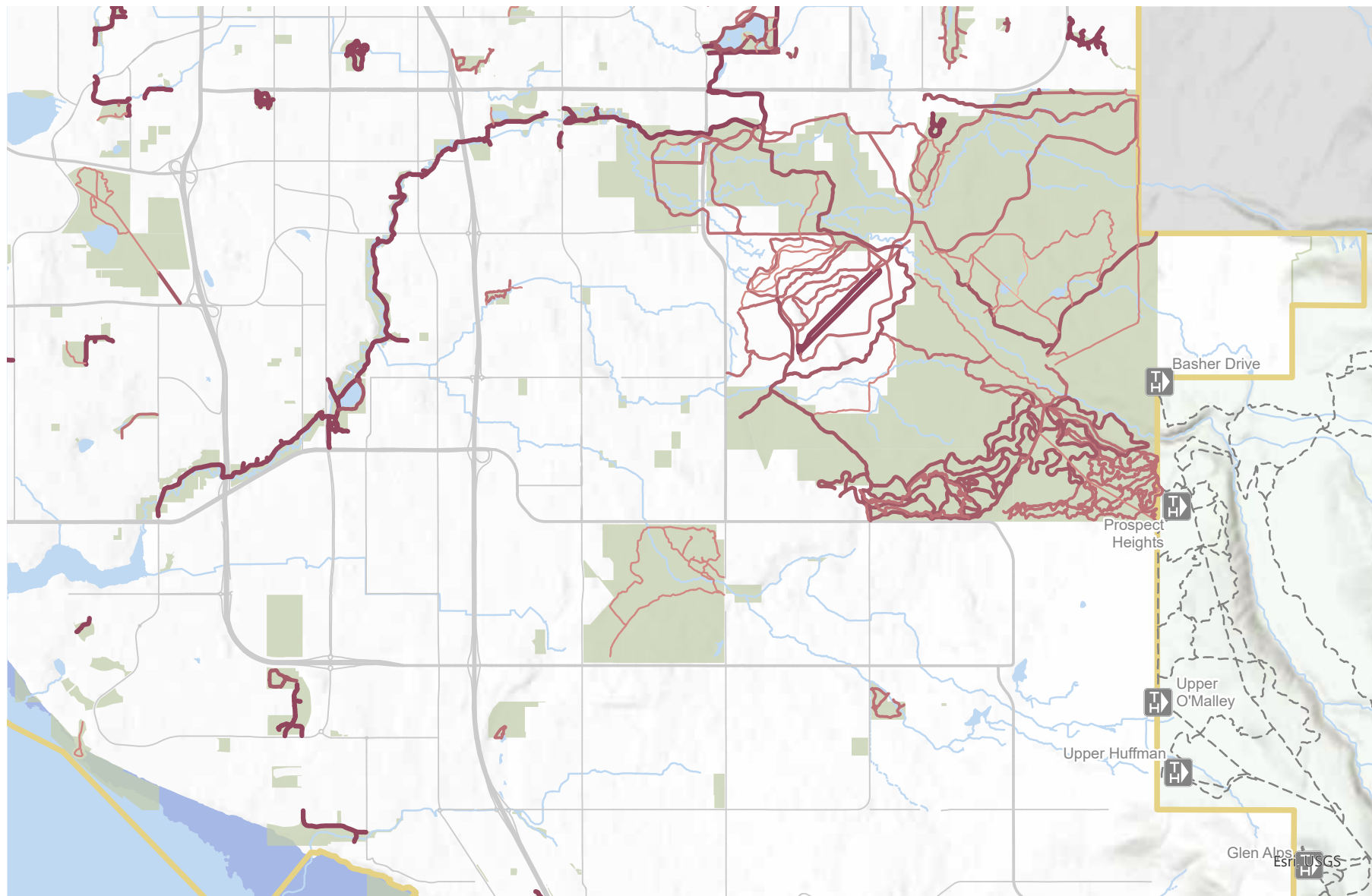
-  AMATS Boundary
-  Chugach State Park Trail
-  Chugach State Park Trailhead

- Existing Trail**
-  Class 1
 -  Class 2
 -  Class 3
 -  Class 4
 -  Class 5

Figure 4. Existing Trails, Anchorage North

-  JBER Boundary





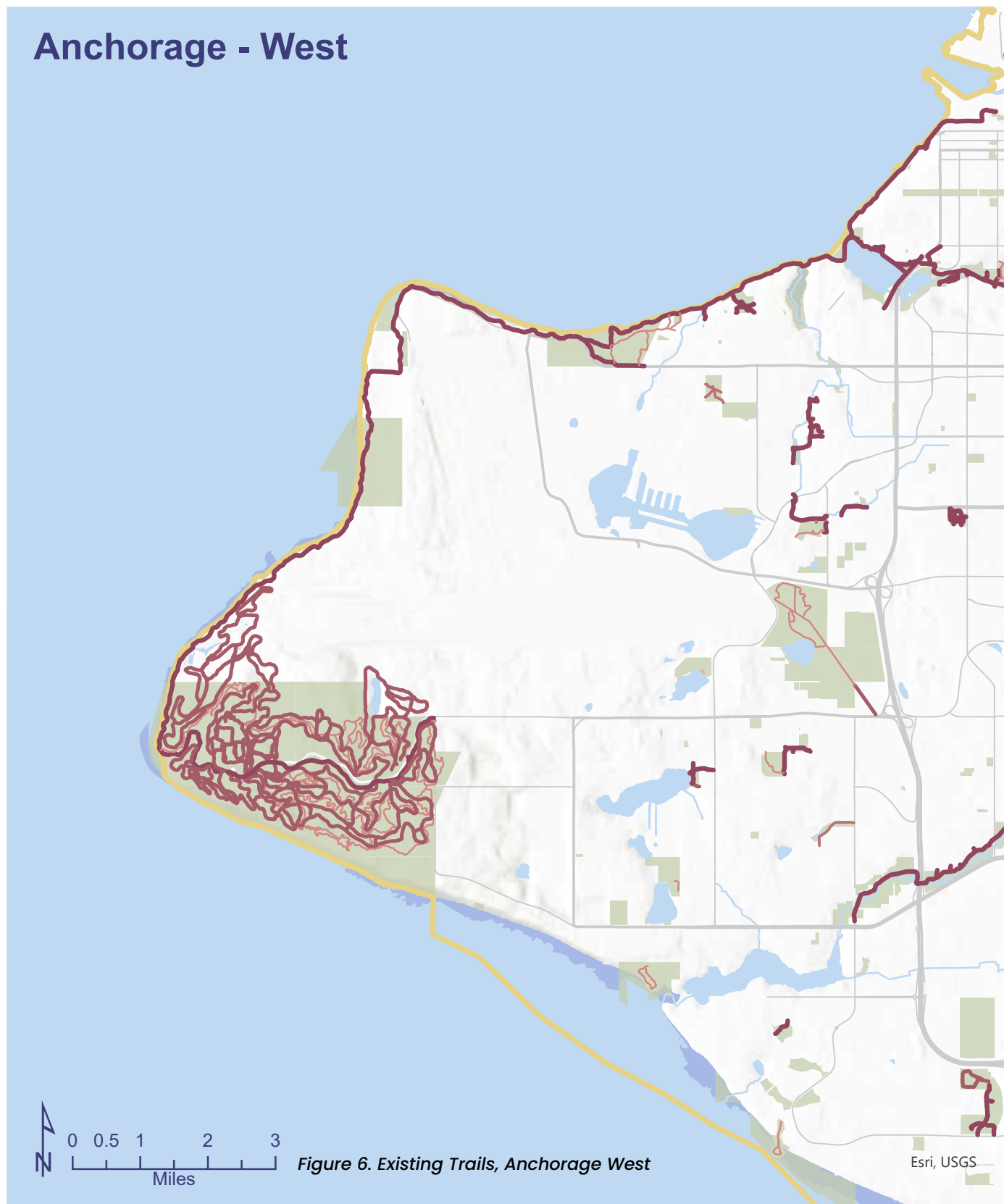
Anchorage - Central

Figure 5. Existing Trails, Anchorage Central



May 2026

Anchorage - West



- | | |
|--|---|
|  AMATS Boundary | Existing Trail |
|  Chugach State Park Trail |  Class 1 |
|  Chugach State Park Trailhead |  Class 2 |
| |  Class 3 |
| |  Class 4 |
| |  Class 5 |
| |  JBER Boundary |



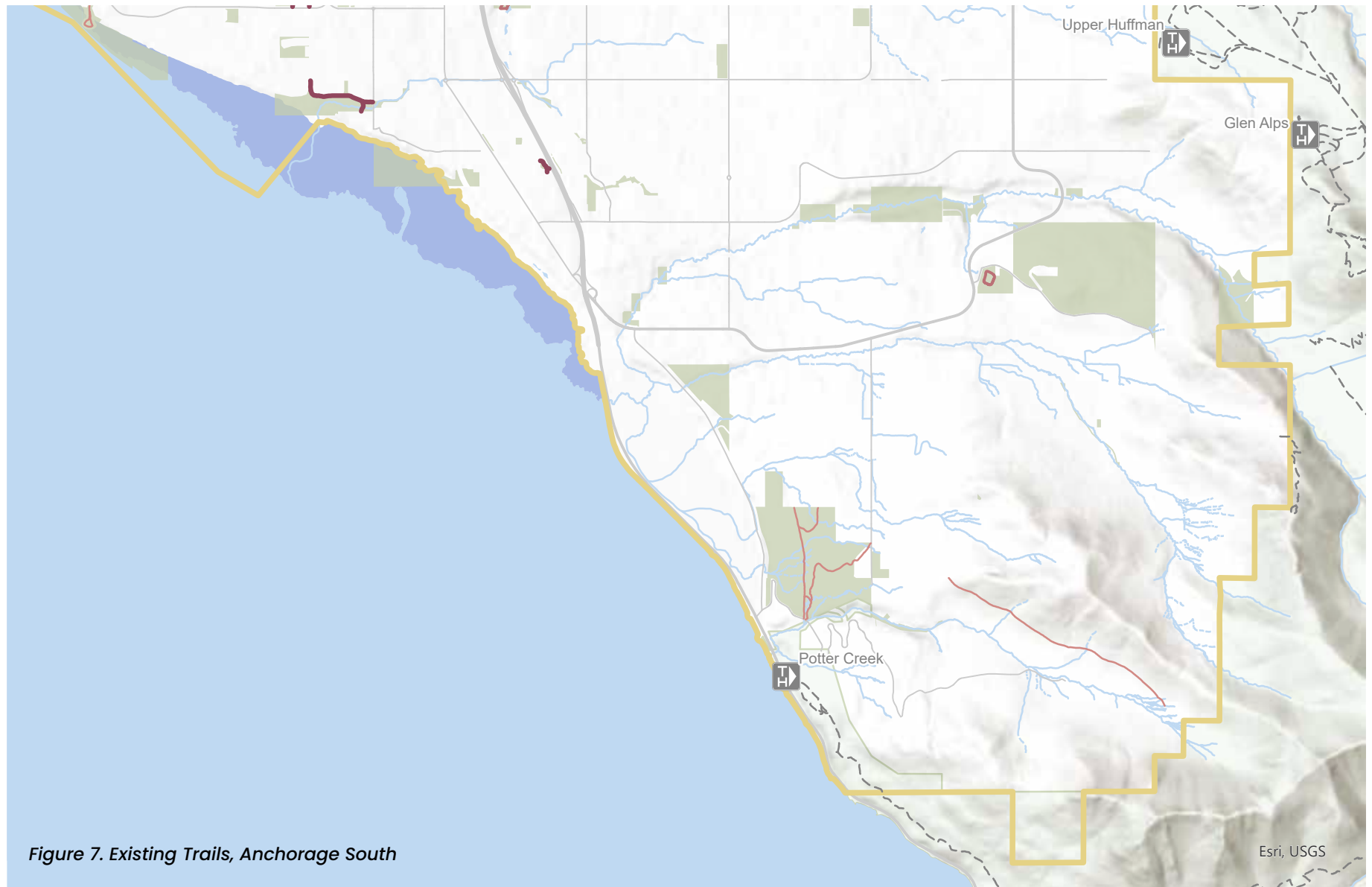
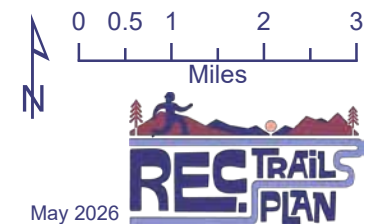
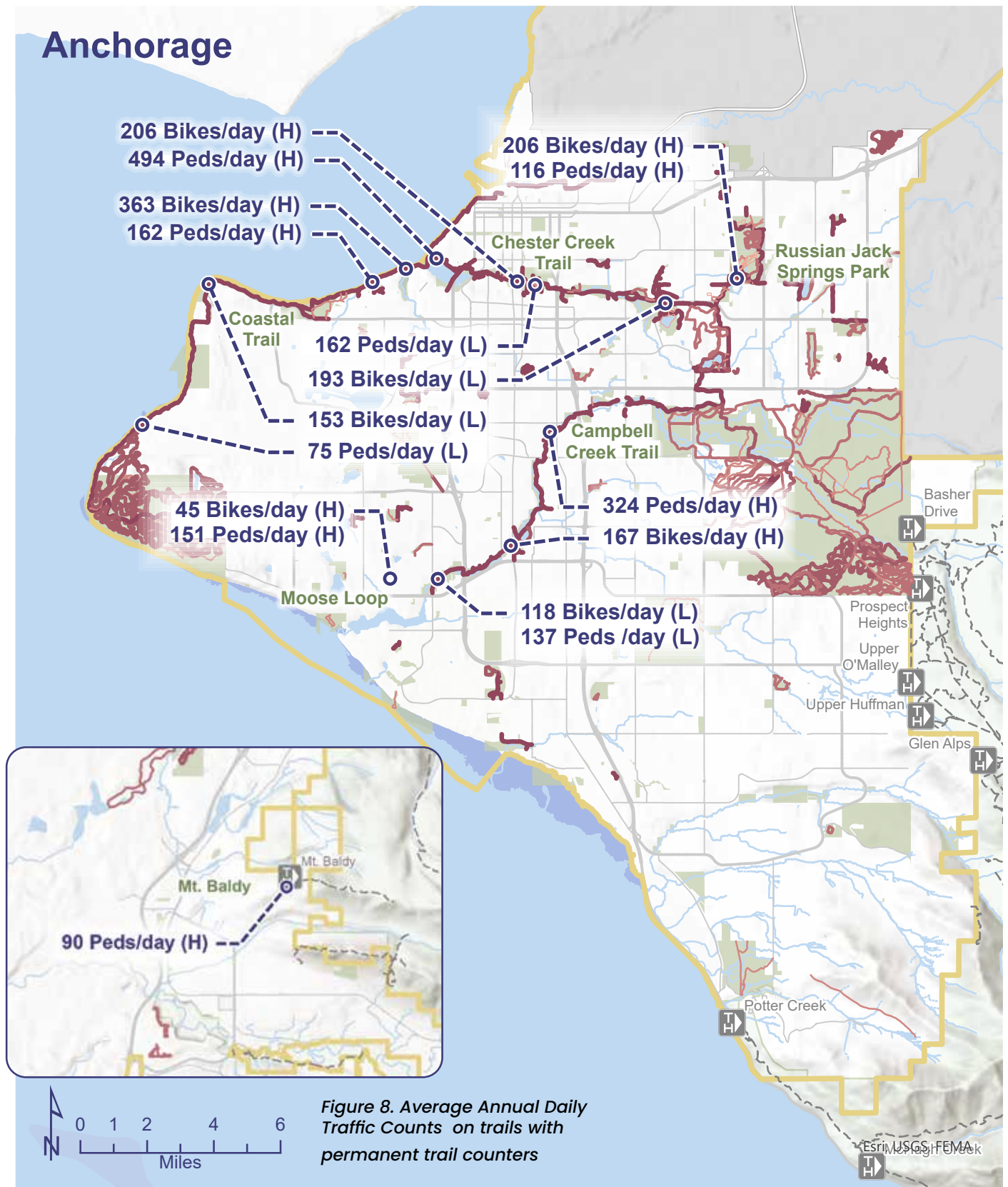


Figure 7. Existing Trails, Anchorage South

Anchorage - South



Anchorage



AMATS Boundary

Trail Class

- Class 1
- Class 2
- Class 3
- Class 4
- Class 5

Chugach State Park Trail



Chugach State Park Trailhead

JBER Boundary

Trail Counts

- (H) Highest Count
- (L) Lowest Count



May 2026



KINCAID PARK

Spanning 1,500-acres on the western coastal edge of Anchorage, Kincaid is well-known for over 30 miles of forested trails, scenic overlooks of Cook Inlet, the sand dunes and motocross track, along with coastline access and common sightings of moose, black bears, and other animals. It's a year-round destination for hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing. Kincaid's large parking area, stadium, ski waxing bunker, and timing hut mean that it is ideal for hosting large events year-round. The Kincaid Chalet, built in 1985 and most recently renovated in 2000, provides an indoor gathering area to support the many events and user groups in the park.

Kincaid Park is partly maintained and activated by groups such as Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage and Singletrack Advocates, who hold Cooperative Use Agreements to maintain trails. NSAA grooms approximately 43 miles of trail in the winter for cross-country ski-only use and manages a snow-making system in the park.

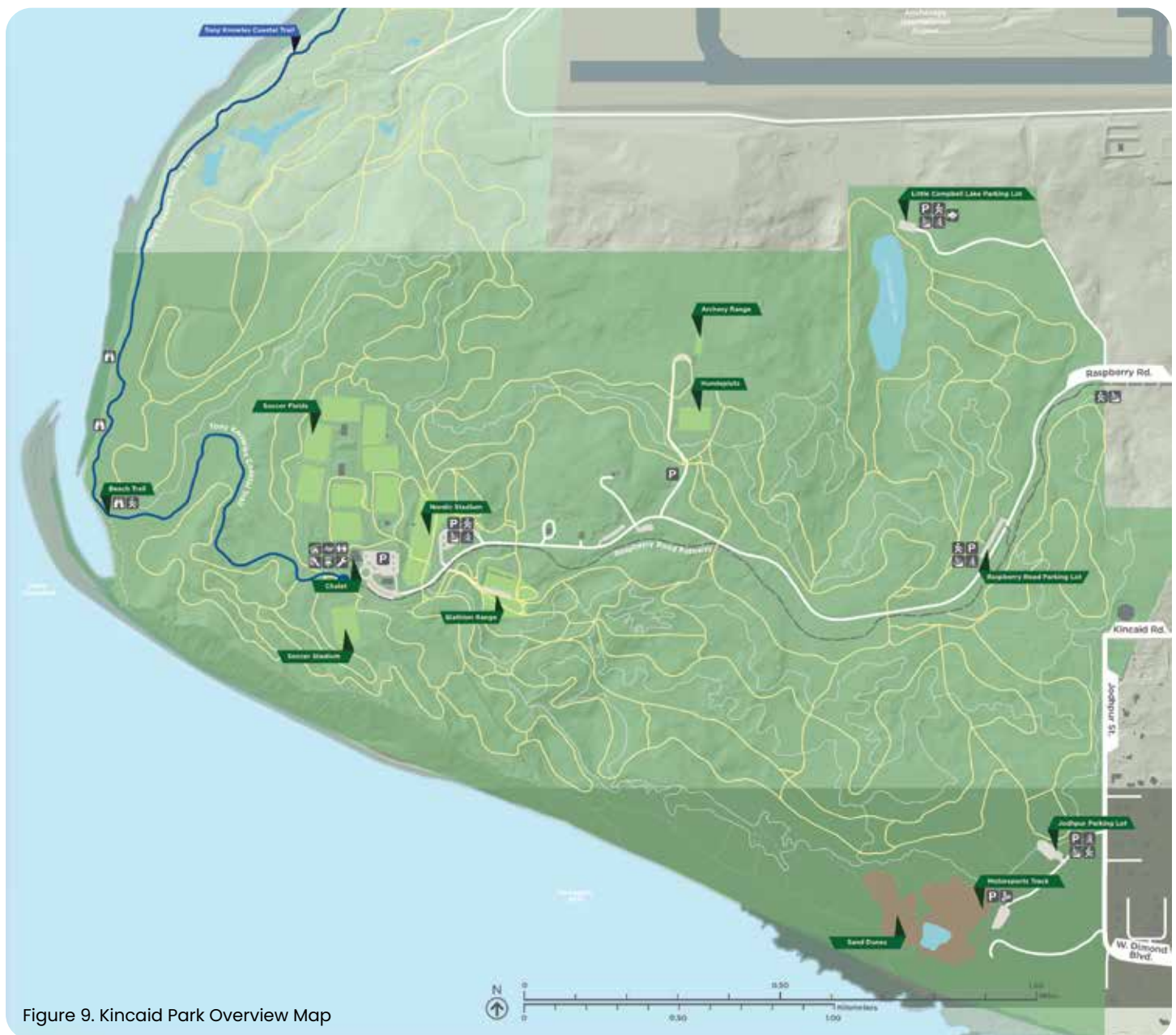


Figure 9. Kincaid Park Overview Map

FAR NORTH BICENTENNIAL PARK

Anchorage's largest natural park, spanning over 4,000 acres, offers soft-surface trails through boreal forest, wetlands, and mountain foothills. It connects with Chugach State Park and provides great opportunities for hiking, biking, skiing, and wildlife viewing within the city. It surrounds the BLM Campbell Tract Special Recreation Management Area which includes 25 miles of trails that seamlessly connect to municipal trails. This park sees an estimated 1,000,000 visitors each year and has seen significant increases in winter recreation, specifically mountain biking.

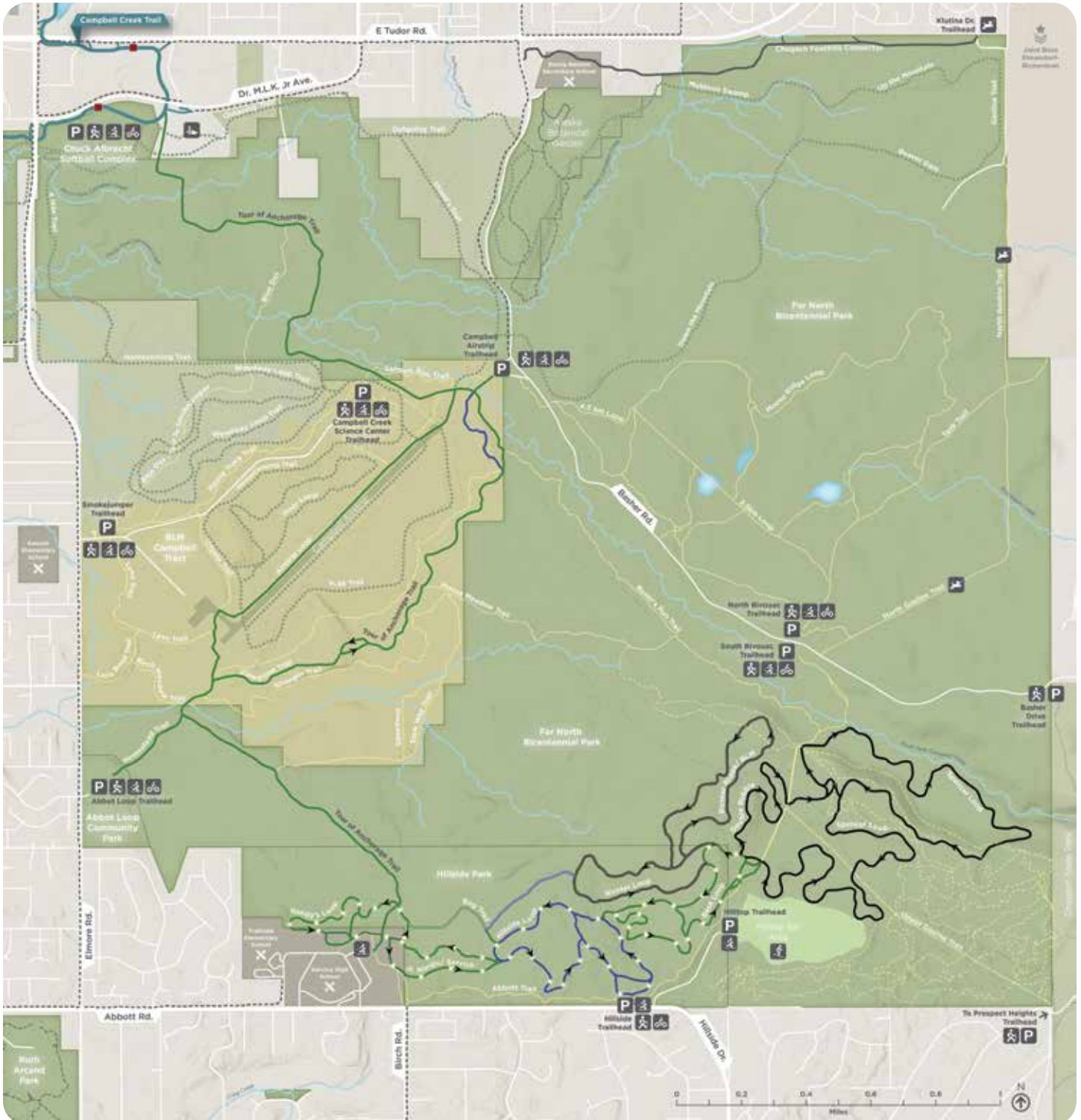


Figure 10. Far North Bicentennial Park Overview Map

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK

A beloved urban green space in east Anchorage with unique history, this park combines natural springs, wooded trails, and open lawns with developed amenities like a golf course, greenhouse, playgrounds, and sports fields. A paved multi-use trail, called the Lighted Loop, traverses the park, connecting the Chester Creek Greenbelt to neighborhoods in Northeast Anchorage and a network of soft surface trails complements a recently developed mountain bike skills trail. In winter, it's popular for sledding and cross-country skiing. The Lidia Selkregg Chalet was built in 1983 and serves as a public meeting and rental space and warming shelter.

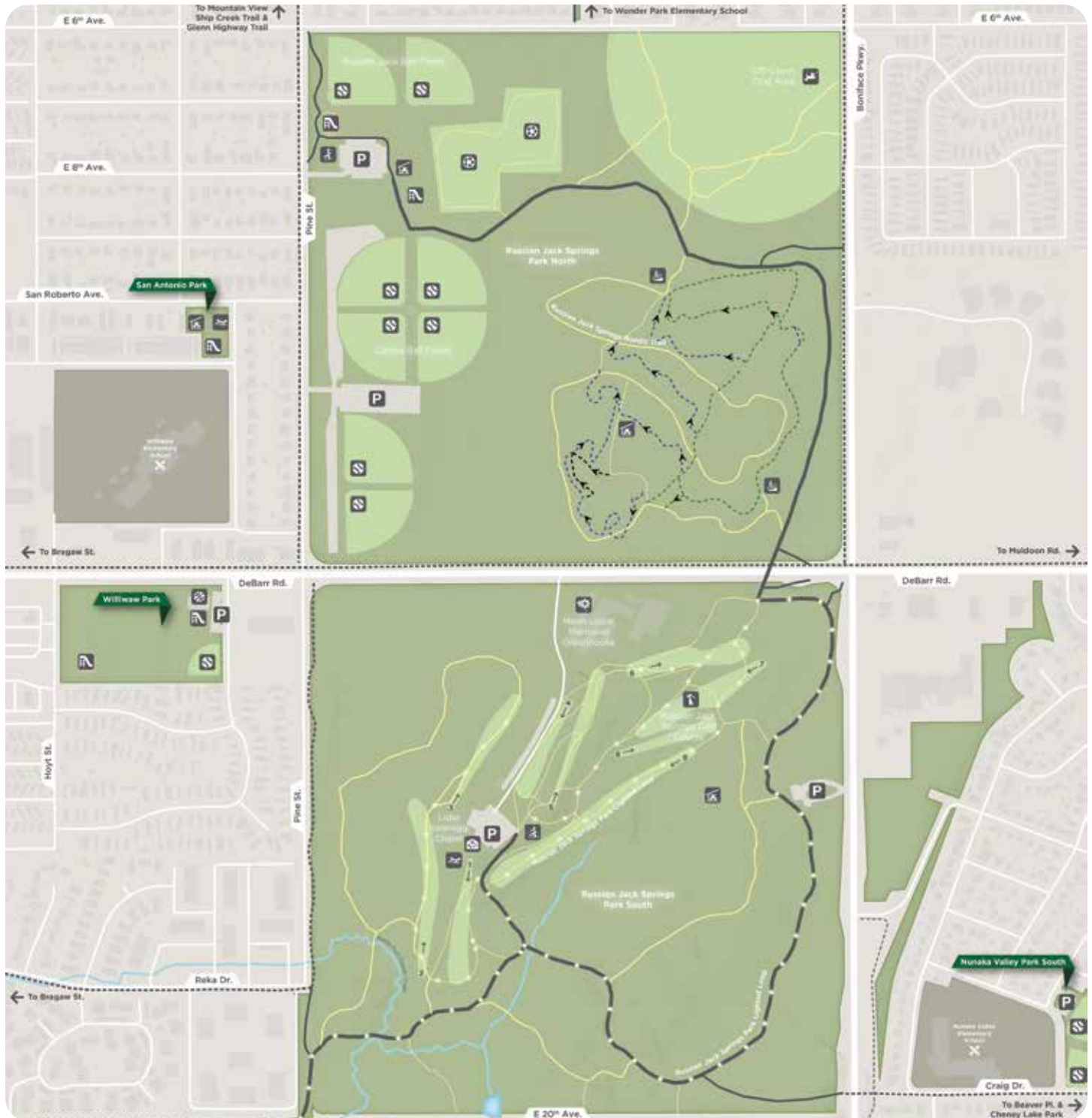


Figure 11. Russian Jack Springs Park Overview Map

RUTH ARCAND PARK

A quieter, wooded park in south Anchorage, Ruth Arcand Park features a horse-friendly gravel loop trail and an equestrian facility leased by the Anchorage Horse Council. It's a favorite for equestrians, dog walkers, and those seeking a quiet trail experience within the city.



Figure 12. Ruth Arcand Park Overview Map

GOOSE LAKE PARK AND UNIVERSITY AREA

Goose Lake Park is nestled between the Campbell Creek and Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek trails, providing access to 157 acres of open space and more than 8 miles of trails managed by Anchorage Parks and Recreation, Alaska Pacific University, and the University of Alaska Anchorage. While three landowners are involved, coordinated management allows users to enjoy these spaces like a singular system. Goose Lake is also seamlessly connected by trail to University Lake Park, which provides an off-leash dog loop. After freeze-up, these park lands also support additional mileage of cross-country ski and fat tire biking trails through wetlands and spruce bogs.

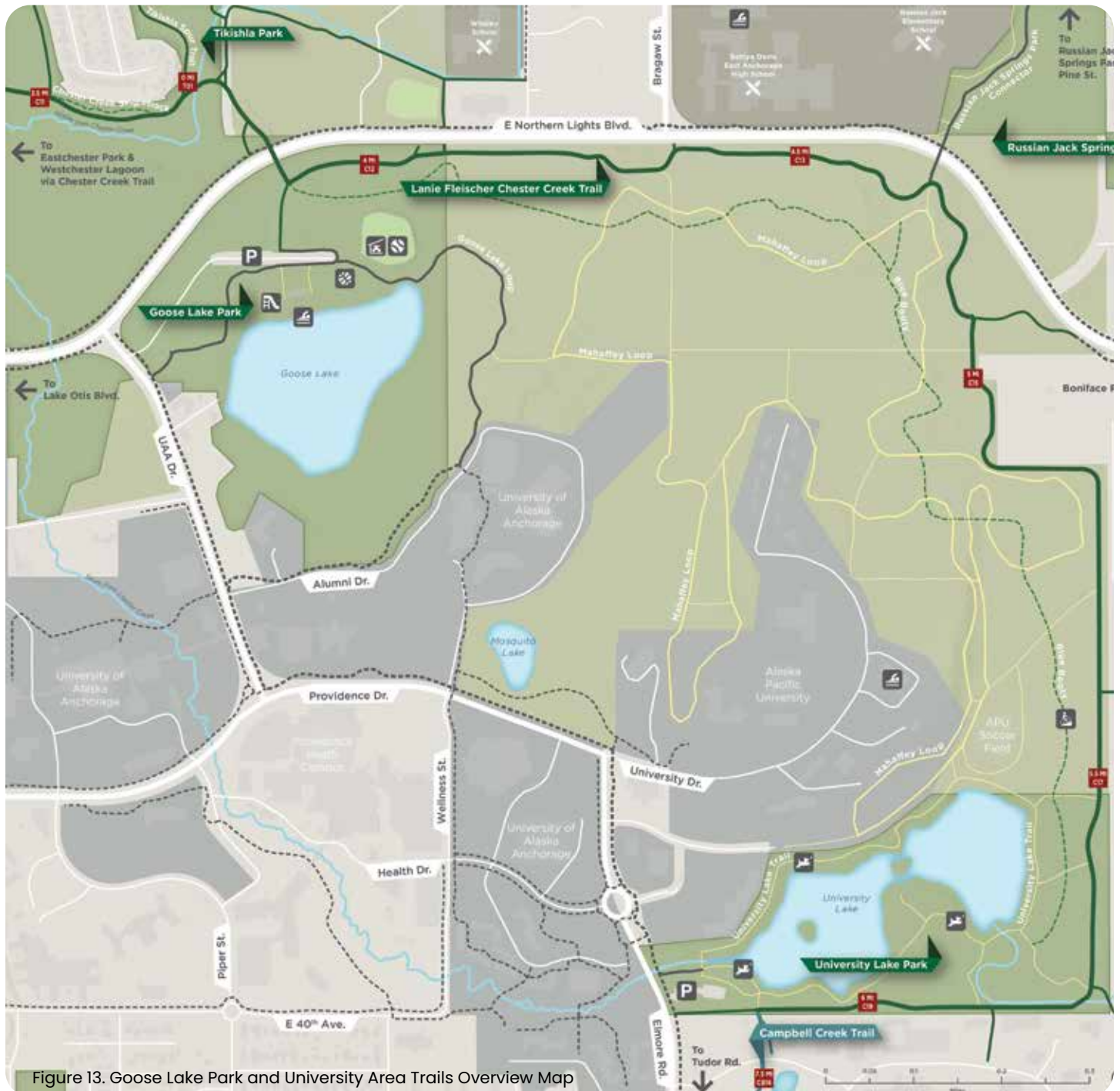
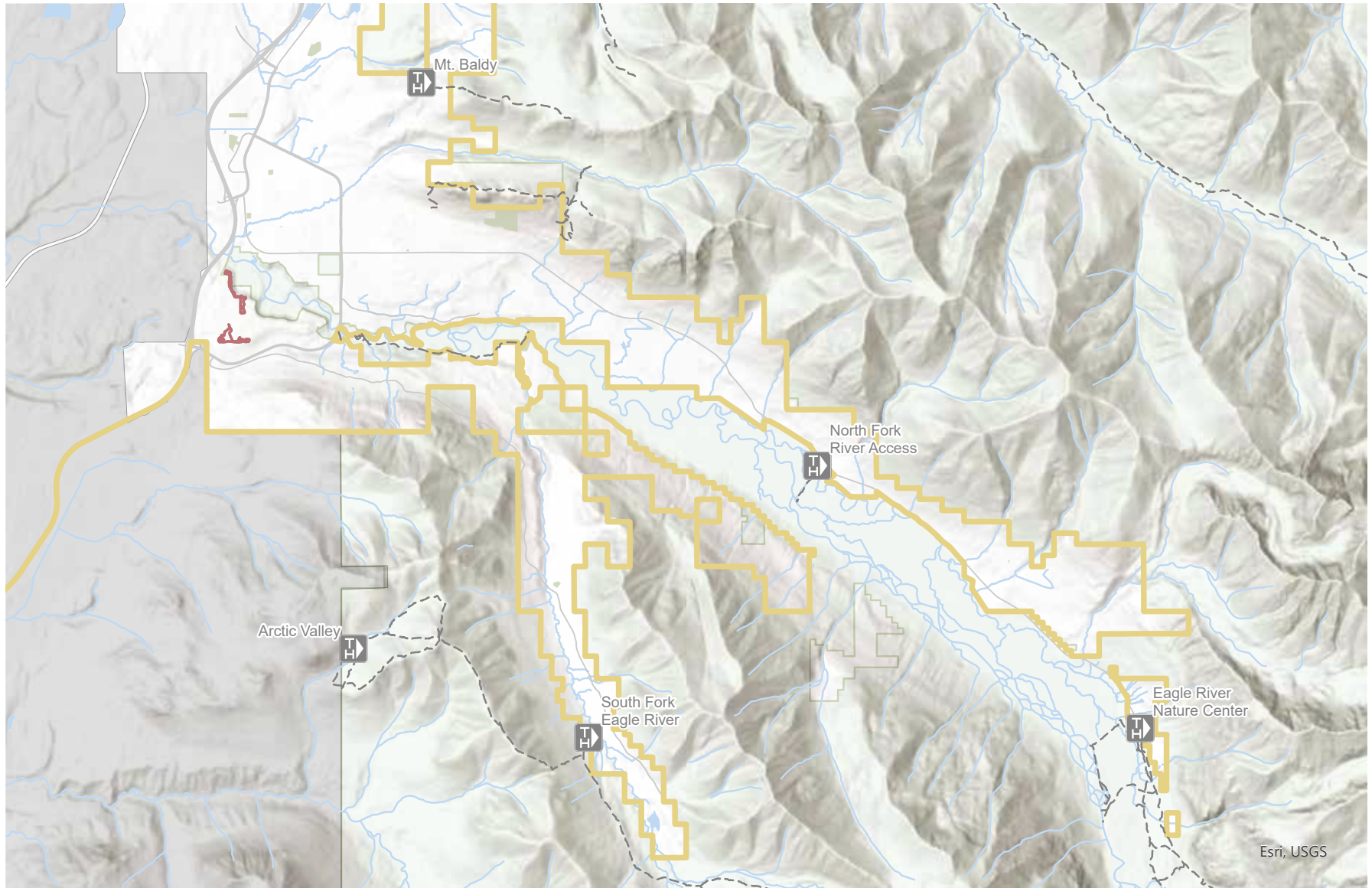


Figure 13. Goose Lake Park and University Area Trails Overview Map

EAGLE RIVER/CHUGIAK TRAILS & FACILITIES

Eagle River Chugiak Parks and Recreation manages over 2,500 acres of developed and undeveloped parkland across 29 park properties. The service area includes over 60 miles of singletrack mountain biking trails, groomed cross-country ski trails, mushing, and multi-use trails.





Eagle River Figure 14-15 Eagle River-Chugiak Area Existing Map Series

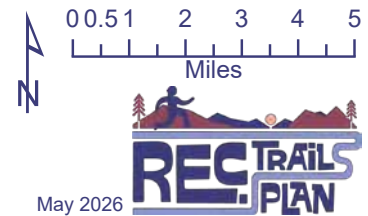




Figure 14-15 Eagle River-Chugiak Area Existing Map Series

Chugiak

- | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|----------------|---|---------------|
|  | AMATS Boundary |  | Existing Trail |  | JBER Boundary |
|  | Chugach State Park Trail |  | Class 1 | | |
|  | Chugach State Park Trailhead |  | Class 2 | | |
| | |  | Class 3 | | |
| | |  | Class 4 | | |
| | |  | Class 5 | | |



BEACH LAKE PARK

This 1,750 acre park is Eagle River's largest park, centered around a scenic lake surrounded by forested trails. The park is a hub for fishing, paddling, and wildlife viewing in summer. Most of the trail development in this park focuses on supporting mushing and cross-country skiing user groups and events. The Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage (NSAA) grooms XX miles of Beach Lake trails in winter. There are two

public facilities in this park that are available for private events and rentals: a small lodge building and cabins at the lake, the Beach Lake Chalet at the cross-country ski trailhead.

The Department constructed a new multi-use gravel trail in 2025 that links the parking area to the coastline and plans to extend this trail, supporting the 2011 master plan's goal to increase the number of year-round multi-use trails.



Figure 16
Beach
Lake Park
Overview
Map

MIRROR LAKE AND EDMONDS LAKE PARK

Just off the Glenn Highway, Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake Parks offers picnic areas, swimming, boating, and fishing against a backdrop of mountain views. It's a family-friendly destination for summer picnics and has an extensive network of mountain biking trails developed and maintained by the Chugach Mountain Bike Riders club.

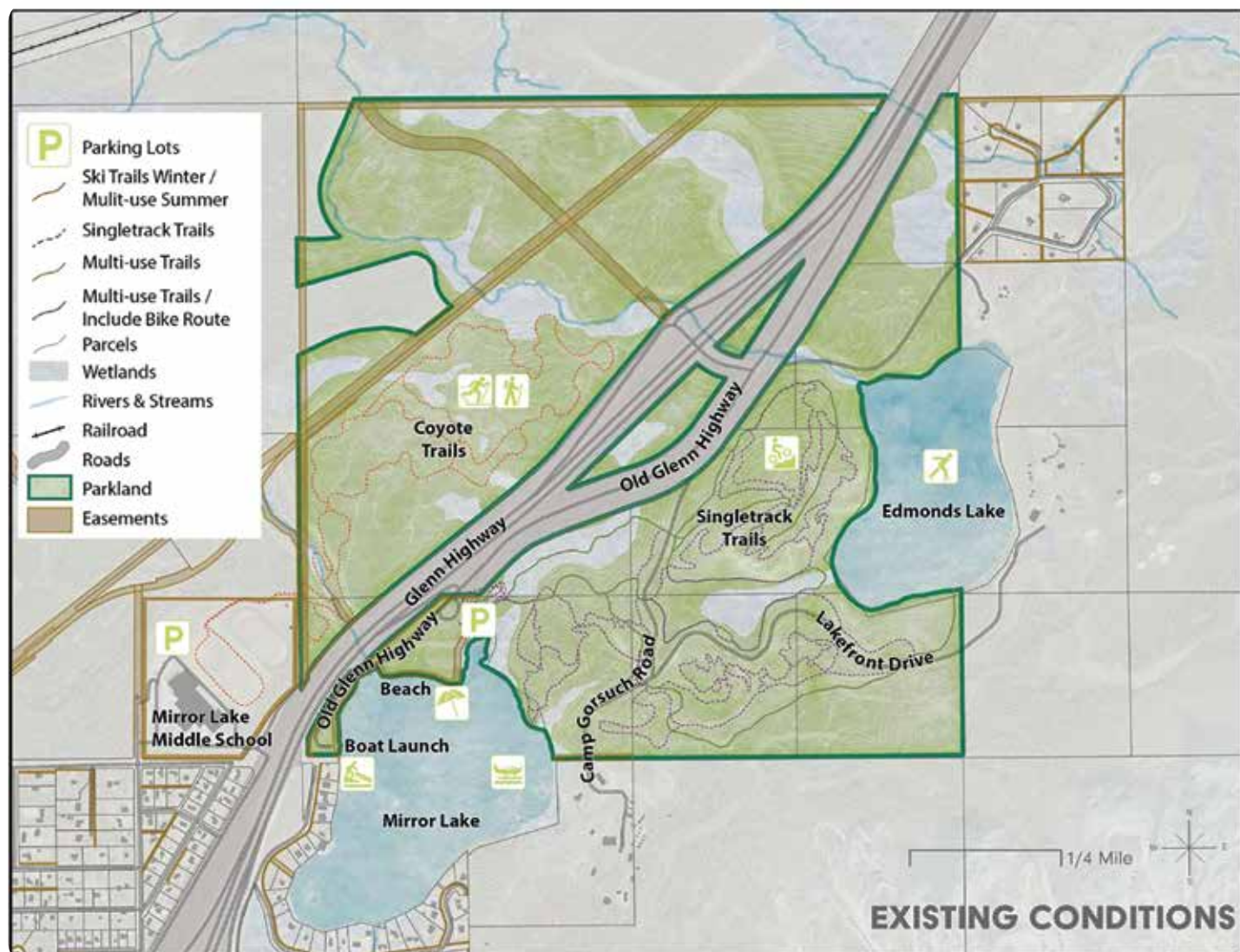


Figure 17 Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake Park Overview Map

REGIONAL TRAILS

GLENN HIGHWAY AND OLD GLENN HIGHWAY TRAILS

The Glenn Highway trail is a paved multi-use path parallels the Glenn Highway, connecting the Muldoon area of Anchorage to Chugiak. Stretching nearly 20 miles, it's popular with cyclists and runners who want a safe, separated route between the two communities. It also hosts events such as the Gold Nugget Triathlon. There are multiple trailheads and access points in Eagle River. The main access from Anchorage is in Mountain View. From Eagle River to Chugiak, the Old Glenn Highway has an adjacent and intermittently separated multi-use path, offering users a route more directly connected to neighborhoods and destinations.

CHUGACH STATE PARK

Chugach State Park (CSP) contains approximately 495,000 acres of land, mostly within the Municipality of Anchorage, and is one of the four largest state parks in the United States. CSP boundaries connect to the Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak–Eagle River, Eklutna, and Joint–Base Elmendorf–Richardson within

MOOSE LOOP

The Anchorage Bowl's four main paved greenbelt trails connect to form a 32-mile loop that, when seen on a map, resembles the shape of a moose. Known as the Moose Loop, this route has become a popular community brand in recent years, promoted by the Anchorage Park Foundation through its annual Moose Loop Trail Challenge fundraiser. Many users choose to ride or walk sections of the loop that fit best with where they live or the destinations they want to visit along the way.

the AMATS area and extends beyond to the communities of Indian, Bird, Girdwood, and farther north to the Knik Arm. The many miles of trails and vast wilderness accessible from them make CSP a destination for locals and visitors from around the world. Easy access to these expansive trail systems is a common reason residents choose to live and stay in Anchorage and plays an important role in tourism.

The Anchorage Hillside, Eagle River, Peters Creek, and Eklutna areas provide access to popular CSP trails used for hiking, biking, skiing, hunting, camping, wildlife viewing, snowmachining, packrafting, kayaking, ATVing, climbing, berry picking and more. Trailheads and CSP access points vary in levels of development and formality, from large parking areas with fee stations to unmarked trails at the end of a neighborhood street. Popular trail access points can become crowded, limiting vehicular circulation and emergency response. The interface between CSP managed lands and trails, private property owners, and recreational trails managed by MOA Parks and BLM are important to plan for community cohesion and to provide connected recreation corridors with consistent allowed managed uses.

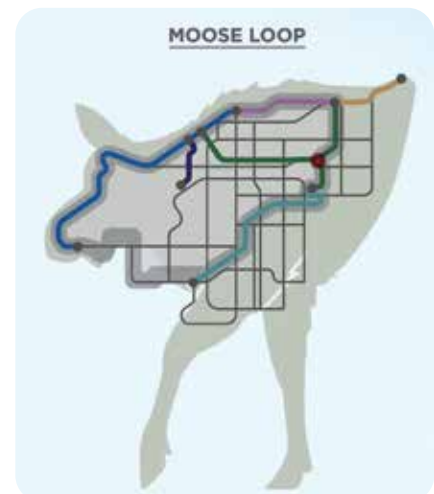


Figure 18 Moose Loop Overview

IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Designated by Congress in 1978, the Iditarod National Historic Trail extends from Seward to Nome following historic routes developed during the Gold Rush era. Only 1% of the entire 2,037 miles of the route are trails managed by local government, including parts of the Chester Creek Greenbelt and Far North Bicentennial Park in Anchorage and Beach Lake Park in Eagle River. The Iditarod National Historic Trail also includes recognized side access trails and commemorative routes, which may be referred to as parallel recreation trails, often designated when the historic route is not able to be legally or physically accessed. A historic main route closely follows today's Eagle River Road and the Old Glenn Highway from the Crow Pass Trail to the Beach Lake Trail.

The Iditarod Trail International Sled Dog Race is an iconic event that commemorates the significance of sled dogs in Alaska's history. During the race's annual Ceremonial Start, mushers and their teams ride from Downtown Anchorage to the Campbell Airstrip along the Chester and Campbell Creek Trails to celebrate the event and engage both local spectators and tourists who travel to Alaska for the race. The community should continue to acknowledge the route of the Iditarod National Historic Trail throughout the AMATS area and to proactively seek opportunities to promote and preserve the historic trail as a meaningful and engaging piece of Alaska's past and present.



Figure 19.

Historic Route of the Iditarod National Historic Trail

Source: BLM INHT Comprehensive Plan Revision Storymap



ALASKA LONG TRAIL

The Alaska Long Trail project, spearheaded by the non-profit Alaska Trails, is working to create a multi-braid trail system connecting more than 500 miles of Alaska from Seward to Fairbanks. Many sections of the proposed routes already exist or are being planned and will incorporate a variety of year-round uses along different braids. CSP and Park's trails connect the backcountry Alaska Long Trail routes to Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River communities. The Moose Loop, Tour of Anchorage Trail, Glenn Hwy/Old Glenn Hwy Pathways, and trails in Beach Lake Park are existing trails identified as primary braid routes. Multiple gaps in primary and secondary routes within the AMATS area are identified and Parks and their partners should actively participate in the planning and implementation of the Long Trail initiative.

AMATS COMMUNITY PROFILE

Demographic data comes from the U.S. Census 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (ACS5YR2023). Indicators were selected based on their availability at the Census Block Group level, which provides more detailed information than a Census Tract. The following Census table codes were used:

Population (B01003)

- » Youth population under 17 (B01001)
- » Population over 60 years old (B01001)
- » Number of households (B19013)
- » Median household income (B19013)
- » Poverty status of families (B17010)
- » Household vehicle availability (B25044)

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

The majority of residents in the AMATS area (nearly 290,000) live in the Anchorage Bowl. Anchorage's higher-density residential areas are concentrated in Northeast Anchorage, Taku/Campbell, Abbott Loop, Huffman, Bayshore-Klatt, and Sand Lake. Most commercial and industrial use is located between Walter J. Hickel Parkway (Minnesota Dr) and the Seward Highway from Downtown to South Anchorage. Homes in Southeast Anchorage are more rural and dispersed with larger lots.

Eagle River is a secondary population center with an estimated 26,100 residents. Eagle River has a small downtown core, commercial corridors along the Old Glenn Highway, and neighborhoods that extend into surrounding valleys bordering Chugach State Park. Chugiak, Peters Creek, Birchwood, and Eklutna have a more rural and dispersed character.

AGE

Youth populations are concentrated in Eagle River, Mountain View, Northeast Anchorage, Taku/Campbell, Sand Lake, and parts of Rabbit Creek. Populations over 60 are more concentrated in Chugiak, Bear Valley, Hillside, and Scenic Foothills.

INCOME AND POVERTY STATUS

Median household income trend higher in Eagle River and South and West Anchorage. Rates of families in poverty are higher in Mountain View, Downtown, Spenard, and the Taku/Campbell area.

VEHICLE ACCESS

Household vehicle access is more common in South Anchorage neighborhoods like Rabbit Creek, Bayshore/Klatt, and Sand Lake. Areas with less household access to vehicles are concentrated in Downtown and Mountain View, Midtown, North Star, Spenard, Taku/Campbell, Russian Jack, and Northeast.



GAPS ANALYSIS

This section compares existing trail access with demographic data to identify gaps in the recreational trail system. Figures 20 – 33 show existing trailhead locations in the context of different demographic data for the AMATS area (source ACSDT5Y2023, see AMATS Community Profile). Closing gaps between existing trails was one of the most consistent themes raised by the community. While bike lanes, sidewalks, and on-street routes provide some connections, Anchorage residents feel safer and more comfortable using separated multi-use trails.

ANCHORAGE BOWL

Anchorage has one of the most extensive trail systems in the state. Campbell Creek and Chester Creek Trails are the backbone of the system, connecting dense residential areas to green space and job centers like UMED, Downtown, and Midtown. However, the analysis finds there are four common types of gaps found in the Anchorage Bowl:

- » Highway and arterial crossings,
- » Missing north–south routes that link neighborhoods to greenbelt trails,
- » Gaps through commercial/industrial corridors, and
- » Trailheads close to neighborhoods, but inaccessible without a car.

Downtown Anchorage is served by the Coastal, Chester Creek, and Ship Creek Trails. A long-awaited project to seamlessly connect the Coastal and Ship Creek Trails is moving forward, with construction expected as early as 2026. However, there are no opportunities for people to access the Coastal Trail in the Downtown core between 15th Avenue and 5th Avenue.

Government Hill remains isolated from all Downtown trail access due to surrounding industrial and military land uses. In **Fairview**, the Seward Highway limits safe east–west travel between the Coastal and Chester Creek Trails. Although 10th Avenue provides a Bike Boulevard, users must cross several unsignalized arterial streets.

Mountain View has direct access to Ship Creek Trail, but the Glenn Highway limits southern connections to larger park systems. There is a bike lane running north–south between Russian Jack Springs Park and McCarrey Dr and a bike boulevard that runs east–west through the neighborhood. Both of these features are on street and not separate from traffic. Mountain View’s largest park, Davis Park, offers an internal soft-surface trail loop but has experienced safety challenges in recent years affecting use.

In **Northeast Anchorage**, major arterials and highways (Tudor and Muldoon Roads, Glenn Highway) and the JBER border limit access between neighborhoods and major trail destinations such as Russian Jack Springs Park, Cheney Lake, Far North Bicentennial Park, and Chugach State Park.

Midtown’s wide roads and commercial corridors create uncomfortable conditions for traveling between Cuddy Family Midtown Park/the Anchorage Public Library and the Chester or Campbell Creek Trails. Minnesota Parkway also secludes neighborhoods to the east from accessing the Fish Creek Greenbelt. There is a growing Midtown hotel district, but no non-motorized route to visitor attractions in Downtown.

Turnagain and **Sand Lake** neighborhoods generally have good access to the Coastal Trail and Kincaid Park. However, the Moose Loop connection along Dimond Boulevard between Kincaid Park/the Coastal Trail and Campbell Creek Trail is often highlighted by the public as uncomfortable due to higher traffic volumes and limited separation from vehicles. Fish Creek Trail serves a small portion of Spenard, but Minnesota Pkwy generally isolates neighborhoods from accessing greenbelt trails.

In **South/Southeast Anchorage**, neighborhoods are closer to trailheads in Chugach State Park and the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge, but residents mostly rely on a vehicle to get there. Non-motorized connections between parks and trails are largely missing in this area as there is not a developed greenbelt trail system. Extending the Coastal Trail south from Kincaid Park to Potter Marsh remains a long-standing community priority, though environmental and political constraints have delayed implementation.



Visit Anchorage / Nathaniel Wilder



Visit Anchorage / Nathaniel Wilder

EAGLE RIVER AND CHUGIAK

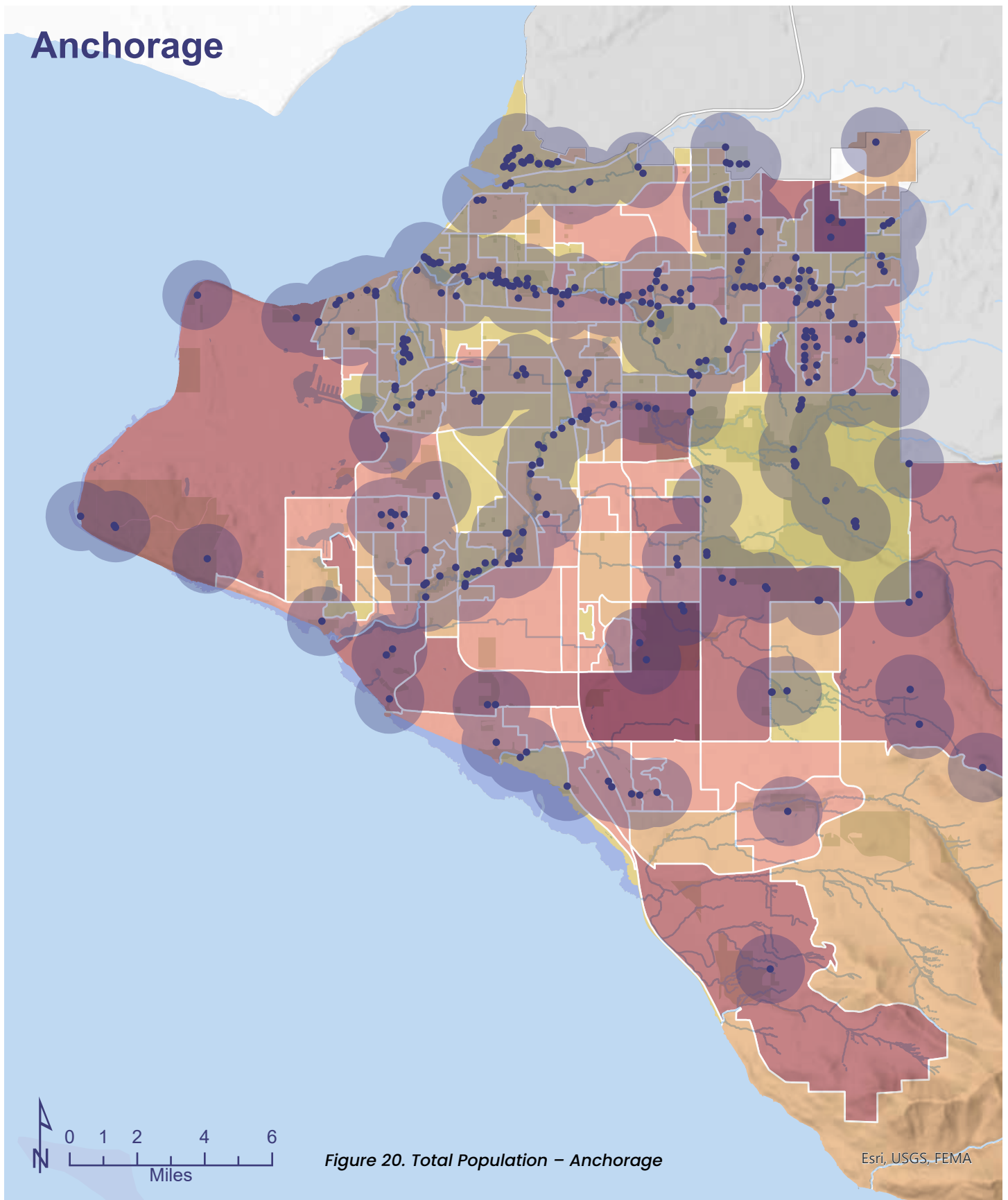
Trail connectivity is a consistent concern for residents of Eagle River and Chugiak. While access to Chugach State Park is a perk of living in this area, four connectivity issues stand out:

- » Neighborhood isolation from trails,
- » Disconnected regional parks,
- » Private property and limited right-of-way
- » Highway and arterial crossings.

The area's primary trail systems, including those in Beach Lake Park and Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake Parks, function largely as drive-to destinations. Nearby neighborhoods lack direct connections, and major roadways such as the Glenn Highway and Eagle River Road create significant barriers to walking and biking. For example, neighborhoods within a short distance of Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake Park have no routes that avoid high-speed traffic. To connect between the Mirror Lake trail system and Thunderbird Falls (Chugach State Park), a trail user would need to get back in their vehicle and drive there.

Compared with the Anchorage Bowl, Eagle River–Chugiak has lower population density and higher rates of vehicle ownership. Trail investments in this area are also influenced by separate parks and recreation funding structures, which affect how projects are prioritized and implemented.

Anchorage



Total Population

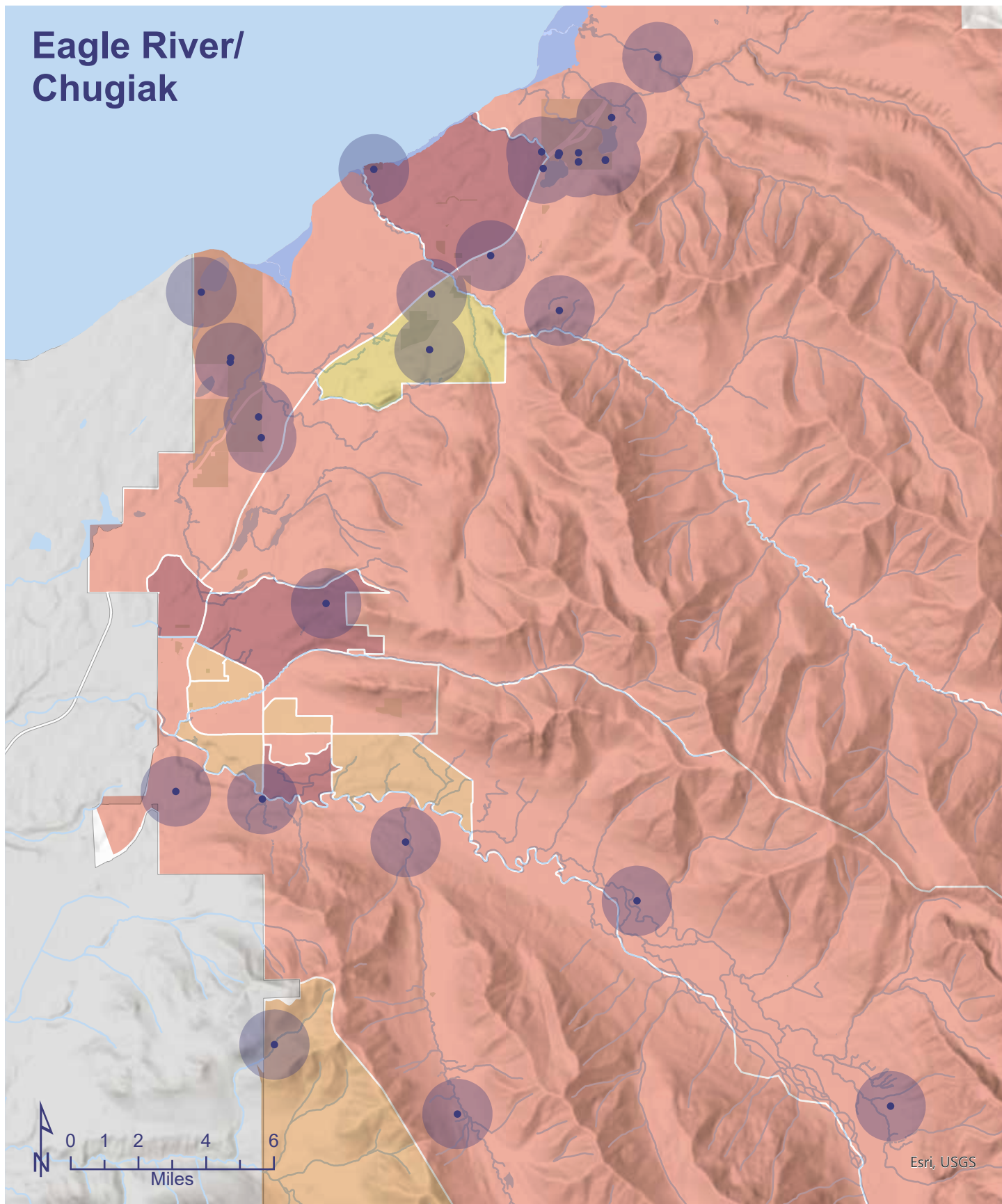
- Trailheads
- Half Mile from Trailhead
- JBER Boundary

Number of People

- 0 - 950
- 951 - 1,500
- 1,501 - 2,500
- 2,501 - 4,000
- 4,001 - 7,643



Eagle River/ Chugiak



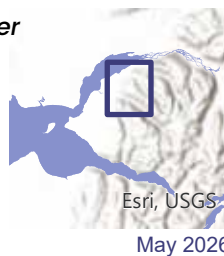
Total Population

- Trailheads
- Half Mile from Trailhead
- JBER Boundary

Figure 21. Total Population – Chugiak–Eagle River

Number of People

- 0 - 950
- 951 - 1,500
- 1,501 - 2,500
- 2,501 - 4,000
- 4,001 - 7,643

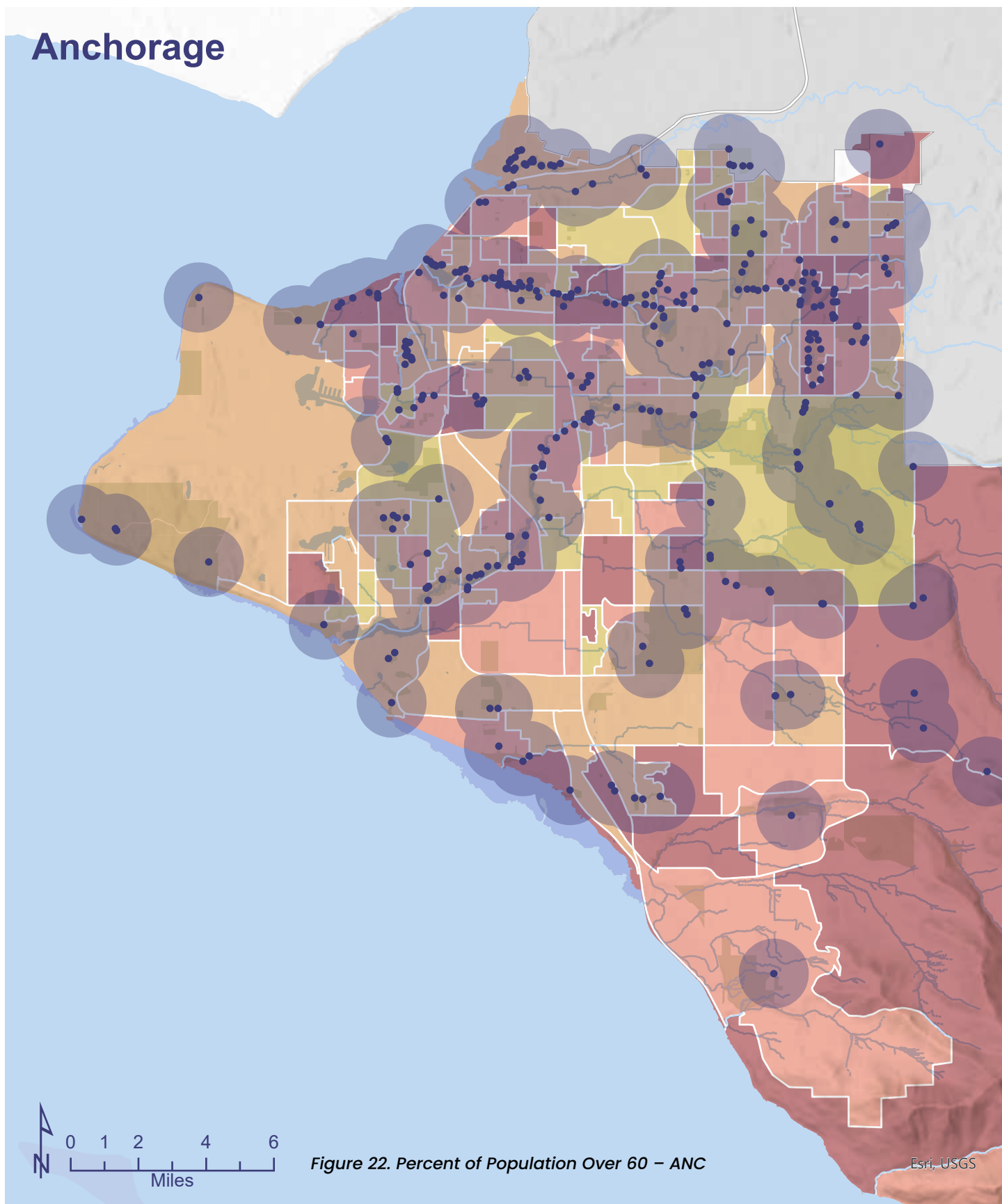


Esri, USGS

May 2026



Anchorage

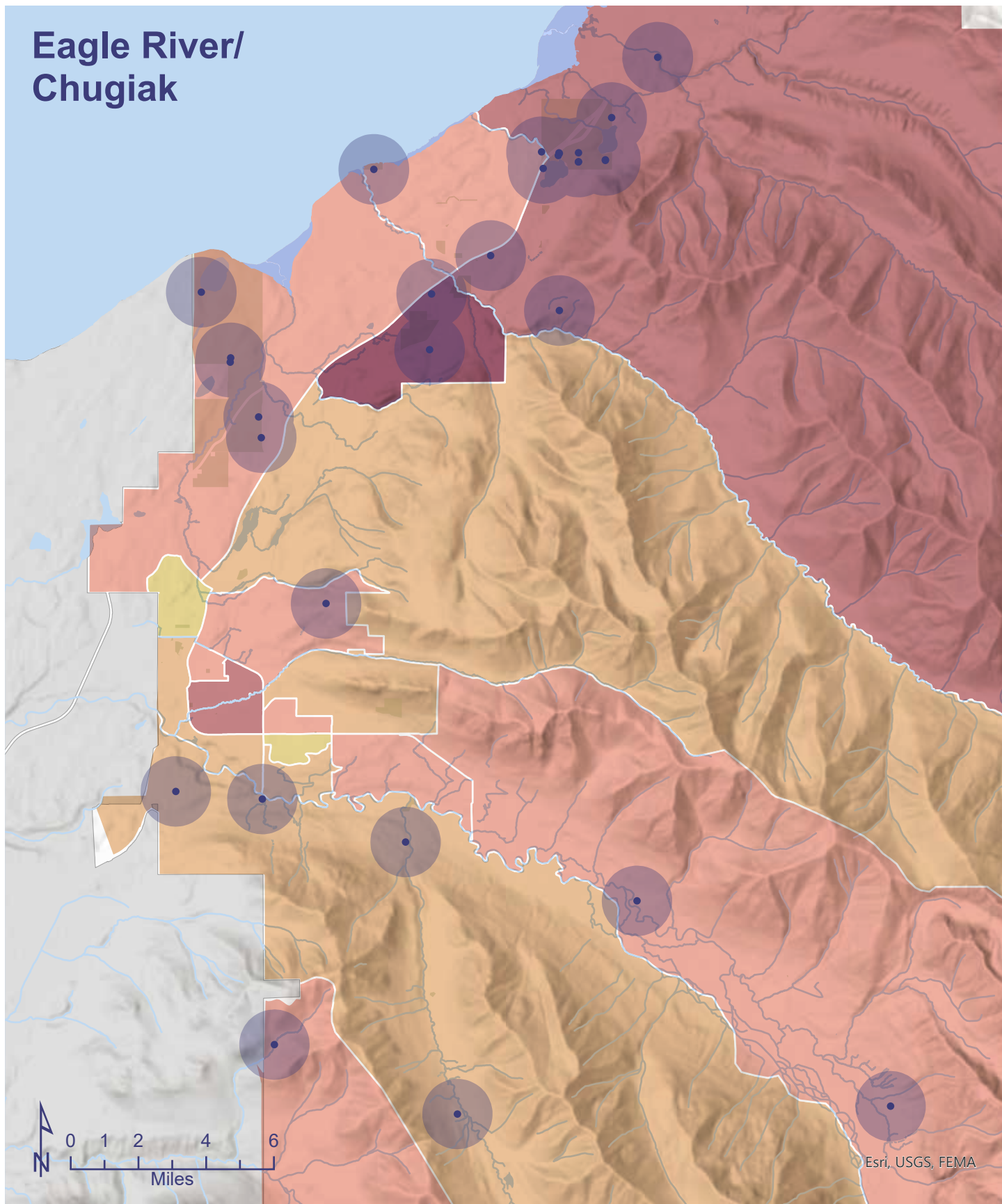


Percent of Population over 60

- Trailheads
 - Half Mile from Trailhead
 - JBER Boundary
- | Percentage Range | |
|------------------|-----------|
| 10% or Less | 11% - 20% |
| 21% - 30% | 31% - 60% |
| 61% or Greater | |



Eagle River/ Chugiak



Percent of Population over 60

- Trailheads
 - Half Mile from Trailhead
 - JBER Boundary
- | Percentage Range | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Light Yellow | 10% or Less |
| Orange | 11% - 20% |
| Red-Orange | 21% - 30% |
| Red | 31% - 60% |
| Dark Red | 61% or Greater |

Figure 23. Percent of Population Over 60 – C-ER

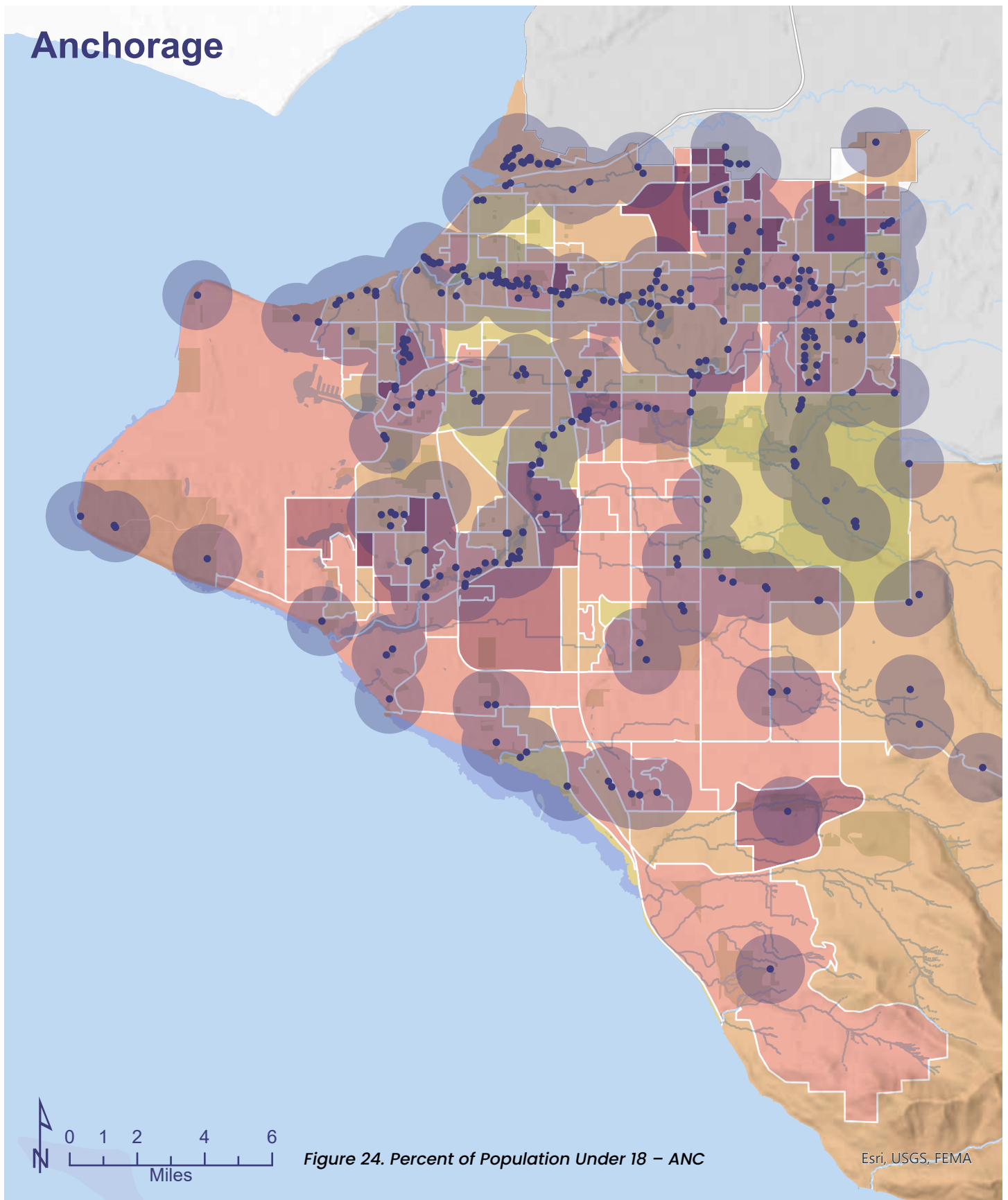


Esri, USGS

May 2026



Anchorage

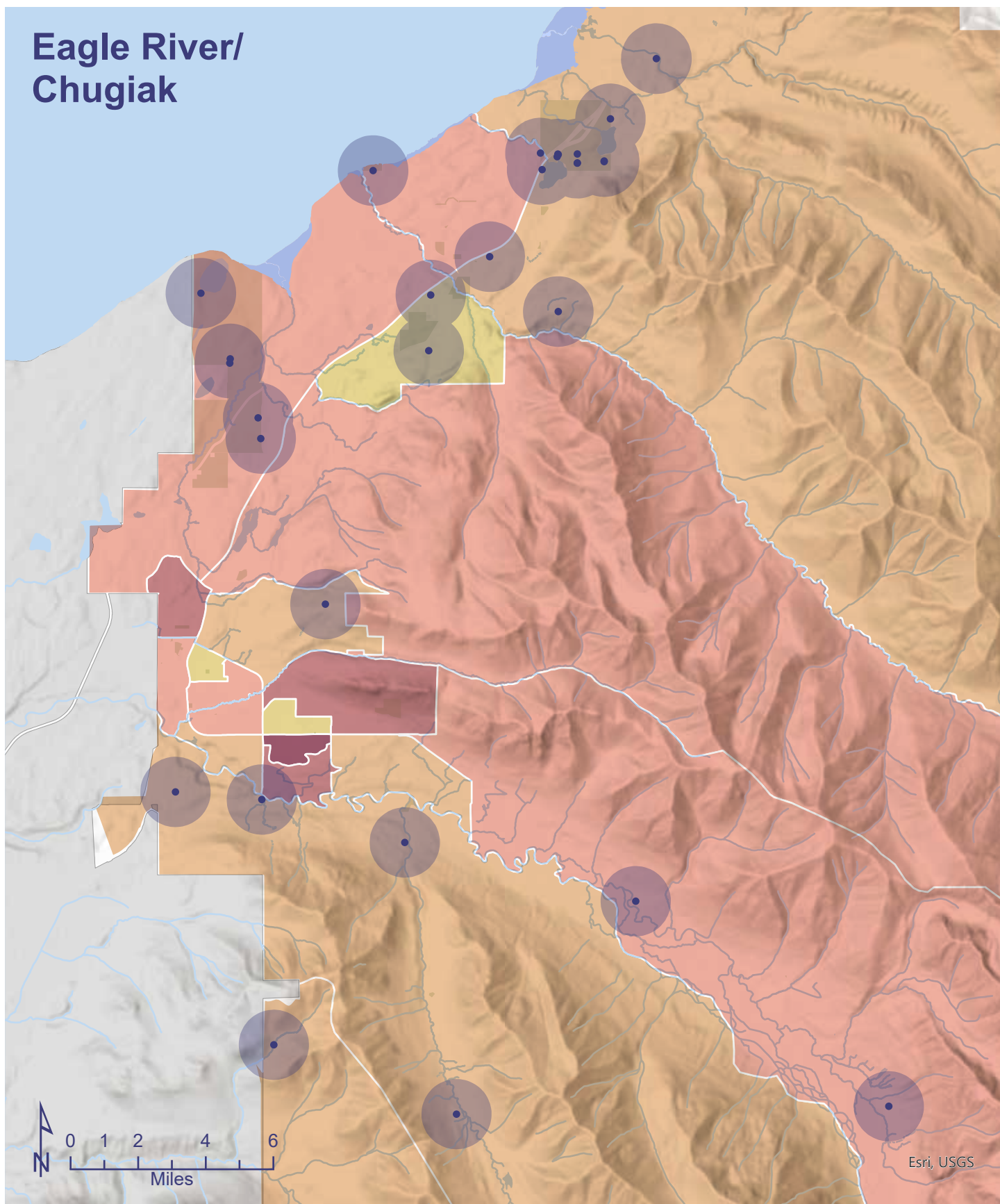


Percent of Population under 18

- Trailheads
 - Half Mile from Trailhead
 - JBER Boundary
- | Percentage Range | |
|------------------|-----------|
| 10% or Less | 11% - 20% |
| 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% |
| 41% or Greater | |



Eagle River/ Chugiak



Percent of Population under 18

- Trailheads
- Half Mile from Trailhead
- JBER Boundary

Percentage Range

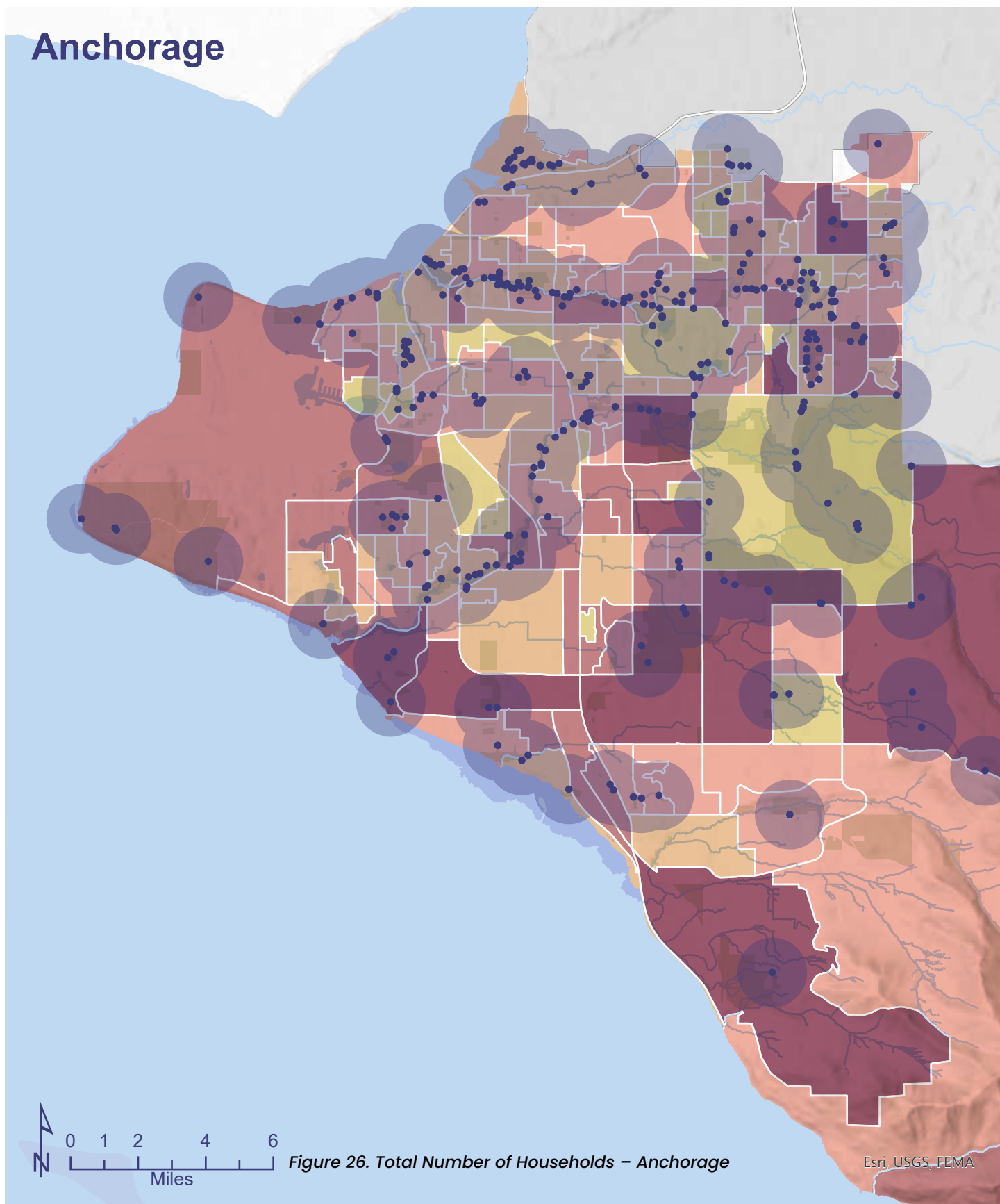
- 10% or Less
- 11% - 20%
- 21% - 30%
- 31% - 40%
- 41% or Greater

Figure 25. Percent of Population Under 18- C-ER



Esri, USGS
May 2026

Anchorage



Total Number of Households

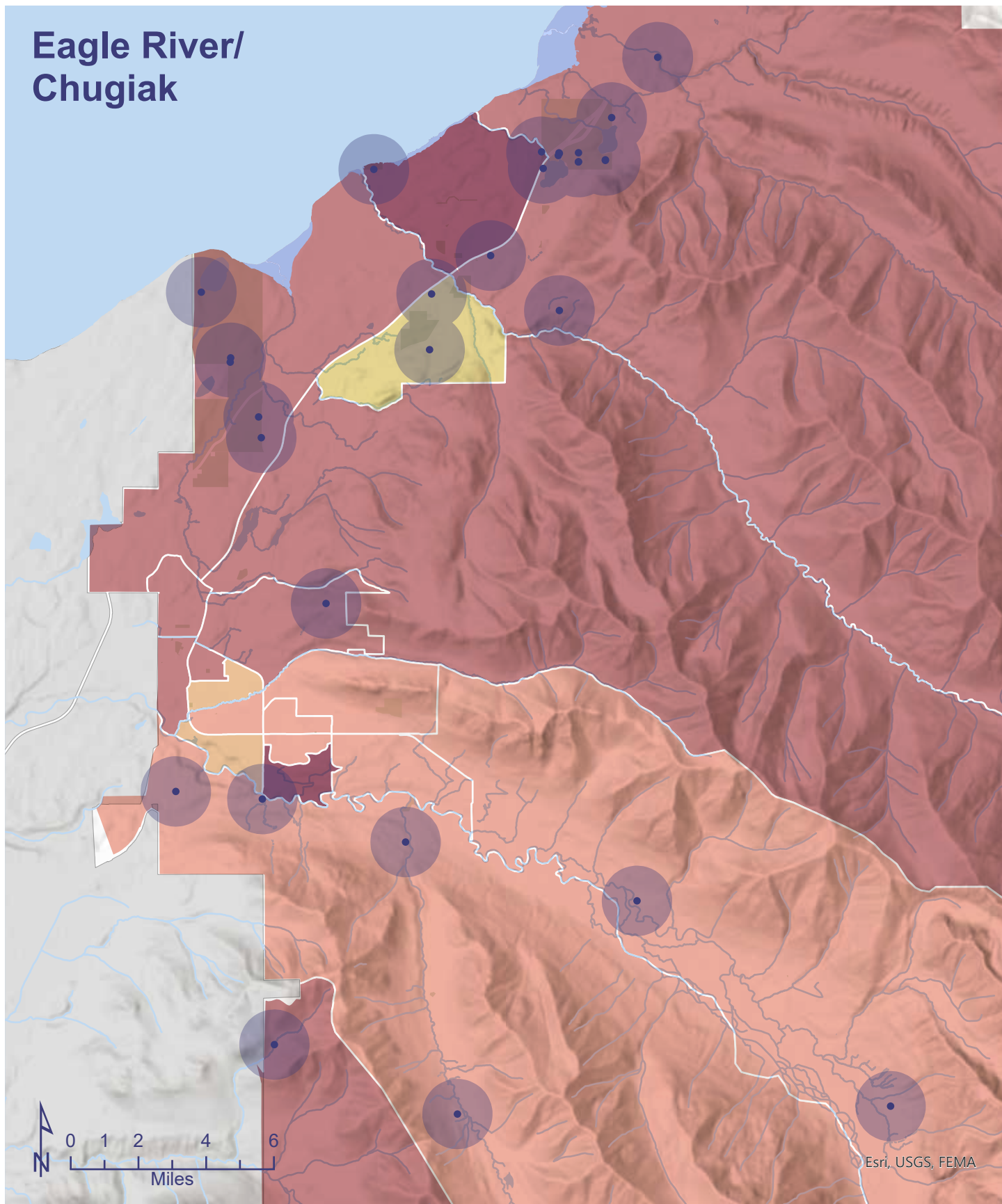
- Trailheads
- Half Mile from Trailhead
- JBER Boundary

Number of Households

- 0 - 275
- 276 - 450
- 451 - 650
- 651 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 1,731



Eagle River/ Chugiak



Total Number of Households

- Trailheads
- Half Mile from Trailhead
- JBER Boundary

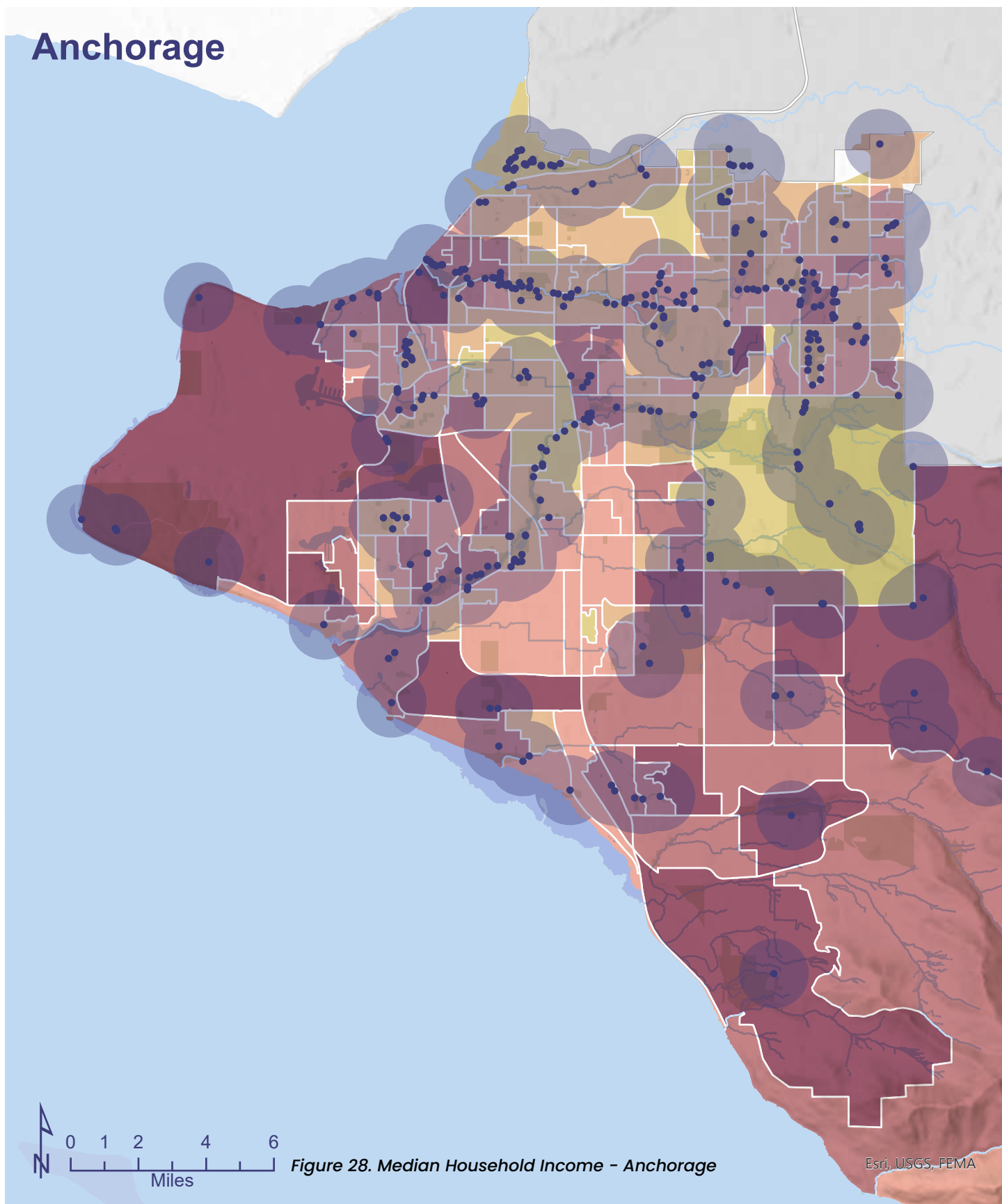
Number of Households

- 0 - 275
- 276 - 450
- 451 - 650
- 651 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 1,731

Figure 27. Total Number of Households – Chugiak-Eagle River



Anchorage

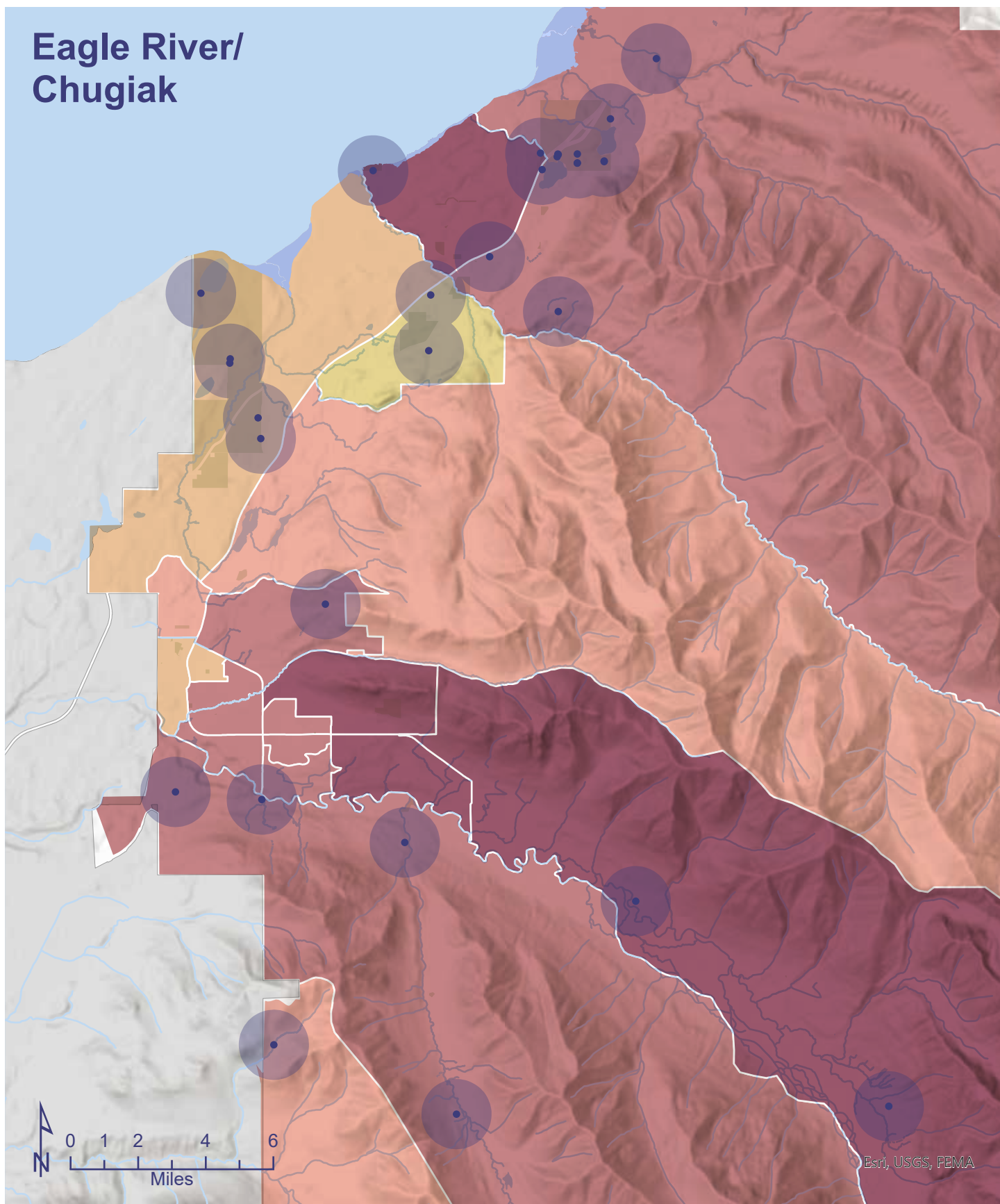


Median Household Income

- Trailheads
 - Half Mile from Trailhead
 - JBER Boundary
- | Income Range (Annual \$) | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| 0 - 40,000 | Light Yellow |
| 40,001 - 85,000 | Orange |
| 85,001 - 120,000 | Light Red |
| 120,001 - 165,000 | Red |
| 165,001 - 250,000 | Dark Red |



Eagle River/ Chugiak



Median Household Income

- Trailheads
- Half Mile from Trailhead
- JBER Boundary

Income Range (Annual \$)

- 0 - 40,000
- 40,001 - 85,000
- 85,001 - 120,000
- 120,001 - 165,000
- 165,001 - 250,000

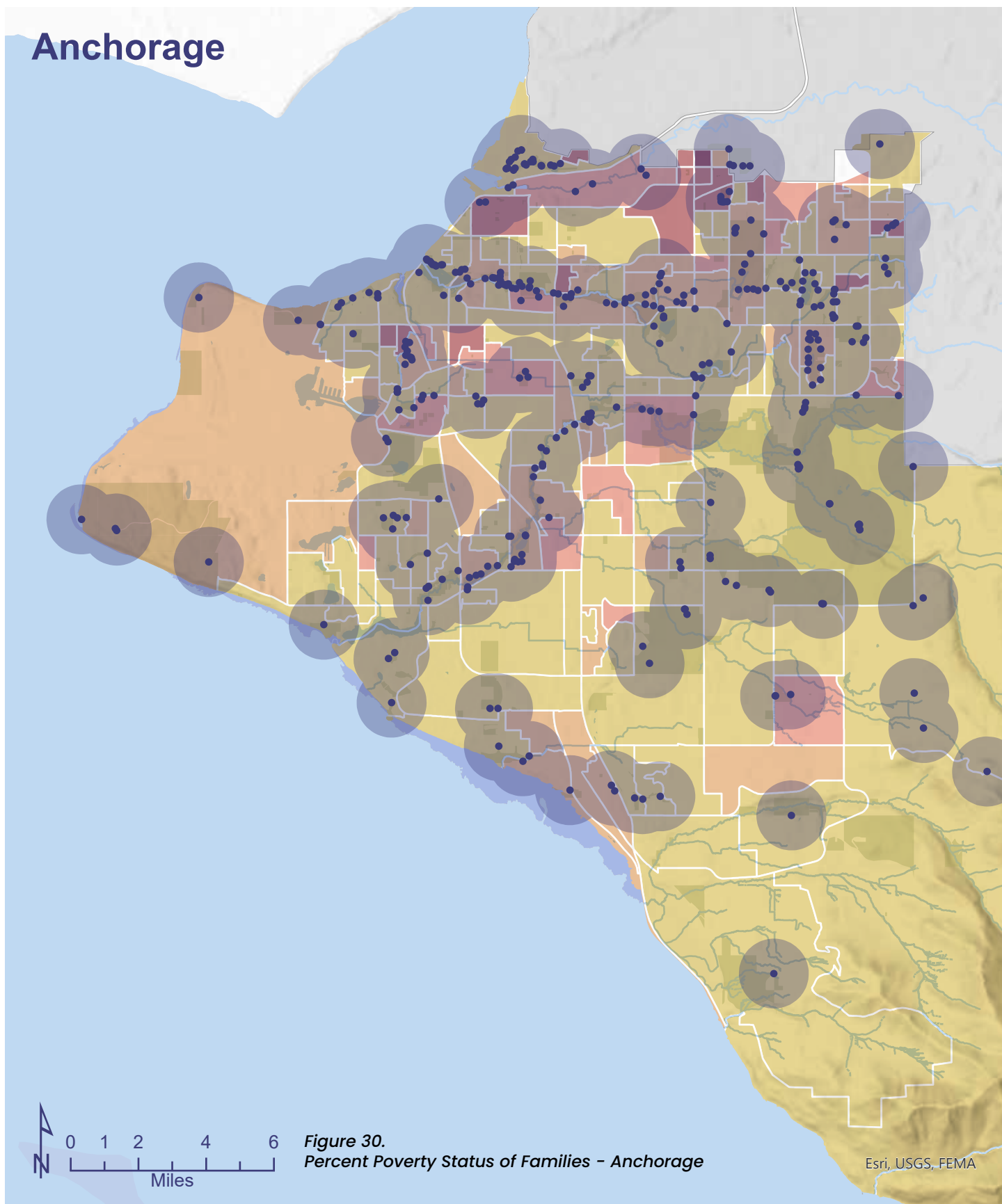
Figure 29. Median Household Income – Chugiak-Eagle River



May 2026



Anchorage

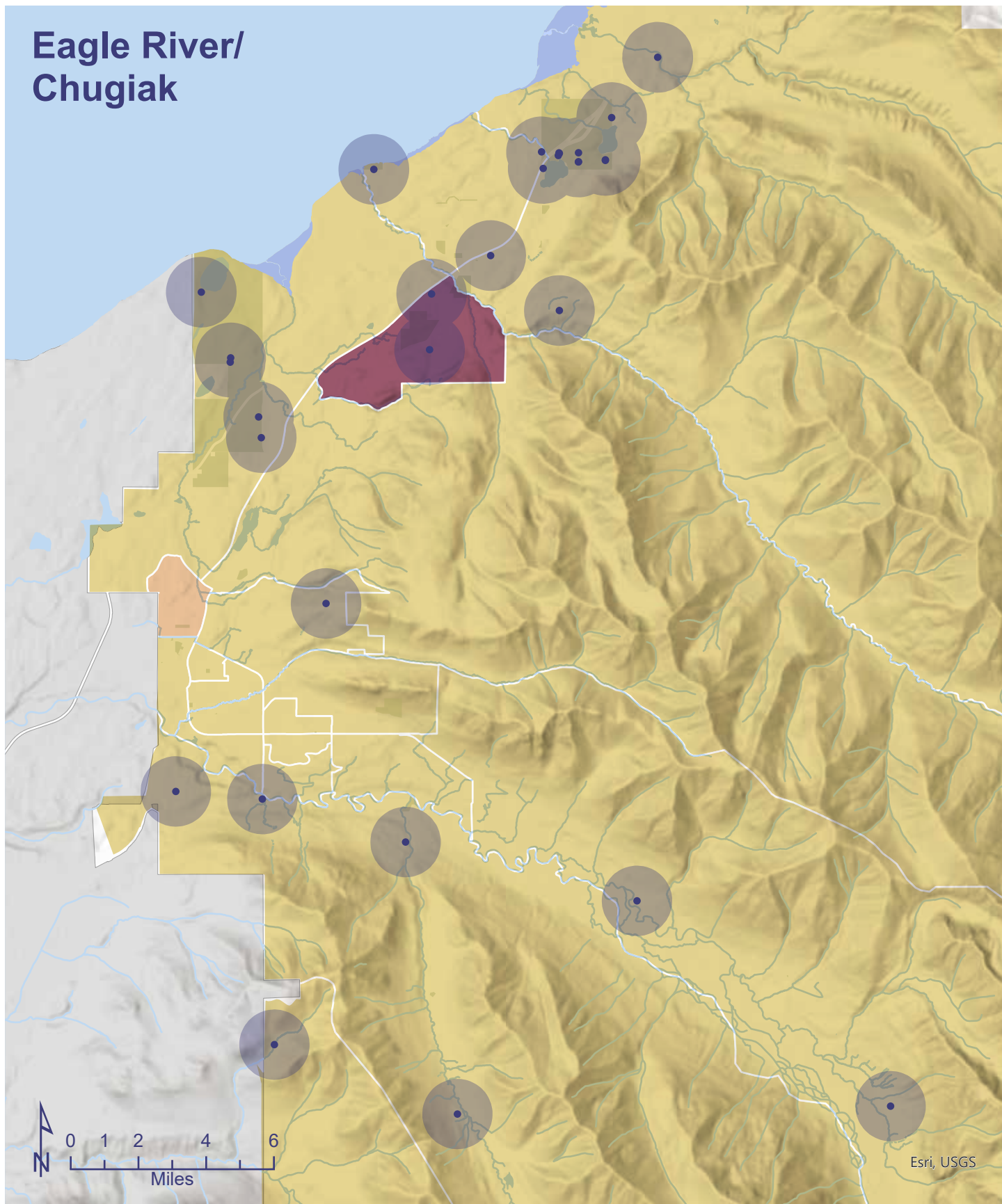


Percent Poverty Status of Families

- Trailheads
 - Half Mile from Trailhead
 - JBER Boundary
- | Percentage Range | |
|------------------|----------------|
| ■ | 4% or Less |
| ■ | 5% - 12% |
| ■ | 13% - 24% |
| ■ | 25% - 45% |
| ■ | 45% or Greater |



Eagle River/ Chugiak



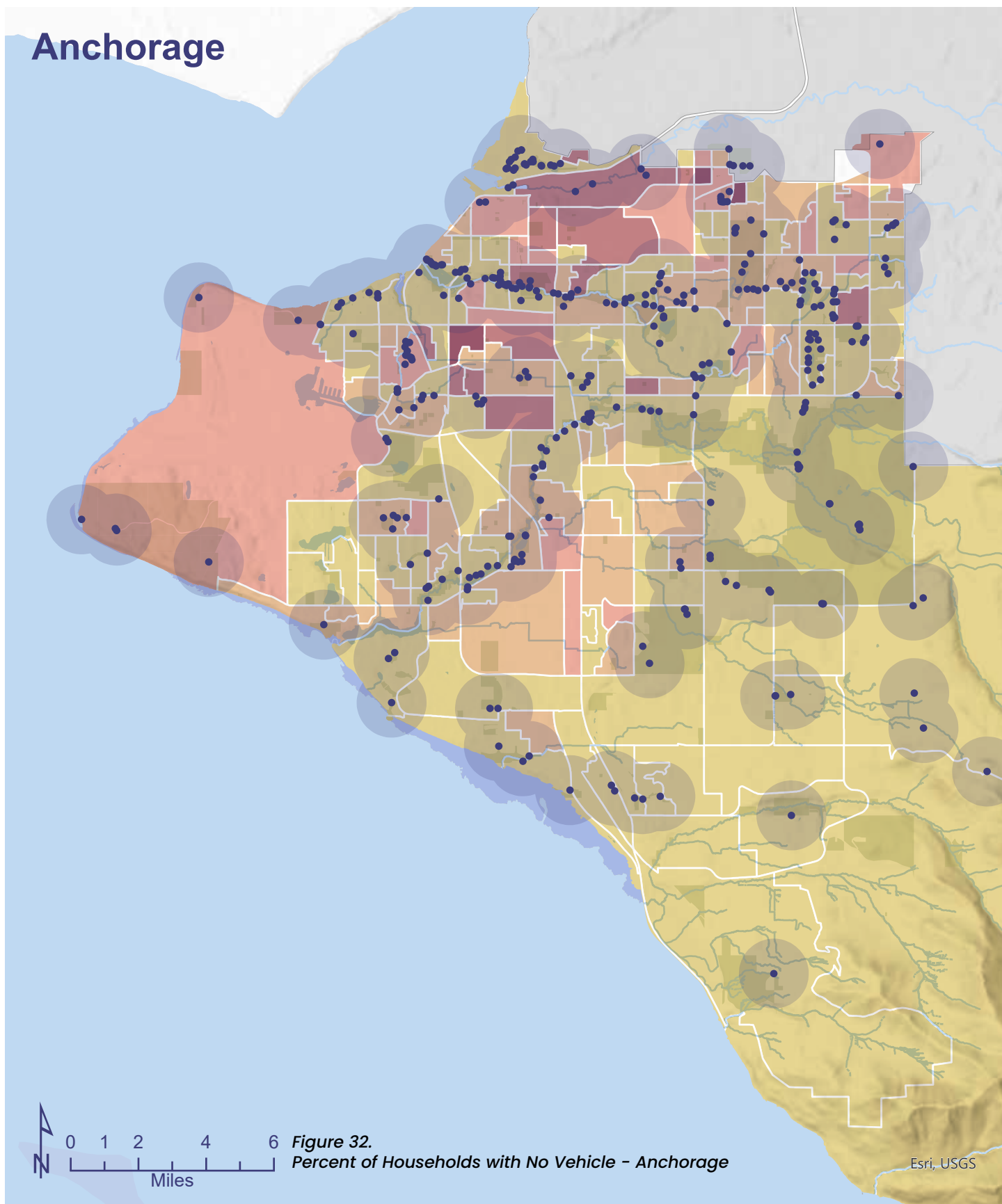
Percent Poverty Status of Families

- Trailheads
 - Half Mile from Trailhead
 - JBER Boundary
- | Percentage Range | |
|------------------|----------------|
| | 4% or Less |
| | 5% - 12% |
| | 13% - 24% |
| | 25% - 45% |
| | 45% or Greater |

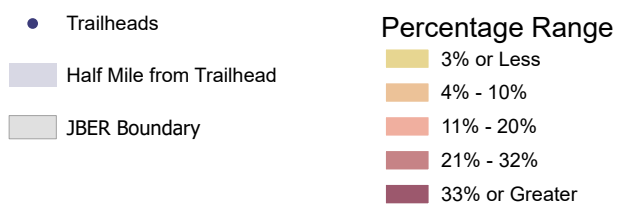
Figure 31. Percent Poverty Status of Families – Chugiak-Eagle River



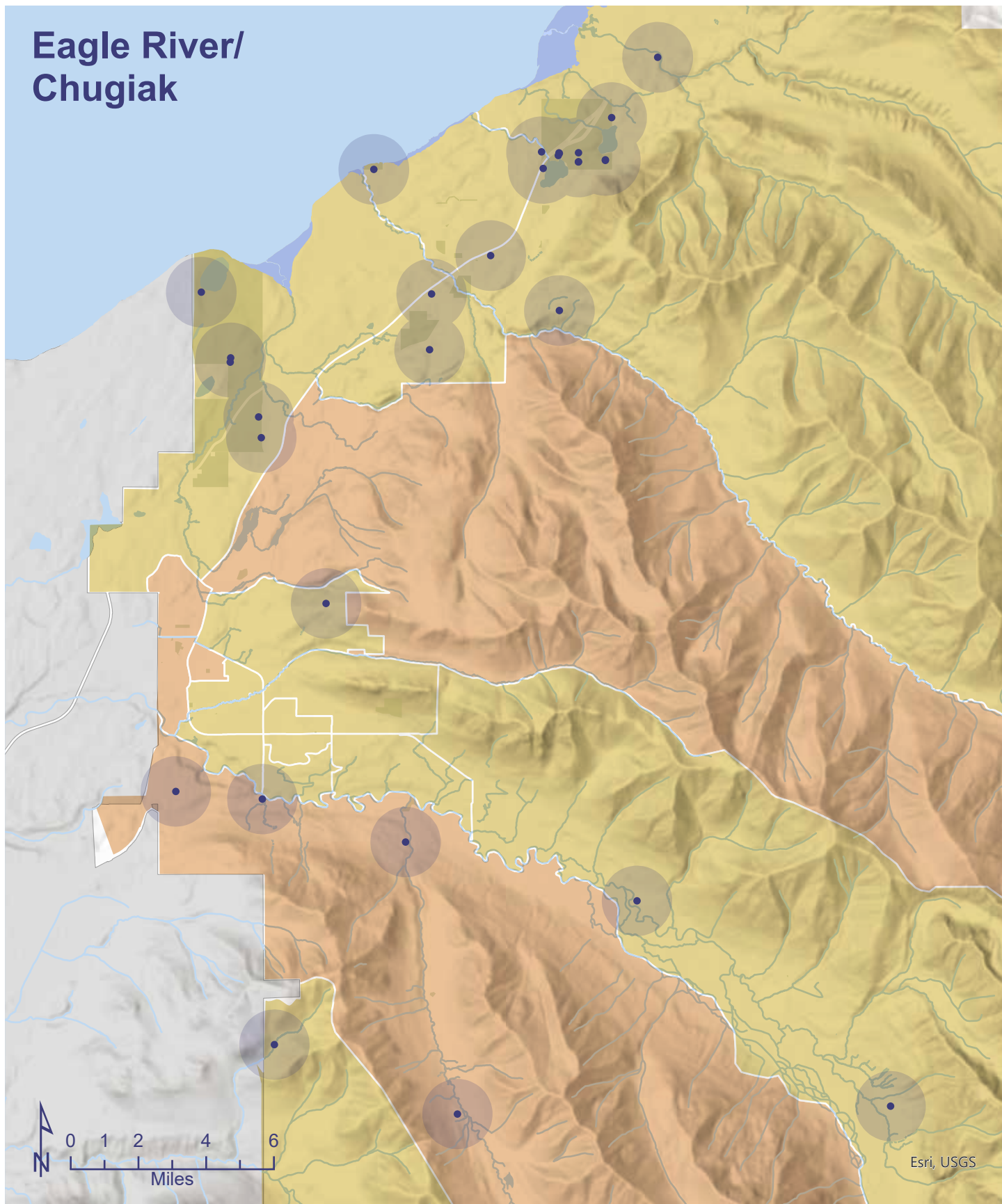
Anchorage



Percent of Households with No Vehicle



Eagle River/ Chugiak



Percent of Households with No Vehicle

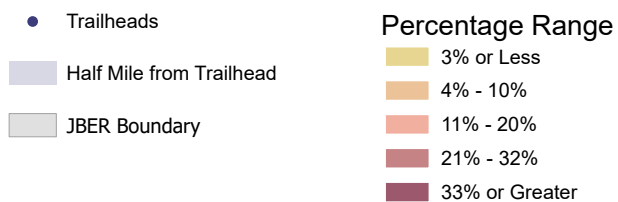


Figure 33. Percent of Households with No Vehicle – Chugiak-Eagle River



COMMON THEMES

TRAIL USE

According to Trail Survey responses:

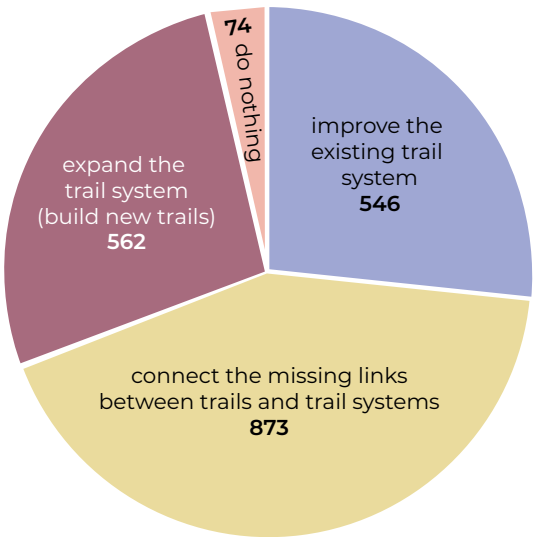
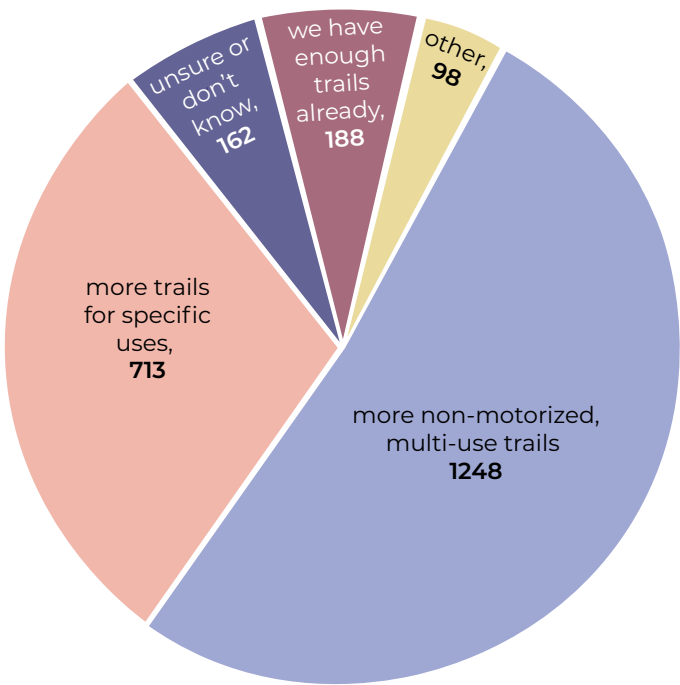


FIGURE 10: How The Trail Systems Should Expand

ISSUES & PRIORITIES

Based on stakeholder interviews, over 2,000 survey responses, and comments collected at public workshops, the community identified issues and priorities for trails that tended to fall under three categories: safety, maintenance, and connectivity.

Safety

- » Unsafe speeds and close encounters on trails, especially between e-bike users and pedestrians or regular bikes.
- » Encountering unpredictable people on the trails and generally feeling unsafe
- » Having to cross a street or travel next to vehicles while accessing trails

Maintenance

- » Lack of funding for maintenance identified as the top issue affecting the trail system in the online survey
- » Desire to prioritize winter grooming
- » Desire to improve paved trail surfaces

Connectivity

- » Desire to have trails serve as non-motorized transportation facilities
- » Desire to have trails that connect seamlessly to other trails, neighborhoods, commercial areas
- » Missing connections between trails and trail systems is a common barrier to trail use, especially in Chugiak-Eagle River

WHAT ARE YOUR TRAIL PRIORITIES

Distribute your four stickers where YOU think public resources should be spent.

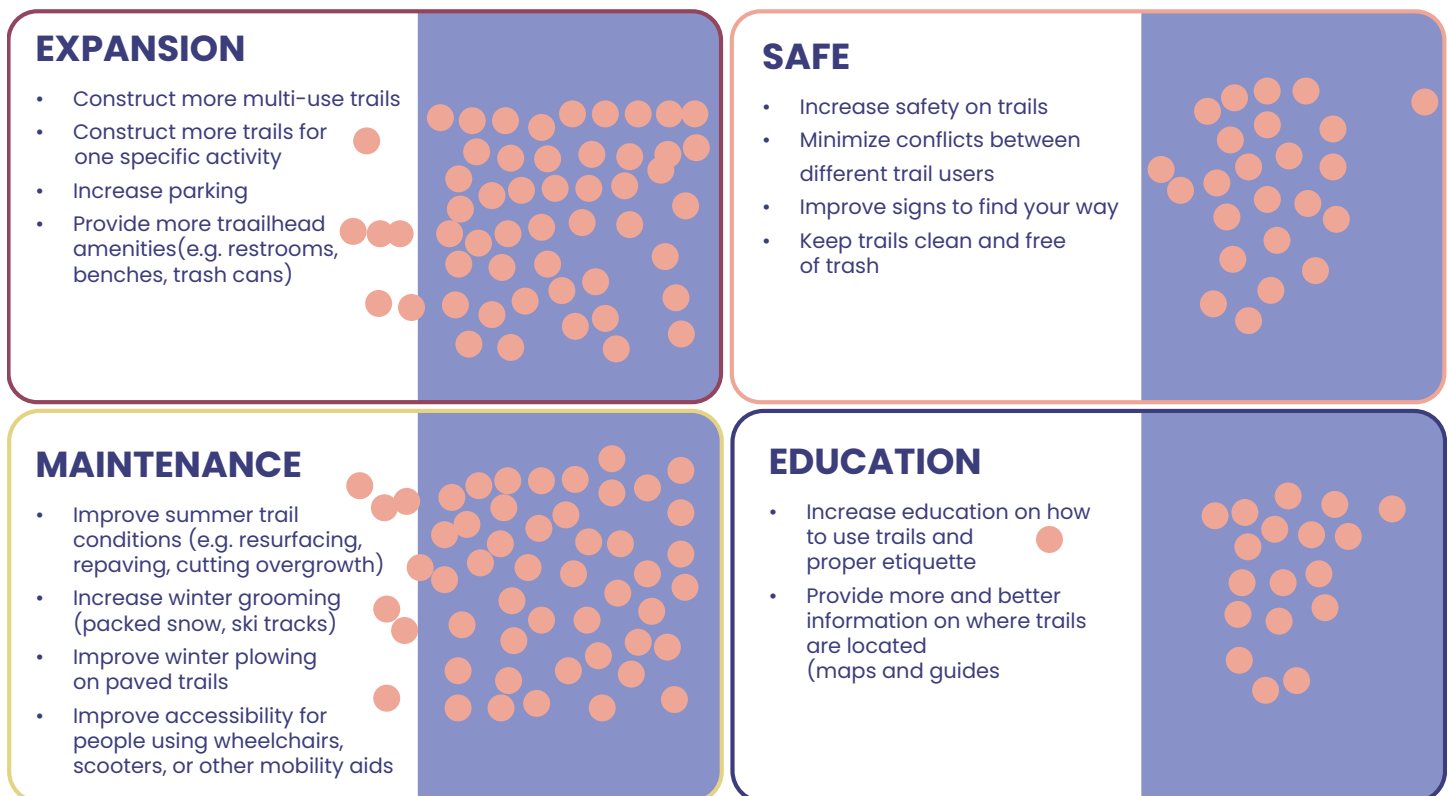


FIGURE 1: Results From Activity At Public Workshop 1 in Anchorage

BARRIERS TO TRAIL USE

What things make it difficult to use local trails in Anchorage, Chugiak, and Eagle River?

Place a dot next to your TOP THREE barriers.

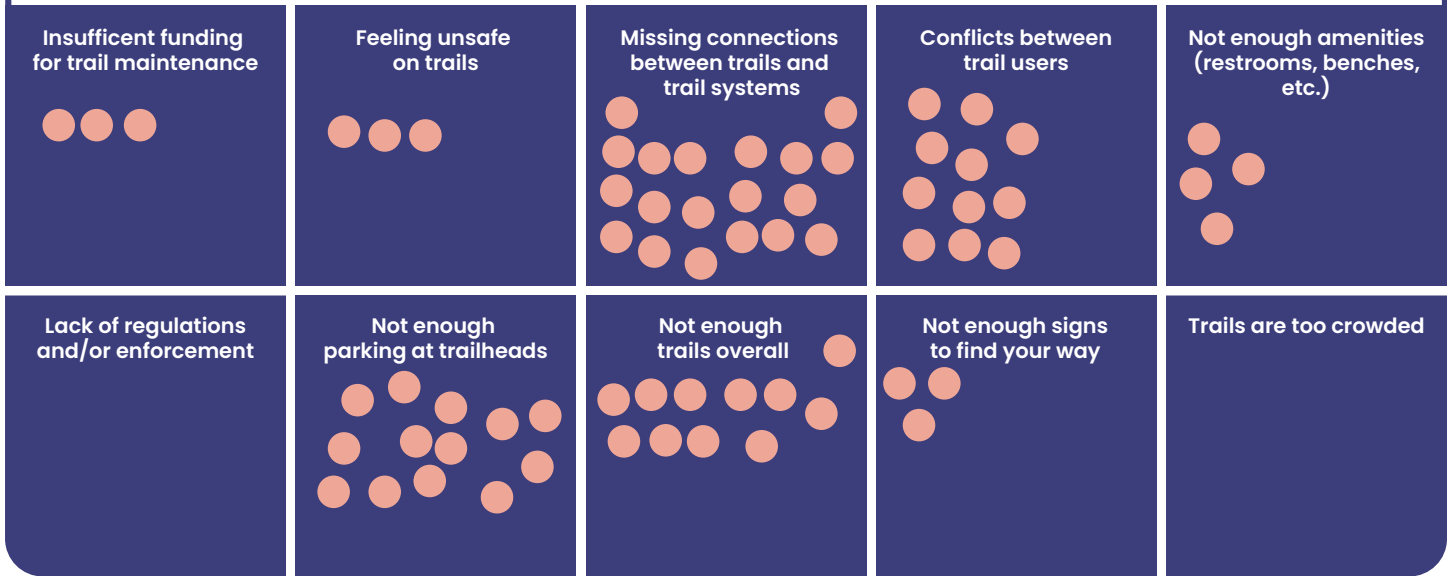


FIGURE 2: Results From Activity At Public Workshop 1 in Chugiak

BARRIERS TO TRAIL USE

What things make it difficult to use local trails in Anchorage, Chugiak, and Eagle River?

Place a dot next to your TOP THREE barriers.

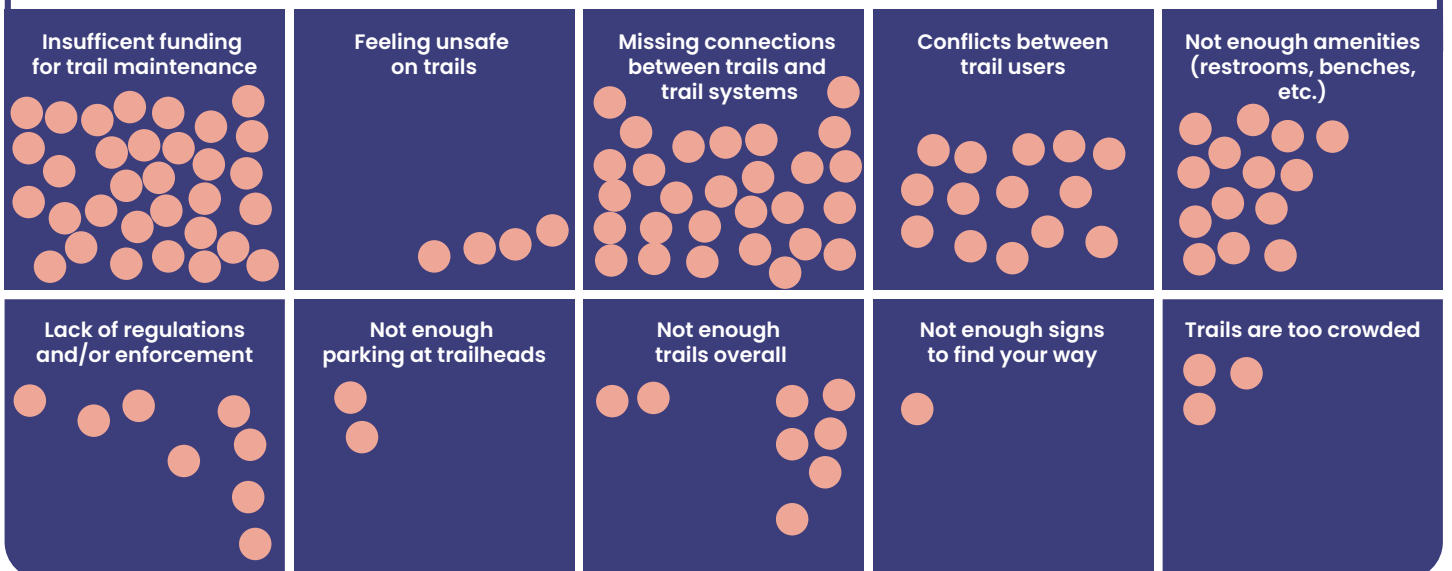


FIGURE 3: Results From Activity On Priorities At Public Workshop 1 in Anchorage

4. TRAILS FOR TOMORROW

The vision for the trails in Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River is...

A safe, seamless, adaptable network of outstanding trails for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities that supports community wellness, celebrates culture, connects people to nature, and enhances quality of life.

The following goals and objectives have been defined to advance this vision. Goals describe what we want to achieve as a community. Objectives break those goals into specific components to guide local government and land management. Actions and projects needed to reach those objectives are defined in the Recommendations and Implementation chapters.

1. CONNECTIVITY

Goal: To provide a geographically distributed, convenient, and integrated network of trails that link neighborhoods, public centers, and recreational destinations.

Objectives:

- A. The recreational trail network has **geographic coverage** throughout Anchorage, Chugiak and Eagle River.
- B. **It is easy to get to trails** no matter where you live.
 - 1. Connections between neighborhoods, community destinations, parks, greenbelts, and other trail systems are frequent.
 - 2. Multiple trailheads and parking areas are available along greenbelts and trail systems.
 - 3. Trails are connected to neighborhoods and can be accessed using active modes of transportation.
- C. Trails **provide enjoyable transportation options** for residents and visitors, connecting users from where they are to their **favorite destinations**.



2. SAFETY

Goal: To ensure trail users can safely and comfortably use trails.

Objectives:

- A. Trail **design and layout** promotes safety and protects trail users from unnecessary risk.
 - 1. **Trails feel consistent and predictable** for users and are appropriately designed for their managed uses.
 - 2. Users have **route options** within trail systems, including connected loops and spurs.
 - 3. Trails have **safety features**, which may include LED lighting, safe road crossings, signage, places to rest, and buffers from motorized traffic.
- B. Trails are **managed and maintained** to reduce exposure to unnecessary risk and protect land managers and partners from liability.
 - 1. Routine **preventive maintenance and monitoring** ensures that trail users are not exposed to unnecessary hazards or avoidable risk.
 - 2. Operation and maintenance teams have the **protocol, tools, and equipment** they need to respond to hazards quickly.
- C. **Information and education** prepare trail users to understand potential risks, make informed decisions, and confidently use trails.
- D. **Quality trail design and maintenance** minimizes the potential for user conflict or unsanctioned uses of trails.
- E. **Regulations and enforcement** promote safe use of public facilities and reduce the potential for conflicts.

3. QUALITY

Goal: To provide high quality trails year-round throughout the network.

Objectives:

- A. **Maintenance** is fully funded, frequent, and reliable year-round.
 - 1. Users of multi-use trails can rely on good trail conditions every day of the year.
- B. The community **invests** in improving the trail network as part of its essential infrastructure.
 - 1. A transparent prioritization process guides the capital improvement program for trails.
- C. The public, the Municipality of Anchorage, and its partners have strong stewardship of the trail network.
 - 1. The Parks and Recreation Department supports public partnerships with user groups and volunteers for trail maintenance.
- D. **Trail design and planning** creates great user experiences.
 - 1. Trail design considers snow management and user experience in all seasons.
 - 2. Trail design and construction is sustainable for the managed uses, reducing maintenance needs.
 - 3. Trail planning and design celebrates and adapts to the natural setting.
- E. The trail network **is a destination** for residents and visitors from around the world.



4. WELLNESS

Goal: To ensure everyone can support their physical and mental well-being by enjoying outdoor activities, nature, and community on recreational trails.

Objectives:

- A. Everyone can experience the **wellness benefits** of recreational trails because of their availability, variety, and quality.
- B. The trail network contributes to an overall **increase in physical activity**.
 - 1. Publicize trail use as an essential, effective tool for public health, including combating childhood obesity, heart disease, and certain mental health disorders, to local health providers and in programs.
 - 2. Segments of the recreational trail network support both recreation and active transportation.
- C. The trail network increases a sense of **community**, fosters **social interaction**, and promotes shared **responsibility**.
 - 1. The Department hosts and supports races, cultural events, volunteer opportunities, and programs that gather people on trails together.
- D. The trail network provides havens for **stress reduction** and **connection to nature**.
 - 1. Trails connect people to natural landscapes and open space.
 - 2. Trail design enhances or protects wildlife habitat and sensitive natural resources like wetlands and creeks
 - 3. Sections of the trail network intend to provide a low use, quiet experience.

5. VARIETY

Goal: To provide a wide range of trail opportunities to support varying activities, abilities, users, and experiences.

Objectives:

- A. All common **trail user groups** have trails to meet their needs.
- B. Trails in the network provide **varied experiences** and **skill-building opportunities**.
- C. The trail network maximizes choice by preserving and expanding **multi-use trails**.
 - 1. Multi-use trails and neighborhood connector trails are designed for use by all ages and abilities, meeting the requirements of the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines to the maximum extent practicable.
- D. Trail users with **mobility differences can experience trail variety**.



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents guidance for trail development, maintenance, and management, shaped by the community's shared priorities.

Recommendations are listed either the Systemwide Recommendations or the Trail Project List. These recommendations form a blueprint to strengthen, expand, and connect trail systems across the AMATS area over the coming decades.

SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Systemwide Recommendations are guidelines that shape how the Anchorage and Eagle River Chugiak Parks and Recreation Departments (Parks) and their partner groups make decisions about trail projects across the region.

The table includes six focus areas: planning, policies, partnerships, projects, programs, and personnel. While the focus is on helping Parks staff use public resources wisely, the advice also supports the many agencies, organizations, and volunteers who build and care for local trails. By following and building on these recommendations, everyone involved can work together toward the shared vision of outstanding trails.

PLAN

Recommendations in the Plan category apply to trail and park planning efforts that identify opportunities and needs for future capital projects, programs, and resource allocation.

THEME	ID	RECOMMENDATION OR IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	GOALS BEING ADVANCED
PARK MASTER PLANS	1	Ensure that park master plans include, where relevant, opportunities for new connections between existing trails and new route options.	Connectivity
	2	Ensure that park master plans consider park type (neighborhood, special use, community use, or natural resource use) to set limitations for trail class and density of trails if needed (e.g., Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Improvements Plan).	Quality
	3	Include natural resource management strategies in park master plans (including 2006 Anchorage Bowl Park Plan) to minimize development impacts to sensitive natural resources and contribute to the overall health of ecosystems.	Quality, Wellness
	4	When updating park master plans, evaluate accessibility of existing trails and identify ways to improve ADA conditions.	Variety
	5	Involve a variety of trail user groups in park master planning per guidance outlined in the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Public Engagement Plan.	Variety
MUNICIPAL PLANS	6	Participate in the development of neighborhood, district, and functional plans and encourage alignment of recreational projects and policies with this Plan.	Connectivity
TRAIL EQUITY	7	When planning and designing specialized trail systems, prioritize opportunities for safe skills progression from beginner to advanced (e.g. mountain biking and Cross-country skiing).	Variety
	8	Use resources like the Parks Department Trailhead Inventory and the Trust for Public Land ParkScore to assess availability of recreational trails throughout our communities to inform project prioritization.	Connectivity
WINTER MAINTENANCE	9	Implement and regularly update the Winter Operations Plan for Parks in alignment with this Plan to ensure that park facilities, pathways, trails, and recreational areas are safe and enjoyable through an organized and efficient winter maintenance program.	Safety, Quality

POLICY

Policy recommendations provide actionable guidance to decision makers on how to allocate public resources for recreational trails. Policies are not tied to a single event or project; they should be adhered to consistently throughout the life of this Plan.

The policy recommendations within the theme of resource allocation define overarching attributes to guide trail project prioritization. These policies layer and build upon the existing criteria Anchorage Parks uses to prioritize projects in their short-term Capital Improvement Plan and Budget (CIP/CIB). If Anchorage Parks undertakes revision of CIP criteria or Eagle River–Chugiak Parks establishes formal funding criteria, the following recommendations should serve as a guide.

This Plan is mainly a guide for the Municipality but should also support the goals of partner organizations who work on trails in the AMATS area. Identifying multiple preferred attributes this section is intentional, as partners have access to different funding sources to accomplish various types of trail projects. These policies provide departmental guidance but offer adaptability to best support the trail network and its expanding users.



THEME	ID	RECOMMENDATION OR IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	PRIMARY GOAL
RESOURCE ALLOCATION	10	Elevate trail improvement and construction projects that connect to Natural Resource, Community Use, or Special Use parks, as defined in the Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan.	Connectivity
	11	Favor capital projects that connect the recreational trail system to major active transportation routes and transit stops, commercial centers, schools, and dense residential areas.	Connectivity
	12	Advance capital projects that rehabilitate or improve existing trails.	Quality
	13	Elevate capital projects located on Parks' property and within a Parks Service Area	Quality
	14	Elevate capital projects that increase trailhead access near neighborhoods in Anchorage, Chugiak, and Eagle River.	Wellness
	15	Prioritize trail rehabilitation and maintenance projects based on volumes of trail use, master plans, and community feedback.	Quality
	16	Favor trail projects that accommodate novice and progressive skills building and serve multiple user groups.	Variety
	17	Favor projects that contribute to the health of park ecosystems, such as streambank restoration and green infrastructure.	Quality, Wellness
	18	Use Parks maintenance resources for park property ahead of municipal street rights-of-way and other non-dedicated Parks property.	Quality
	19	Include information on associated operations and maintenance cost estimates in capital project budgets.	Quality
DESIGN	20	Expand the Park Service Areas to include more of the population located within the AMATS boundary	Quality, Connectivity
	21	Ensure Parks and partners implement and adhere to Parks' Trail Classification and design standards.	Safety
	22	Ensure trail design and construction prioritizes sustainable design and reduces maintenance burden.	Quality
	23	Ensure bridges meet width, weight limit, and other design standards in accordance with planning trail classification and winter maintenance.	Quality
	24	Grade-separate trail crossings of roadways and strongly encourage the use of pedestrian bridges or pedestrian open-air underpasses wherever possible. Upgrade pedestrian culverts and tunnels to open-air underpasses wherever practicable to increase width, increase visibility, and improve user comfort.	Quality
	25	Ensure that greenbelt multi-use trails meet Trail Class 5 or greater standards in the Anchorage area and Trail Class 4 or greater standards in the Chugiak-Eagle River area.	Variety
	26	Consider designated- or single-use trails in a recreational area when multiple user groups are incompatible due to speed, width, maintenance requirements, or equipment types (e.g., downhill mountain biking and walking, nordic skiing and equestrian use).	Variety
	27	Plan and design for snow storage at trailheads and along pathways maintained by Parks.	Quality



THEME	ID	RECOMMENDATION OR IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	PRIMARY GOAL
DESIGN	28	Use signage, especially in single-use areas, to communicate allowed uses, circulation for one-way trails, and difficulty levels.	Variety
	29	Use trail names, trailheads and landmarks, and emergency locator numbers on wayfinding signage.	Safety
	30	Use standard linework and colors on signage to communicate trail attributes, such as difficulty, special features, and trail experience in areas designed for Cross-country skiing and mountain biking.	Safety
	31	Use natural vegetation and landscaping to integrate recreational trails into the built environment and apply sustainable design to integrate trails into the natural environment.	Quality, Wellness
	32	Enhance opportunities to experience and enjoy natural landscapes through trail planning and design that showcase unique viewsheds, landmark, and environments.	Quality, Wellness
PROCESS	33	Participate in regularly scheduled updates to the Municipality of Anchorage Design Criteria Manual and adopt and implement standards that incorporate accessibility, industry standards for specialized uses, and sustainable design.	Safety
	34	Support non-motorized facilities that serve recreationalists or that connect to recreational trails. This includes separated bike lanes and pathways, space for snow storage, traffic calming, and wayfinding signs, in accordance with this Plan, the Municipal Comprehensive Plan, and the AMATS Non-Motorized Plan.	Connectivity
	35	Support new or continued protection of rights-of-way and easements for recreation or non-motorized access to trails, parks, and greenbelt in accordance with this Plan and the maps for non-motorized connectivity found in Neighborhood and District Plans and the AMATS Non-Motorized Plan. Advocate for rights-of-way in lieu of easements to establish lasting management and maintenance authority.	Connectivity
	36	Provide safe and engaging volunteer experiences on trails and increase Parks maintenance capacity through use of the Volunteer Agreement Policy.	Safety, Wellness

PARTNERSHIP

Partnerships are essential to providing and caring for quality trails in the AMATS area. Recommendations in the partnership category rely on the efforts of multiple entities to make it possible.

THEME	ID	RECOMMENDATION OR IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	GOALS BEING ADVANCED
AGENCY COORDINATION	37	Parks staff should work closely with municipal departments and other landowners to ensure important connections are preserved, improved, or created during land development. Departments include Planning, Project Management & Engineering (PM&E), Watershed, Private Development, Public Works, Real Estate Services and Heritage Land Bank (HLB). Landowners include but are not limited to University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), Alaska Pacific University (APU), Eklutna Inc., Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and their Trust Land Office, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER).	Connectivity
	38	Municipal departments should collaboratively participate in municipal Rights-Of-Way studies and support improved neighborhood access to the trail network.	Connectivity
	39	During updates to non-motorized plans and other transportation planning efforts as appropriate, collaborate with municipal departments and the DOT&PF to identify non-motorized routes with significant recreational value and recommend design elements that enhance the recreational experience.	Connectivity
	40	Partner with local and state health departments and non-profit and private entities to support programs that amplify the health benefits of parks.	Wellness
	41	Ensure opportunities for community engagement in project development processes are communicated clearly and timely.	Quality



THEME	ID	RECOMMENDATION OR IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	GOALS BEING ADVANCED
EMERGENCY RESPONSE	42	Collaborate with the Anchorage Fire Department and the Office of Emergency Management to remove potential wildfire fuel sources such as dead standing or fallen spruce trees affected by spruce bark beetle.	Safety
	43	Support emergency services through collaborative measures such as recording emergency locator numbers in the MOA GIS system and integrating them into Anchorage Police Department and Fire Departments dispatch and operational resources. Measures should be updated with new construction and adoption of new technologies.	Safety
	44	Ensure regulation signage is frequently posted throughout the trail system to support trail users, the Anchorage Police Department, Fire Department, JBER, and other enforcement agencies.	Safety
MAINTENANCE	45	Review formal maintenance agreements regularly and update as needed to ensure terms of responsibility and liability are clearly defined.	Safety
	46	Establish and regularly reference agreements between MOA departments or divisions for maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation work.	Safety
	47	Establish and update maintenance agreements with partner organizations to oversee user-specific trail maintenance and management (e.g., Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage, Singletrack Advocates).	Quality
	48	Coordinate trail design, maintenance, and managed uses with neighboring landowners and maintenance providers, including UAA, APU, BLM, and Chugach State Park (CSP) to provide a predictable, continuous trail experience.	Quality
PROJECT	49	Coordinate trail connections with neighboring recreation areas, including Chugach State Park, Campbell Tract, and Hilltop Ski area, to offer a greater variety of recreation experiences (e.g., alpine, front country, and backcountry access).	Variety
	50	Support user group organizations in their efforts to fund, develop, manage, and maintain trail systems designed for single use (i.e., Cross-country skiing, mountain biking, dog mushing, and horseback riding). Efforts may include establishing management and maintenance agreements for trails on Park property, providing letters of support, acting as a grant recipient, applicant or pass-through entity, and permitting programming and fundraising events.	Variety
	51	Provide partner and philanthropic organizations with information about trail management and development activities, such as full costs of trail improvements, including maintenance and operations, existing deficiencies, and staff capacity.	Quality



PROJECT

Project recommendations are specific capital projects or recurring actions that support the recreational trail network and its users.

THEME	ID	RECOMMENDATION OR IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	PRIMARY GOAL
ADDITION	52	Construct the missing recreational trail connections identified in this plan, and support partner efforts to construct recreational trail connections captured in Neighborhood and District Plans.	Connectivity
	53	Identify opportunities to add adult fitness equipment and interpretive installations or other public art along trails in neighborhoods during park upgrades.	Wellness
IMPROVEMENT	54	Upgrade all trail lighting, including in underpasses, to LED in accordance with the latest design standards, including ANSI/IES RP-43-22 and LP-2-20, in a manner considerate of visual comfort, ecological impacts, and preservation of dark skies.	Safety
	55	Conduct tree clearing and brush limbing where needed to increase visibility and sight lines.	Safety
	56	Update trail regulation signage with current information about use of e-bikes and e-scooters.	Safety
	57	Review and amend AMC Title 21 Street and Trail Review and application form for a Context Sensitive Solutions Transportation Project Site Plan Review as needed in accordance with this Plan.	Connectivity Quality
	58	Update MOA GIS inventory regularly to track amenities and conditions, such as trail maintenance and lighting, and share data with the public.	Safety, Quality
INFORMATION	59	Post annual interactive map with information about projects included in the Municipal Parks Bond (Anchorage).	Quality

PROGRAM

Programmatic recommendations are recurring efforts and activities hosted by Parks and their partners to improve access to, knowledge of, experiences on, and education about recreational trails.

THEME	ID	RECOMMENDATION OR IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	PRIMARY GOAL
ENGAGEMENT	60	Continue hosting tables at annual events like Bike to Work Day and the Transportation Fair, which offer connecting information about recreation and active transportation.	Connectivity, Wellness
	61	Continue to host, support, and expand recreational programs that promote safe trail use, trail etiquette, and wildlife safety (e.g., Biker Buddies, Bike Rodeo, Outdoor Week, etc.).	Safety
	62	Host regular volunteer orientation nights to educate the public about volunteer opportunities on trails.	Quality
	63	Address common barriers to getting outside by supporting and implementing programs that introduce residents to new activities and skill development, including introductory programs to winter sport.	Wellness, Variety

THEME	ID	RECOMMENDATION OR IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	PRIMARY GOAL
ENGAGEMENT	64	Provide opportunities to borrow or rent gear during park programs.	Wellness
INFORMATION	65	Promote the Public Tree Hazard Reporting app to assist with hazard tree identification and removal.	Safety
	66	Parks staff should use the Work Order Management System to triage public and internal reports of trail issues.	Safety
	67	Feature maintenance and operations on department social media to increase public awareness of department process.	Quality
	68	Outline the permit process for hosting trail events on Parks' website.	Wellness

PERSONNEL

Personnel recommendations are specific to the people who are needed to develop and maintain our recreational trail system.

THEME	ID	RECOMMENDATION OR IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	PRIMARY GOAL
ENGAGEMENT	69	Increase staff presence in parks through the Parks Ambassador program.	Safety
	70	Continue to support the Youth Employment in Parks program's work on soft-surface trails and streambank restoration through partnership with the Anchorage Park Foundation.	Safety
ENGAGEMENT	71	Increase or reconfigure Parks' operating budget for new staff positions focused on trail maintenance.	Quality
	72	Provide professional development opportunities for existing staff focused on trail design, maintenance, and management.	Quality
	73	Support Recreation Programmers to develop and manage trail-based programs and events throughout the AMATS area.	Wellness



MAINTENANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

To meet the community’s expectations for high-quality trails, new funding strategies are needed for maintenance. Increased investment from the municipality and its partners will help keep all trails safe and accessible. Additionally, maintenance practices need to be consistently evaluated to ensure they are meeting the needs of the community’s diverse trail users.

PAVEMENT REPAIR

Requests to repair cracked pavement quickly and more frequently on multi-use trails are consistently received by Parks. This Plan confirmed that improved summer trail conditions are a top community priority. The backlog of needed repairs is substantial and the traditional packaging of repair efforts with larger bond-funded projects is not keeping up.

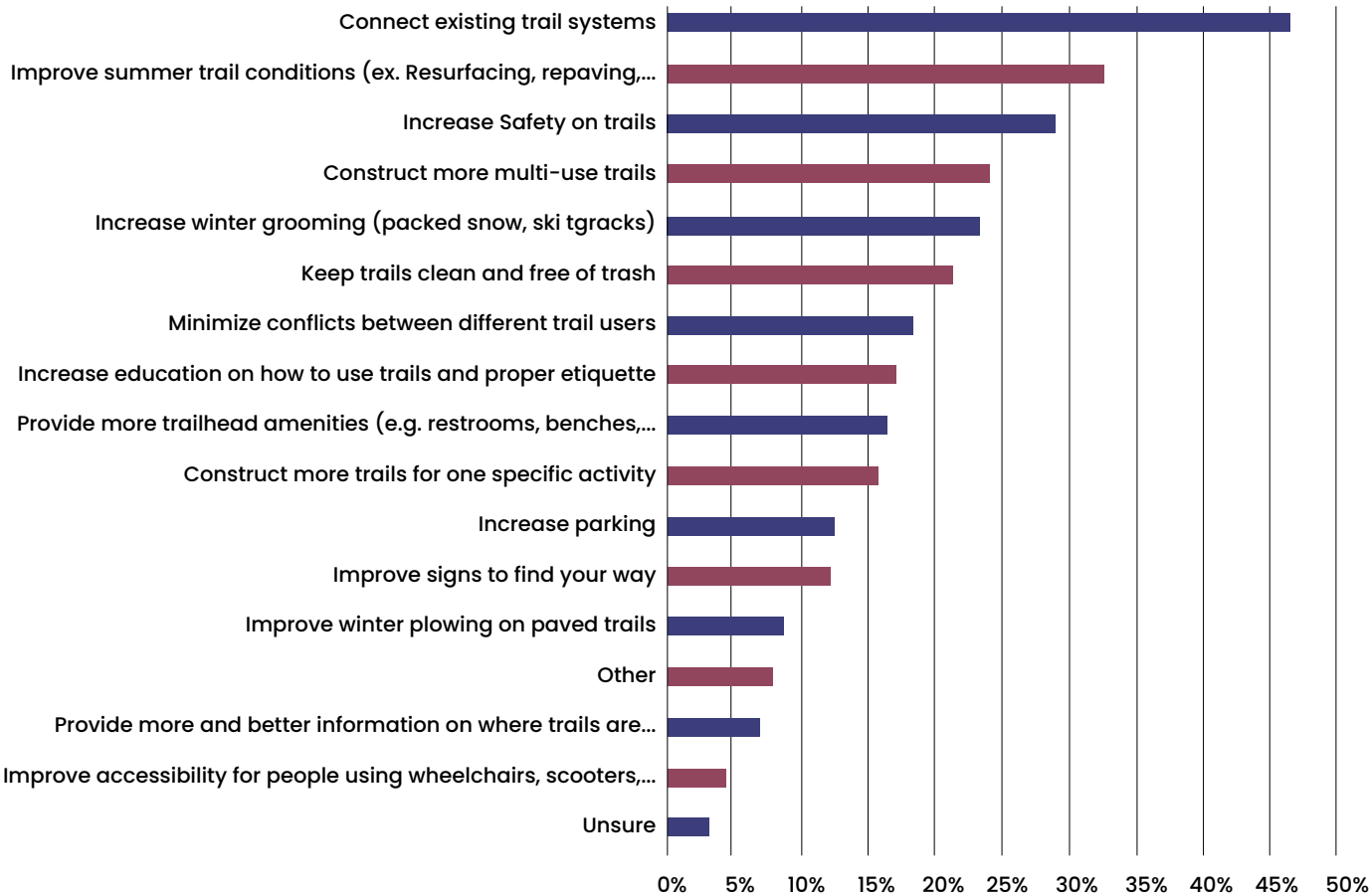
WINTER MAINTENANCE

The Plan received many comments about winter maintenance. 23% of survey respondents ranked increased winter grooming operations in their top three priorities for improving trails. It was the fifth highest overall priority out of 17 options. Desires for more trail grooming were also consistently expressed at public engagement events including public workshops, advisory group meetings, and in written comments.

Recommendations:

- » Expand opportunities to fund pavement repair and summer trail maintenance (see Funding Strategies in Chapter 6).

TOP PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING TRAILS BY RESPONSE



To support multi-use activity and winter-specific sports, the Plan recommends continuing trail grooming of the Chester Creek, Campbell Creek, and Coastal Trails in Anchorage, along with the ski loop at Russian Jack Springs Park. Given strong community support and Parks' resources, grooming trails is a win to support daily trail users and annual events that make Anchorage unique.

Recommendations:

- » To create a uniform and predictable surface, Parks should strive to groom trails 3 times per week as snowpack allows.
- » Clearing snow in spring should continue to be a priority to support cyclists and pedestrians.
- » Winter maintenance, whether groomed or cleared snow, should be coordinated with neighboring landowners and maintenance providers as much as possible to provide seamless transitions for trail users.
- » Winter maintenance should continue to provide diverse recreation opportunities and to support annual events including the Tour of Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous sled dog racing and Ceremonial Start of the Iditarod.
- » Ship Creek and Fish Creek Trails should be continued to be cleared of snow using a Trackless due to their shorter lengths, capacity for snow storage, and updated bridge carrying capacity.
- » New multi-use trail projects in Anchorage, Chugiak, and Eagle River should consider how a trail will be used and how it will be maintained to best support users.

ADDRESSING ENCAMPMENTS

The Municipality faces challenges supporting those experiencing homelessness and addressing the related community impacts. Encampments, litter, and property damage along and within trail corridors are common sources of conflict and the presence of camps can affect the perception of safety which may impact people's willingness to use trails. The Municipality is taking stronger action to improve safety and accessibility in public spaces, including parks and trails, and improve quality of life for those occupying encampments. During the time of this Plan update, the Municipality has improved its year-round network of shelter and services, and the Healthy Spaces division of Anchorage Parks and Recreation has expanded park and trail cleanups and supported increased camp abatement on trails. These efforts directly support Goal 2: to ensure trail users can safely and comfortably use trails.

Recommendation:

- » Anchorage Parks and Recreation will continue to support the municipality-wide response to homelessness that requires coordinated action from a variety of partners.



TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS AND DESIGN

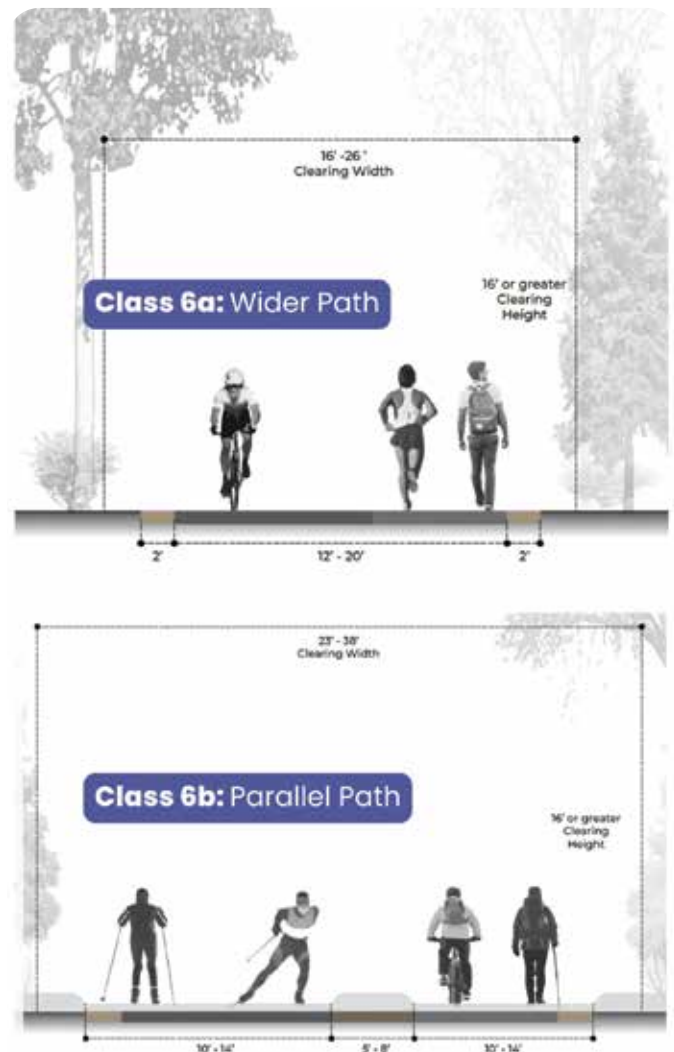
TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Trail Classifications are a way of organizing and describing the physical design of trails based on how they are intended to be used and the type of experience they provide. Each class sets design standards (such as width, surface, and level of development) that guide trail planners and builders in creating safe and consistent facilities across the AMATS area. In the past, the Department has used classifications from the Far North Bicentennial Trail Improvements Plan or national standards used by the U.S. Forest Service. These classifications range from narrow, natural-surface trails (Class 1) to highly developed, paved multi-use trails (Class 5) that accommodate a wide variety of users.

This Plan introduces a classification system of multi-use Summer Class 1 – 5 trails and Winter Class 1–5 trails that reflect updated standards throughout our network. Summer and winter classifications may not always match (a summer Class 2 trail does not mean the trail must be a Winter Class 2). This plan also introduces new Class 6 trails, designed to separate different user groups on wider or parallel paths. This is typically bicyclists and pedestrians in the summer. In winter, separation could also provide groomed ski trails separate from a path maintained for bicyclists and pedestrians. This is a direct response to comments about discomfort and safety concerns where trail use is highest, and where bicyclists, skiers, and pedestrians intermix, such as along the Coastal Trail near Westchester Lagoon in Anchorage.

A Class 6 trail also has potential to accommodate multiple winter maintenance options. For example, the Winter Class 6b trail could separate and support both groomed snow surfaces and surfaces cleared of snow to provide more variety for trail users. The 6a and 6b variations are meant to provide adaptable models that will require specific planning and design processes to determine the best layout considering trail use types, maintenance capacity, and preferences and the ability to manage and store snow.

Trail Class details are provided in Appendix A. Trail Classifications.



Relationship To Specialty Trails

Trail Classifications guide public and private trail development and investment. The classifications were developed for multi-use trails and are not intended to limit features for specialty trails (sometimes called purpose-built) such as those used and maintained for cross-country ski racing and biathlon events or components of singletrack mountain bike trails such as berms, jumps, and wooden features.

When appropriate, locating specialty-use trails next to multi-use trails is encouraged. Considering user compatibility and designing intersections with feedback from all user groups creates successful co-location projects, as seen with the singletrack mountain bike trails along the Chester Creek Greenbelt or with mountain bike trail development alongside ski trails. While co-location is not reflected in Trail Classifications, it is a welcome exception to the standard. The planning and design of these projects requires context- and project-specific development.

As Parks undertakes new projects, stakeholders should be consulted early in the process to provide valuable site context. This includes, but is not limited to, subject-matter experts such as the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, neighboring landowners like Bureau of Land Management, Chugach State Park, Alaska Pacific University, and the University of Alaska Anchorage, and municipal departments such as Traffic, Project Management and Engineering, and Right-of-Way Enforcement. Trail design principles will be detailed under the Design Criteria Manual updates, summarized below.

TRAIL STRIPING

Anchorage's greenbelt trails include many neighborhood connections and side paths, which can be confusing for new users. Painted lines, colored markings, and directional arrows can help show which path is the main trail and which are spur trails. These markings can also highlight hazard areas. When snow covers the trail, light projection systems mounted on light poles may provide similar guidance.

Recommendations:

At minimum, a yellow stripe along the trail centerline should be maintained on greenbelt multi-use trails under the following criteria:

- » 400+ bikes and pedestrians counted per day.
- » Congestion pinch points, like Westchester Lagoon.
- » Areas where main trail should be delineated from spurs.
- » Areas with limited sightlines, like curves and sharp turns, tunnels, and hills.

Surface markings, paint, and light projection are an effective, relatively low-cost method to help with navigation, improve circulation, and reduce the risk of collisions.

TRAIL COUNTERS

Permanent trail counters are a tool used by the municipality to count trail volumes at 15-minute intervals. Trail volume studies are important for Parks and Recreation to understand trends and user patterns, inform design and development decisions, and demonstrate the value of trail assets in grant applications or reports.

Recommendation:

All new, repaired, or altered trails or pathways should coordinate with Traffic Engineering for possible permanent count station installation and/or repair.

WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE

Wayfinding is an essential component of the recreational trail system. It strives to provide clear, simple navigation for trail users and provides opportunities to incorporate community identity, increasing safety and sense-of-place. Anchorage Park Foundation and Parks developed an Anchorage Trails Design Intent brand guide in 2015. This document provides branding standards (colors, typography, and layouts), sign typologies, and placement scenarios. After the Anchorage Park Foundation received an \$800,000 Alaska Legislative Grant in 2022 to implement this brand, several key recommendations arose from the implementation process:

- » **Use north-up maps on kiosk maps instead of “heads up” orientation.** Heads-up maps (oriented to the direction the user is standing) are time-consuming for the designer and the installer. Future kiosks should use north-up maps to make installation more flexible and reduce design time.



- » **Introduction of a new Locator Map standard.** These vertical panels are smaller in scale than kiosk maps and modeled after city metro maps. They fill in gaps on wooden posts and offer a bread crumb for trail users about their next stop on the trail.
- » **Deferring to local and national standards for signage in right-of-way.** Revision of the “DIR.1” panel standard at trail entrance points near roadways.

More information is contained in the updated forthcoming 2025 Wayfinding Implementation Plan guide.

UPDATES TO THE DESIGN CRITERIA MANUAL

The MOA’s Design Criteria Manual (DCM) is a comprehensive resource that establishes minimum standards for the design and construction of roads, trails, and drainage projects specific to Anchorage’s climate, geology, and topography. It is used by engineers, landscape architects, designers, and other professionals working to improve public infrastructure. Founded on nationally recognized industry standards and regulations, the DCM addresses eight categories that correspond to chapters in the DCM: streets, storm drain, landscaping, trails, lighting, traffic control, public transportation, and engineering plans and specifications.

The MOA’s Project Management and Engineering Department is updating chapters of the DCM at the time of this Plan’s drafting. The Trails chapter of the DCM will be updated following adoption of this Plan and modifications to trail design standards will be informed directly by the Trail Classifications and Design recommendations in this section.

SUMMER CLASS 1

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

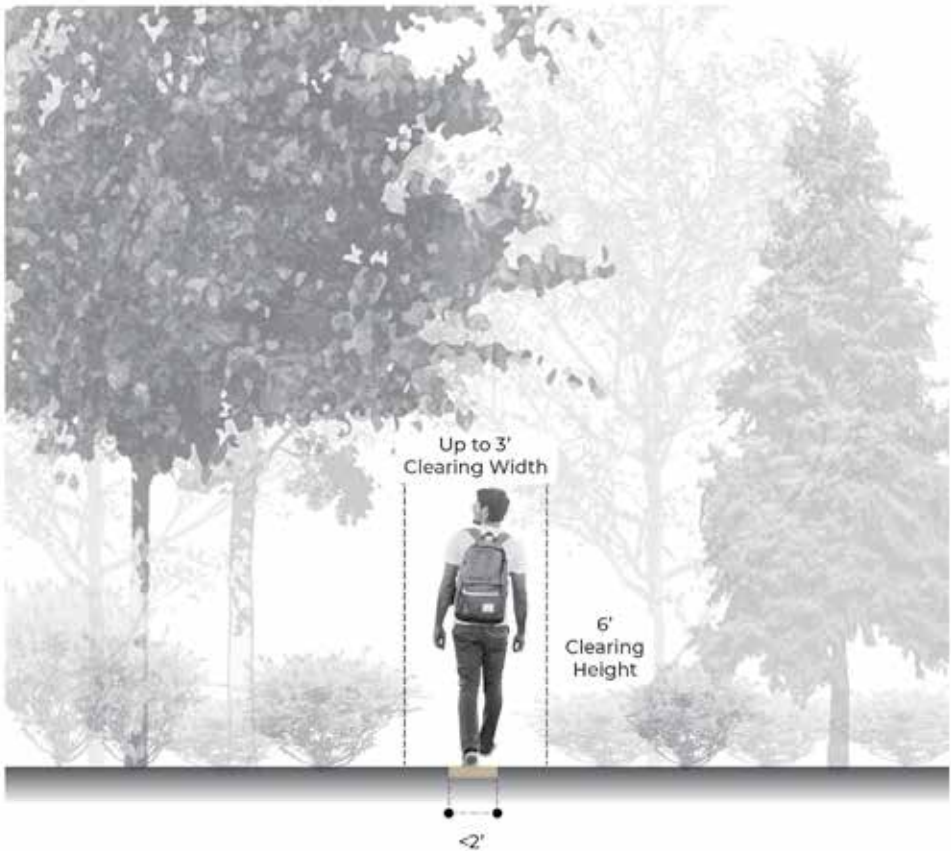
Natural to minimally modified with a primitive setting.

Tread may be intermittent to indistinct.

Roots, rocks, logs, and steps up to 2' may be present.

Minimal to nonexistent constructed features.

Minimal usage.



Trail Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
<2'	Up to 3' with some vegetation encroachment	Native, un-graded, intermittent, rough	6'	Hiker-Pedestrian, Pack & Saddle, Bicycle	Clearing blockages to maintain defined route



SUMMER CLASS 2

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

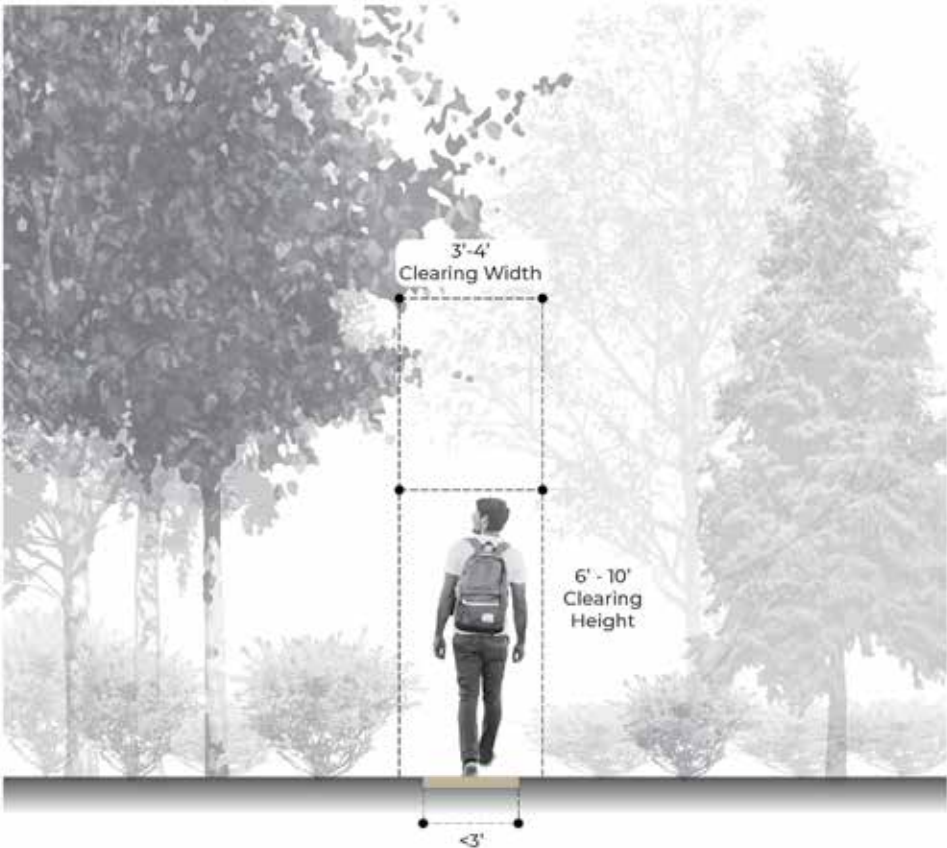
Natural to minimally modified with a primitive setting.

Continuous tread with roots, rocks, logs, and protrusions up to 6", steps up to 14" may be present.

Constructed features may be present.

Moderate usage.

Could support low bike usage.



Trail Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
<3'	3'-4' some vegetation encroachment	Native with limited grading	6' - 10'	Hiker-Pedestrian, Pack & Saddle, Bicycle	Clearing blockages and periodic vegetation clearing to maintain defined route



SUMMER CLASS 3

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

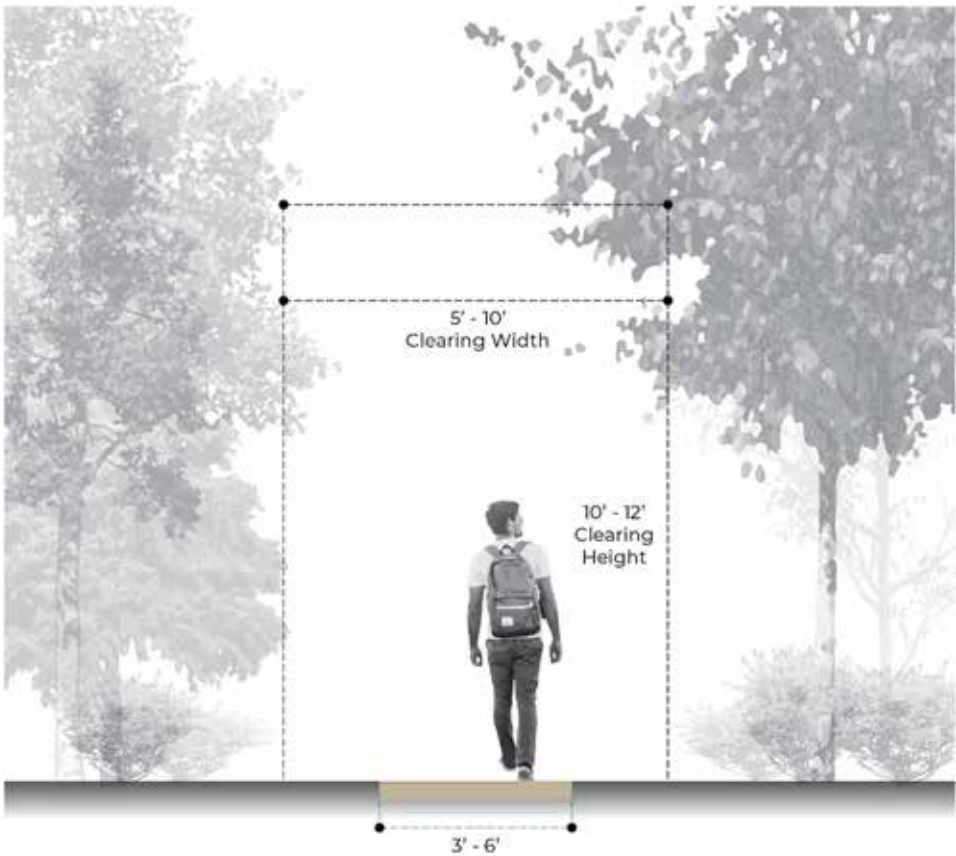
Modified trail with protrusions up to 3". Steps up to 10" may be present.

Tread surface is mostly stable with some variability.

Constructed features may include primitive bridges, trailhead amenities, or wayfinding.

Class 3 includes singletrack trails designed for mountain biking, which may have additional built features such as rock gardens, rock-overs, ledges, drops, bermed turns, skinnies, jumps, and wooden structures.

Moderate to heavy usage.



Trail Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
3' - 6'	5' - 10'	Native with grading improvements; some on-site borrow or imported material	10' - 12'	Hiker-Pedestrian, Pack & Saddle, Bicycle	Vegetation cleared to outside of trail width



SUMMER CLASS 4

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

Wide and relatively smooth tread with few irregularities.

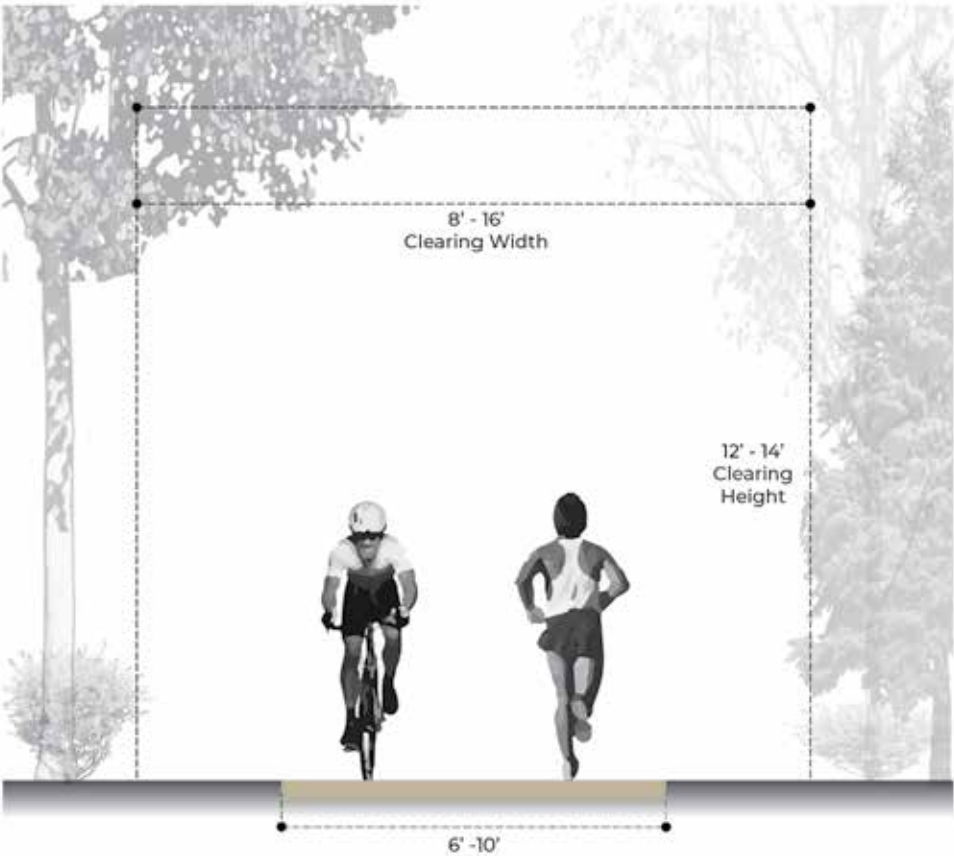
Few obstacles with protrusions up to 2" or less.

Constructed features may include steps up to 8", bridges with rails, trailhead amenities, wayfinding/ kiosks, or trash receptacles.

Heavy usage.

Double-track trail allows for two users side-by-side or passing.

If heavier bike use expected, minimum 8' trail width recommended.



Trail Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
6' - 10'	8' - 16'	Imported materials or hardening of surface is common	12' - 14'	Hiker-Pedestrian, Pack & Saddle, Bicycle	Vegetation cleared to outside of trail width; seasonal shoulder mowing; clean-up after storm events



SUMMER CLASS 5

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

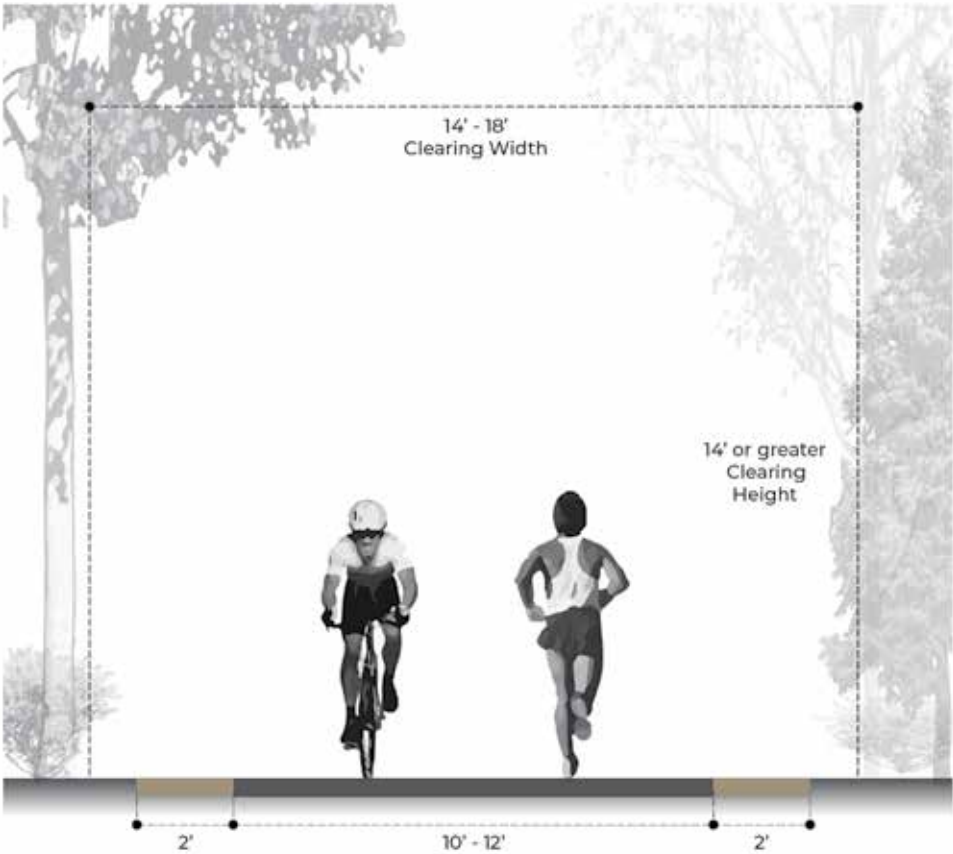
Wide and smooth tread with a highly modified surface.

No obstacles, no protrusions, no steps.

Constructed features may include bridges with rails, trailhead amenities, wayfinding/kiosks, trash receptacles, benches, viewpoint bump-outs, curbs, or decorative fences.

Intense usage.

Often includes shoulders up to 2' wide.



Trail Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
10' - 12'	14' - 18'	Uniform, firm, paved	14' or greater	Hiker-Pedestrian, Pack & Saddle, Bicycle	Vegetation cleared to outside of trail width; seasonal shoulder mowing; seasonal sweeping; clean-up after storm events



SUMMER CLASS 6a

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

Wide and smooth tread with a highly modified surface.

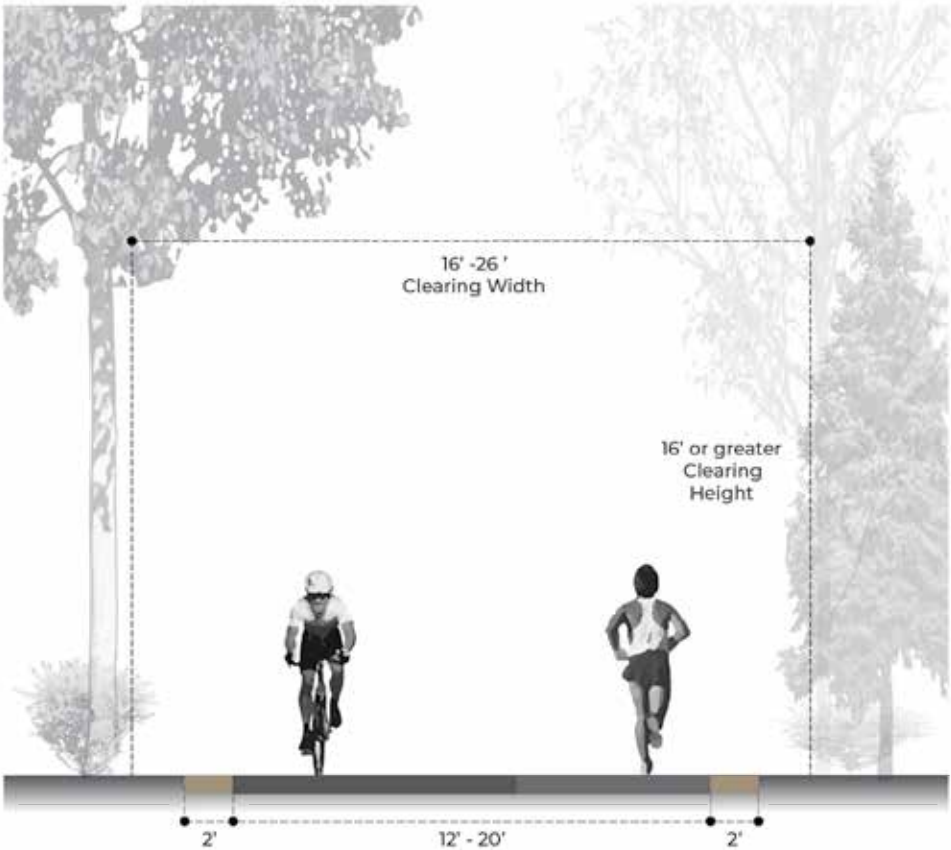
Provides enough width for the comfortable separation of bicyclists and pedestrians.

Separation can be provided through striping, surface color, projected lighting, and/or grade separation.

No obstacles, no protrusions, no steps.

Constructed features may include bridges with rails, trailhead amenities, wayfinding/kiosks, trash receptacles, benches, viewpoint bump-outs, curbs, or decorative fences.

Most intense/highest use.



Trail Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
12' - 20'	16' - 26'	Uniform, firm, paved; may separate pedestrians and bicyclists	16' or greater	Pedestrian and bicyclist	Vegetation cleared to outside of trail width; seasonal shoulder mowing; seasonal sweeping; clean-up after storm events



SUMMER CLASS 6b

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

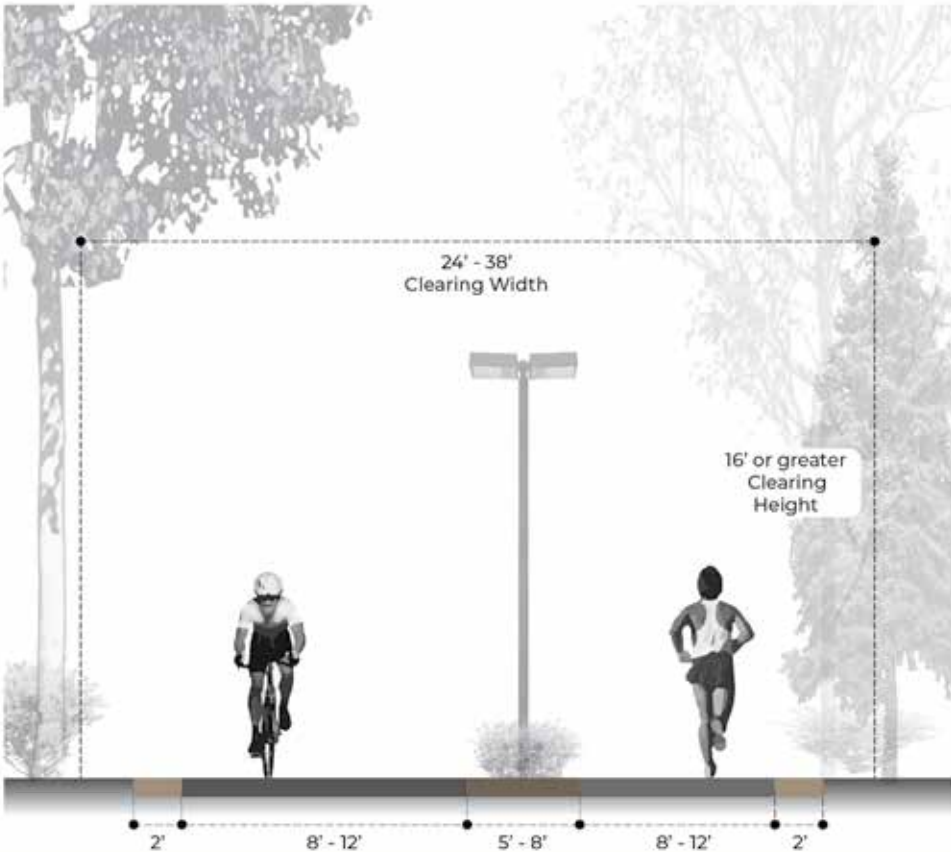
Wide and smooth tread with a highly modified surface.

Similar to 6a, this design separates bicyclists and pedestrians in congested areas by building two separated trails with a center vegetated buffer.

No obstacles, no protrusions, no steps.

Constructed features may include bridges with rails, trailhead amenities, wayfinding/kiosks, trash receptacles, benches, viewpoint bump-outs, curbs, or decorative fences.

Most intense/highest use.



Trail Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
16' - 24' (paved total)	24' - 28'	Uniform, firm, paved; may separate pedestrians and bicyclists	16' or greater	Pedestrian and bicyclist	Vegetation cleared to outside of trail width; seasonal shoulder mowing; seasonal sweeping; clean-up after storm events

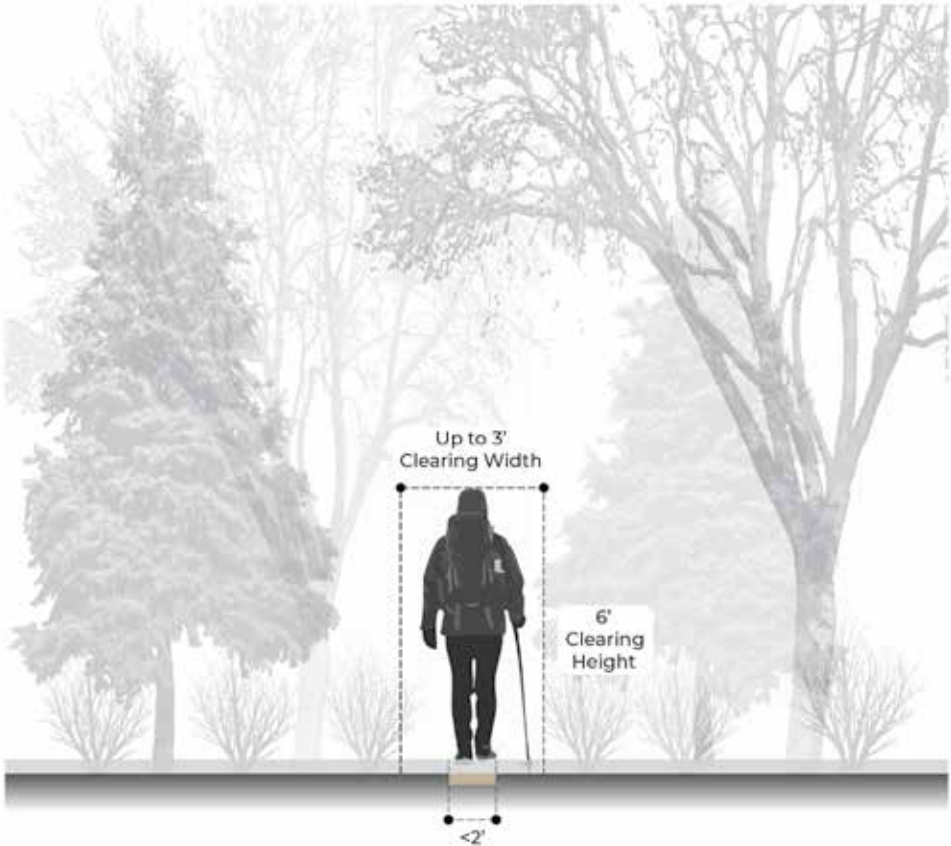


WINTER CLASS 1

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

- Natural and unmodified.
- Roots, rocks, logs, and steps up to 2' may be present.
- Minimal to no constructed features.
- Minimal usage.



Trail Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
Ungroomed (<2')	Up to 3' with some vegetation encroachment	Use packed snow	6'	Snow Shoeing, Nordic Skiing (Classic), Hiker-Pedestrian, Winter Bicycle	Clearing blockages to maintain defined route; no grooming



WINTER CLASS 2

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

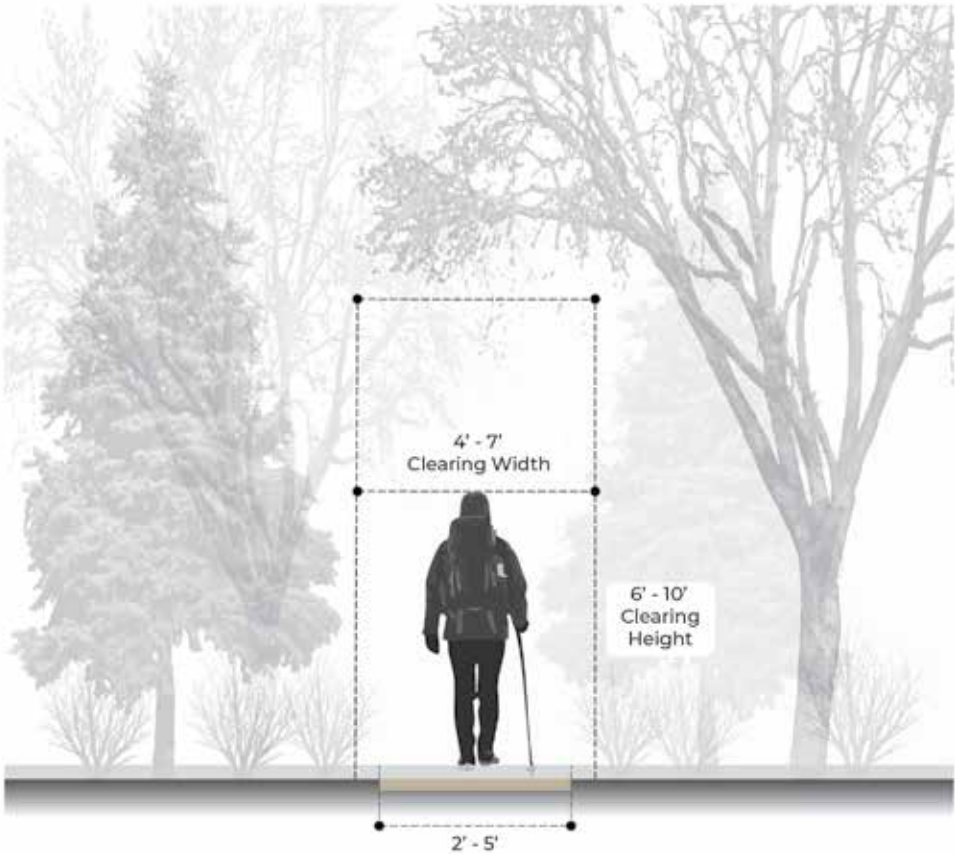
Trail Class Description

Minimally modified.

Dips, bumps, and ruts may be common but widely spaced in the snow surface.

Primitive bridges, trailhead amenities, wayfinding, and constructed steps may be present.

Moderate usage.



Grooming Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
2' - 5'	4' - 7' with some vegetation encroachment	May receive occasional light grooming to pack surface or set classic tracks	6' - 10'	Snow shoeing, Nordic Skiing (Classic), Hiker-Pedestrian, Winter Bicycle	Occasional grooming or track setting

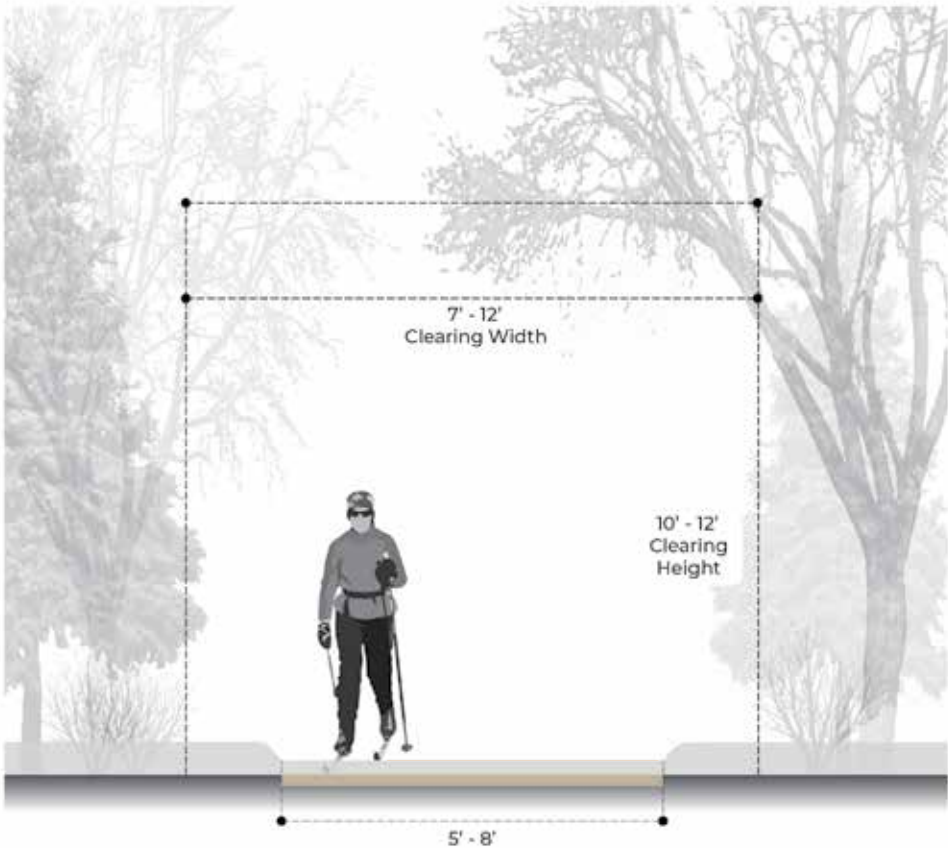


WINTER CLASS 3

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

- Regularly groomed or packed down.
- Consistently smooth snow surface with small rolling bumps, dips, or rises.
- No surface obstructions.
- Constructed features may include primitive bridges, trailhead amenities, or wayfinding.
- Moderate to heavy usage.



Grooming Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
5' - 8'	7' - 12'	Regular grooming for snow compaction and track setting	10' - 12'	Snow Shoeing, Nordic Skiing (Classic and Skate), Skijoring, Hiker-Pedestrian, Winter Bicycle	Regular grooming and track setting; vegetation cleared outside of grooming width



WINTER CLASS 4

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

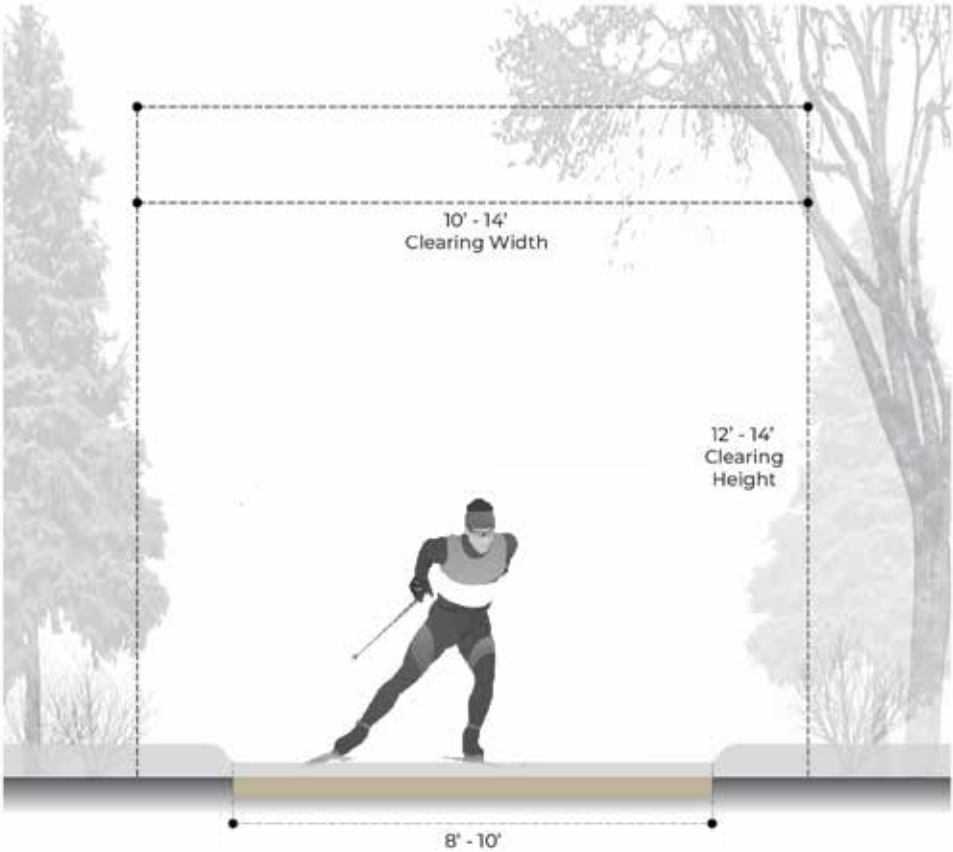
Trail Class Description

Wide, regularly groomed and consistently smooth with no obstructions.

Set tracks may be intermittent.

Constructed features may include bridges with rails, trailhead amenities, wayfinding/kiosks, trash receptacles, or constructed steps.

Heavy usage.



Grooming Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
8' - 10'	10' - 14'	Regular grooming for snow compaction and track setting	12' - 14'	Snow Shoeing, Nordic Skiing (Classic and Skate), Skijoring, Hiker-Pedestrian, Winter Bicycle	Regular grooming and track setting; vegetation clearing outside of grooming width



WINTER CLASS 5

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

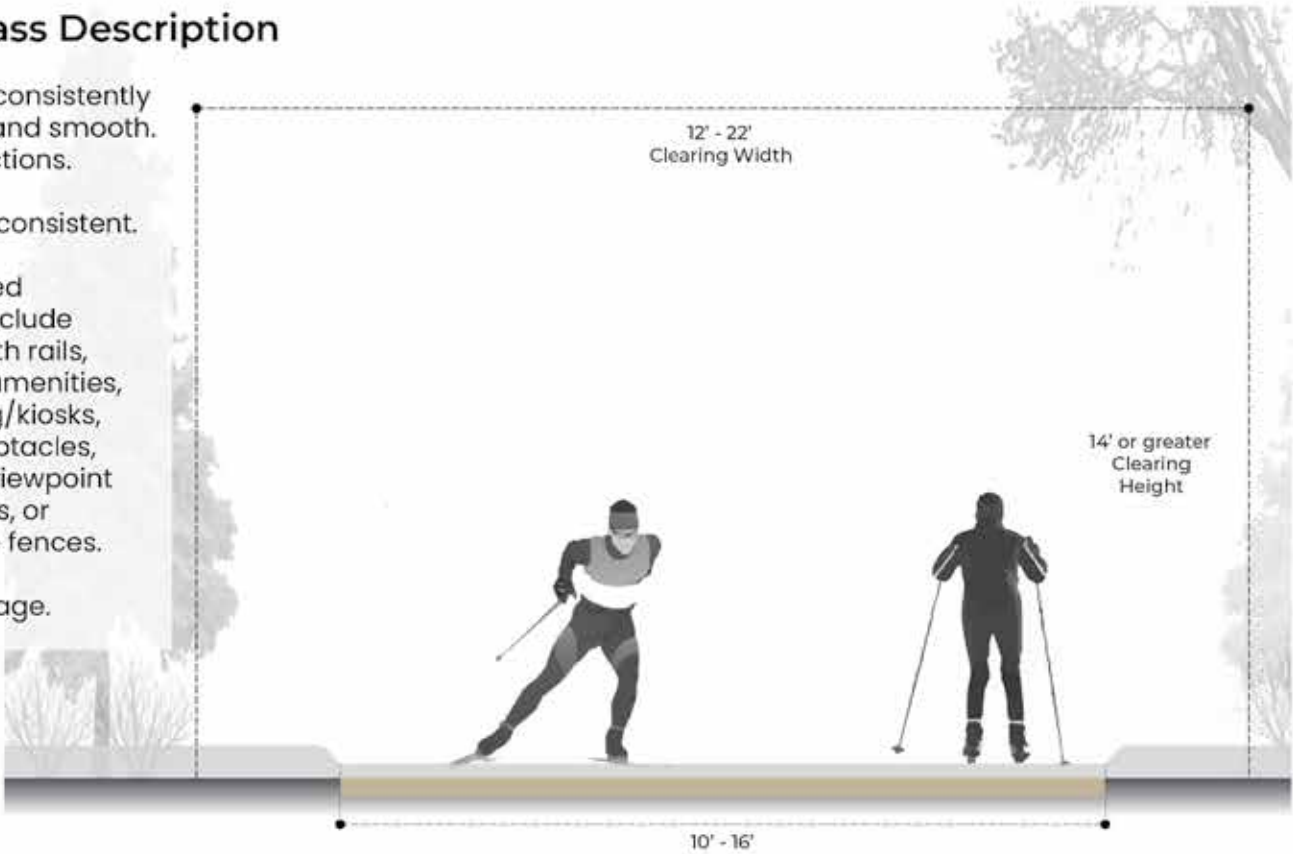
Trail Class Description

Wide and consistently groomed and smooth. No obstructions.

Set tracks consistent.

Constructed features include bridges with rails, trailhead amenities, wayfinding/kiosks, trash receptacles, benches, viewpoint bump-outs, or decorative fences.

Intense usage.



Grooming Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
10' - 16'	12' - 22'	Consistent grooming for snow compaction and track setting	14' or greater	Snow Shoeing, Nordic Skiing (Classic and Skate), Skijoring, Hiker-Pedestrian, Winter Bicycle	Consistent grooming and track setting; vegetation cleared outside of grooming width



WINTER CLASS 6a

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

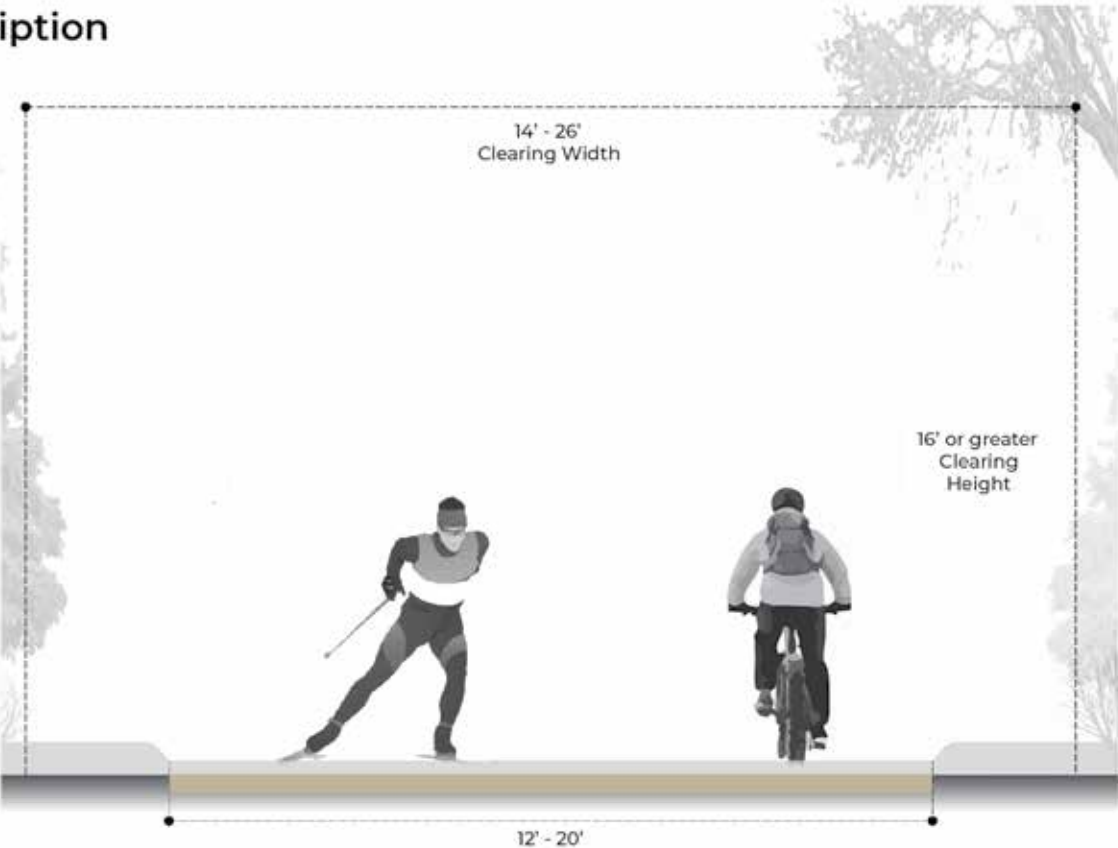
Wide and consistently groomed tread.

Provides enough width for the comfortable separation of bicyclists and pedestrians.

No obstacles, no protrusions, no steps.

Constructed features may include bridges with rails, trailhead amenities, wayfinding/ kiosks, trash receptacles, benches, viewpoint bump-outs, curbs, or decorative fences.

Most intense/highest use.



Grooming Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
12' - 20'	14' - 26'	Uniform, firm, paved; may separate pedestrians and bicyclists	16' or greater	Nordic Skiing (Classic and Skate), Skijoring, Hiker-Pedestrian, Winter Bicycle	Consistent grooming and track setting; vegetation cleared outside of grooming width



WINTER CLASS 6b

AMATS Recreational Trails Plan

Trail Class Description

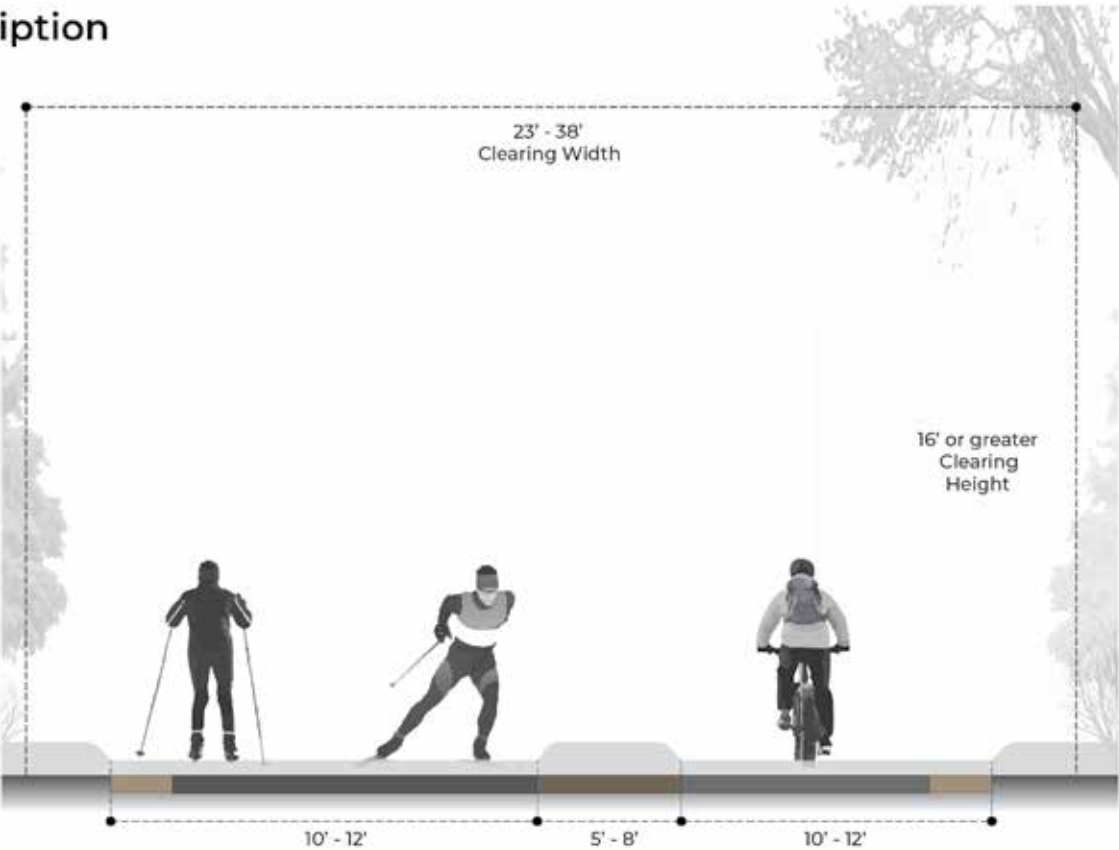
Wide and consistently groomed tread.

Provides enough width for the comfortable separation of bicyclists, pedestrians, and skiers.

No obstacles, no protrusions, no steps.

Constructed features may include bridges with rails, trailhead amenities, wayfinding/ kiosks, trash receptacles, benches, viewpoint bump-outs, curbs, or decorative fences.

Most intense/highest use.



Grooming Width	Trail Clearance	Trail Surface	Clearing Height	Designed Uses	Maintenance
16' - 24' (groomed total)	23' - 38'	Uniform, firm, paved; may separate pedestrians and bicyclists	16' or greater	Nordic Skiing (Classic and Skate), Skijoring, Hiker-Pedestrian, Winter Bicycle	Consistent grooming and track setting based on user needs; vegetation cleared outside of grooming width



EMERGING TRAIL USES

E-BIKES

During the development of this Plan, the Anchorage Assembly updated regulations to allow electric and pedal-assist electric bicycles (e-bikes) and e-scooters on city trails and revised definitions for electric-assisted bicycles (Assembly Ordinance No. 2024-51(S)). E-bikes are not considered motorized vehicles and Parks supports their safe use on trails, as they are important tools for accessibility.

To ensure safety, it is important to clearly communicate what is allowed (pedal-assist e-bikes and e-scooters at safe speeds) and what is not allowed (fully motorized bikes, including electric dirt bikes) on trails. Parks should also clearly establish where motorized bikes can be used (dedicated motorcross track). This can be achieved through signage, social media, outreach to user groups, and Community Council notifications.

Recommendation:

- » Develop standard signage on allowed trail uses and new e-bike regulations.
- » Update the Design Criteria Manual to evaluate safe speeds and trail design strategies for areas with mixed users, including pedestrians, bicycles, and e-bikes.

WINTER-ONLY TRAIL MANAGEMENT

Winter-only trails are those that emerge on wetlands or bodies of water when the ground is frozen and are impassable during summer months. While some of these trails are actively managed and maintained for dog mushing or skiing, there is a dynamic network of natural winter-only trails that are not managed. Recreation on these unmanaged seasonal trails have grown in popularity with fat-tire biking and are often also enjoyed by snowshoers, dog walkers, and some touring skiers.

Typically, winter-only trails have less impact to the environment since riders are traveling on snow. However, there are some concerning impacts, such as unauthorized cutting and brushing of tree limbs, riding through nesting habitats, and the fragmentation of wildlife habitat. The Department continues to monitor and document winter-only trails on an internal GIS database.

Recommendation:

- » Future updates to the 2006 Anchorage Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan should evaluate potential natural resource and wildlife impacts of winter-only trails.
- » Establish parameters or thresholds of natural resource disturbance that may trigger more active management from Parks.



SNOWMAKING

Snowmaking is an important part of winter trail management and will need to adapt as weather patterns change in the coming decades. Snow conditions can vary across the AMATS area within a single season due to microclimates shaped by mountains, marine systems, wind patterns, and topography. Partner organizations operating on municipal park land, such as the NSAA and Hilltop Ski Area, have explored the expansion of current snowmaking efforts or development of new trail system to keep cross-country and downhill ski trails open for longer seasons.

Recommendation:

- » Include snowmaking in park master planning and support partner organizations in seeking grants and other resources to advance these efforts.



TRAILSIDE FACILITIES

Public interest in revitalized and new trailside facilities is driven by the potential to encourage more trail use for locals and visitors. Indoor spaces can reduce barriers to getting outdoors by providing a space to change, warm up, or use the restroom. Facilities on trails also create potential for programming, concessionaires, or rentals. However, facilities require sustainable funding to support construction, staffing, and maintenance.

Facility recommendations fall outside the scope of this plan and would require significant public outreach specific to each site. However, the Plan recognizes the public interest in improving facilities to make it easier for residents and visitors to access the trail system comfortably in all seasons.

Recommendation:

- » Incorporate trailside facility analysis into park master plans to capture user needs.

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Trail Project Recommendation List identifies priority trail projects for the next 5 to 20 years in the AMATS area. **It is an adaptable and non-exhaustive list meant to focus Parks Department resources.**

The Supporting Non-Motorized Project List identifies active transportation projects that have a significant recreational purpose or connection but are beyond the responsibility of the Parks Department, therefore requiring other agencies and partners to implement. Clear guidelines for decision-making as new trail or trail improvement proposals arise are provided in this plan, including for projects funded by partners or grant programs. This flexible approach will help the Parks Department align projects with community priorities across Anchorage, Eagle River, and Chugiak.

PROJECT SELECTION AND PRIORITIZATION

Projects were proposed by the public and participating organizations throughout the plan development process (see Chapter 1.

Plan Development Process). Projects were then reviewed, selected, and prioritized using the three criteria and scoring matrix provided in the table below. The criteria for selecting projects to include in this long-range plan were developed from community priorities are informed by those used in the current Anchorage Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Program/Budget (CIP/CIB) project evaluation system.

Projects that met the first criteria of being on MOA owned land were then considered for the Trail Project Recommendations List depending on whether they met the following two criteria which are based on the goals and objectives defined in this Plan. If a project met all the criteria, their overall score influenced the priority and timeframe recommendation. See the flow chart below summarizing the project selection process.

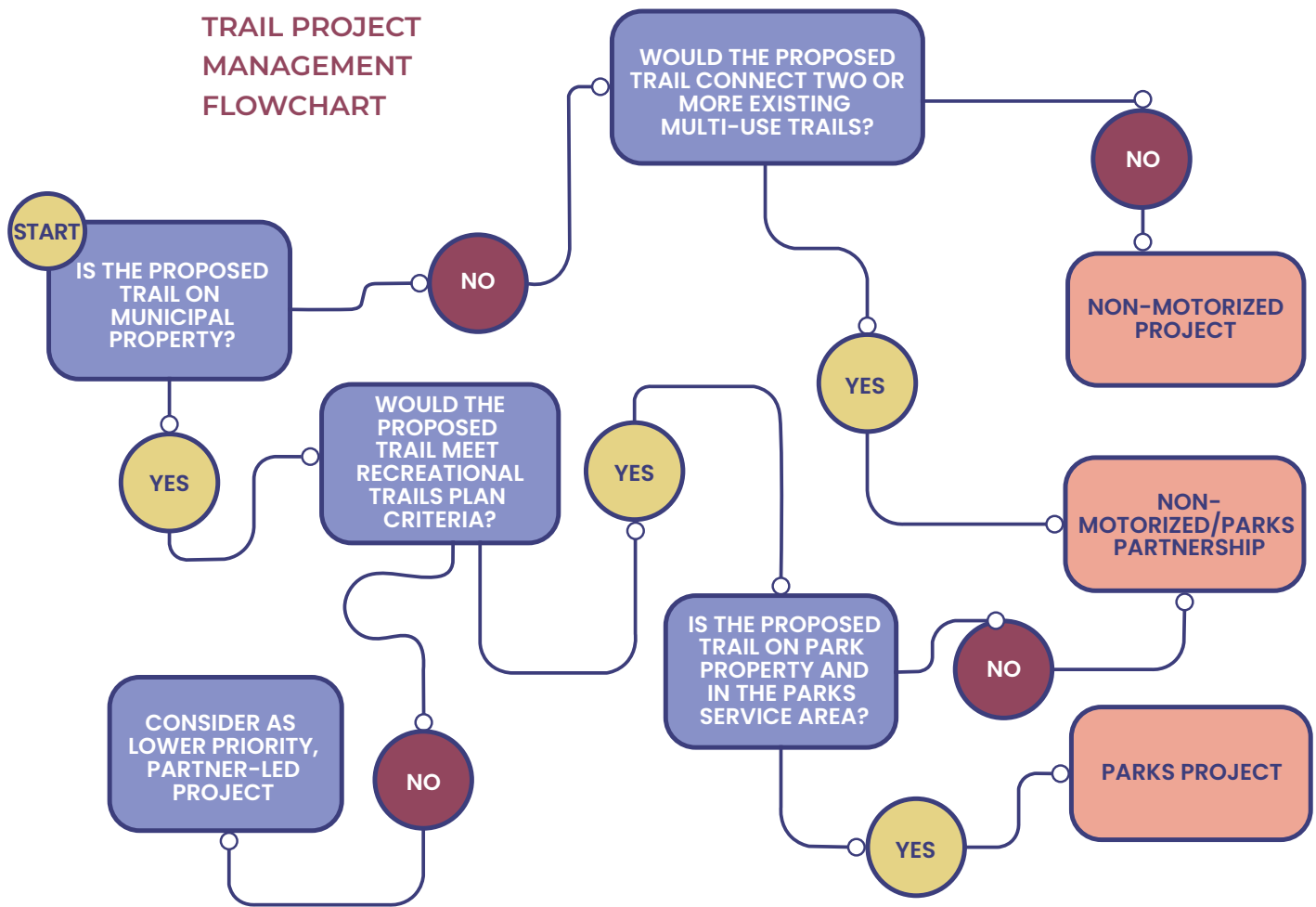
The weighting in this system places more emphasis on the Severity of Need / Maintenance Status category. This helps sort through a crowded field of project proposals. This is also in alignment with the weighting used in Anchorage Parks' CIP/CIB. used in Anchorage Parks' CIP/CIB.



CRITERIA	SCORE	DESCRIPTION
MOA Land Ownership Reflects the ability of Parks and Recreation to manage the project and the trail/asset.	10	Project falls within MOA Parks and Recreation managed property.
	5	Project falls within MOA Real Estate ownership, other public land ownership (BLM/Chugach State Park), or a future public roadway/pathway improvement project.
	0	Project falls within private land and would require property acquisition.
Gaps in the Recreational Trail System Reflects objectives of Goal 1 (Connectivity) and Goal 4 (Wellness), informed by the location of trails and demographic context of surrounding area.	10	Project fills a connectivity gap and serves a high-priority demographic area (neighborhoods with more dense population or with more youth, seniors, lower household income, or lower household vehicle access).
	5	Serves some connectivity goals or fills a demographic need.
	0	Project does not fill a connectivity gap or address demographic need.
Severity of Need / Maintenance Status Reflects objectives of Goals 2, 3 and 5 (Safety, Quality, Variety).	20	Project is an urgent need due to health and safety concerns, and/or is in high demand to improve experience and variety for trail users.
	10	Project has growing health and safety concerns or has growing trail user variety needs.
	0	Project serves neither immediate health and safety concerns nor immediate user group needs.



TRAIL PROJECT MANAGEMENT FLOWCHART



The **Trail Project Management Flowchart** is about how management of trail projects might vary based on the landowners involved and the scope of work. It does not directly reflect funding sources.

Coordinating with Non-Motorized Connectivity Projects

The Trail Project Recommendation List focuses on improving existing trails and creating new trail connections on municipal-owned park property. However, the planning process confirmed that the public see recreational trails as part of a broader non-motorized transportation network. Trail users want an integrated network that supports both recreation and transportation. This is a theme that carries over from the 1997 Areawide Trails Plan.

Compared to cycling or walking along roadways, recreational trails keep people safely separated from motorized traffic and often provide a more desirable experience. Trails offer added health benefits of spending time in nature while using active modes of transportation. However, the public's desired travel paths may span private property and lack the necessary legal access to support a trail connection.

Considering the public's desire to improve existing trails first, this Plan does not recommend taking property acquisition on a large scale. However, Parks can be a partner in helping the Municipality achieve better recreational connectivity using existing right-of-way or public access easements when no public lands are available. The flowchart above shows how management of trail projects might vary based on the landowners involved and the scope of work (see also Chapter 6, Implementation).

Recommendation:

- » Given the current and anticipated limitations of staff and funding availability, the most effective use of public funds is to prioritize recreational connectivity improvements that can be achieved without the need for property acquisition.

Coordinating and Connecting with Chugach State Park

Feedback gathered for this plan emphasized public support for improving, maintaining, and connecting existing trails before building new trails. However, the public also supported new and improved connections to Chugach State Park, especially across the Anchorage Hillside neighborhoods and in Chugiak and Eagle River. Existing plans, such as the Hillside District Plan and the Alaska State Parks Chugach Access Plan, reflect many of these same ideas.

Although these projects offer high recreational value, municipal Parks Service

Area boundaries limit the Department's ability to act. In addition, limited undeveloped public land and a lack of established legal access constrain future trail connections. As a result, new connections may require a platting process, use of road rights-of-way, or property acquisition.

Trail projects focused on connections to Chugach State Park are represented broadly in Trail Project Recommendations 13 and 72. Other trail development and partner agencies are expected to lead their planning, design, and development, such as MOA Real Estate and Heritage Land Bank, Project Management and Engineering, local Road Service Areas, and the State of Alaska DOT&PF or DNR.

The municipality created the Chugach State Park Access Service Area (CASA) in the Anchorage Bowl to give voters a way to fund infrastructure such as parking and trailhead improvements that improve park access. Although CASA is relatively new, Parks has coordinated with the Project Management and Engineering (PM&E) Department to implement projects where they connect to local park land. The Implementation chapter provides additional details about CASA.

Recommendation:

- » Support ongoing partnerships and partnering agencies, road service areas, trail development groups, advocates, and others to improve and expand connections to Chugach State Park.



TRAIL PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

Projects identified in the following table and maps are consistent with community priorities as defined through this Plan development process, met prioritization criteria, are within a Parks Service Area, and are therefore actionable by the Parks Department.

- » Project identification numbers (ID) do not reflect priority; they are generally organized geographically.
- » Project priority is determined by the project scoring matrix and existing Parks work plans.
- » Timeframes are generalized into short-term (1-3 years), mid-term (4-7 years), and long-term (7 or more years)
- » Estimated costs are represented on a scale of \$ to \$\$\$\$ for comparison.

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
Anchorage Area Projects								
Downtown Trail Connection	Connect Ship Creek Trail to the Coastal Trail.	1	New	In Progress	2026 and 1997 Trails Plans	High	Short	\$\$\$\$
Fish Creek Trail to the Ocean	Connect Fish Creek Trail at the Northern Lights pedestrian bridge to the Coastal Trail.	2	New	In Progress	2026 and 1997 Trails Plans	High	Short	\$\$\$\$
Fish Creek Trail to Campbell Creek Trail Connection	Connect the Fish Creek Greenbelt to the Campbell Creek Greenbelt.	3	New	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Long	\$\$\$\$
Earthquake Park Spur Trail Rehabilitation	Rehabilitate pavement and upgrade signage from Northern Lights/Nathaniel Ct. to the Coastal Trail entrance.	4	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	High	Mid	\$\$
Tony Knowles Coastal Trail Widening	Widen segments of the Coastal Trail to Class 6, starting with most popular corridors between Elderberry Park and Earthquake Park, and evaluate opportunities for improved access to the trail from Downtown.	5	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	High	Long	\$\$\$
Tony Knowles Coastal Trail Rehabilitation	Rehabilitate the Coastal Trail (root removal, erosion control and soil stabilization, amend drainage issues, sightline clearing, etc.)	6	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	High	Mid	\$\$\$

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
Anchorage Area Projects								
Coastal Trail Singletrack	Build novice/beginner singletrack flow trails along the Coastal Trail between Earthquake Park and Kincaid Park	7	New	Propose	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Short	\$
Kincaid Park Master Plan Update	Update the Master Plan to identify trail development priorities to accommodate multiple user types, including Cross-country skiers, biathletes, pedestrians, and mountain bikers. Evaluate potential improvements to trailhead and trailside amenities.	8	Improve	In Progress	Other	High	Short	\$
Coastal Trail to Campbell Creek Trail Connection Improvements (Moose Loop Connectivity)	Improve routing, wayfinding, and connectivity between the Coastal Trail and Campbell Creek Trail to provide a more comfortable experience.	9	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$\$
Coastal Trail: South Extension	Support and participate in the evaluation of alternatives and development of a continuous nonmotorized extension of the Coastal Trail from Kincaid to Potters Marsh Watershed Park. Alternatives should consider seasonal variations and braided routes to continue the experience and access to viewshed offered by the existing on-coast alignment of Coastal Trail.	10	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$\$
Potter Marsh Watershed Park Master Plan	Complete development of the Master Plan to define trail priorities and implement its short-term development recommendations.	11	New	In Progress	2026 Trails Plan	High	Short	\$
Section 36 Park Master Plan Update	Work with user groups to identify current trail development priorities, including potential ski and mountain bike trails. Coordinate with MOA Traffic and Heritage Land Bank to provide safe access to the park and consider connections to adjacent recreation opportunities and destinations.	12	New	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
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Anchorage Area Projects

Chugach State Park Connection Improvements: ANC	Coordinate with neighboring landowners, recreation area managers, and municipal departments implementing Chugach State Park Access Service Area (CASA) funded projects, to support improvement and expansion of access to Chugach State Park in accordance with their Access Plan. Areas and trails include Stuckagain Heights, Bear Valley, and Potter Valley areas, access to McHugh Peak, and the Stewart Homestead Trail.	13	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plans	Low	Short	\$
Rabbit Creek Greenbelt	Improved trail connections between the Rabbit Creek Greenbelt and Chugach State Park.	14	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plan	Low	Long	\$\$\$\$
Tanglewood Park Trail System Improvements	Improve existing trails, address drainage issues, and expand connections within Tanglewood Park.	15	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Short	\$
Ruth Arcand Park Access Improvements	Improve trailheads and neighborhood connectivity at Ruth Arcand Park, including working with the Traffic Department to evaluate safe crossing options for Abbott Rd.	16	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plans	Low	Mid	\$\$\$
Sitka Street Park Pathway Rehabilitation	Rehabilitate pathway between Lake Otis Pkwy and Orca Street, including bridge replacement.	17	Improve	Proposed	Other	High	Short	\$\$
Sitka Street Park to Eastchester Park	Connect Sitka Street Park to the Chester Creek Greenbelt (Eastchester Park) via new multi-use trail.	18	New	Proposed	Other	High	Mid	\$\$\$
Tikishla Park Trail Improvements	Rehabilitate the existing paved connector trails, evaluate bridge and lighting upgrades, and evaluate trail improvements to better connect neighborhoods to the paved trail system.	19	Improve	Proposed	Other	Low	Mid	\$\$
Goose Lake Park Trail Rehabilitation	Repair paved trails around Goose Lake Park.	20	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	High	Mid	\$\$

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
Anchorage Area Projects								
Goose Lake Park Master Plan	Update the Master Plan to address modern park and trail needs, such as rehabilitation on paved trail around the lake, improvement to lakeside facility, parking improvements, and playground upgrades.	21	Improve	In Progress	2026 Trails Plan	High	Short	\$
Chester Creek Trail Lighting Improvements	Complete lighting on segments of Chester Creek Trail connecting Goose Lake Park to Russian Jack Springs Park.	22	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$
Chester Creek Trail Widening	Widen segments of the Chester Creek Trail to Class 6, starting with most popular corridors between Westchester Lagoon and Eastchester Park.	23	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$
Westchester Lagoon Master Plan	Develop a Westchester Lagoon Master Plan in support of Chester Creek Trail Widening Project and modernization of recreation facilities and opportunities.	24	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	High	Short	\$
Chester Creek Trail Singletrack	Improve the singletrack system along the Chester Creek Trail to provide expanded opportunity for novice/beginner riders.	25	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Mid	\$
Chester Creek Trail Lake Otis Tunnel to Underpass	Upgrade tunnel to underpass in partnership with state/local road projects.	26	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$
Chester Creek Trail Seward Hwy Tunnel to Underpass	Upgrade tunnel to underpass in partnership with state/local road projects.	27	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$
Chester Creek Trail Eagle St Trailhead Improvements	In coordination with MOA Project Management & Engineering Department road improvements, rehabilitate trail entrance. Add parking, signage, lighting, and amenities.	28	Improve	In Progress	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$
Chester Creek Trail C Street Underpass	Upgrade below waterline underpass to above creek level to reduce flooding in partnership with state/local road projects.	29	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
Anchorage Area Projects								
Chester Creek Trail Arctic Tunnel to Underpass	Upgrade tunnel to underpass in partnership with state/local road projects.	30	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$
Chester Creek Trail Spenard Rd, Tunnel to Underpass	Upgrade tunnel to underpass in partnership with state/local road projects.	31	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$
Chester Creek Trail Minnesota Tunnel to Underpass	Upgrade tunnel to underpass in partnership with state/local road projects.	32	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$
Jacobson Park Trail Improvements	Improve trail surface in Jacobson Park to provide sustainable north-south connection between greenbelt trails in Midtown Anchorage neighborhoods.	33	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Mid	\$\$
Cuddy Midtown Family Park Master Plan	Update the Cuddy Family Park Master Plan and consider connectivity expansion and new winter maintenance and programming opportunities.	34	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	High	Short	\$
Russian Jack Springs Park Trail & Bridge Rehabilitation	Rehabilitate pavement throughout park. Upgrade bridges to conform to grooming equipment needs.	35	Improve	In Progress	Other	High	Short	\$\$\$
Russian Jack Springs Park Trail Lighting	Completed lighting on segments of the Lighted Loop and neighborhood spurs.	36	Improve	In Progress	Other	High	Short	\$\$\$
Muldoon Perimeter Trail	Provide continuous north-south access between Muldoon neighborhoods, Far North Bicentennial Park, and Chugach State Park.	37	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plans	High	Long	\$\$\$\$
Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Connectivity	Provide a trail connection from Chanshtnu to Windsong Park, per the Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Master Plan.	38	New	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	High	Mid	\$\$\$

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
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Anchorage Area Projects

Patterson Street/ Chester Valley Park Trail & Bridge Rehabilitation	Upgrade trail surface and replace bridges to accommodate grooming equipment.	39	Improve	Proposed	Other	High	Short	\$\$\$
Cheney Lake Connection to Chester Valley Park Trail	Develop a new Class 3 pathway connecting Cheney Lake to the Chester Valley Park trail via existing easement.	40	New	Proposed	Other	Medium	Mid	\$\$
Cheney Lake Trail Rehabilitation	Rehabilitate pavement and natural surface trails in the high development area and reduce erosion effects at shoreline by rerouting.	41	Improve	Proposed	Other	High	Mid	\$\$
University Lake Trail Rehabilitation	Coordinate trail and shoreline restoration and revegetation with Youth Employment in Parks, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and US Fish & Wildlife Service.	42	Improve	In Progress	Other	Medium	Mid	\$
Castle Heights Park Trail Pathway Upgrades	Improve the connector trail from the Chester Creek trail to Castle Heights Park and connect existing neighborhood connector trails within the park.	43	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	High	Short	\$\$
Campbell Creek Trail & Bridge Rehabilitation	Rehabilitate pavement throughout trail, generally east to west. Upgrade bridges to conform to grooming equipment needs and mitigate erosion.	44	Improve	In Progress	2026 Trails Plan	High	Short	\$\$\$\$
Campbell Creek Trail MLK Blvd Underpass	Upgrade visibility, safety, and drainage of the underpass.	45	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Mid	\$\$\$\$
Campbell Creek Trail Elmore Underpass	Upgrade visibility, safety, and drainage of the underpass.	46	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$\$\$
Campbell Creek Crossing at Lake Otis (NMO00011)	Project would construct an elevated non-motorized crossing over Lake Otis Blvd to connect the east and west portions of the Campbell Creek Trail. Project may consider at-grade crossing for shorter-term intervention.	47	Improve	In Progress	Other, 2026 and 1997 Trails Plans	High	Long	\$\$\$\$

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
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Anchorage Area Projects

Campbell Creek Trail Seward Hwy Underpass	Upgrade visibility, safety, and drainage of the underpass	48	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$\$\$
Campbell Creek Trail International Airport Rd Underpass	Upgrade visibility, safety, and drainage of the underpass.	49	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$\$\$
Campbell Creek Trail Old Seward Hwy Underpass	Upgrade visibility, safety, and drainage of the underpass.	50	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$\$\$
Campbell Creek Trail Railroad Underpass	Upgrade visibility, safety, and drainage of the underpass.	51	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$\$\$
Campbell Creek Trail C Street Underpass	Upgrade visibility, safety, and drainage of the underpass	52	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$\$\$
Campbell Creek Trail Arctic Underpass	Upgrade visibility, safety, and drainage of the underpass.	53	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$\$\$
FNBP Safe Trail Crossings at Campbell Airstrip Rd.	Provide traffic calming and trail realignment to increase safety at trail crossings with the road.	54	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Mid	\$\$
FNBP Campbell Airstrip Rd. Fire Break Trail	Provide a Class 4 or 5 trail adjacent to Campbell Airstrip Road from the BLM parking area to Basher Trailhead.	55	New	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Mid	\$\$\$
FNBP Mushing Bridge Upgrades	Working with User Group and landowners (Heritage Land Bank), upgrade bridges on dog mushing trails to meet the width needs of Alaskan Sled Dog and Racing Association (ASDRA) at 10' wide with minimal railings and short spans.	56	Improve	In Progress	Other	Low	Long	\$\$\$

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
Anchorage Area Projects								
FNBP Abbott Multi-Use Trail Upgrade	Surface and drainage improvements to provide quality multi-use access between trailheads.	57	Improve	Proposed	Other	Medium	Mid	\$
FNBP Moose Ridge Loop Improvements	Rehabilitate the 2.5/4.5km loops, and upgrade segment between the North Bivouac and Campbell Airstrip parking lots for safety and sustainability. Upgrade wayfinding to improve all-season use and navigation.	58	Improve	In Progress	Other	Low	Short	\$
FNBP Mushing Dry Land Summer Improvements	Working with User Group and landowners (Heritage Land Bank), upgrade mushing trails to support dryland events and shoulder-season use.	59	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Mid	\$\$
FNBP North Gasline Bridge and Trail Upgrades (Federal Lands Access Program Grant)	Upgrade bridge on North Gasline Trail, crossing North Fork Campbell Creek to connect to existing trails accessed from Klutina Dr. Add boardwalk and upgrade trail east of the bridge to provide sustainable, usable surface.	60	Improve	In Progress	Other	High	Short	\$\$
Eagle-River Chugiak Area Projects								
Eagle River Greenbelt East: Connectivity Improvements	Coordinate with neighboring landowners to improve access to Eagle River Greenbelt, including trailhead improvements.	61	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Long	\$\$
Eagle River Greenbelt West: Connectivity Improvements	Coordinate with neighboring landowners to improve access to Eagle River Greenbelt west of Eagle River Loop Rd., including connectivity to Gruening Middle School, Eagle River Campground, and pathway of VFW Rd./Glenn Hwy. Use of existing state or other publicly owned land is preferred.	62	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$
Eagle River High School Nordic Ski Trail System Expansion (HLB, CSP, MOA)	Expand ski loops at Eagle River HS to support a full 5km loop and improve connections to adjacent state park campground. Trail expansion should be consistent with and support Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan Trail Management Recommendation 223b. Eagle River Greenbelt Pathway – Glenn Highway to Briggs Bridge.	63	New	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Low	Short	\$\$

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
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Eagle–River Chugiak Area Projects

Beach Lake Park Multi-Use Trail: Chugiak High to Lake	Design and construct an extension of the multi-use trail connecting to Chugiak High School. This will extend the 'Parallel Recreational Trail' segment of the Iditarod National Historic Trail.	64	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plans	High	Mid	\$\$\$
Beach Lake Park Master Plan Trails	Complete trail improvements outlined in the Beach Lake Master Plan. Identify future trail improvement needs for the Beach Lake NW 1/4 Section 25 Area.	65	Improve	In Progress	Other	Medium	Long	\$\$\$
Beach Lake Park Mushing Dry Land Summer Improvements	Upgrade mushing trails to support dryland events and shoulder-season use.	66	Improve	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$
Beach Lake Park Mushing Trail System Reroutes	Pursue opportunities to restore equivalent mileage of mushing trails to offset loss due to adjacent changes in land use.	67	New	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Mid	\$\$
Coastal Trail: North Extension, Beach Lake Park to Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake	Provide continuous trail experience from Beach Lake Park to Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake Park. Close coordination with landowners (Eklutna, Inc.) during trail planning and design, to include management and maintenance responsibilities, will be required.	68	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plan	High	Long	\$\$\$\$
Mirror Lake Park to Thunderbird Falls Connection	Connect Mirror Lake Park to Paradis and Thunderbird Falls neighborhoods, supporting neighborhood connectivity and the larger regional Alaska Long Trail and North Coastal Trail Extension Project. Close coordination with landowners (Eklutna Inc., DOT&PF) during trail planning and design, to include management and maintenance responsibilities, will be required.	69	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$\$

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS	SOURCE	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME	EST. COST
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Eagle–River Chugiak Area Projects

Mirror Lake Park Master Plan Implementation	Implement the Mirror Lake Master Plan including completing a multiuse trail loop connecting Edmonds Lake Park and Mirror Lake Parks, ski and bike trail expansion, and trail expansions on the inlet side of Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake Park.	70	New	Proposed	Other	High	Long	\$\$\$
Coastal Trail: North Extension, Thunderbird Falls to Knik River	Support and participate in the evaluation of alternatives and development of a continuous nonmotorized extension of the Coastal Trail from Mirror Lake Park to the Knik River to provide community connectivity and essential links in the larger regional Alaska Long Trail effort. Close coordination with landowners (Eklutna Inc., DOT&PF, ARRC) during trail planning and design, to include management and maintenance responsibilities, will be required.	71	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plan	Low	Long	\$\$\$\$
Chugach State Park Connection Improvements: C–ER	Coordinate with neighboring landowners, recreation area managers, and municipal departments implementing CASA funded projects to improve and expand access to Chugach State Park, including Ram Valley, Mt. Baldy, and Eagle River Greenbelt	72	New	Proposed	2026 and 1997 Trails Plans	Low	Long	\$
Eagle River Greenbelt Mountain Bike Trail Development	Develop mountain bike trails connecting Eagle River High School, Eagle River Campground and Briggs Bridge. Trail development should be consistent with and support the Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan, specifically Trail Management Recommendation 223a. Eagle River Greenbelt Pathway – Glenn Hwy to ERNC.	73	New	Proposed	2026 Trails Plans	Medium	Mid	\$\$
Carol Creek Trail	Connect the McDonald Center to Chugach State Park at Mt. Baldy in accordance with adopted plans and through close coordination with landowners.	74	New	Proposed	2026 Trails Plan	Medium	Long	\$\$

SUPPORTING NON-MOTORIZED PROJECTS

Projects identified in the following table and maps are active transportation projects that would offer significant recreational benefit to the community but are beyond the Parks purview. They are within or adjacent to road rights-of-way or on private property, requiring partnering entities (municipal departments, state agencies, private property owners, recreational user groups, etc.) to actualize. Projects identification numbers (ID) do not indicate priority; they are organized geographically. Sources for the recommended project may include the AMATS 2023–2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), AMATS Nonmotorized Plan (NMP), or public comments gathered through this Plan development process.

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	SOURCE
Chugiak–Eagle River Area Projects			
Glenn Highway Trail Connection	Project will construct an extension of the Glenn Highway Separated Pathway from Ski Road to Settlers Drive (approximately 0.5 miles). This project may also include, as necessary: curb ramps, lighting, drainage improvements, vegetation clearing, signing, striping, and utilities.	1	AMATS TIP Project #NMO00010
Glenn Hwy Pathway Extension to Mirror Lake	Provide a nonmotorized connection from the Glenn Hwy pathway extension to Mirror Lake Park.	2	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
South Birchwood Loop Road	Provide a roadside non-motorized pathway along S. Birchwood Loop Road between Hidden Hill Ct, Birchwood Spur Rd, and Old Glenn Hwy.	3	NMP Projects #69, 70, 71
Eagle River Road Pathway	Expand recreational and transportation opportunity along Eagle River Road and provide commemorative Iditarod National Historic Trail signage and information along the recreational corridor. Project will rehabilitate the existing pathway from Eagle River Loop Road to where it ends just east of Hillcrest Lane and extend the pathway to Mile Hi Avenue. Public comments at workshops have expressed continued connectivity to the Eagle River Nature Center, which will require further study into feasibility and likely result in a segmented project; the first being from Eagle River Town Center to Mile Hi Avenue and subsequent segments from Mile High Avenue to Oriedner Road or to the Eagle River Nature Center.	4	AMATS TIP Project #NMO00015, NMP Project 127
Glenn Highway Pathway Connection at VFW Rd.	Connect nonmotorized facilities and neighborhoods to the Glenn Highway Pathway.	5	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Glenn Hwy Pathway Connection at Artillery Road	Improve connection to Glenn Hwy Pathway. Project is underway.	6	AMATS TIP Project #NHS0013

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	SOURCE
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Chugiak-Eagle River Area Projects

Glenn Hwy Pathway Connection at JBER D Street Gate	In coordination with effort to improve safety for all users at this intersection, integrate non-motorized pathway intersection of the Glenn Hwy Pathway and roadways at JBER D Street Gate.	7	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Access to Chugach Foothills Connector	Explore safe crossing options at Muldoon/Tudor curve for improved access between major trail systems (Far North Bicentennial, Chester Creek/Campbell Creek, Chugach State Park) and residential areas.	8	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Russian Jack Springs Park to Mountain View Neighborhood Improvements	Improve bike lanes and other nonmotorized facilities to connect the recreational destination to nearby neighborhoods.	9	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Chester Court Pathway Improvements	Repair and improve the pathway connection between Chester Court and Begich Middle School.	10	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment, MOA PM&E and Traffic



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PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	SOURCE
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Anchorage Area Projects

UAA Drive Crossing Improvements	Improve nonmotorized crossing at the intersection of UAA Drive and Alumni Drive.	11	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Tudor Rd. Crossing at MacInnes St.	Improve nonmotorized crossings of Tudor Rd. at or near MacInnes St. to increase safety and connectivity to Waldon Park and Campbell Creek Trail.	12	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Chester Creek Trail I St. Access Improvements	Improve access to Downtown (16th Ave/I St) from Chester Creek Trail due to closure and removal of staircase.	13	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Alaska Railroad Corridor Pathway	MTP: Multi-use Pathway from Tudor Road to Northern Lights Boulevard – Project would construct a multi-use pathway along the Alaska Railroad corridor from Tudor Road to Northern Lights Blvd. This project would connect to the existing trail to the north and existing trail on Taft and Tudor Road. Removed from TIP due to lack of match.	14	2020 Spenard Corridor Plan; NMP Project #59 (study); MTP project TIP NMO 7
Cambridge Way to Campbell Creek Trail via Potter Dr Separated Bikeway	Potter Drive Rehabilitation [Arctic Blvd to Dowling Road]: This project would rehabilitate Potter Drive from Arctic Boulevard to Dowling Road and include non-motorized improvements. Increase connectivity between Campbell Creek Trail and Midtown.	15	NMP Project #240
Jodhpur St. Trailhead to Dimond Blvd.	Provide safer non-motorized connectivity along this segment of the Moose Loop.	16	NMP Project #167 (high priority)
Tudor Rd. Crossing at MacInnes St.	Improve nonmotorized crossings of Tudor Rd. at or near MacInnes St. to increase safety and connectivity to Waldon Park and Campbell Creek Trail.	17	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
De Armoun Rd. Separated Bikeway	Improve non-motorized safety and connectivity by constructing a separated multi-use pathway or bikeway along De Armoun Rd.	18	NMP Project #272 (low priority)
Rabbit Creek Rd. Separated Bikeway	Construct a separated bikeway and other non-motorized improvements between Upper De Armoun Road and Seward Highway. TIP includes the lower half (2025 design, 2026 ROW): Rabbit Creek Road Rehabilitation [Seward Highway to Goldenview Drive]. Project would rehabilitate Rabbit Creek Road from the Seward Highway to Goldenview Drive and will look at left turn accommodations where possible. Project will include non-motorized improvements.	19	NMP Project #246 (medium priority); TIP CS 3

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT ID	SOURCE
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Anchorage Area Projects

Golden View Dr. Separated Bikeway	Construct a separated bikeway between Rabbit Creek Rd. and Bulgaria Dr.	20	NMP Project #147
Old Seward Hwy Study Corridor	Study corridor for bicycle and other non-motorized facilities between Rabbit Creek Rd. and Potter Valley Rd., adjacent to the new Potter Marsh Watershed Park. Planned DOT&PF work currently includes pavement preservation with consideration for non-motorized travel.	21	NMP Project #233 (high priority)
Coastal Trail Extension South, Seward Hwy from Potters Marsh to Indian	Provide a separated non-motorized pathway from Potters March to the existing pathway at Indian Road.	22	1997 Trails Plan, 2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Huffman Road to Coast Connection along Furrow Creek	Construct a non-motorized connection from Huffman Road and Old Seward Hwy west, across the railroad, along Furrow Creek or E Huffman Road ROW to improve neighborhood connectivity to Mariner Park, Johns Park and potential South Coastal Trail alignments	23	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Government Hill to Ship Creek Connection	Implement the Government Hill Parks & Trails Plan to improve non-motorized connectivity to Ship Creek	24	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Government Hill East to West Bluff Trail Connection	Implement the Government Hill Parks & Trails Plan to provide a non-motorized connection from E Bluff Park to W Bluff Park with an improved crossing at E Loop Road.	25	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Barbara St. Improvements from Northern Lights to 32nd Avenue	Improve non-motorized safety and connectivity along Barbra St. to connect the elevated crossing at Northern lights to the Fish Creek Trail at 32nd Avenue	26	2026 Trails Plan Public Comment
Hyder Street Corridor Improvements	Improve non-motorized connectivity and user experience along the Hyder Street Corridor to better connect the neighborhoods of Fairview and downtown to recreational assets including Chester Creek and Ship Creek trails.	27	NMP Project #220, 2026 Trails Plan Public Comment

MAJOR CONNECTIVITY PROJECTS

While this plan mostly focuses on improving existing trails, it also proposes connecting trail systems to make more trails more accessible to more people. Many of these concepts have been documented in community plans for decades. The North and South Coastal Trail Extensions, Muldoon Perimeter Trail, and Rabbit Creek Greenbelt Trail are examples of projects recommended in the 1997 Trails Plan, and some in earlier iterations. As these projects are especially complex due to land ownership, property acquisition, management concerns, and environmental limitations, more information is provided below than in the project tables.

North Coastal Trail Extension

The North Coastal Trail would add miles of new multi-use trail in Eagle River and Chugiak, where park and trail connectivity lacks. There has been recent public support for new multi-use trail construction in Beach Lake Park which begins to realize this concept.

This project is shown in multiple segments to reflect different user groups potentially served. Segments from Mirror Lake/Edmonds Lake north (Projects 69 and 71) are consistent with the results of a 2025 Reconnaissance Engineering Study conducted by the Anchorage Park Foundation. Concerns include culturally sensitive resources present and managed by Eklutna Inc, potential for increased trespass on Eklutna Inc lands, lack of established legal access along stream corridors and other public easements, railroad crossings, and incompatible land uses (shooting range).

South Coastal Trail Extension

The community desire remains similar to what was documented in 1997: a continuous experience of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail with minimal traffic crossings that would better integrate South Anchorage into the greenbelt multi-use trail system. Recommendations also include continuation of the trail south beyond the AMATS area to connect to the community of Indian along Turnagain Arm. An Environmental Impact Statement was published in 2006 from the MOA, ADOT&PF, and FHWA that examined route alternatives, barriers, and limitations. This would need to be reevaluated in the future. Similar major issues remain, including mixed support from private property owners on the bluff and the siting, design, and construction of a trail within the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge.

Considering the concerns and complexities of this connection, two conceptual alignments are proposed:

- » **Inland Alignment:** While there is significant community interest in having this trail along the coastline, Project 10 includes an inland concept acknowledging environmental and political barriers.
- » **Coastal Alignment:** There is the potential to convert a wide section of railroad right-of-way along the coastline into trail use, with underpass potential near the confluence of the railroad, Seward Highway, and Rabbit Creek Rd near the rifle range.

Campbell Creek to Fish Creek Greenbelts

While neighborhood parks are scattered throughout West and South Anchorage, many neighborhoods are cut off from the greenbelt trail system by Minnesota Parkway. The Gaps Analysis demonstrates that a trail connecting the Campbell Creek and Fish Creek Greenbelts could better integrate an underserved area of the Anchorage Bowl. Barriers include a lack of established legal corridors and the need to cross high-volume roads.

The concept of Project 03 does not include the Alaska Railroad corridor due to the agency's desire to preserve their land use between Tudor and 120th Avenue.

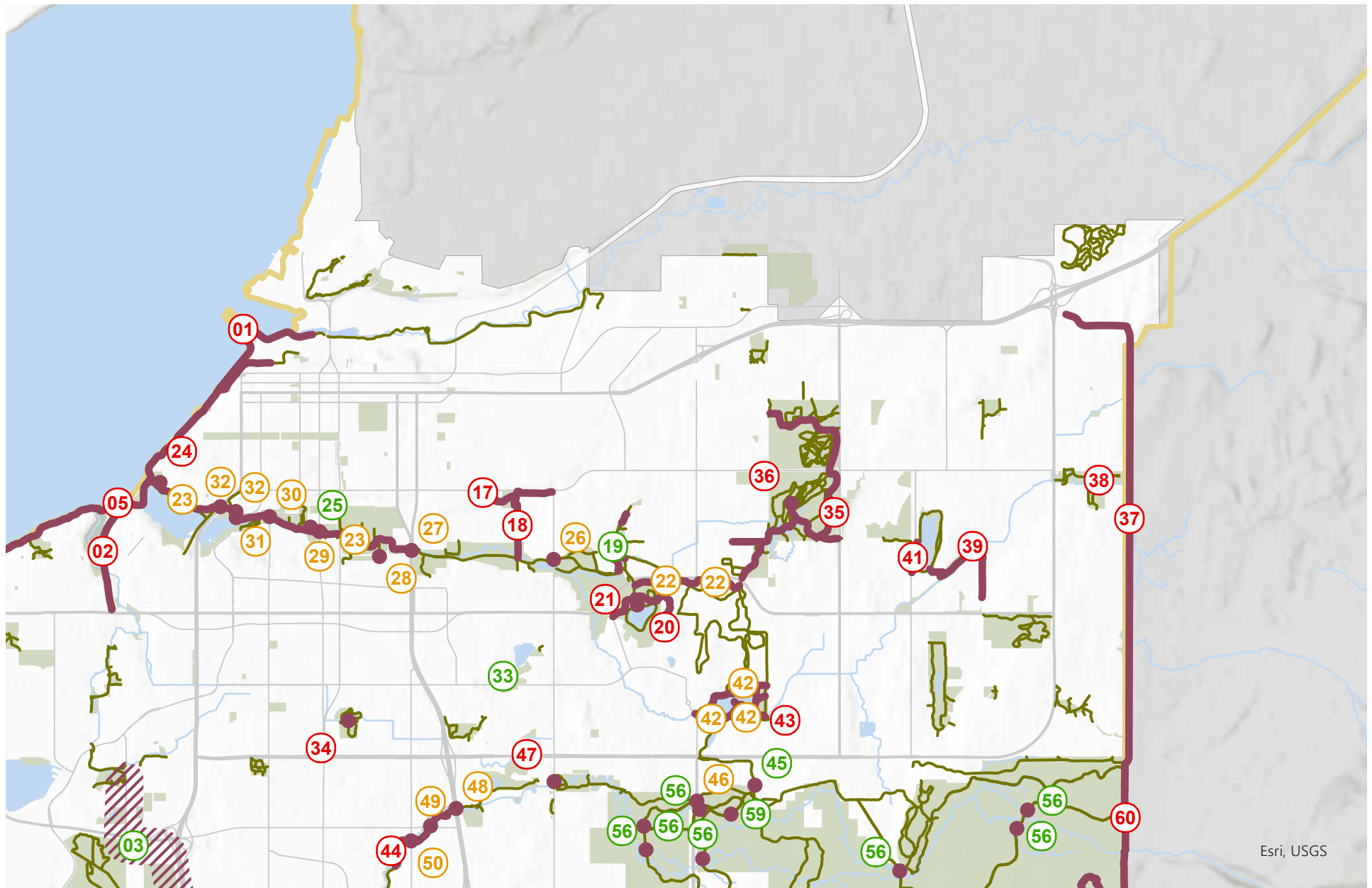
Muldoon Perimeter Trail

A north-south multi-use trail connection along the military-civilian boundary in Northeast Anchorage has been documented in plans since 1979 and continually supported by the community. However, JBER requested the removal of this project during the comment period, citing incompatibility with their mission. Due to substantial public support received and the potential for a trail in this location to connect existing park land through an underserved neighborhood, the project team elected to keep this conceptual project in the plan, acknowledging lack of landowner support. By including the concept, alternatives may be explored that are more amenable to JBER's mission.

Rabbit Creek Greenbelt

This project would connect neighborhoods that are relatively underserved by local parks and trails. While the demographic of this area trends more resourced (higher income, higher vehicle ownership) than other parts of the Anchorage Bowl, the project would have substantial recreational value and the potential to further improve access to Chugach State Park. Major barriers include unestablished legal access, encroachments and driveway access issues, topography barriers, and issues with natural resources and creeks.





Anchorage - North

Figure 34. Recommended Trail Projects, Anchorage North

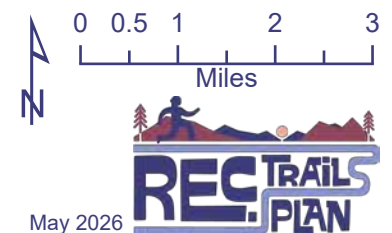
Recommended Projects

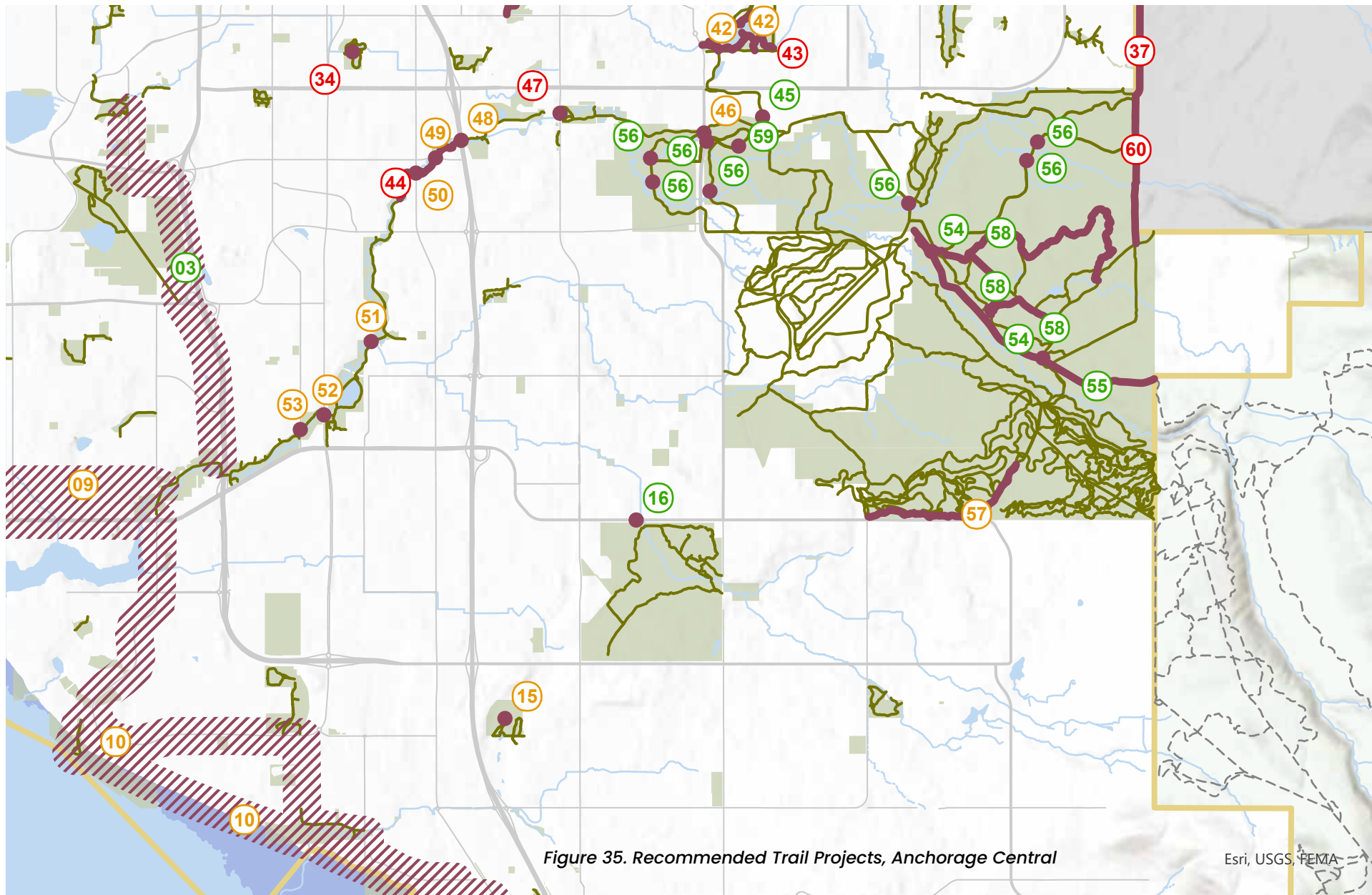
- Defined
- Conceptual

- AMATS Boundary
- Chugach State Park Trail
- Existing Trail
- JBER Boundary

Priority

- 01 High
- 01 Medium
- 01 Low





Anchorage - Central

Recommended Projects



- AMATS Boundary
- Chugach State Park Trail
- Existing Trail
- JBBER Boundary

Priority

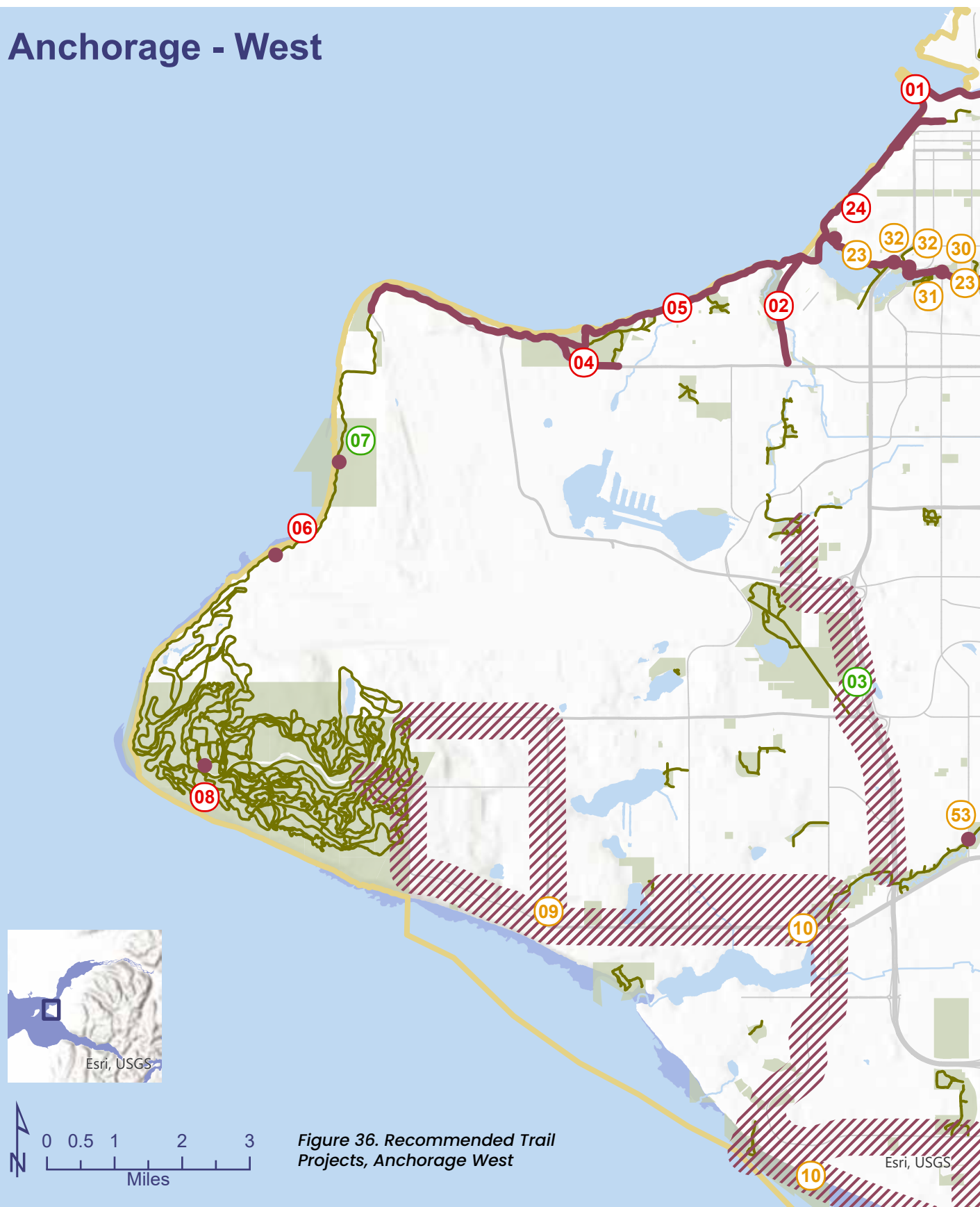
- High
- Medium
- Low



May 2026



Anchorage - West



Recommended Projects

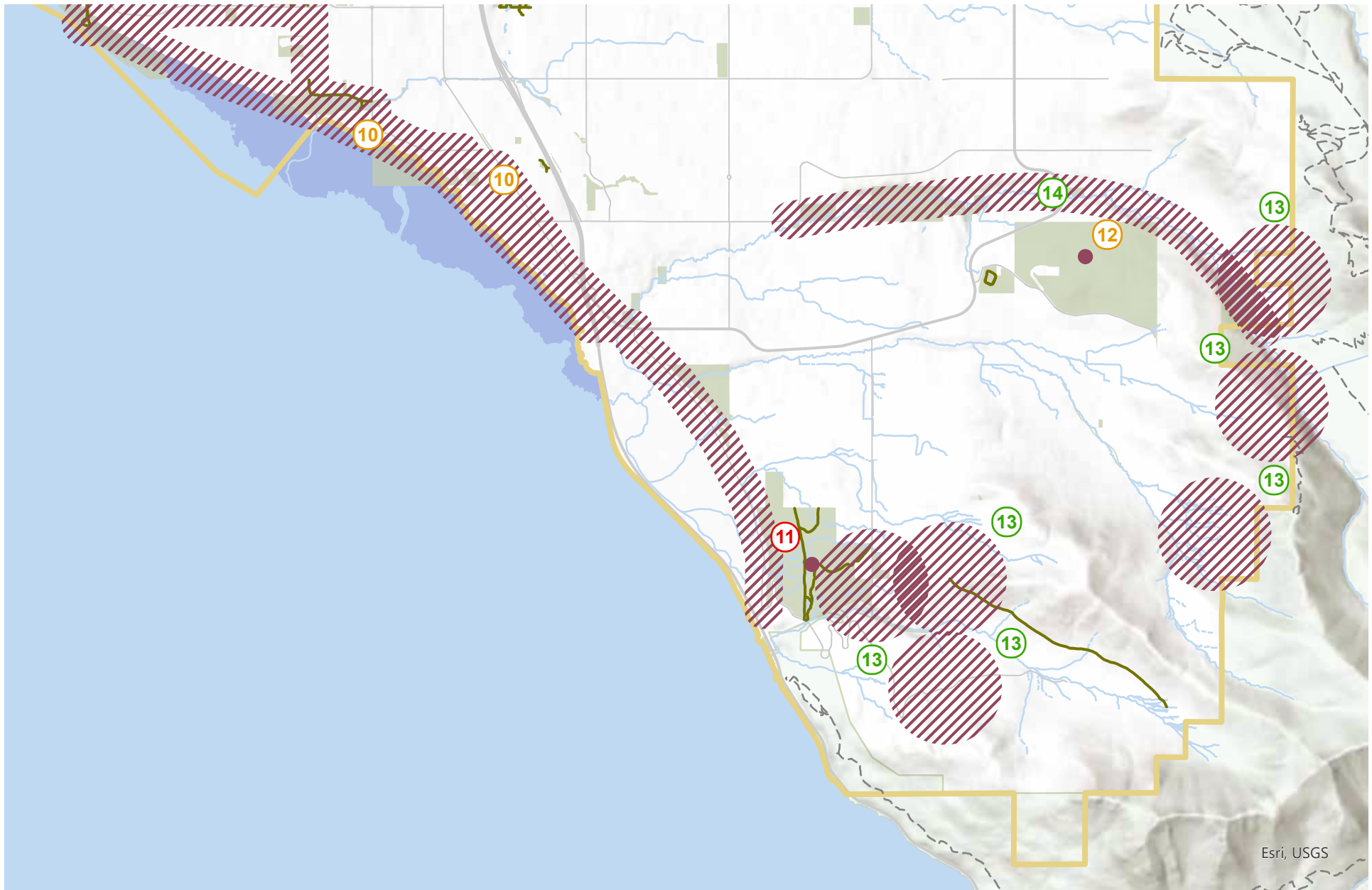
- | | | | |
|--|------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Defined | | Existing Trail |
| | Conceptual | | Chugach State Park Trail |
| | | | AMATS Boundary |
| | | | JBER Boundary |

Priority

- | | |
|--|--------|
| | High |
| | Medium |
| | Low |

May 2026





Anchorage - South

Figure 37. Recommended Trail Projects, Anchorage South

Recommended Projects



-  AMATS Boundary
-  Chugach State Park Trail
-  Existing Trail
-  JBER Boundary

Priority

-  High
-  Medium
-  Low



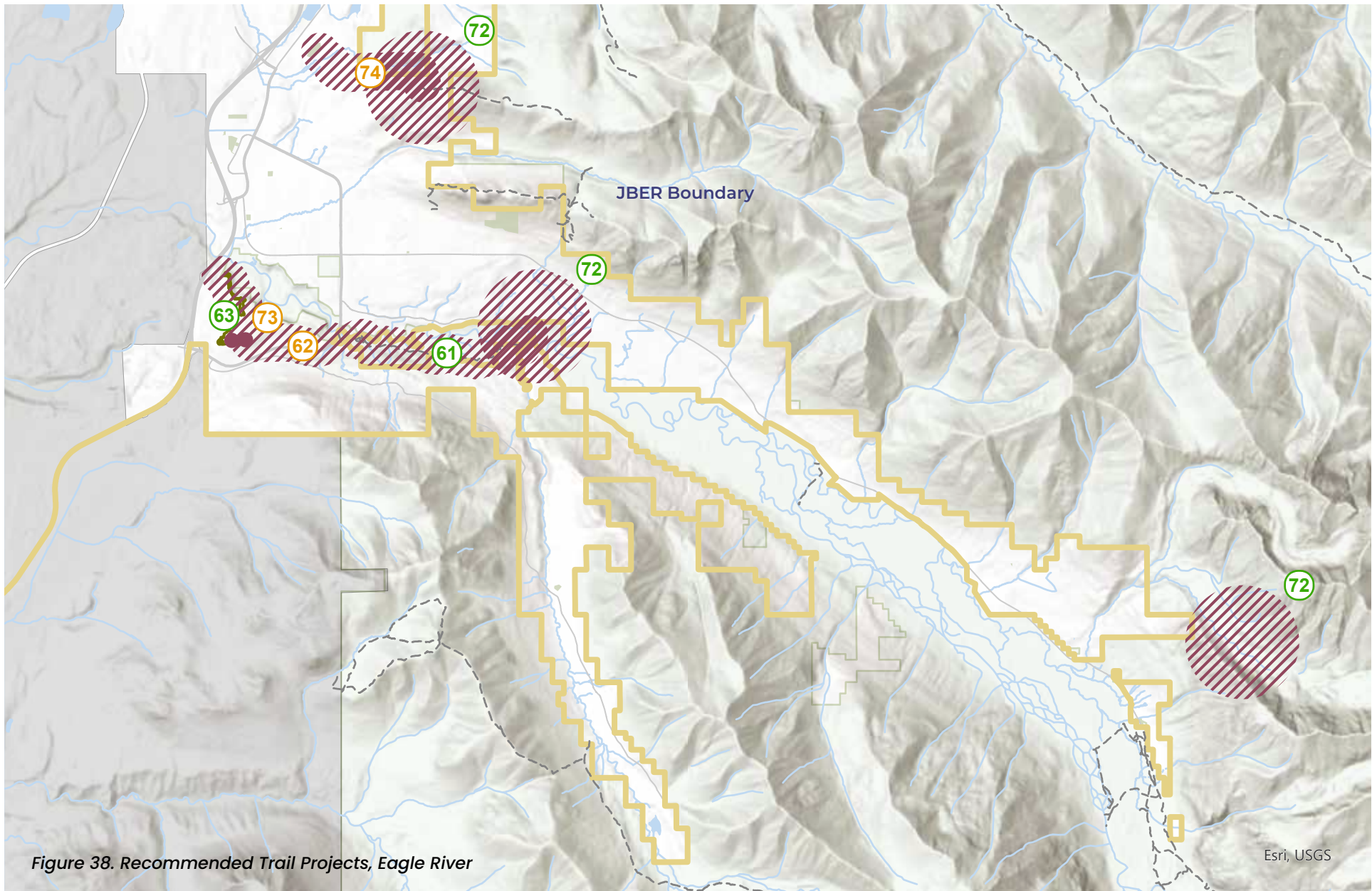


Figure 38. Recommended Trail Projects, Eagle River

Eagle River

Recommended Projects



-  AMATS Boundary
-  Chugach State Park Trail
-  Existing Trail
-  JBER Boundary

Priority

-  High
-  Medium
-  Low



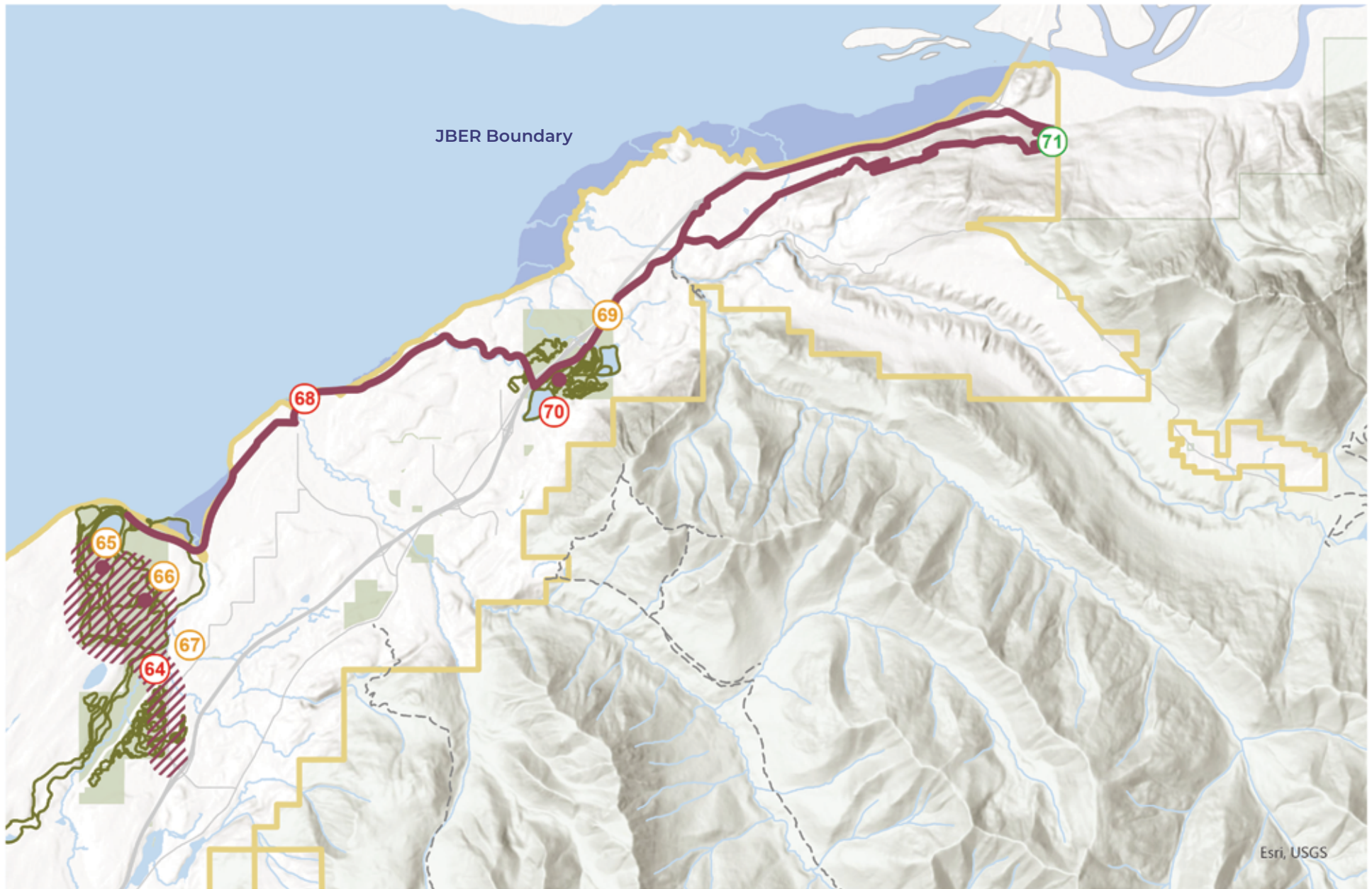
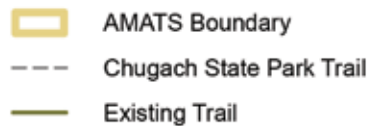


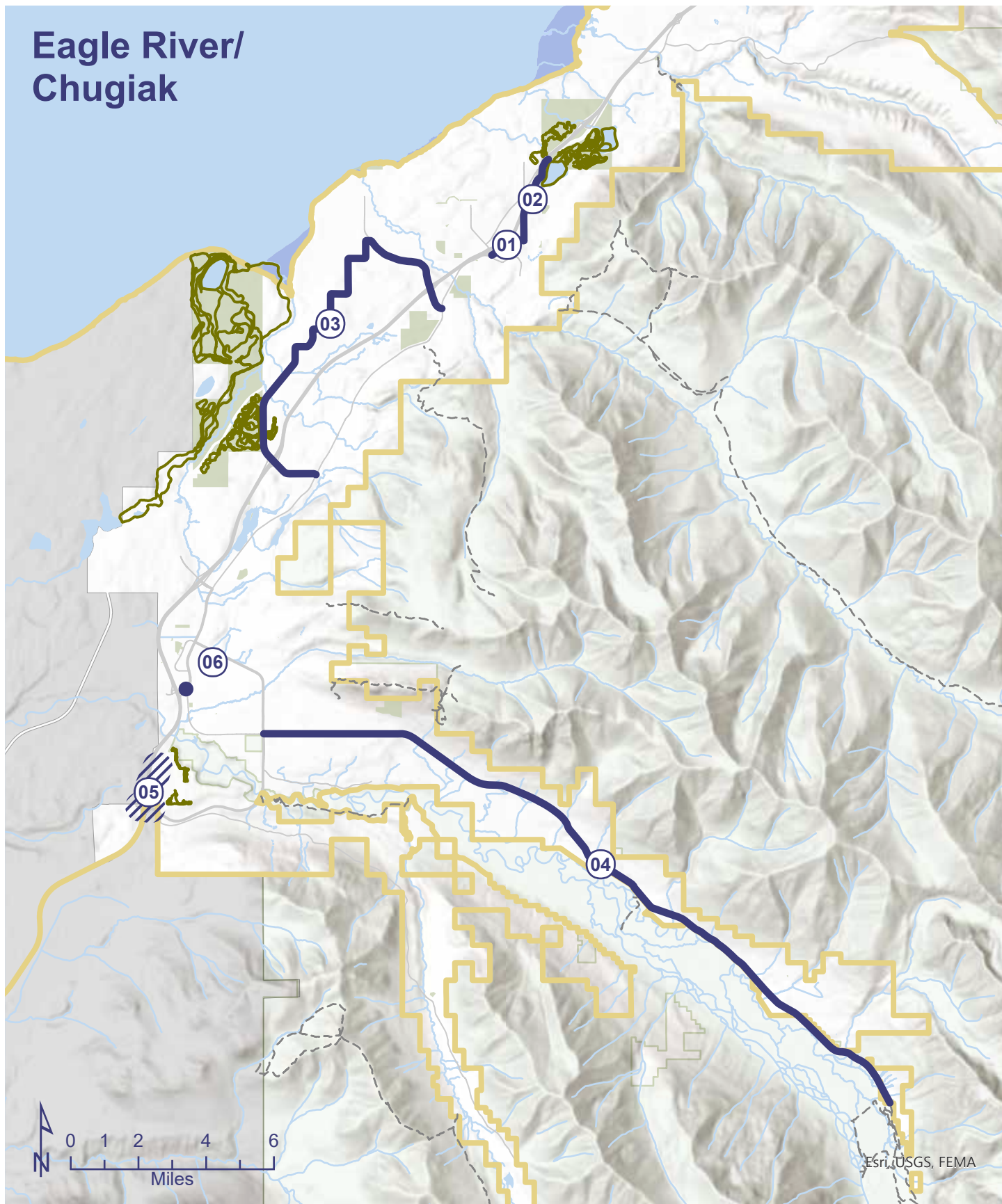
Figure 39. Recommended Trail Projects, Chugiak

Chugiak

Recommended Projects



Eagle River/ Chugiak



Non-Motorized Projects

-  Defined
-  Conceptual
-  Existing Trail
-  Chugach State Park Trail
-  AMATS Boundary
-  JBER Boundary

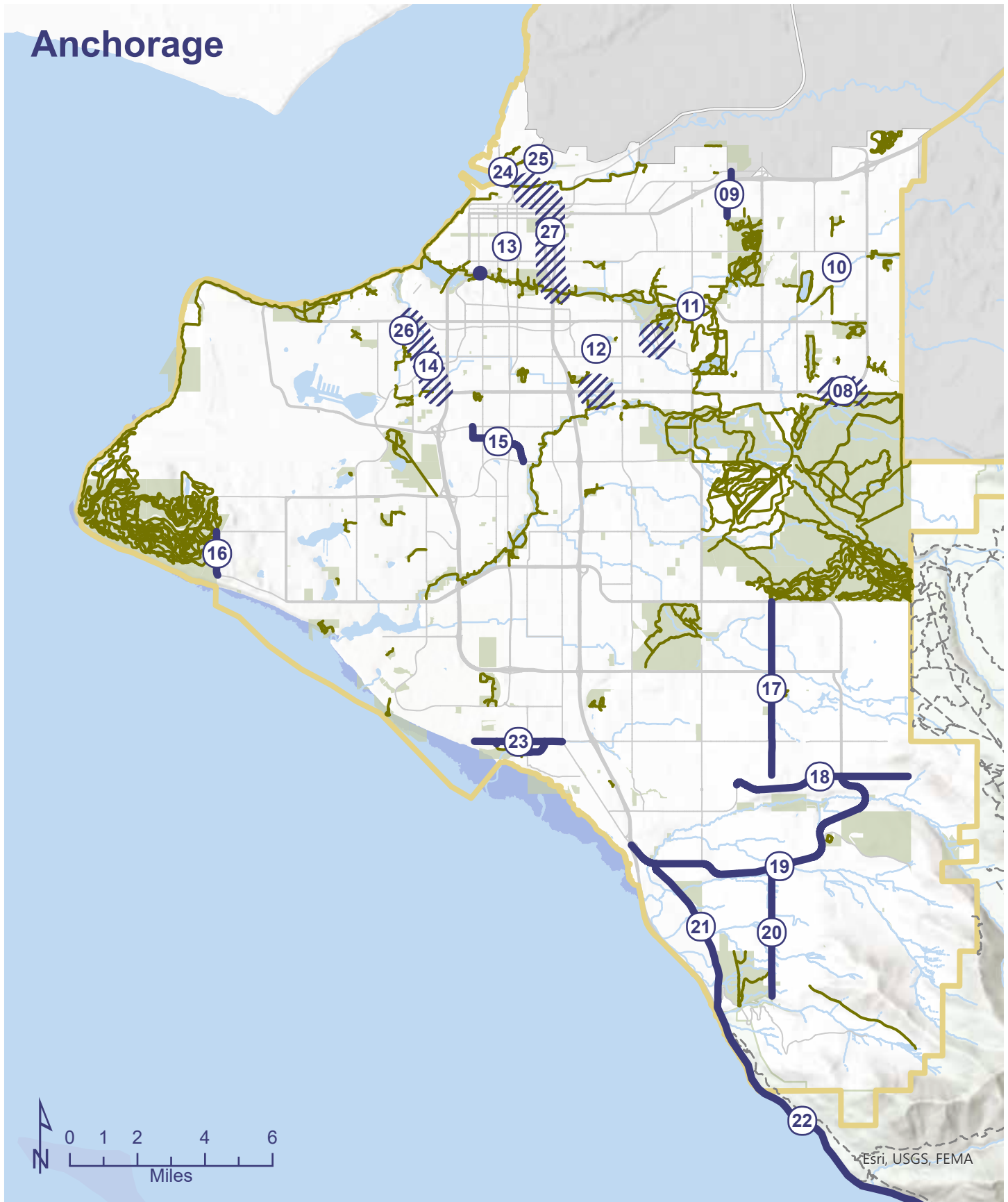
Figure 40. Non-Motorized Projects, Chugiak-Eagle River



Esri, USGS
May 2026



Anchorage



Non-Motorized Projects

Figure 41. Non-Motorized Projects, Anchorage

-  Defined
-  Conceptual
-  Existing Trail
-  Chugach State Park Trail
-  AMATS Boundary
-  JBER Boundary



6. IMPLEMENTATION



Stewarding the recreational trail system in Anchorage, Chugiak, and Eagle River is a shared responsibility that depends on collaboration among municipal agencies, community partners, and trail users. This Plan guides policy and sets priority for municipal investments and should be used as a resource for organizations and residents to pursue grant funding and advocate for trail investments from local, state, federal and private sources. This chapter outlines tools that can turn this Plan into action.

PARK MASTER PLANNING

The Parks Department will continue to update or create Park Master Plans for Community Use and Special Use parks, which are the main areas where recreational trails are located.

Master planning brings stakeholder groups together to envision different futures of the park and trail systems. Master planning at the park level allows for an iterative, focused approach to trail development that is distinct from broader areawide recommendations.

Near-term recommendations for revisiting Park Master Plans for future updates include the following:

PARK/PLAN NAME	PARK CLASSIFICATION	STATUS
Potter Marsh Watershed Park	Natural Resource	In progress, expected 2026
Kincaid Park	Special Use	In progress, expected 2027
Chester Creek Sports Complex	Special Use	In progress, expected 2027
Goose Lake Park	Community Use	In progress, expected 2027
Section 36	Natural Resource	Last updated 2014, recommended update
Cuddy Family Midtown Park	Community Use	Approved 2006, recommended update
Westchester Lagoon/Margaret E. Sullivan Park	Community Use	Site plan completed 2010, recommended Master Plan
Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Improvements Plan	Natural Resource	Plan completed 2011, recommended targeted update
Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan	Areawide Master Plan	Approved 2006, recommend update



FUNDING STRATEGIES

There should be a continuing, increased investment in the AMATS-area trail system as a world-class asset. The costs of trail planning, design, and construction continue to increase alongside the cost of labor and materials. To assist with long-term planning, the following table provides cost and timeline estimates based on recent trail projects including those completed in partnership with AMATS. Timeline estimates do not include years that the project took to get on the STIP, TIP, or municipal bond for approved funding. This can typically take up to three years prior to project kick off if going through an AMATS process.

PROJECT	APPROXIMATE LENGTH (MILES)	TRAIL DESCRIPTION	TOTAL COST (IN MILLIONS)	COST PER LINEAR FOOT	TIMELINE (YEARS)
Fish Creek to the Ocean	1	Class 5 paved multi-use trail	\$20	\$3,790	7
Chugach Foothills Connector	0.9	Class 4 soft-surface trail and approx. 200 feet of boardwalk	\$5.5	\$1,160	3
Downtown Connector	1	Class 5 paved multi-use trail	\$18	\$3,410	7
Russian Jack Springs Park Lighted Loop Rehabilitation Phase 1	0.5	Class 5 paved multi-use trail rehabilitation and bridge replacement	\$1	\$360	2

MUNICIPAL BONDS

Municipal bonds continue to be the main source of capital funding for trail projects in the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area. Municipal bonds should prioritize projects on park land that strengthen connectivity and improving existing assets in accordance with this Plan. Additionally, systemwide recommendation #34 in the Policy section recommends expanding the service area to capture more of the Anchorage population, as certain neighborhoods are currently excluded.

Eagle River Chugiak Parks and Recreation will continue to fund projects with the mill rate and is in the process of developing a project evaluation system that mirrors what Anchorage Parks uses to evaluate projects through the Capital Improvement Program evaluation.

Streamlining Pavement Repair

Parks and Recreation is in the process of implementing a new funding approach dedicated to fixing cracks and crumbling

pavement on busy trails, especially Class 5 multi-use paths. Right now, trail repairs are funded by a municipal bond, either bundled into a general areawide project or itemized as individual projects. This process can take years, leaving damaged trails in place and reducing the safety and enjoyment of trail users. An areawide bond item focused on trail surfacing would allow the Municipality to maintain major trail corridors more regularly, ensuring smoother, safer surfaces and a better experience for the public.

EXPLORING NEW FUNDING MECHANISMS

While bonds have been successfully passed since 2013, the municipal budget is stretched thin. New funding mechanisms specific to parks and trails are essential to support the goals and recommendations of this plan.

In the online survey, respondents were asked whether they would support a hypothetical funding mechanism such as a sugary drink tax to go toward local trails. About 50% of respondents strongly favored the idea, 23% were somewhat in favor, and 17% were opposed. Some respondents explained that they would not support a regressive tax model which burdens lower-income populations. Some respondents suggested they would support user fees (i.e. trail pins, equipment tax), parking fees at trailheads, progressive taxes (income-based tax), or a tourist-focused tax.

More outreach, research, and collaboration is needed to determine viable new funding mechanisms for parks and trails.

CHUGACH STATE PARK ACCESS SERVICE AREA (CASA)

In April 2023, Anchorage voters approved the establishment of the Chugach State Park Access Service Area (CASA) (see AMC 27.30.085). CASA is a mechanism by which voters can decide to fund infrastructure like road, parking, and trailhead improvements that will improve access to Chugach State Park. Specific project bonds or tax levies can now appear on yearly ballots for voters to consider. It does not apply to the Eagle River Chugiak Parks and Recreation Service Area.

This is an important implementation tool that is not under the purview of Parks but managed by Chugach State Park in partnership with Project Management & Engineering and Parks when needed. Parks may be consulted if the project abuts a municipal park, such as the Basher Drive Trailhead project, which is also used to access Far North Bicentennial Park.

CASA currently extends beyond the Anchorage Parks Service Area, making it a better fit to address public requests in this Plan such as improved trailhead access from Southeast Anchorage neighborhoods or the Muldoon Perimeter Trail proposal. Recommendations in this Plan for projects that improve access to Chugach State Park were informed by public comment during Plan development and cross-referenced with the Hillside District Plan and the Chugach Access Plan.

YEAR	PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	APPROVED FUNDING AMOUNT
2023	Chugach State Park Access Service Area (CASA)	CASA is established.	\$0
2024	Canyon Road Improvements	Improvements to Canyon Road, which serves as access for the Sunnyside Flattop Trail and Rabbit Lakes Trails, along with popular winter routes like Peak 3.	\$4,000,000
2025	Basher Drive Trailhead Design	Develop a design for a new trailhead on Basher Drive near the Chugach State Park boundary with the goal to expand parking at Basher Drive for popular trails such as Basher, Wolverine, Near Point, and Middle Fork.	\$300,000
2026	Chugach State Park Access Service Area Capital Improvement Bonds	This bond would fund improvements to parking, trails, and wayfinding to enhance public access to Chugach State Park. » Improvements to the Basher Drive Trailhead parking lot » Extension of Lost Cabin Trail » Acquisition and construction of Stewart Trail wayfinding and signage	\$1,720,000

AMATS MTP & TIP

Every four years, AMATS updates its 20-year transportation plan, called the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), following federal requirements. This plan includes a list of projects intended to be completed within the time horizon of the plan. Any new projects are taken from other AMATS plans or nominations by the public, and the projects are scored and ranked based on criteria relevant to goals and objectives developed by AMATS with public input. While this is a transportation plan, recreational projects can be (and are) included. At the time of writing this Plan, the current version is the 2050 MTP.

The projects identified by the 20-year plan are then advanced for federal funding through AMATS's 4-year funding program, also called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), following federal requirements. Projects are generally selected in rank order from the 20-year plan, with some exceptions based on available funding and

any changes in community priorities. The 4-year program identifies the timeline for design and construction of each project, with some projects taking long enough to span multiple 4-year cycles. As with the 20-year plan, recreational projects can be (and are) funded through the 4-year program. At the time of writing of this plan, the current version is the 2023-2026 TIP, with the 2027-2030 TIP being drafted.

For projects in the Recreational Trails Plan to advance for federal funding, they must first be added to the 20-year plan and scored and ranked according to its criteria. The rank in that plan will affect when or if they are considered for federal funding through AMATS. If projects secure federal funding through other sources, and are considered regionally significant, they also must be added to the 20-year plan and 4-year funding program, which can be done through annual amendments to those documents.

GRANTS

State legislative, federal, and private grants may be an opportunity to implement trail projects from this Plan. Grant programs used successfully in the last include (but are not limited to):

- » Alaska Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Historically, this program has funded trail construction. In 2025, this program was being proposed to be relocated under the purview of AK DOT.
- » Alaska State Legislative Grants. Anchorage Parks and Recreation works closely with the Anchorage Park Foundation to coordinate legislative grant requests via the Capital Appropriations System (CAPSIS).
- » Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), including Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP). It is important to note that these grants come with federal requirements to protect the land for recreational use in perpetuity.

- » Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). An initiative of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. FLAP grants have been used by the Natural Resource team to fund soft-surface trail construction, bridge replacements, and boardwalk construction in Far North Bicentennial Park.

PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

Private donations from nonprofit organizations, individuals, or investments from businesses can be facilitated through park and trail foundations, user groups, or the Municipality. Recreational trails contribute to our local economic future and opportunities to leverage the economic benefits of trail to advance our goals should be expanded. This could include efforts to build, upgrade and promote an interconnected network of facilities and businesses along trails, such as Kincaid Chalet, Russian Jack Chalet, Hilltop Chalet, Goose Lake, Tikishla Park, and Westchester Lagoon facilities and support an ecotourism economy.





LEGAL ACCESS: TRAIL EASEMENTS & RIGHTS-OF-WAY

While maintaining and improving the existing trail infrastructure is the priority of the community and this Plan, legal access is essential for a trail's development and long-term management. A trail could be removed at the will of the landowner or if the land's use changes without established legal access. Trails in municipal parks, greenbelts, open spaces, and recreation areas are typically as secure as the land itself and its use designation. Many streets and highway ROWs are also used for recreation purposes. These active transportation facilities are considered comprehensively in the AMATS Non-Motorized Plan and the recommendations identified in this Recreational Trails Plan support their continued development. However, trails outside of dedicated municipal parkland, street ROW, or easements permitting recreation are at risk.

AMC 21.08.040 Subdivision Standards, Dedication provides requirements for dedicating various easements, including those for public access to Chugach State Park, as part of the subdivision process. This essential tool for establishing public access per adopted municipal plans only applies when a property owner elects to subdivide their land. With the continued development of the AMATS area, the

possibilities for expanding the trail system, particularly longer stretches of greenbelt corridors, are diminishing. Parks and their partners will continue to comment on land use agreements, proposed land disposals, and other land development actions that are open for agency or public comment. The Municipality will not develop a trail where public access is not continuous and complete (e.g., easement ending at a property line with no continuing easement). To establish and protect public access and continue to expand recreation opportunities in accordance with the community's goals, expanded methods to identify, protect, and establish trails beyond the current process in Title 21 may need to be explored.

There are many existing dedicated easements, and some may allow for recreational use. **Development of a comprehensive inventory of existing easements and rights-of-way within the AMATS area is recommended.** This multi-agency municipality-wide study would inventory all types of easements and upon completion, Parks and other agencies can explore the feasibility of future trail options under existing agreements. This has been requested before by the public but is difficult to accomplish because it requires a department to take the lead with dedicated staff, budget, and time for research. Coordination with Municipal staff responsible for right-of-way management

is also recommended to develop a process for partners to initiate trail construction or maintenance on trails within easements and rights-of-way.

Recreational access permissions may be explored for use of:

- » Utility Easements including trunk and lateral sewer, natural gas, telephone and power, and Eklutna waterline
- » State Section Line Easements
- » Rights-of-way or easements across private property
- » ANILCA land agreements
- » Alaska Railroad Corporation Rights-of-Way
- » Alaska DOT&PF Rights-of-Way

In instances existing or proposed trails would cross lands owned by public or quasi-public entities such as the Bureau of Land Management, State of Alaska, University of Alaska, etc., cooperative agreements may be an appropriate avenue to secure legal access. Cooperative agreements are negotiated with the landowners and offer flexibility in timeline in format (lease, use license, permit, memorandum of understanding, etc.) but are still subject to change in partner-landowner management preferences.

In instances where proposed trails would cross private land, legal access must be established before public investments will

be made to construct the trail. Legal access can be established through a fee-simple land purchase, purchase of an easement or through a land swap or transfer. Close coordination and negotiations with the private landowner will be required and some may prefer fee-simple land acquisition or land swaps to granting recreational access easements. Purchasing an easement is purchasing the right to use the land within the easement for a defined purpose, ownership and management of that land remains with the private landowner.

Eklutna Inc., through this Plan development process, has indicated a strong preference for land acquisition or land trades with the Municipality to establish public trails through their property. Part of this preference is due to trespassers' disrespect of the land through illegal dumping, tree cutting, arson, and other nefarious activities that damage Eklutna's property. With an ownership transfer, management, enforcement and clean responsibilities are transferred as well.

Any land acquisition will require working with the Municipality's Real-Estate Department, as they manage municipally owned property with management authority transferred to other departments as appropriate. Funding acquisitions for trails will likely require funding through municipal bonds, legislative appropriations, grants, or through the U.S. Department of the Interior's Land and Water Conservation Fund.



WHAT IF MY PROJECT IS NOT ON THE LIST?

The project recommendations in this Plan are meant to highlight priority investments for Parks resources. If a specific project is not on this list, that does not mean it is not possible to complete or that it would not serve the community.

Other ways that trail projects can be considered:

- » Projects are nominated in the Capital Improvement Survey by Community Councils.
- » Projects are nominated in the AMATS long-range transportation plan (MTP) update.
- » Projects are included in adopted neighborhood plans and district plans.

- » A partner organization receives grant funding to complete a project.
- » A natural surface trail improvement is included in the workplan for Youth Employment in Parks.

The Parks planning team are a first point of contact to field questions about improvement proposals at any time and help guide public interest.

PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS

To maintain transparency, track implementation progress, and support public understanding of trail investment, development, and improvements, Parks should publish an Annual Progress Report following adoption of the Recreational Trails Plan.

Each report should summarize accomplishments from the past year and outline upcoming priorities. Specifically, annual progress reports should include:

- » **Implementation Status:** Progress toward goals, objectives, and priority projects identified in the Plan, including completed, ongoing, and delayed initiatives.
- » **Performance Metrics:** Key indicators to be developed based on the goals and objectives as well as new miles of trail constructed, rehabilitated, or improved, and summaries of approximate dollars invested across the trail system.
- » **Next-Year Outlook:** A preview of upcoming projects, anticipated funding needs, and public participation opportunities for the upcoming year.

These annual reports should be made publicly available online and shared with partner agencies and community organizations to support coordinated trail development and stewardship.

10-YEAR UPDATE

The Recreational Trails Plan should be considered for an update on a 10-year basis. A streamlined update may be sufficient to reconfirm or reassess community priorities. The update should:

- » incorporate newly adopted plans,
- » evaluate progress toward goals,
- » consider emerging issues and trends, and
- » evaluate new projects to add to the Plan.

The scope of the update should be closely examined to ensure it complements (and does not replicate) aspects of the Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan (Park Plan) and the AMATS Non-Motorized Plan.

The Park Plan will undergo a 20-year update soon. The Recreational Trails Plan should be referenced in an overview of issues and opportunities for the park system. For example, this Plan identifies geographic gaps in the trail system that lack existing property to support a trail. The Park Plan should further analyze level of service and future resource needs, including strategic property acquisition and funding mechanisms, that would support the trail connections recommended by this Plan.

