

Basher Community Council

Campbell Airstrip LRSA

#1: mile 0.3 - 0.7, Campbell Airstrip Road

#2: mile 1.1 - 3.3, Campbell Airstrip Road

Resolutions
Basher Community Council & Limited Road Service Area (LRSA) Board
Regarding the
Draft Trail Improvement Plan
of the Far North Bicentennial Park (FNBP), March 2009

Background: The Parks and Recreation Department of the Municipality of Anchorage released the FNBP Draft Trail Improvement Plan in March 2009, and requested input from the public and all Community Councils. Members of the Basher Community Council formed a committee to review the plan and identify proposed projects and improvements that could potentially impact residents of the Basher (Stuckagain Heights) neighborhood. Since FNBP borders the community and residents use Campbell Airstrip Road daily as their only access to the Anchorage road network, the committee focused on projects affecting the road and Project #24 that is proposed adjacent to the neighborhood (See Plan map Figure 26, "Proposed Projects").

The committee's priorities for consideration in reviewing the proposed Trail Improvement Plan included: Safety and liability concerns and balancing the recreational use of the park with existing wildlife activity to maintain an "undeveloped and rural feel within the park." (Plan Project Goal #1, FNBP Draft Trail Improvement Plan Release to (Federation of) Community Councils from Park Planner, 1/21/09).

Committee members spoke to design team members and city park planners, members of the planning steering committee, public and private agencies, and FNBP park trail users - both residents of the Stuckagain Heights neighborhood as well as non-residents. Information regarding the plan was presented and discussed at a Basher Community Council meeting held on March 31, 2009, in which city planners declined to attend. The committee presented its recommendations at a Basher Community Council meeting held on April 27, 2009, and the follow Resolutions were proposed:

**Resolution Regarding FNBP Trail and Road Project Improvements
affecting Campbell Airstrip Road**

Whereas FNBP is the only community park within the Municipality of Anchorage that lies within the boundaries of the Basher Community Council, residents have enjoyed the unique variety of recreational opportunities in the park from skiing, biking trails, multi-use and social trails, etc., to wildlife viewing and undeveloped natural areas;

Whereas residents of the Basher Community Council and the LRSA Board have long supported and advocated for a multi-use trail along Campbell Airstrip Road as evidenced in the attached Resolution: "Improvements to the Campbell Airstrip Road and Completion of A Parallel Bike Trail" dated November 29, 2007;

Whereas Campbell Airstrip Road is not a fully developed road meeting MOA or AASHTO design standards; it is a narrow (10 feet plus or minus) dangerous road with no shoulders or ditches for many sections, with sharp curves, and inadequate sight distances;

Whereas as a Limited Road Service Area (LRSA), the Basher Community taxes itself and contributes a portion of these taxes to maintain this road;

Whereas constructing multi-use trails along the road (Projects #10, 12) will provide pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized traffic a safer route to recreate or commute through FNBP, thereby decreasing the chances for injury or death to pedestrians and/or bicyclists who now share this substandard, hazardous, multi-use roadway; For the same reasons, to be consistent with the Updated March 1985 FNBP Master Plan, the 2000 Anchorage Bowl Park Natural Resource and Recreation Facilities Plan, and the 1996 Areawide Trails Plan;

Therefore, be it resolved,

The Basher Community Council and LRSA Board support the "concept" of the FNBP Trail Plan to construct a multi-use trail system adjacent to Campbell Airstrip Road. However, any multi-use trail system should be built in conjunction with the improvement of Campbell Airstrip Road. To proceed with full construction of the proposed multi-use trail system and the proposed projects as stated in the plan (paved trails, road crossings, new parking lots, or upgrades, or closures, improvements, etc.) would be ill-advised until the safety issues of the road are addressed.

Representatives of the Basher Community Council, the Limited Road Service Area (LRSA) Board, the Municipality of Anchorage, Parks and Recreation Planning Department, and other entities such as the Alaska Botanical Gardens, Chugach State Parks, and Municipal, State, and Federal legislators, need to work together when planning, engineering and financing the road upgrade, and the park projects such as parking areas, pedestrian crossings, and adjacent multi-use trails.

Implementation of the plan projects as stated will result in unnecessary expenditure of public/private and/or grant/donation monies, duplication of efforts, and possible re-construction of "park trail projects" once the road is improved and upgraded to MOA or AASHTO design standards in the future.

That being said, **the Basher Community Council recognizes that the current situation with park users utilizing Campbell Airstrip Road for recreational pursuits is extremely hazardous.** A "temporary solution" may be necessary to encourage and divert park users from the road or from other trails in FNBP due to wildlife concerns (such as Seasonal Trail Closures). Therefore, the Council and LRSA would consider endorsing construction of multi-use trails along Campbell Airstrip Road (Projects #10 and #12) to be developed to minor standards (Class 2) with the understanding that the trail placement may not be permanent and the trails may be moved once the road is constructed to meet design safety standards.

Under this temporary "fix," the construction of any multi-use trails adjacent to Campbell Airstrip Road should not be construed as an endorsement by the Basher

Council or LRSA Board for City Park Planners to encourage more trail use or routes on or near the road. Any “temporary trail construction” will be for the express purpose to divert existing non-motorized park users from “Shared Use” of Campbell Airstrip Road or to divert park users from a Seasonal Trail Closure only.

Until Campbell Airstrip Road can be improved to meet minimum safety standards, the LRSA Board would be willing to work with the Parks and Recreation Planning Department to rectify pedestrian/motorist safety concerns on the following road projects: improve the sight distances at the entrance to the South Bivouac parking area; improve parking at the "Little Hill" parking area; (#25); and extend the multi-use trail connector between the BLM parking area and the North Bivouac Trail (project #10).

The Basher Community Council and LRSA Board do not support implementation of Plan Projects # 6, 7, 15, and 22, nor do they support the closing of the South Bivouac Trailhead parking lot area.

With regard to Proposed Project #9: According to the Plan (p. 66), part of the project included a “New connector trail from North Gasline Trail to Stuckagain Heights entrance.” The Basher Council review committee requested but was not provided written information from the Design Team or City Planners regarding this portion of the project. Therefore, the Council does not support this part of Project #9 as described on p. 66.

Should the proposed Trail Improvement Plan be adopted in part or full, it will most certainly bring more public use to the Northeast section of FNNP and increase non-motorized traffic on Campbell Airstrip Road. In the interest of public safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, the Basher Community Council respectfully requests that the Municipality of Anchorage contribute more funds in the coming years to the maintenance and upgrade of Campbell Airstrip Road, and take a more active role to alert non-motorists of the dangers of using Campbell Airstrip Road in its present substandard condition.

Resolution Passed at a meeting held on April 27, 2009.

Respectfully submitted by residents of the Basher Community Council and Board members of the Section 6/Campbell Airstrip Limited Road Service Area (LRSA).

//Signed// 29 Apr 09
Dave Keddington, President Date
 Basher Community Council

//Signed// 29 Apr 09
Harry Haywood, Chair Date
 Section 6/Campbell Airstrip
 Limited Road Service Area (LRSA)

Resolution
Basher Community Council
Regarding
Project 24, Single Track Advocate (STA) Bike Trails - Phase II
Proposed FNNP Trail Improvement Plan, March 2009

Whereas Project 24, is the second phase of a system of bike trails proposed to be constructed by Single Track Advocates (STA) on the north side of Campbell Airstrip Road for mountain bikes and foot traffic. The Basher Community Council passed a resolution in support of the STA network of trails to improve access to Chugach State Park at its April 9, 2008, council meeting (See attached);

Whereas the STA volunteer bike group is finalizing 8 to 10 miles of the first Phase of trails south of the Spencer Loop trails. The trails will connect users to Chugach State Park. The Phase I STA trail system was identified in the FNNP Draft Trail Plan released in September 2008 as a STA project under construction;

Whereas the STA Phase II Project was removed from the September 2008 Draft Plan by MOA park planners and the Trail Design Team because of "wildlife concerns as well as concerns by park users who enjoy exploring areas of FNNP that are without trails." (Agency Meeting, Sept. 10, 2008);

Whereas, a representative of the Department of Fish and Game (Dept of F & G) advised the Basher Community Council at its March 31, 2009, meeting, that construction of the Phase II STA bike trails is proposed in a known wildlife corridor. One of the Trail Plan Improvement project goals is to "Respect wildlife and its known or discovered wildlife corridors."

Whereas the Dept. of F & G has advised Park Planners, the Design Team, and Basher residents since the release of the March 2009 Draft Trails Plan that the Phase II bike trails will increase the risk of surprise encounters and attacks with bikers, resulting in bears being shot, wounded, and posing further risks to other recreationists and neighborhoods. (See attached follow-up letter dated April 2, 2009, from Rick Sinnott);

Whereas the STA bike trails are proposed adjacent to the Basher (Stuckagain Heights) neighborhood, the bike trails impact existing neighborhood trails used for decades such as skiing, dog-walking, equestrian, nature and social trails. Although a STA representative has indicated trail boundaries could be adjusted, the Plan maps show trails "touch" the property boundaries of adjacent homeowners.

Whereas the STA have already constructed 8 to 10 miles of trails in the Phase I of the trail network, a high density trail system already exists on the south side of Campbell Airstrip Road, and in an effort to balance the needs of other park users, maintain social trails and preserve a natural undeveloped area in the park, respect wildlife corridors, and minimize negative impact from wildlife in the Stuckagain Heights neighborhood;

Therefore be it resolved,

The Basher Community Council amends its resolution dated April 9, 2008, regarding the STA bike trail system (Project 24) in light of new information and recent FNBP incidents regarding wildlife, safety and liability, input by other user groups, agencies, the Design Team, Park Planners and the Plan goals. The information includes:

The Design Team/MOA September 2008 decision to remove Phase II of the STA project due to wildlife and other trail user concerns;

The unfortunate bike/bear incidents in FNBP last summer;

The project is proposed in a “known wildlife corridor;”

The Department of Fish & Game advised the Council and the MOA Park Planners in March 2009 that Project 24 poses further safety concerns and risks for bikers, other park users in FNBP and Chugach State Park, and for “adjacent neighborhoods.”

Residents expressed support that this section of FNBP is a “wildlife corridor” and a “wildlife viewing area” and as such it should be set aside as “No Trail Development” in an effort to preserve a natural undeveloped area in the Park that is consistent with the park goals.

The Council does not support Project 24 of the FNBP Draft Trail Improvement Plan, proposed on March 2009.

Resolution Passed at a meeting held on April 27, 2009.

Respectfully submitted by residents of the Basher Community Council and board members of the Section 6/Campbell Airstrip Limited Road Service Area (LRSA).

//Signed// 29 Apr 09
Dave Keddington, President Date
Basher Community Council

//Signed// 29 Apr 09
Ann Gabler, Chair Date
Review Committee
FNBP Trail Improvement Plan