



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

ANCHORAGE PARKS & RECREATION



PRC 2012-26

DATE: July 5, 2012

TO: Parks & Recreation Commission

FROM: Mark McCaffery

SUBJECT: PRC 2012-26 **Campbell Creek Estuary and Natural Area Master Plan**

Introduction

The purpose of the Campbell Creek Estuary and Natural Area Master Plan is to identify appropriate improvements for an undeveloped 60 acre parcel of municipal land.

Located south of Kincaid Park along the coast in southeast Anchorage, the parcel contains Campbell Creek, Campbell Creek Estuary, associated estuarine wetlands, and an upland buffer containing an open field and forested areas. Adjacent to the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Refuge, the property has valuable natural resources and habitat that may provide the public with unique educational, scenic and passive recreation opportunities.

The parcel was purchased by the Great Land Trust (GLT), a private nonprofit land conservation organization, in 2010. It was transferred to the Municipality of Anchorage, with GLT retaining a conservation easement over the entire property ensuring that it will be maintained as a natural area in perpetuity. The Municipality of Anchorage holds the title to the land and it is currently under the management authority of Parks & Recreation.

Planning Process & Public Involvement

Public involvement has been an important component in developing the Campbell Creek Estuary and Natural Area Master Plan. The Anchorage Park Foundation contracted with USKH to develop a public involvement plan to assist with the identification of a stakeholder group, conduct community outreach, and synthesize the public input collected at meetings into a master plan. Funding for the master planning process was provided to the Anchorage Park Foundation by GLT.

With language in the conservation easement allowing the construction of a small parking area, a trailhead, and natural trails on the property, GLT/Parks & Recreation has sought public input on the nature and location of these improvements. Two stakeholder group meetings and two public meetings have been held since May and were well attended. Over 100 people attended the first public meeting which included a site visit to the parcel and participation from Sen. Lesil McGuire, Rep. Craig Johnson, and Assembly Chair Ernie Hall. The public involvement schedule, relevant project documents and public input summaries are posted on the GLT and Parks & Recreation project websites.

The public meetings yielded valuable input pertaining to potential trail location(s) and the preferred level of development of amenities and activities. The stakeholder group channeled the input from the public into a preferred alternative with consideration for appropriate phasing of development.

USKH is currently synthesizing the input gathered from the public and stakeholder group and will submit the preferred alternative for review at the third stakeholder meeting to be held at the project site on August 7th.

Future opportunities for public notification and involvement include updates via the GLT and Parks & Recreation websites, email communications to the public who signed up for future correspondence at the

public meetings, and the Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting on October 11th, 2012 when the Master Plan will be submitted for review and approval.

Project Vision, Goals and Use Program

The Master Plan's vision and goals are based on the values, objectives and goals outlined in the conservation easement and have been expanded through discussions with USKH and the stakeholder group.

Draft vision statement:

Campbell Creek Estuary and Natural Area is a unique community asset that in perpetuity:

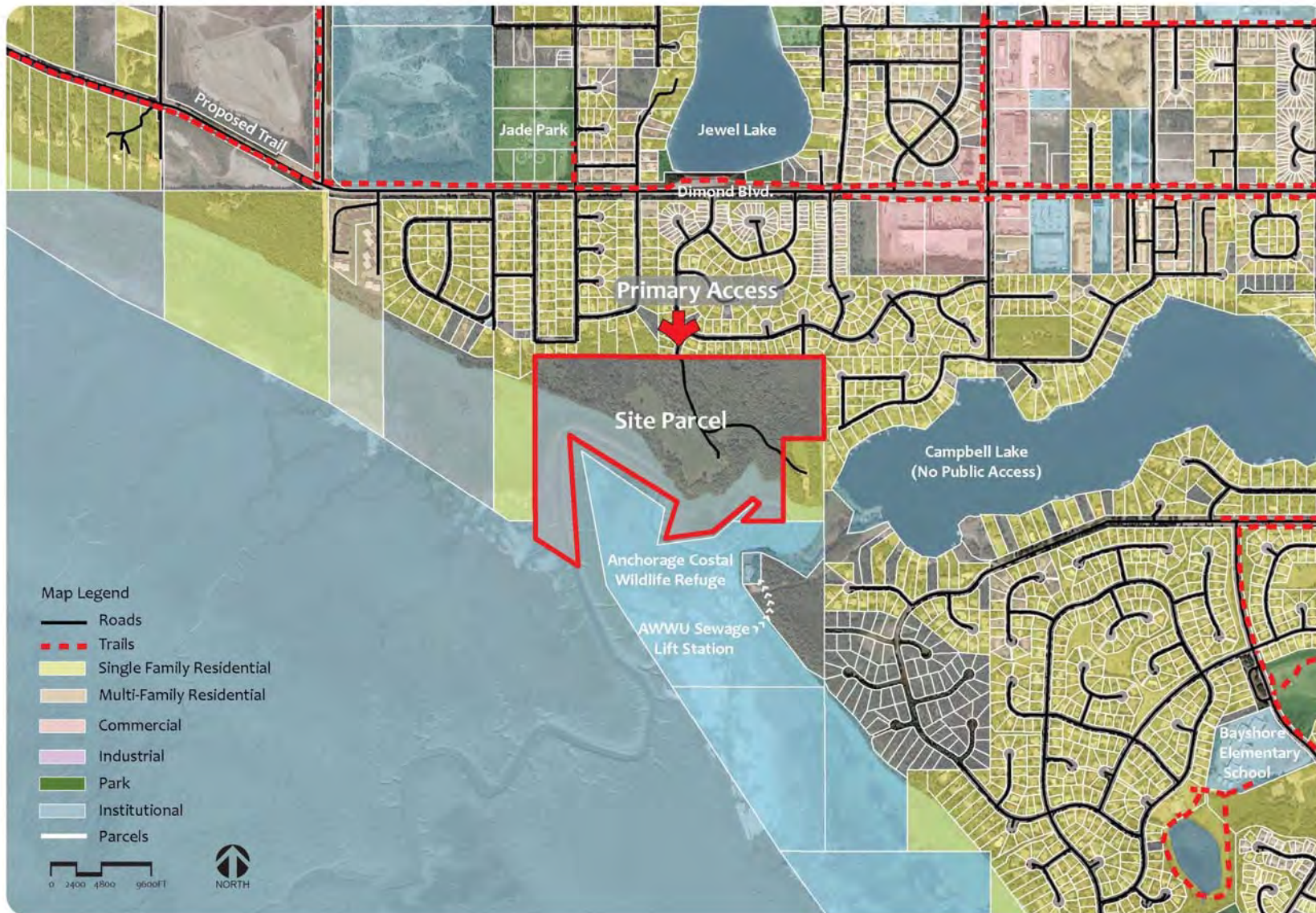
- *provides unfragmented upland and coastal habitats directly connected to the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife refuge*
- *provides undisturbed habitat for the proliferation of native plants and animals*
- *provides spectacular views of resources within the property and to mountains, the coast, and Campbell Creek estuary*
- *provides an outdoor learning opportunity for estuary and natural area visitors now and for future generations*

The conservation easement divides the parcel into three different areas, each of which has specific goals. The three areas are termed "Resource Protection Area," "Restricted Use Area," and "Limited Development Areas." The goals defined within these areas guided public and stakeholder group input for appropriate improvements.

- Resource Protection Area: Protect natural resources and keep in an undisturbed state except as required to promote and maintain diverse community of predominantly native species
- Restricted Use Area: Protect relatively natural habitat and scenic views through limits and appropriate use
- Limited Development Areas: Promote compatible land use and activities that support other designated uses on the property to achieve conservation purposes

Recommendations to phase development within these areas will be included in the Master Plan and will be accompanied by site maps and design specifications.

Use analysis and site assessment maps of the Campbell Creek Estuary and Natural Area parcel are provided on the following pages.



Recreation

- Neighborhood trail system connection
- Private water recreation



Mixed Development

- Medium Density Residential
- Schools & Parks
- Limited commercial



Scenic Resources

- Wildlife Viewing
- Turnagain Arm/Cook Inlet
- Chugach Mountain & Kenai Mountains

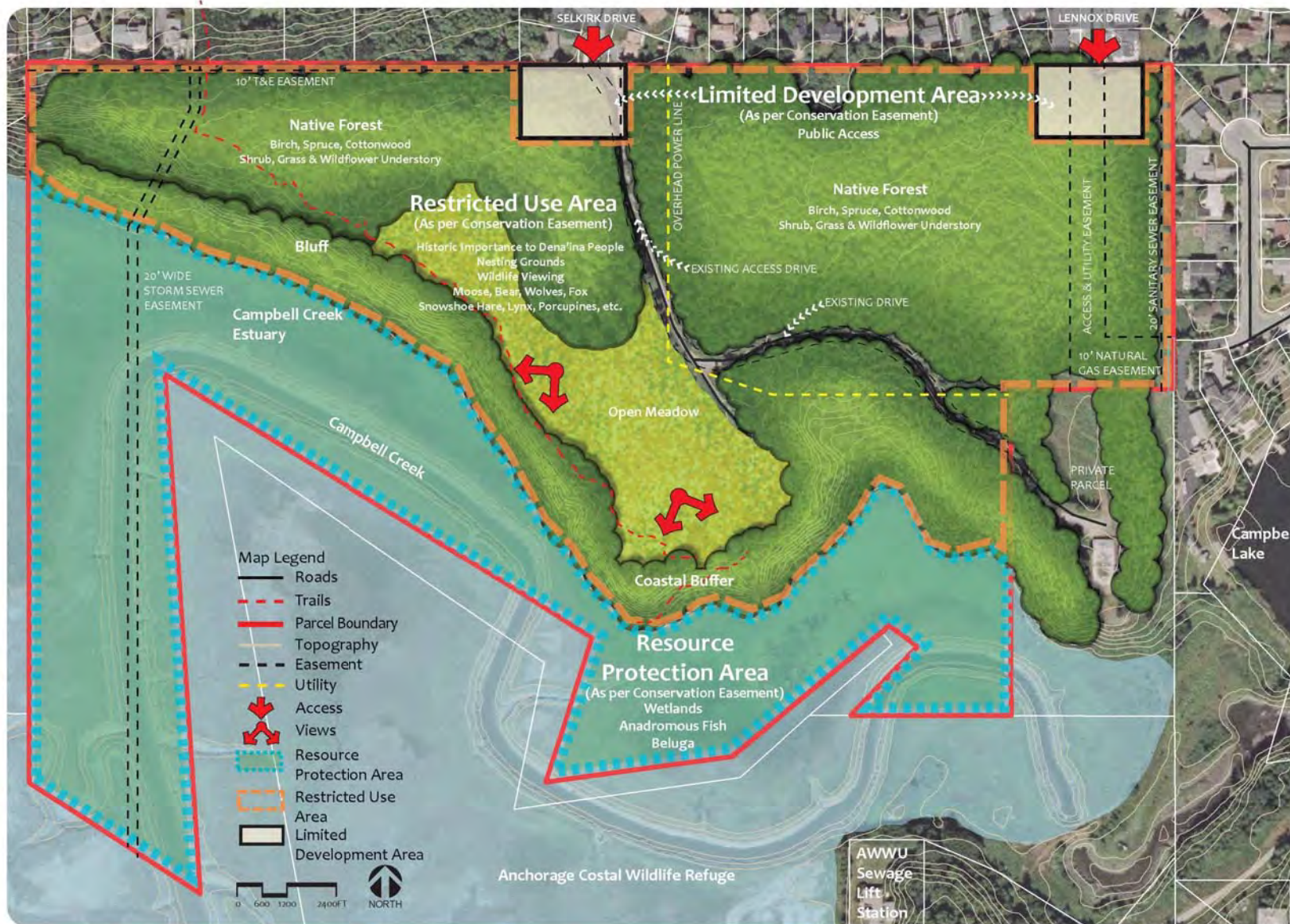


Photo Resource Campbell Creek Estuary Final Site Documentation

Limited Development Areas

GOALS

- Support on-site activities
- Public access
- Educate

ACCEPTABLE IMPROVEMENTS (SUBJECT TO REVIEW)

- Utility and site improvements
- Interpretive signs that pertain to conservation
- Rest rooms and kiosks
- Parking areas, with sufficient security
- Access road, gate, fences



Restricted Use Area

GOALS

- Keep large connected habitat intact
- Protect scenic vista in and outside of the site
- Facilitate activities that promote overall conservation goals

ACCEPTABLE IMPROVEMENTS (SUBJECT TO REVIEW)

- Recreational & open-space activities
- Public access: emergency vehicle, trails and wildlife watching
- Continue existing enhancements
- Site amenities and utilities as necessary



Photo Credit: Carl Johnson

Resource Protection Area

GOALS

- Protect natural resources & water quality
- Promote & maintain ecological community
- Keep hydrologic functions in undisturbed state

ACCEPTABLE IMPROVEMENTS (SUBJECT TO REVIEW)

- Habitat enhancement: native plantings, wetland restoration
- Porous trails/boardwalks if necessary to promote conservation
- Limited regulatory signs and fences if necessary

