

Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan

The Anchorage Bowl Parks, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan (Park Plan) provides guidance for the planning, development, and maintenance of parks, recreation, and natural use areas in Anchorage. This plan focuses on the basic value of parks within the Anchorage Bowl, to provide for and reserve space for a range of leisure activities, and to retain a dimension of the natural environment as part of the overall design of the community. This plan was adopted in April 2006 as a component of the MOA Comprehensive Plan.

Parks today serve a multitude of uses for both passive and active recreation and the park system is composed of places that vary in size, function, service area, and development. The plan establishes five different park classifications within the Anchorage Bowl as described below:

Neighborhood Use Areas: A focal point for one neighborhood that includes areas of informal play and family and community building.

Community Use Areas: Provides the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or a large section of the community.

Special Use Areas: Parks that provide a single specialized use; outdoor recreation facilities, historic/cultural/social sites, and indoor recreation facilities.

Natural Resource Use Areas: Land set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics or buffering, conservation, and reserved for future use.

Trails and Connectors: Non-motorized links between residential areas, parks, and schools consisting of trails, greenbelts, and linear parks.

As part of the Park Plan, a needs assessment was developed in order to identify the recommended level of service (LOS) for each of the park classifications. The LOS provides a measurable method to determine how

well parks and facilities are distributed throughout Anchorage based on population and the amount and type of recreation. The resulting range of LOS standards allows Anchorage to equitably and logically improve the park, recreation, and open-space system as funding allows.

The Park Plan identified five park districts in Anchorage. Section 36 is located within the Southeast Park District, which is composed primarily of single-family housing in large-lot subdivisions. The 2000 population of the district was 18,786, with an estimated population of 35,733 by 2020.

The Southeast Park District has the largest concentration of natural resource use areas in the Anchorage Bowl, but the lowest amount of developed parks of any of the park districts. The Southeast Park District includes FBNP's 4,000 acres, as well as an additional 375 acres of regional parks and open space at 18 sites. The lack of trail connectivity to the Anchorage Bowl from the Southeast Park District is a major problem. In addition to upgrading and adding facilities for neighborhood parks, community-wide park improvements are also needed, including the development of a master plan for Section 36 and developing a link with Storck Park. The Southeast Park District also has the greatest adjacency to Chugach State Park. Maintaining links and acquiring access points for trailheads to Chugach State Park is included in the Park Plan's recommendations.

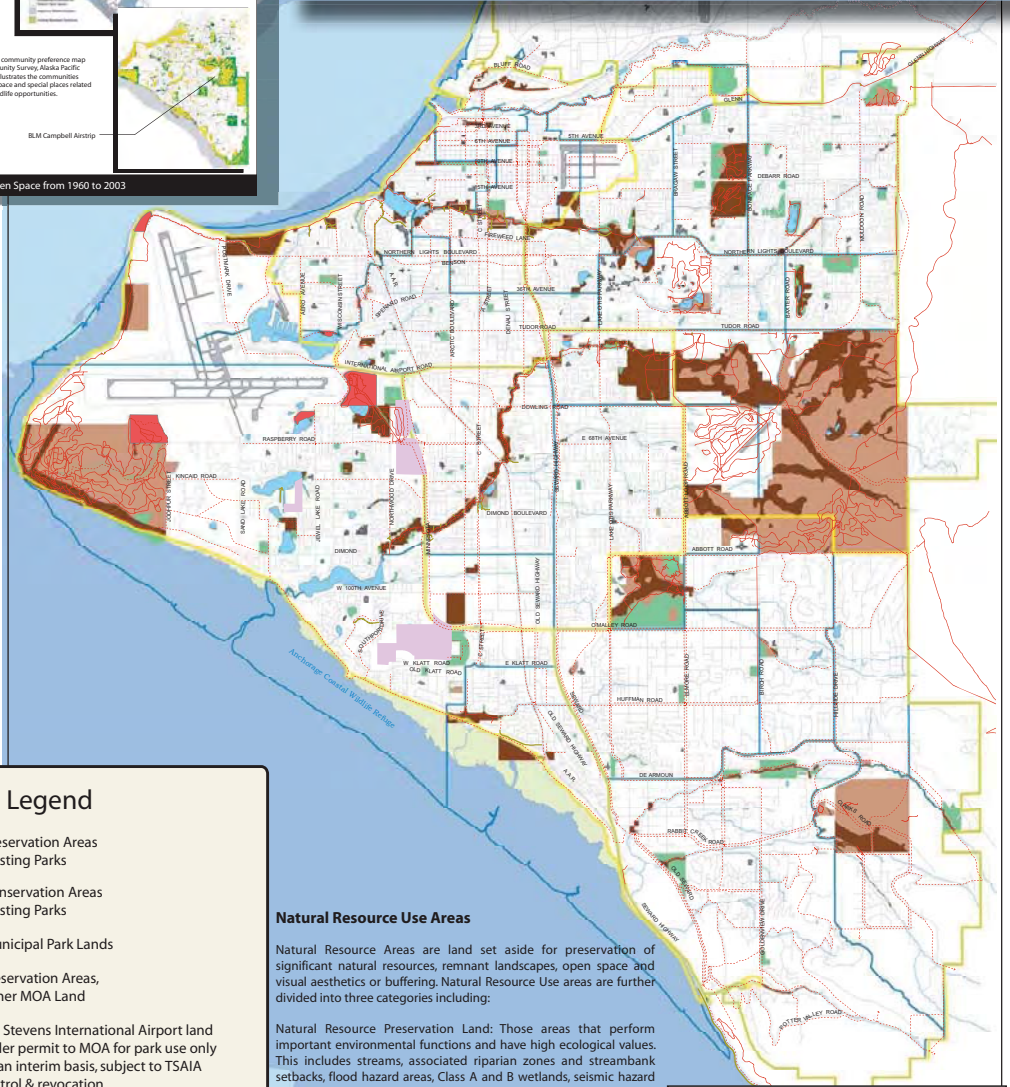
The Park Plan makes the following recommendations for the Southeast Park District, many of which are relevant to Section 36:

Upgrade Existing Parks: This recommendation includes developing a master plan for Section 36 and developing a link with Storck Park.

Acquire Land and Develop New Parks: The acquisition and future development of Section 36 as new park land is recommended.

School-Park Partnership: The location of Section 36 adjacent to Bear Valley Elementary School will facilitate a school-park relationship. Section 36 in particular could also be part of a wider network of school-park partnerships within the Anchorage Bowl.

SECTION 36	612 acres	
FNBP	4000 acres	80 miles of trails
KINCAID	1500 acres	30 miles of trails



Legend

- Preservation Areas
- Existing Parks
- Conservation Areas
- Existing Parks
- Municipal Park Lands
- Preservation Areas, Other MOA Land
- Ted Stevens International Airport land under permit to MOA for park use only on an interim basis, subject to TSAIA control & revocation
- Subarea Park District Boundaries
- Community Council District Boundaries
- Existing Recreation Trails
- Proposed Recreation Trails

0.4 0 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6 2 Miles

Natural Resource Use Areas

Natural Resource Areas are land set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics or buffering. Natural Resource Use areas are further divided into three categories including:

Natural Resource Preservation Land: Those areas that perform important environmental functions and have high ecological values. This includes streams, associated riparian zones and streambank setbacks, flood hazard areas, Class A and B wetlands, seismic hazard zones, steep slopes in excess of 15 percent, lands with conservation easements and other restrictions and any other lands determined to have unique or threatened habitat values.

Natural Resource Conservation Land: Those areas with significant natural vegetation, perform storm water management, habitat, visual or noise buffer, or other natural function important to the community.

Natural Resource Reserve Land: Those areas that retain most of their natural vegetation, perform a variety of natural functions found throughout the Anchorage Bowl, but that have features that make development possible with limited cost and minimal disturbance to the surrounding ecosystem. Future use of this reserve land will be determined through Master Plans.

Map Use

The Anchorage Park Maps are intended for general park planning purposes only and are not intended to be used for individual park planning issues. The Natural Resource Area Map represents a summation of existing natural resource data for the Anchorage Bowl Parks. It is intended to serve as a basis for future Natural Resource Use Park designation which will be formalized through the natural resource master plans as noted in Chapter 7 park classification descriptions. Resource data from other areas of the Bowl will be used to determine future additions to Natural Resource designations via fee simple or other acquisition methods.

Map Revised
March 2006

Map 6 Natural Resource Use Areas

Anchorage Park, Natural Resource & Recreation Facility Plan

Figure 3-15: Natural Resource Use Areas

Expand and Develop Recreation Facilities: The development of Section 36 will be an expansion of recreation facilities.

Protect and Improve Natural Resources: This recommendation includes developing a resource management plan for Section 36 and allowing for necessary access sites. Section 36, as a large undeveloped parcel of land, could accommodate appropriate recreational uses, while protecting habitat and its connectivity.

Develop Park Access, Trails, and Connectivity: This recommendation includes completing or establishing easements for trails proposed in the Area-wide Trail Plan. Section 36 is ideally located to be part of a connection from the Anchorage Bowl into Chugach State Park.

Section 36 is classified as a Natural Resource Use Area (NRUA) in the adopted Park Plan. On Map 6: Natural Resource Use Areas, the wetland area of Section 36 is classified as Natural Resource Preservation Land (Figure 3-15). The remainder upland areas of Section 36 are classified as Natural Resource Conservation Land. Preservation lands are areas that perform important environmental functions and have high ecological values. This includes streams, associated riparian zones and streambank setbacks, flood hazard areas, Class A and B wetlands, seismic hazard areas and any other lands determined to have unique or threatened habitat values. Natural Resource Conservation Lands are those areas with significant natural vegetation that perform storm water management and provide habitat, visual or noise buffer, or other natural functions important to the community.

Although Section 36 is classified as a NRUA, the Southeast Park District Recommendations of the Park Plan identify the development of a master plan for Section 36 and the development of a link between Section 36 and Storck Park as proposed Community Use Park improvements.

Another recommendation in the Park Plan included the development of a resource management plan for Section 36 allowing for necessary access sites in order to protect and improve natural resources.

Section 36 is also designated as a Winter Special Use Site on Map 4: Athletic & Winter Special Use Areas, though there is no text providing guidance on how this designation applies to Section 36.

Hillside District Plan

The Hillside District Plan (HDP) is a neighborhood plan for the MOA's Hillside area. Its goal is to establish a sound public policy for the area that reflects the vision of residents and landowners for future Hillside growth (Figure 3-16). Anchorage 2020, the MOA comprehensive plan adopted by the MOA Assembly in 2001, calls for the development of neighborhood/district plans to refine the general guidance provided in comprehensive plan. The HDP, adopted in April, 2010, provides more specificity for land use and public services, addressing issues such residential densities, water and sewer service, drainage, roads, trails and open space. The Hillside District Plan also replaces the Hillside Wastewater Management Plan.

The Hillside District has retained its rural setting, yet maintains convenient access to downtown Anchorage. Continued development will have an impact on the character of the Hillside District, which includes more than 50 percent of Anchorage's remaining vacant private land. Retaining the special qualities of the Hillside, while accommodating the projected growth, has emerged as the overall goal of the HDP. More parks and recreational facilities are in the north part of Anchorage than in the south, so providing a park in the Hillside District will help alleviate this inequality. Much of the land in the Hillside district is currently undeveloped, though this could drastically change with the expected growth. The central location of Section 36 provides a valuable area for recreation, outdoor education, and wildlife corridor connectivity.

Trails and open space in the Hillside District are popular with both local residents and visitors. At least 200,000 users access Chugach State Park through the Hillside each year, and many residents enjoy walking on the generally quiet Hillside roads. In many places on the Hillside, trails infrastructure--parking areas, trash services, signage, and general management of use--has not kept pace with demand. Conflicts and user--pressures have mounted over the years, often intensifying with new development. Section 36 could

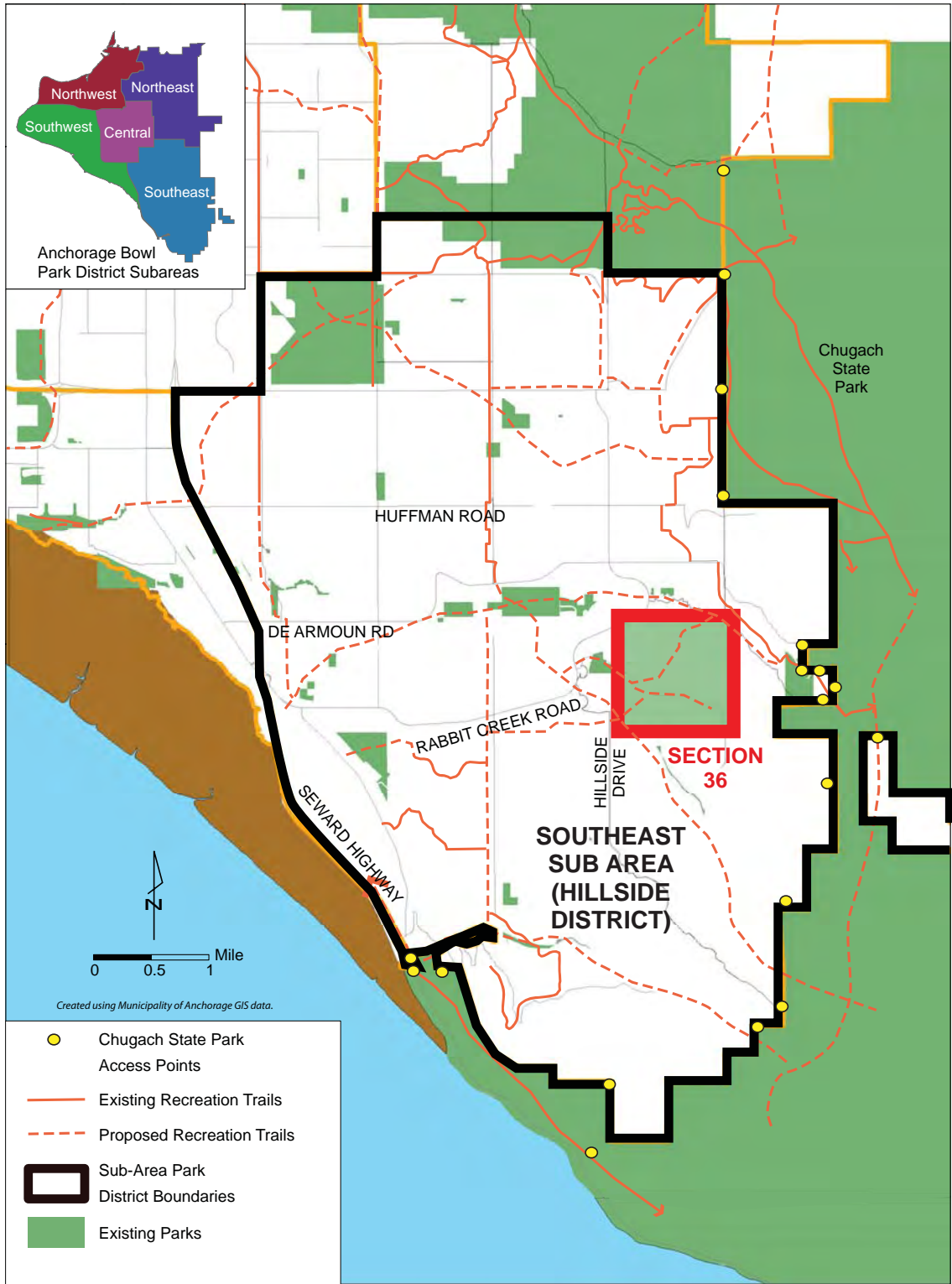


Figure 3-16: Hillside District Plan Area Map

help alleviate some of these pressures by providing an additional area for recreational use and outdoor education.

Areawide Trails Plan

The Areawide Trails Plan (ATP) is the MOA's primary trail planning and policy document (MOA, 1997). The purpose of this plan is to guide and establish trail facilities as part of the overall transportation system. The dual focus of the ATP is the development of integrated trails serving multiple recreational users and the creation of a trail system that facilitates alternative modes of transportation.

The ATP recommends an interpretive display for the Mountain Hemlock Stand located in Section 36. Interpretive trails educate the public on the natural environment and help to increase public sensitivity on the various habitats and ecosystems that support the array of wildlife in the Anchorage Bowl. Recommendations also include the establishment and maintenance of natural trails within Section 36 park lands. Natural trails are unpaved, unlighted, ungroomed, non-motorized, generally narrow, lightly used trails that occur in a natural setting enjoyed by non-competitive walkers, bird watchers, outdoor educators, skiers, etc. The need to restrict the use of groomed cross-country ski trails by motorized vehicles, horses, sled dog teams, family pets, and people of foot is discussed, as well as the need for trail lighting on cross-country ski trails in the Anchorage Bowl. Cooperative efforts of the Municipality and the Nordic Skiing Association should be actively supported and standardized signage should be used throughout the MOA to designate acceptable trail users.

Whenever possible, the ATP recommends that different types of uses should take place on a single trail. In the summer, hikers and joggers can use cross-country trails. In the winter, dog mushers and cross-country skiers can use summer hiking trails. Waterways can be used as a winter dog mushing and cross-country skiing trails.

Chugach State Park Access Inventory

The goal of the Chugach State Park Access Inventory is to ensure future generations of Alaskans retain access to Chugach State Park (ADNR, 2002). In order to meet the needs of existing users and provide for future use,

it is important to understand the current trend of park users. In areas of the Anchorage Bowl, such as the Hillside, opportunities for access to Chugach State Park are disappearing as land continues to be developed. As these areas of access disappear, park use has been increasing. In order to meet the needs Chugach State Park, existing trailheads need to be preserved and strategically placed new trailhead access points should be designed to disperse use.

Section 36 does not link directly with Chugach State Park, but it has the potential to become a component in a link between the park and the Hillside District. Numerous streets east of Section 36 provide neighborhood access to the park, most of which are not suitable to develop for expanded use. Public comment supported maintaining public access in the area between Rabbit Creek and Potter Valley, focusing on the McHugh Peak Complex, Rabbit Lakes, the Suicides, and the backside of Flattop. The need to connect to existing MOA trails and parks was also expressed; especially desirable is connectivity to the Rabbit Creek Greenbelt, Section 36, and the North Fork of Campbell Creek. In addition, several respondents voiced support for the development of a park to coast connection particularly along the Tour of Anchorage route and in South Anchorage.

Storck Park Master Plan

Two master plans for Storck Park have been produced for the MOA. The Storck Park Master Plan appears to date from the mid-1980s and was approved by the Rabbit Creek and Bear Valley Community Councils. The Storck Park Improvements Plan was completed in 1997. Improvements in Storck Park are consistent with these plans. Parking and other recreation facilities are indicated on these plans though restroom facilities are not (Appendix A). The existing facilities at Storck Park include a parking lot with 63 spaces, accessible play equipment, a ballfield, two soccer fields, a picnic shelter, nature trail, and portable restrooms that are available through the summer. Many people also use the park for exercising their dogs. Though the parking lot is often full during games and tournaments during the summer, it is relatively empty when there are no scheduled games and during the spring, fall, and winter months. Improvements proposed in the Section 36 Master Plan have considered and are consistent with the Storck Park Master Plans.

Park Designation

Although Section 36 is referred to in existing plans, its designation and projected use is not clearly defined. It is classified as a Natural Resource Use Area (NRUA) in the adopted Park Plan. NRUAs are lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics or buffering. On the plan's map showing NRUAs, most of Section 36 is shown as Conservation Area (areas with significant natural vegetation, perform stormwater management, habitat, visual or noise buffer or other natural functions important to the community) and the wetland portion is shown as Preservation Area (areas that perform important environmental functions and high ecological value areas, including streams, riparian zones, streambank setbacks, flood hazard areas, etc.)

However, the section on Southeast Park District Recommendations states that *Community Use Park improvements are needed in Section 36*. Community parks are larger in size and meet the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or of a large section of the community. This section also notes that a resource management plan, that allows for necessary site access, should be developed for Section 36.

Section 36 is not shown on the Community Use Park map, but it is shown as a Winter Special Use Site in the plan. There is nothing in the text providing guidance on how this designation applies to Section 36.

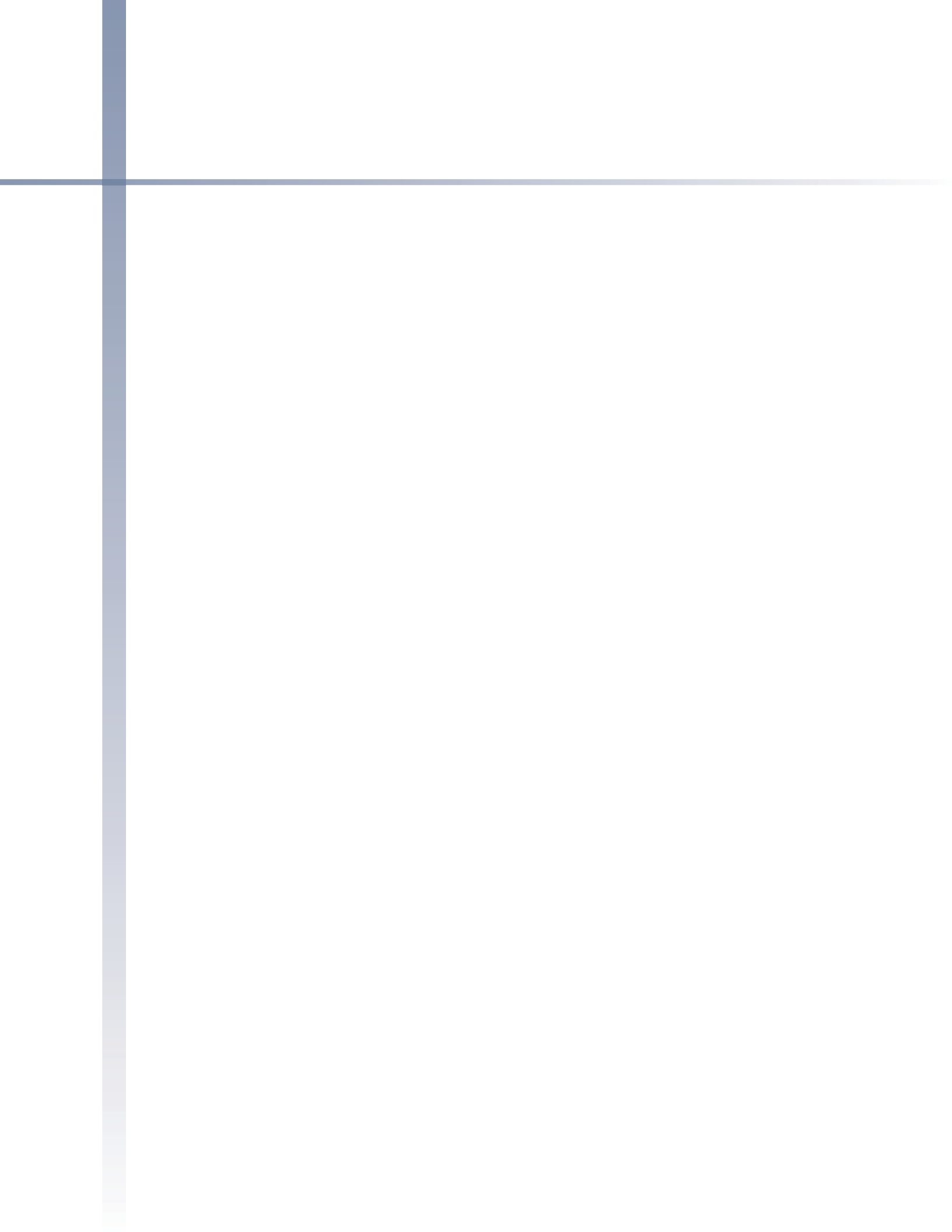
Finally, other issues, needs and recommendations in the Southeast Park District that should be considered in the development of Section 36 include:

- The Southeast Park District has the largest concentration of NRUAs in the Anchorage Bowl and the lowest amount of developed parks of any area.
- The Southeast Park District has a shortage of developed parks, both Neighborhood Use and Community Use.
- The Southeast Park District has deficiencies in all aspects of recreational facilities.
- Trail development is needed in many areas, including the Rabbit Creek Greenbelt.
- Access points for trailheads into Chugach State Park should be acquired.
- Rabbit Creek and Little Rabbit Creek greenbelts should be enhanced.

A person with a backpack is walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a forest. The path is surrounded by tall grass and trees. The scene is captured in a high-angle, slightly blurred perspective, giving it a sense of movement and depth. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day or a shaded forest environment. The overall mood is one of quiet exploration and nature.

chapter 4

Vision, Goals and Use Program



Chapter 4: Vision, Goals and Use Program

4

This section articulates the vision, goals, and use program for the future development of Section 36.

Defining the Vision and Goals

The vision statement expresses the desired future conditions of Section 36, including the management of its natural resources and the quality of the experience of its users. Goals are determined in order to guide development and management in achieving the conditions described in the vision. The program development will define the uses that are appropriate for Section 36 guided by the vision and goals.

Vision

Encourage, enhance, and provide a balance between appropriate wild land recreation opportunities and natural open spaces. Section 36 is a place for connecting with and learning about nature through recreation and natural open spaces.

Goals

- Conserve natural resources and habitat.
- Develop a means to get people interested and engaged in the outdoors in a wild land setting.
- Provide for a variety of ways to connect with and learn about nature.
- Provide opportunities for active trail-based recreation, nature appreciation, and quiet reflection.
- Provide for future access to Chugach State Park and trail connectivity to greenbelts.
- Develop in a manner sensitive to the area and adjoining neighborhoods.
- Develop sustainable Class 2 and 3 trails, as well as accessible trails and boardwalks in appropriate areas.
- Provide reasonable and low impact access and adequate parking in non-obtrusive areas, sensitive to neighboring areas.
- Recognize the potential for nuisance behaviors and design the park to minimize these to the extent possible.
- Develop a means of funding construction and maintenance of the park.



Use Program

The uses and facilities determined suitable for Section 36 will provide for passive and active wildland recreation as well as some educational experiences. They will help preserve and interpret the unique qualities of Section 36. The program developed for Section 36 will provide for recreational opportunities including walking, hiking, biking, picnicking, nordic skiing, and horse-back riding.

Below is a summary of the program elements that were determined to be appropriate for Section 36.

The overall level of development is mid-level which includes a variety of trail classes appropriate for a diverse range of abilities and age groups. Constructed restroom facilities and parking areas will be provided at trail heads. Outdoor education will be provided for through the use of Bear Valley Elementary School during the summer.

Connections from Section 36 to other greenbelts and recreation areas, should be a priority and implemented as land and funding becomes available.

Use Program Elements

Trails

Network of sustainable multi-use trails, appropriate for a variety of abilities and age groups, including walkers, hikers, nordic skiers, bikers, and equestrians.

Multi-use loop trail, designed to Nordic Class 3 parameters, with low-impact lighting on lower slopes on the north side of the ridge.

Multi-use loop trail, designed to Nordic Class 3 parameters, without lighting, on the lower slopes south of the ridge (south of Clark's Road, east of Heights Hill Road).

Multi-use loop trail, designed to equestrian Class 2 parameters, on the slopes and along the ridge.

Area of mixed network of Class 2 and Class 3 trails of low to moderate density, designed to equestrian parameters, north of the ridge.

Area of Class 2 trail network south of the ridge, designed to equestrian parameters.

Class 2 accessible boardwalks with wildlife viewing platforms where appropriate in the wetland area.

Trail connection to Storck Park, Bear Valley Elementary School, Chugach State Park, and greenbelts.

Grade-separated trail crossing Clark's Road.

Amenities

Bear Valley Elementary School as a summer outdoor education facility.

Benches at scenic viewing areas and set in a natural setting along trails for rest and picnics.

Where appropriate, design sustainable amenities, such as restrooms and lighting, in appropriate locations facilities that utilize solar, wind, water catchment, composting toilets, etc. could be incorporated into interpretation and education.

Scenic viewing areas.

Wildlife viewing areas.

Educational/interpretive signage on appropriate trails, boardwalks, and viewpoints.

Trailhead parking and constructed restrooms at trail heads.

Parking/Access

Non-obtrusive locations, but visible and safe.

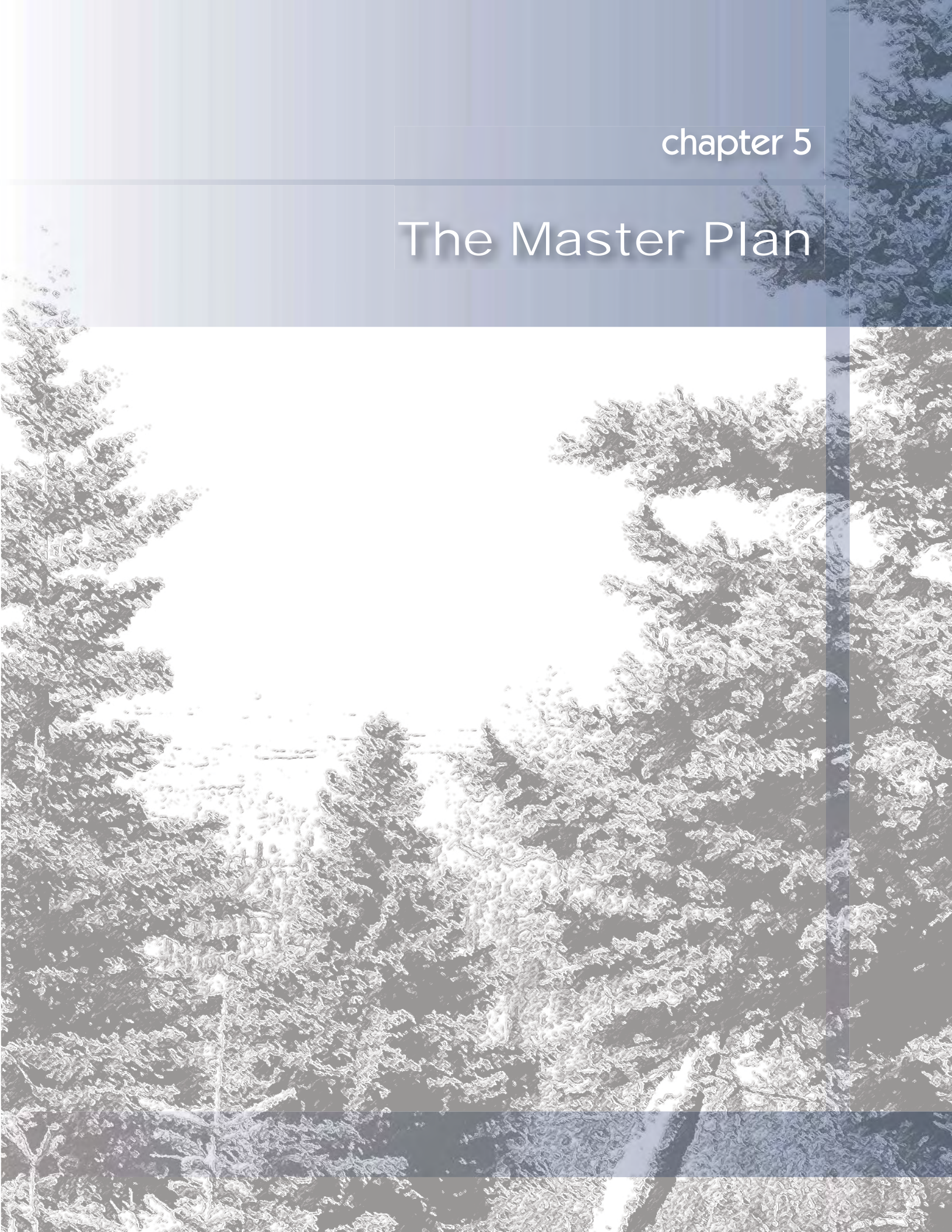
Adequate for current and future use.

Primary parking and upgraded restroom facilities located at Storck Park.

Limited secondary parking at trail heads.

chapter 5

The Master Plan



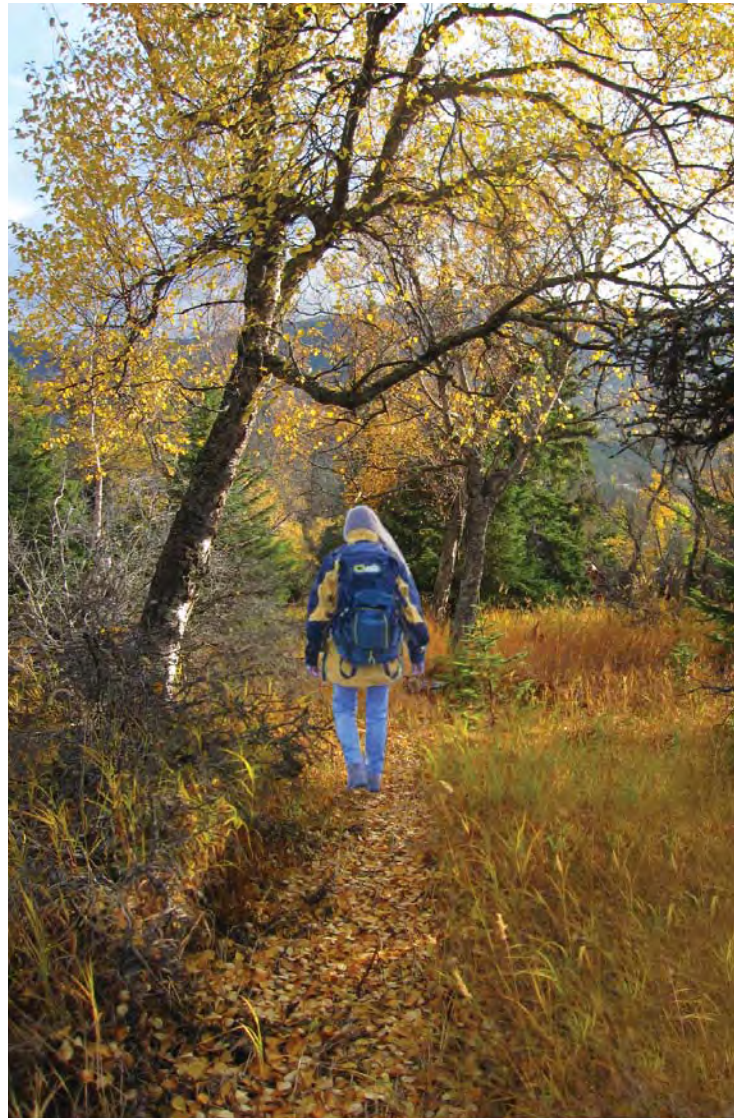
The MOA Park Plan identifies Section 36 as a NRUA and proposes it be improved to serve as a community park in the Southeast Park District. As a NRUA, Section 36 will continue to have a role in maintaining the natural systems on the hillside, such as storm water infiltration. Due to the size of the population in southeast Anchorage and the lack of community parks in the area, it will serve a broader population base than that of other community parks in Anchorage. Section 36 will be a park that fills a gap between the urban parks in Anchorage and the wildness of Chugach State Park.

Section 36 provides many opportunities for recreation as well as incredible views, unique areas of vegetation including hemlock forests, and wildlife habitat.

Preliminary Concepts

Three preliminary concepts were developed based on the information gathered through the planning process. Special attention was given to viewsheds and other features that define the area's character, as well as possible connections to other recreation trails and greenbelts. The concepts were designed to be sensitive to the area's natural resources; for example, taking advantage of the areas that are more suited to development for parking areas. Trails were proposed to provide for a variety of levels of recreation abilities. Though all three alternative concepts were consistent with the vision of providing wildland recreation opportunities balanced with natural open spaces, they showed a range of development density, from very limited recreational development to relatively more intensive recreational development. The three concepts are shown and described on the following pages.

All three concepts incorporate relatively low levels of development, primarily trails, trailheads, and parking. All concepts respond to the context around them, facilitating connections with other greenbelts and recreation areas is an essential consideration for all three.



Computer simulation of a trail in the upland area of Section 36



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking

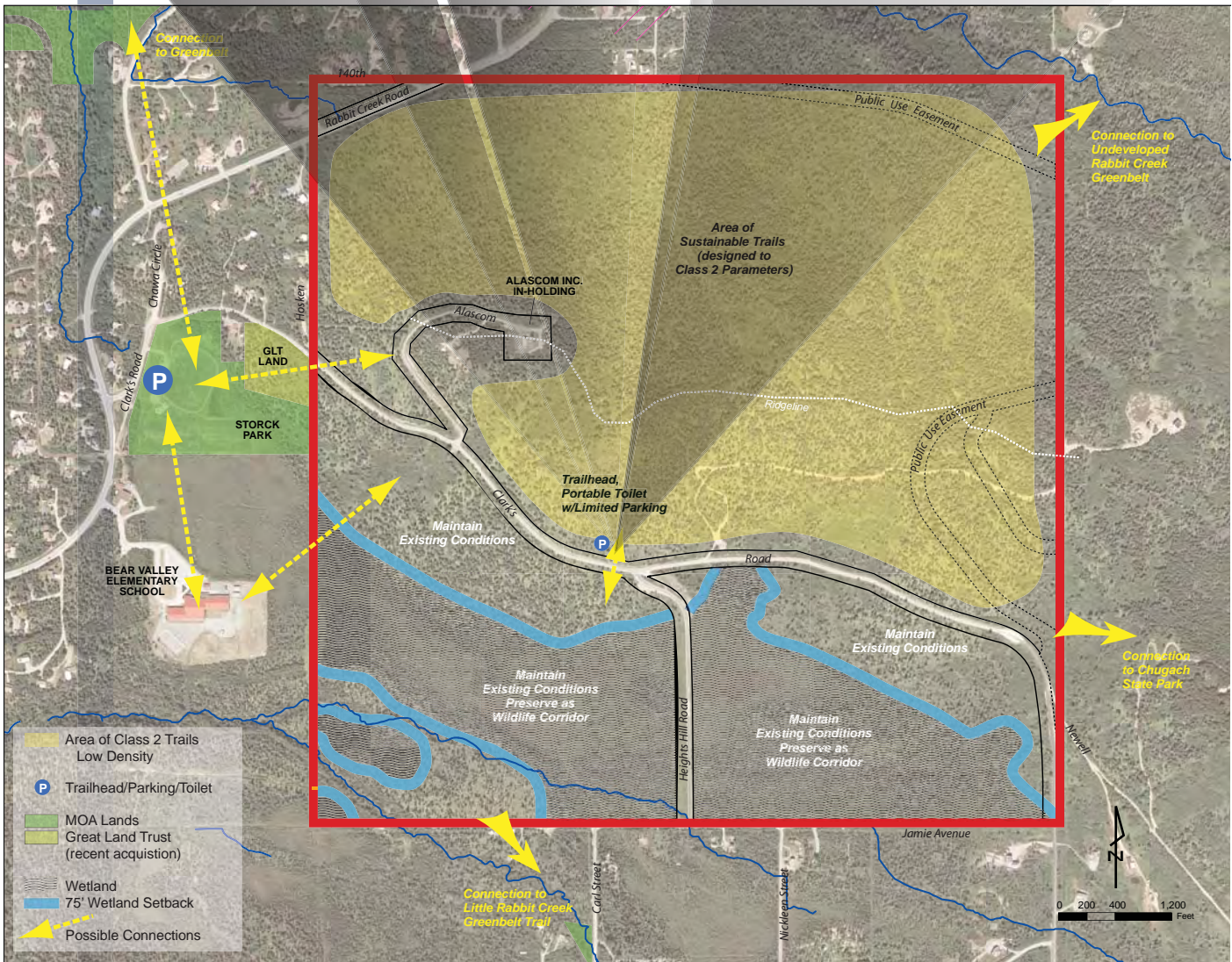


Figure 5-1: Section 36 Preliminary Concept #1 Illustrating Minimal Development

Concept 1

The primary focus of Concept 1 was to develop a sustainable trail system with access similar to current use and to provide portable toilets and some parking and a trailhead (Figure 5-1).

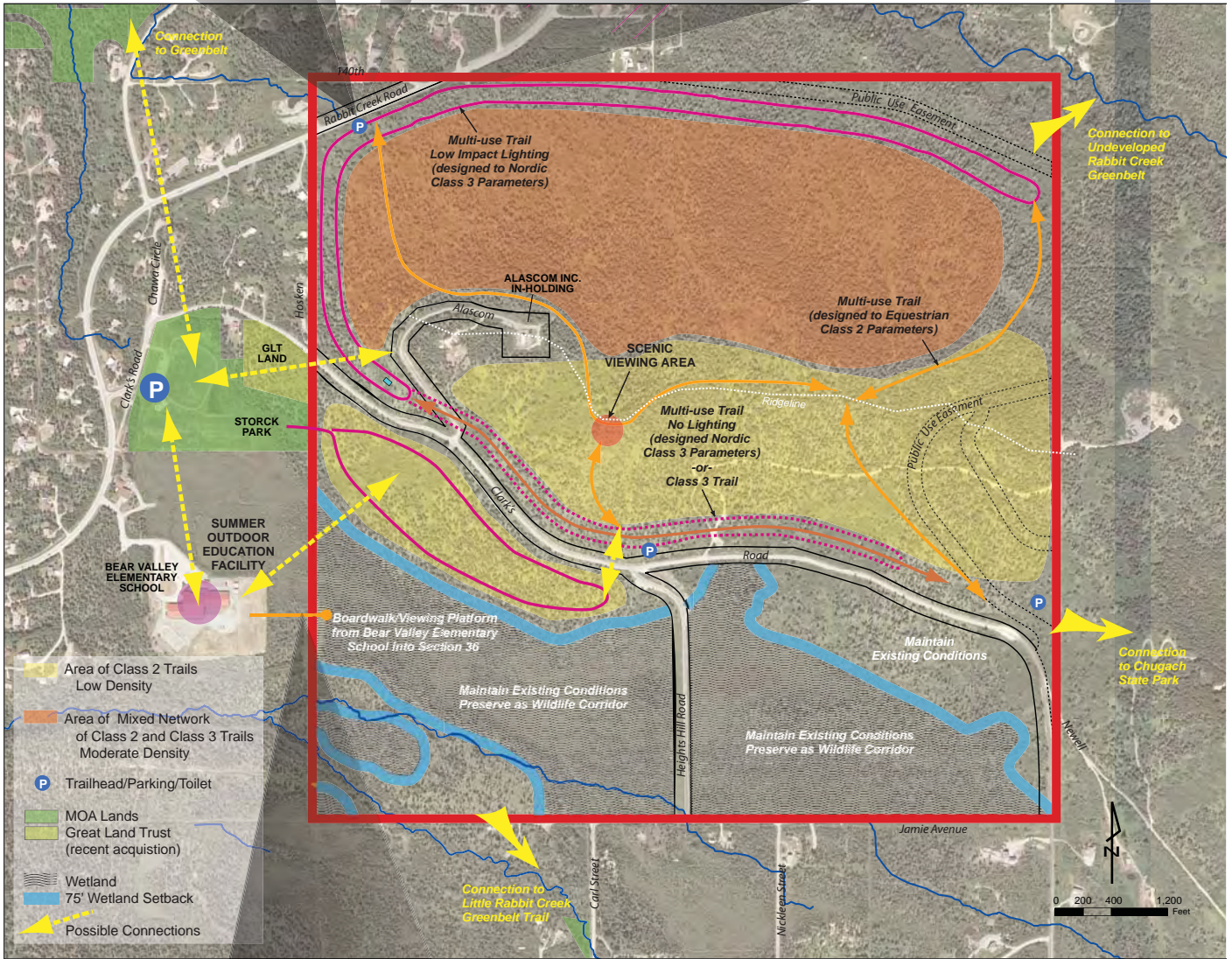
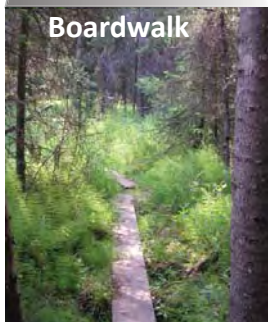


Figure 5-2: Section 36 Preliminary Concept #2 Illustrating Moderate Development



Concept 2

Concept 2 involves slightly more development, including an increase in the trail system relative to Concept 1. This concept involves the development of a variety of trail classes appropriate for a diverse range of abilities and age groups. Constructed restroom facilities and parking areas would be provided at up to three trailheads. Outdoor education would be provided through a trail/boardwalk from Bear Valley Elementary School (Figure 5-2).



Trailhead



Parking



Restroom
(composting toilet, rainwater tank, solar pump)

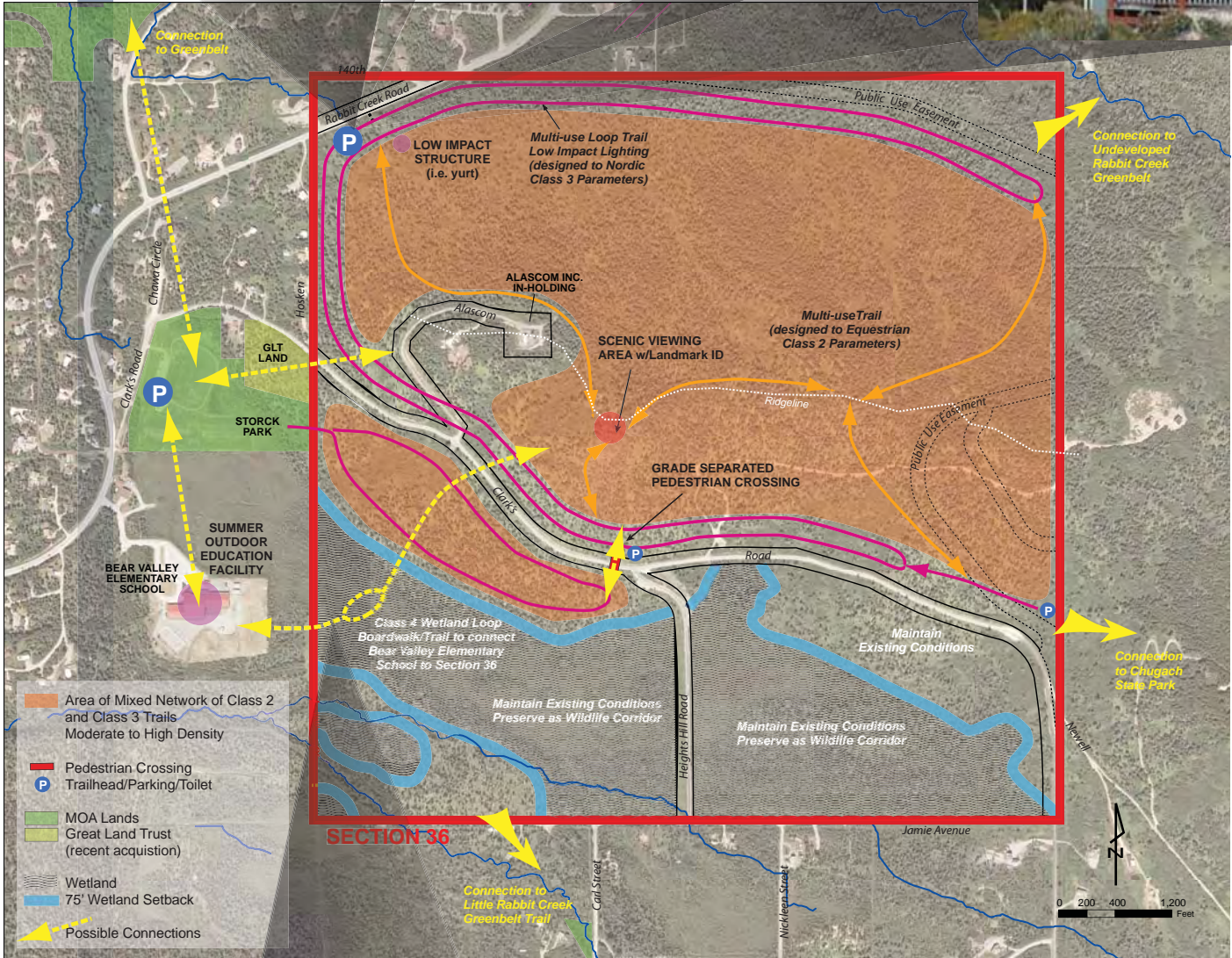
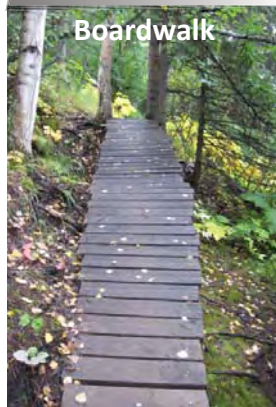


Figure 5-3: Section 36 Preliminary Concept #3 Illustrating Enhanced Development



Boardwalk

Concept 3

Concept 3 provided for development of a variety of trail classes appropriate for a diversity of abilities and age groups. This trail system would be denser than that proposed in Concept 2. The level of development of structures would still be nominal, consisting of trailheads, parking, and constructed restrooms. Outdoor education could be provided through the use of a trail or boardwalk from Bear Valley Elementary School and a minimal structure such as a yurt, which could also function as a warming hut during the winter (Figure 5-3).

The three concepts were refined through the summer/fall of 2009 with input from the CAC and the public. A public meeting in November gave the larger public an opportunity to evaluate the three concepts and contribute their input. All comments received were considered in the development of the preferred concept.

The result of this master planning process envisions Section 36 as a park developed with a non-motorized trail system that would fill the needs of a diverse range of recreational users (Figure 5-4). The trail system would include a network of low to moderate density trails for both active and passive recreational use, including walking, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and nordic skiing (diagonal and skate). Equestrian use is expected from the neighboring communities but the area will not be designed to attract riders from outside the southeast area. This network of trails should provide opportunities for those who are training competitively as well as those who want more of a low-key passive hike, snow shoe, or cross-country ski.



Computer Simulation of a Trail in the Upland Area of Section 36



Section 36 Preferred Concept Amenities

Trails

The majority of the trails in Section 36 are proposed to be a network of multi-use Class 2 and 3 trails of low to moderate density (Figure 5-6), on the slopes and along the ridge. On the north side of Clark's Road, along the perimeter of Section 36 could be the location of a groomable multi-use trail loop. This trail would be a wider, less steep trail usable in summer by walkers and bikers at a more passive recreation level.

The proposed trails and trail classes follow the approved trail class parameters developed by the MOA Parks and Recreation ((Figures 5-7, 5-8 and Appendix B). All of the trails are intended to be multi-use with no excluded uses. The most stringent designed use will dictate the design parameter to be used. For example, in determining the cleared trail height for a proposed trail that allows walking, hiking, skiing, biking, and horseback riding, the most strict design parameter would apply. In this case, the designer would use the equestrian design parameter to incorporate the highest clearance.

The trail system will be connected across Clark's Road with a surface cross-walk connection with pedestrian crossing warning signs on Clark's Road. In the long term, a grade-separated crossing should be considered.

Bike paths or lanes should be incorporated into future road upgrades to provide for additional non-motorized access to the park from throughout the south hillside.

Lighting

Due to the long and dark winters of Alaska, many Anchorage trails are lit. However light pollution has become more of a concern over time, with increasing light levels affecting night sky views. Public input was received both in support of and in opposition to lit ski trails.

Lighted ski trails are recommended on the north side of the Section 36 ridge to reduce concerns of some residents. All lighting should be eco-friendly, low-impact, with full cutoff to minimize impacts to residences and promote dark skies. Consideration should also be given to other alternatives to reduce the impact of lighting, such as limiting lighting to a specific time schedule or to an as-needed basis.

A wide corridor along the northwest boundary of Section 36, which was designated as a wildlife corridor when residential development was proposed, will help to buffer the residences west of Section 36 from lighted trails that might be proposed within Section 36.

Trailheads/Parking

Storck Park has an established parking lot that experiences high use in the summer primarily during soccer matches. Other times in the summer and throughout the winter the use is minimal and the parking lot is often under utilized. This parking lot could provide most of the needed spaces and access to Section 36, especially in the short-term. In addition, up to three small 5-12 space parking lots could provide additional parking along with toilets at the trailheads (Figure 5-5). The toilets could be portable initially then upgraded to constructed toilets if and when the funding and use increases.

Parking areas and trailheads were determined based on the terrain and accessibility to the existing roads and proposed trails. Flatter and more accessible sites were identified for parking areas to reduce the impact development of the sites would have on the existing vegetation. Another consideration was the visibility into the parking areas from the roadways and the volume of traffic that occurs. Some roads in the vicinity of Section 36 have little traffic while others have higher levels of traffic such as Clark's Road and Rabbit Creek Road. The above considerations affect the safety and security of the parking area. A parking lot in a highly visible area from roadways with higher volumes of traffic provides a more secure environment for people and automobiles left unattended.

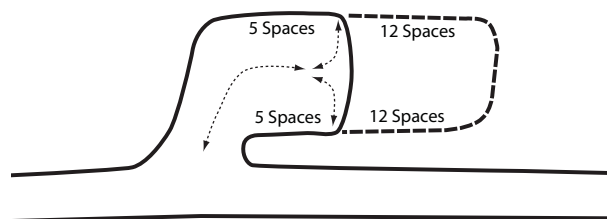


Figure 5-5: Conceptual Parking Configuration (Approximately 5,000-10,000 square feet)

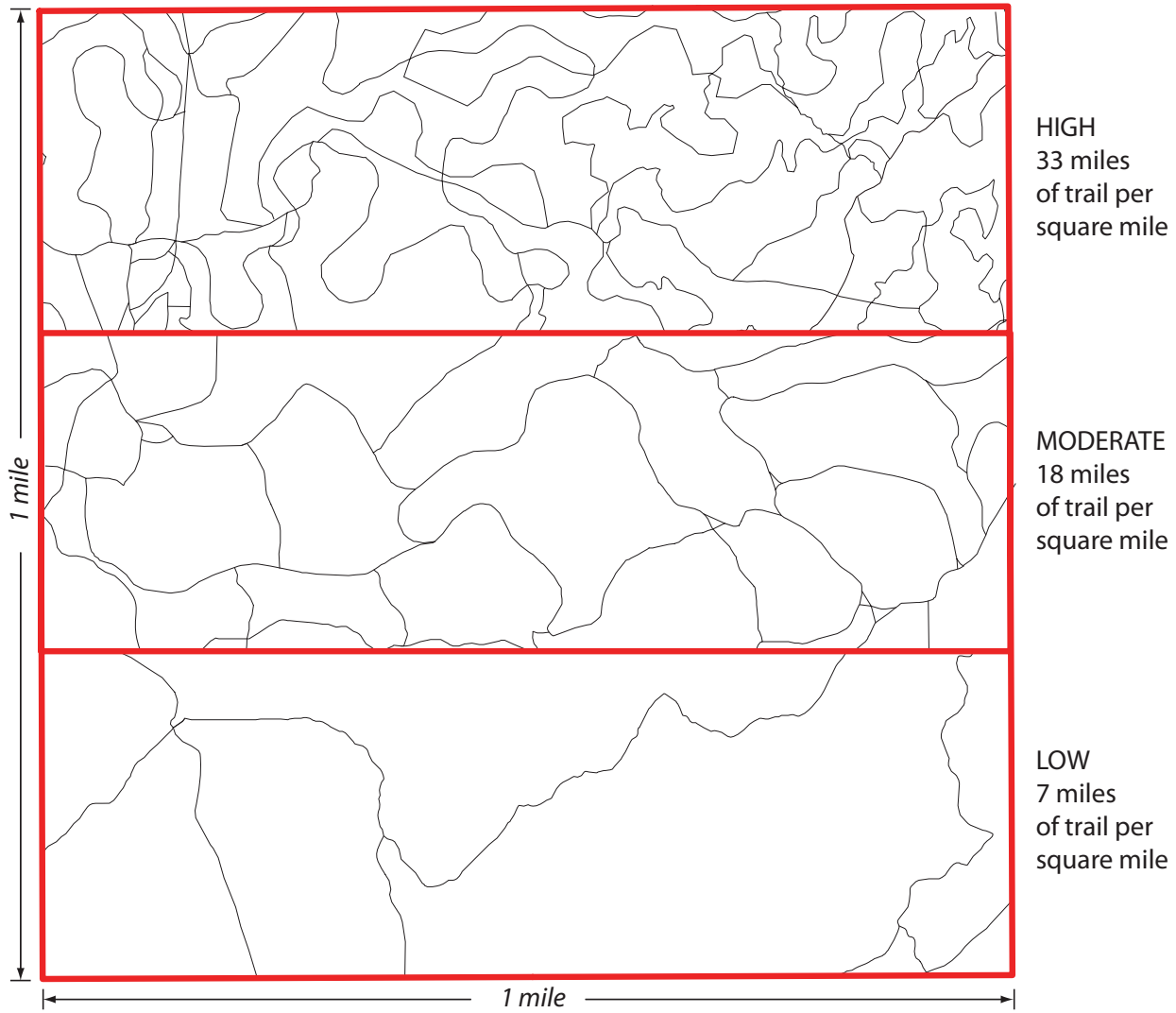
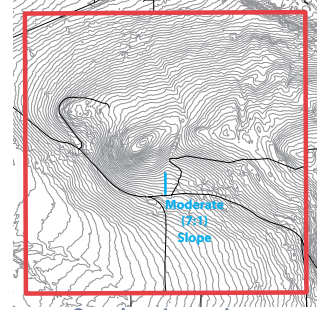
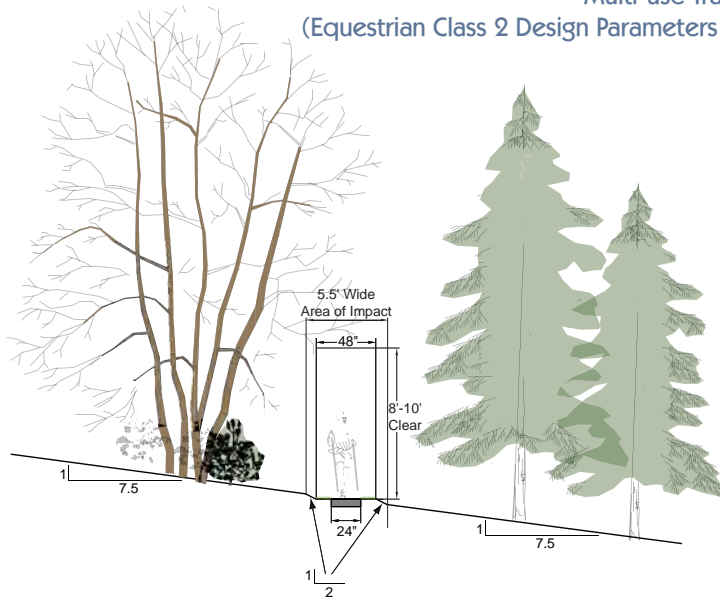


Figure 5-6: Trail Density Over One Square Mile

Multi-use Trail
(Equestrian Class 2 Design Parameters)



Section Location

Multi-use Trail
(Nordic Class 3 Design Parameters)

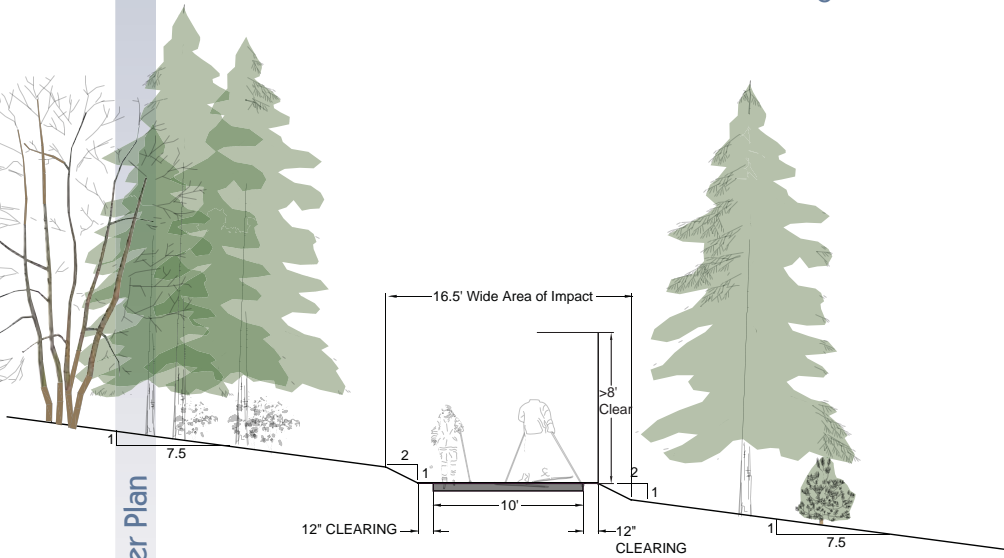
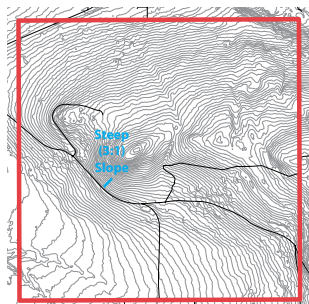
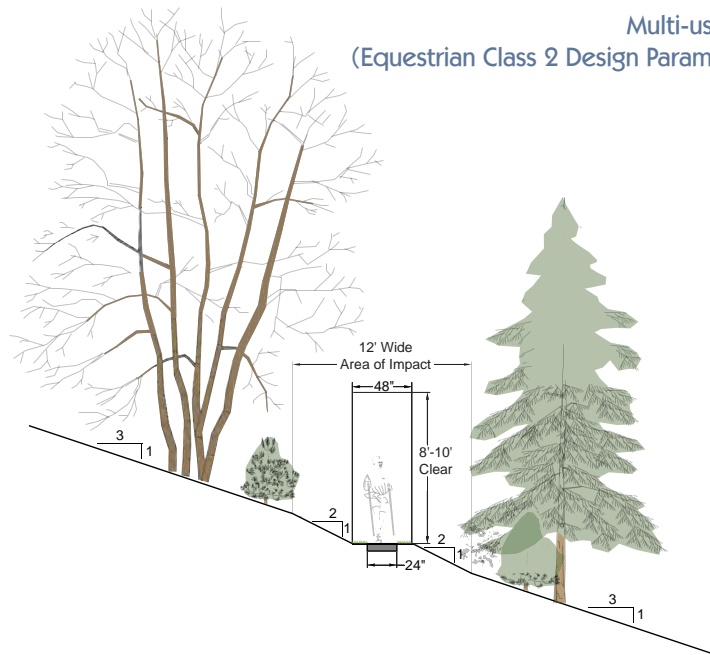


Figure 5-7: Section 36 Trail Cross Sections on a Moderate (7:1) Slope

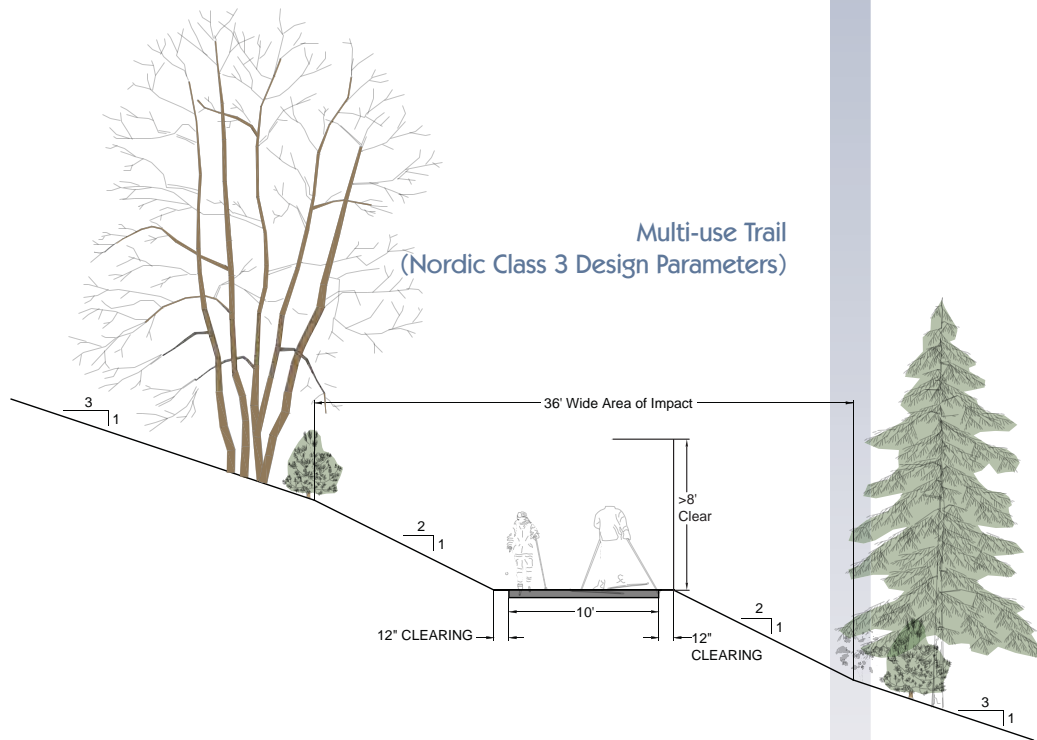


Section Location

Multi-use Trail
(Equestrian Class 2 Design Parameters)



Multi-use Trail
(Nordic Class 3 Design Parameters)



Trail Sections illustrate the impact to the surrounding landscape (includes trail width, shoulder and 3:1 cut slope)

Figure 5-8: Section 36 Trail Cross Sections on a Steep (3:1) Slope



Figure 5-9: Looking South into Section 36 from the Intersection of Upper De Armoun Road and Canyon Road. This Photo Simulation Gives an Indication of the Visual Impact of a 10-foot Wide Multi-use Trail

Visual Impact

The visual impact of the proposed trails in Section 36 is expected to be minimal. The wider the trails and the steeper the side-slope, the greater the impact will be on the surrounding terrain (Figures 5-9 and 5-10). The trail system proposed in the Section 36 master plan is not expected to have as great an impact as the existing roads and the extensive vegetation of Section 36 should also contribute to disguising the impact. The use of full cut-off lighting should minimize light pollution.

Wildlife Habitat

In addition to the recreational user, Section 36 also provides habitat for many species of wildlife, primarily in the wetland area. The existing conditions of the wetlands should be maintained and preserved as a

wildlife corridor, though a limited boardwalk/platform facility could provide a valuable outdoor education resource for children, including those from Bear Valley Elementary School. The proposed types and density of trails are expected to have minimal impacts on wildlife habitat and movement.

The Settlement Agreement of November 1995 between the MOA and ACE referred to wildlife corridors that would be required in the event of residential development within Section 36. These wildlife corridors have been incorporated into the preferred concept. The proposed trail development should have little impact on these animal movement corridors.

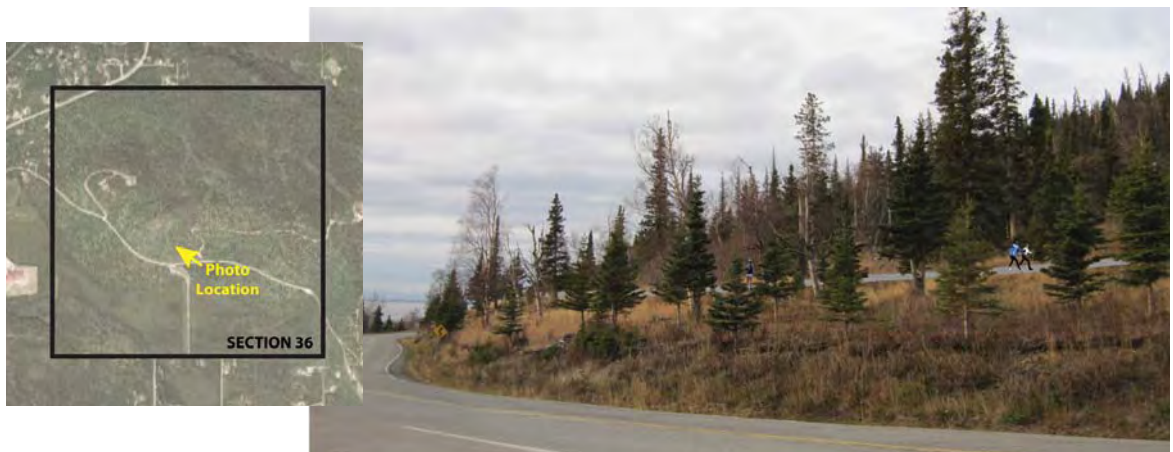


Figure 5-10: Looking Northwest into Section 36 from Clark’s Road. This photo Simulation Gives an Indication of the Visual Impact of the Multi-use Trails



Looking East from Section 36 into Chugach State Park

Connections

Section 36 should be developed in anticipation of future connections to Chugach State Park and other greenbelts and parks. Much of the land surrounding Section 36 is privately owned. More studies are needed to determine which connections are feasible. The MOA should look for opportunities to acquire trail easements on specific properties as they are developed. The state and other organizations are looking at facilitating connections to Chugach State Park and incorporating Section 36 into this process. One connection suggested through public input involves a connection through Chawa Circle to the greenbelt northwest of Section 36.

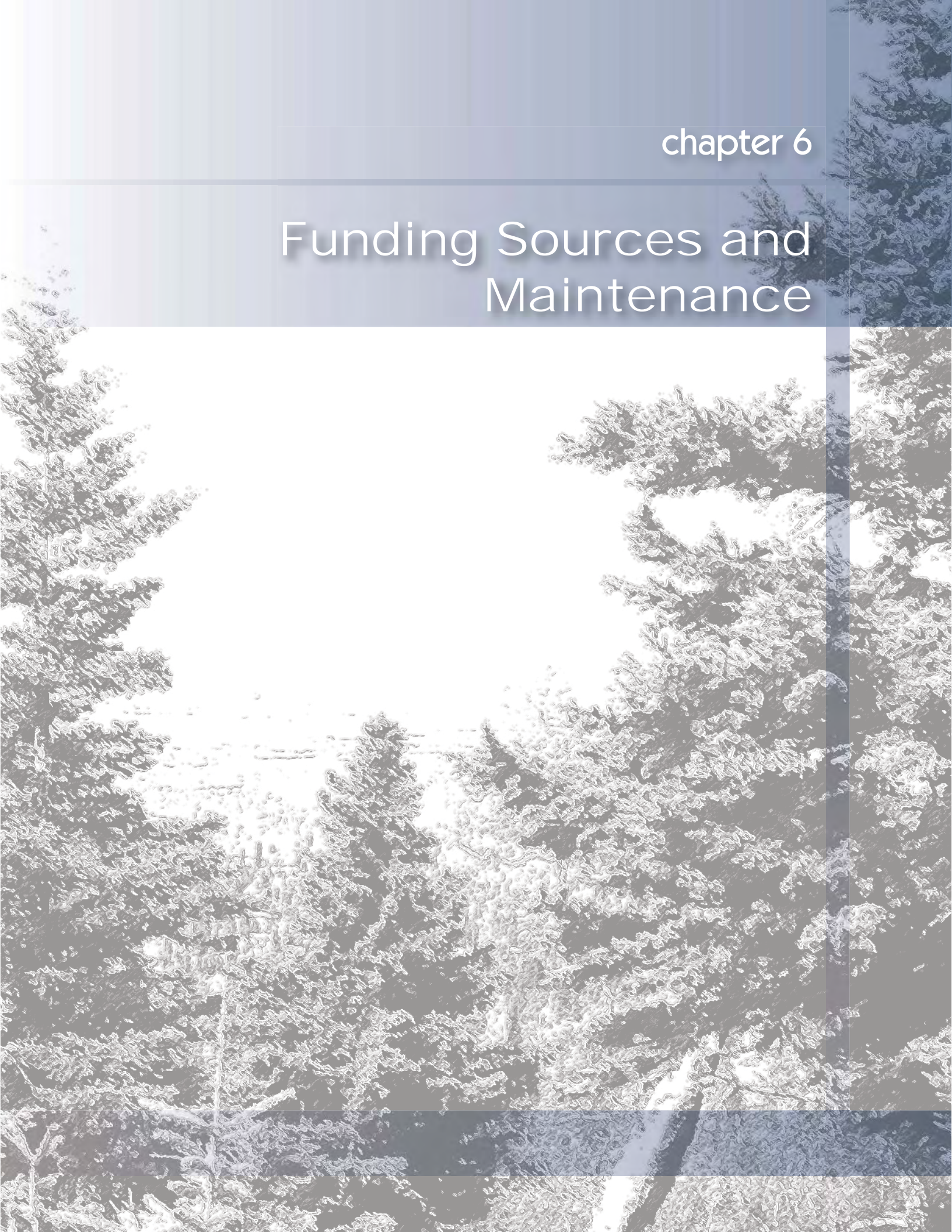
Conclusion

Section 36 is important to the community and wildlife of the Anchorage Bowl, due to the quantity and quality of its largely undeveloped land. Through sensitive and sustainable development of recreation facilities, Section 36 has the potential to become an even more integral and significant asset to the region.

Throughout this planning process this park has been known as Section 36. The designation of Section 36 is based on its location, which is Section 36, T12N, R3W. It is also suggested that a community-wide effort be used to determine a name that a park of this quality deserves.

chapter 6

Funding Sources and Maintenance



The funding of recreational trails and facilities is often difficult and with the economic climate of 2009-2010, the difficulty is even more pronounced. A conceptual cost estimate is provided in Appendix C. Creative and alternative funding will have to be sought in order to construct improvements to Section 36. Funding opportunities for trail development and other recreation facilities may be available from both private and public sources on national, state, and local levels.

The primary funding sources available for the development and maintenance of Section 36 will be through Partnerships, Capital Improvement Programs, and Operations/Maintenance Funding.

Federal Funding

There are several funding programs for which trails are eligible. These programs are listed below and the type of projects funding is provided for.

Surface Transportation Program

Surface Transportation Program (STP) was designed to provide states with flexible federal funding to improve all modes of transportation. These funds are distributed by the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The types of project funded through this program include:

- Bicycle lanes on roadway
- Paved shoulders
- Shared-use path
- Intersection of trail and highway
- Overpass, underpass, tunnels, bridges
- Sidewalks
- Curb cuts and ramps
- Crosswalks
- Signal improvements
- Traffic Calming
- “Share the Road” signs

STP- Transportation Enhancements Program

This program provides funding for transportation enhancement projects that strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental qualities this country’s intermodal transportation system. The types of project funded through this program include:

- Bicycle lanes on roadway
- Paved shoulders
- Signed bike routes

- Bicycle parking facilities and programs
- Bicycle use promotion programs
- Shared-use path
- Intersection of trail and highway
- Overpass, underpass, tunnels, bridges
- Trailhead facilities
- Land acquisition for trails
- Pedestrian access path or boardwalk
- Sidewalks
- Crosswalks
- Curb cuts and ramps
- Signal improvements
- Traffic calming
- Walking promotion program
- Safety campaigns and publications
- “Share the Road” signs
- Helmet use promotion

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program provides funding for projects that reduce transportation-related emissions. The types of project funded through this program include:

- Bicycle lanes on roadway
- Paved shoulders
- Signed bike routes
- Bicycle parking facilities and programs
- Bicycle use promotion programs
- Maps or publications
- Shared-use path
- Intersection of trail and highway
- Overpass, underpass, tunnels, bridges
- Sidewalks
- Curb cuts and ramps
- Crosswalks
- Signal improvements
- Traffic calming
- Walking promotion program
- Safety campaigns and publications
- “Share the Road” signs
- Helmet use promotion

Recreational Trails Program

Recreational Trails Program provides funding for the development of both motorized and non-motorized recreational trails. The types of project funded through this program include:

Mountain bike trail
 Shared-use path
 Intersection of trail and highway
 Trailhead facilities
 Land acquisition for trails
 Trail maintenance
 Training
 Pedestrian access path or boardwalk
 Back country hiking trail
 Safety campaigns and publications
 “Share the Road” signs
 Helmet use promotion

State Funding

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

This program can be used to provide partial funding for the acquisition of outdoor recreation lands and/or development of outdoor recreation facilities. The federal LWCF grant program, administered through the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, can provide up to 50% matching assistance for the cost of the project.

State agencies and local governments having park and recreation powers qualify to apply. The project must be accessible to persons with disabilities and be identified as a priority in the Anchorage region by the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Alaska Trails

Alaska Trails is a statewide, non-profit trail organization whose motto is, “We’re known by the tracks we leave.” With a membership composed of trail enthusiasts, land management agencies, and business enterprises with an interest in trail promotion and development, Alaska Trails assists and supports agencies and organizations responsible for trail planning, programming, policies, construction, funding, reserving trail rights-of-way, and maintenance throughout Alaska.

Alaska Trails states that its mission and purposes are:

- To raise and provide funds to organizations for acquisition, development, maintenance, promotion, safety and education.

- To educate through forums, conferences, informational materials, training and other activities.
- To assist public and private organizations in the formulation of coordinated programs, policies and standards.
- To preserve and improve public trail access and related facilities.
- To promote sustainable trail systems for all users.
- To encourage the formation of local trails organizations.
- To develop and provide technical assistance and project support for trails.
- To promote health, social and economic benefits of trails.
- To foster cooperation among diverse groups through facilitation and planning.

Local Funding

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The MOA also budgets for capital projects to be funded either through bonds or general tax revenues. These projects are generally completed within 2 to 5 years. However, park projects are not likely to be the highest priority for limited CIP funds.

Examples from communities around the U.S. include San Diego’s ½-cent sales tax earmarked for transportation spending, a half percent of which is set aside for bicycle projects. In the year 2000 this amounted to one million dollars for bicycle transportation. Bernalillo County, New Mexico, which includes the city of Albuquerque, sets aside five percent of street bond funds for non-motorized transportation projects. Voters in Pinellas County, Florida voted to implement a one-cent sales tax increase to pay for their trail system. The city of Colorado Springs has implemented an excise tax of four dollars on every bicycle sold in the city which is used for the installation and maintenance of bicycle lanes and bicycle trails.

Park and Trail Improvement District

Another source of funding could be the development of a Park and Trail Improvement District. Portions of the community can decide to assess themselves for park and trail development and maintenance, in the same manner as a road improvement district or a street lighting district.

Partnerships

Many of the park and trail projects throughout Anchorage have been constructed through Partnerships, volunteer efforts, grants, and Youth Employment in Parks. The partner is often a trail user group which is in support of a specific project. This group is responsible for raising the majority of the funding necessary to develop the project. The sources of money are varied and are often obtained through fund raising and grants. This gives the MOA Parks and Recreation considerable flexibility in the use of their resources to distribute work and participate in projects with a variety of user groups.

Fundraising Efforts

A number of communities have held trail development fundraisers. Jackson County, Oregon held a “Yard Sale” in which each yard along a proposed trail was sold for forty dollars. Other communities have held “Buy-a-Foot-of-Trail” campaigns. Springfield, Missouri holds an annual adventure race. In 2003, fifty-four teams participated in the race and more than \$17,000 was raised for greenways and trails development and maintenance. A small outdoor equipment retailer in the Colorado Springs area has implemented a “Change for the Better Program” in which he donates twenty-five cents from every sale to the local trails coalition program and asks his customers to match it. This retailer’s efforts have raised approximately \$12,000 a year.

Wetland Mitigation Funding

Funding for projects related to education on wetlands, such as the proposed boardwalk trail and interpretive information near Bear Valley Elementary School, may be available from various organizations. Local developers that impact wetlands are often required to pay fees to a local land trust to be used for wetland preservation and other related projects. Although wetland acquisition and preservation is preferred, other wetland-related projects could potentially be eligible for this funding. Similarly, the HLB has been successful in selling wetland mitigation credits to public agencies by putting certain wetland areas under conservation easements.

Additional Sources of Funding

There are a number of foundations that distribute grant funds for non-motorized transportation and trail development including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Youth Corps, and the Conservation Fund.

Financial resources may also be obtained from private donations and corporate giving. For those corporations whose revenues depend upon the sales of outdoor recreation equipment, ensuring continued access to a variety of recreational activities is good business.

Maintenance

In order to protect the health and safety of trail users some MOA P&R funds are budgeted for operations and maintenance of park improvements. This funding could be available for the upkeep of Section 36 facilities after construction.

The MOA has instituted an Adopt-A-Trail Program in the same manner as Adopt-A-Park program. Volunteers are responsible for light maintenance and litter removal along designated sections of trails and walkways.

The MOA could also enlist volunteers in a Trail Watch program, similar to the Neighborhood Watch program. They would routinely patrol designated sections of trails and walkways and be able to report problems or assist people in trouble.

Implementation and Phasing

Due to limited sources of funding the implementation of this plan will probably occur in phases.

Phasing

Multi-use loop trail on lower slopes designed to Nordic Class 2 Parameters.

Multi-use trail to ridge designed to Equestrian Class 2 Parameters.

Complete a surveyed trail plan. Two possible trail plans are included in Appendix D).

Process for Trail Construction

The following is the process trail users or organizations must follow in order to develop and build a project.

- Propose to MOA P&R staff and assembly a project to be included in MOA CIP and/or bond packages

- Acquire and submit a volunteer Park Improvement Proposal to MOA P&R.
- Meet with MOA P&R staff to discuss the Volunteer Park Improvement Proposal. Available funding and funding being pursued will be discussed (such as private funding or a partnering opportunity with MOA P&R) as well as the time-line or schedule for the work.
- Review wetland delineation report?
- Create a development/maintenance agreement with MOA P&R, if necessary for the project.
- Attain the necessary construction permitting from the MOA or other agencies as required, such as:
 - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
 - Fill and Grade Permit
 - 404 and 401 permit from the USACE, for construction in wetlands
 - Coastal Consistency Review, as required



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