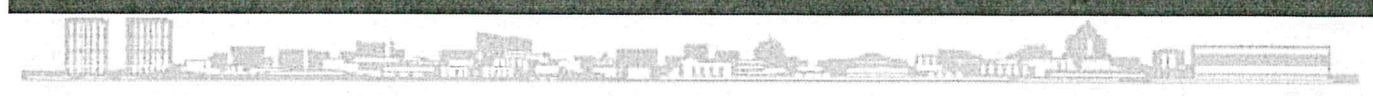


Application for Park Master Plan

Municipality of Anchorage
 Planning Department
 PO Box 196650
 Anchorage, AK 99519-6650



PETITIONER		PETITIONER REPRESENTATIVE (if any)	
Name (last name first) Parks & Recreation Department, Steve Rafuse		Name (last name first)	
Mailing Address Municipality of Anchorage		Mailing Address	
PO Box 196650 Anchorage, AK 99519-6650			
Contact Phone: Day 907-343-4586	Evening 907-343-4586	Contact Phone: Day	Evening
E-mail stephen.rafuse@anchorageak.gov		E-mail	

PROPERTY INFORMATION			
Property Tax # (000-000-00-000): Multiple, see attached Property Info.			
Site Street Address: 939 Pine St., 1970 Boniface Pkwy., 4415 E Northern Lights Blvd.			
Current legal description: (use additional sheet if necessary) T13N R3W SEC 15 SE4, T13N R3W SEC 22 NE4, RUSSIAN JACK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TR B, RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK TR A, PINE VALLEY ESTATES TR A, PINE VALLEY ESTATES TR F, PINE RIDGE TR A			
Zoning: PLI, R2M	Acreage: 324.64	Grid #: See attached	Underlying plat #: See attached
Park Name: Russian Jack Springs Park			
Park Classification: <input type="radio"/> Community Use <input checked="" type="radio"/> Special Use <input type="radio"/> Natural Resource Use <input type="radio"/> Neighborhood Use <input type="radio"/> Large Urban <input type="radio"/> Regional <input type="radio"/> Playlot, Mini Park, Vest Pocket <input type="radio"/> Not classified/other			
<input checked="" type="radio"/> New master plan		<input type="radio"/> Amendment/revision to existing master plan Original Case #:	

I hereby certify that (I am)(I have been authorized to act for) owner of the property described above and that I petition for a park master plan in conformance with Title 21 of the Anchorage Municipal, Code of Ordinances. I understand that payment of the application fee is nonrefundable and is to cover the costs associated with processing this application, and that it does not assure approval of the master plan. I also understand that assigned hearing dates are tentative and may have to be postponed by Planning Department staff or the Planning and Zoning Commission, for administrative reasons.

Signature Owner Representative (Agents must provide written proof of authorization) Date

Steve Rafuse (1-26-22)
 Print Name

Accepted by: Karlie Gredig 3/10/22	Poster & Affidavit: 5+1	Fee: \$5665.00 \$3,165	Case Number: 2022-0032	Meeting Date: P2C 04/18/2022
80 2/28/22				

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INFORMATION

Improvement Area (per AMC 21.08.050B.): Class A Class B

Anchorage 2040 Land Use Designation:

- Neighborhood (Residential) Center Corridor
 Open Space Facilities and Institutions Industrial Area

Anchorage 2040 Growth Supporting Features:

- Transit-supportive Development Greenway-supported Development
 Traditional Neighborhood Residential Mixed-use

Eagle River-Chugiak-Peters Creek Land Use Classification:

- Commercial Industrial Parks/opens space
 Public Land Institutions Marginal land Alpine/Slope Affected
 Special Study Residential at _____ dwelling units per acre

Girdwood- Turnagain Arm

- Commercial Industrial Parks/opens space
 Public Land Institutions Marginal land Alpine/Slope Affected
 Special Study Residential at _____ dwelling units per acre

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION (All or portion of site affected)

- Wetland Classification: None "C" "B" "A"
 Avalanche Zone: None Blue Zone Red Zone
 Floodplain: None 100 year 500 year
 Seismic Zone (Harding/Lawson): "1" "2" "3" "4" "5"

RECENT REGULATORY INFORMATION (Events that have occurred in last 5 years for all or portion of site)

- Rezoning - Case Number:
 Preliminary Plat Final Plat - Case Number(s):
 Conditional Use - Case Number(s):
 Zoning variance - Case Number(s):
 Land Use Enforcement Action for
 Building or Land Use Permit for
 Wetland permit: Army Corps of Engineers Municipality of Anchorage

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

(One of each applicable item is required for initial submittal, additional copies are required after initial submittal)

- 1 copy required: Signed application (original)
 Watershed sign-off form, completed
 8 1/2" by 11" copy of park master plan
- 16 copies required: Signed application (copies)
 Park master plan
 Assembly Ordinance enacting zoning special limitations, if applicable
 Applicable parks board resolution or summary of parks board meeting(s)

(Additional information may be required.)

WMS WATERCOURSE MAPPING SUMMARY

Per the requirements for watercourse verification outlined in Project Management and Engineering Operating Policy and Procedure #8 and Planning Department Operating Policy and Procedure #1 (effective June 18, 2007), MOA Watershed Management Services has inspected the following location for the presence or absence of stream channels or other watercourses, as defined in Anchorage Municipal Code (21.35).

- Project Case Number or Subdivision Name: Russian Jack Springs Park
- Project Location, Tax ID, or Legal Description: 005-141-01-000, 005-081-01-000, 005-091-08-000, 005-162-43-000, 006-311-19-000, 006-311-78-000, 006-311-80-000
- Project Area (if different from the entire parcel or subdivision): _____

In accordance with the requirements and methods identified, WMS verifies that this parcel, project area, or application:

_____ **DOES NOT** contain stream channels and/or drainageways, as identified in WMS field or archival mapping information.*

X ABL **DOES** contain stream channels and/or drainageways **AND** these are located and identified on submittal documents in general congruence with WMS field and archival mapping information.
*New or additional mapping **IS NOT REQUIRED**.**

_____ Contains stream channels and/or drainageways **BUT** one or more streams or other watercourses:

- are **NOT** shown on submittal documents, or
- are **NOT** depicted adequately on submittal documents for verification, or
- are **NOT** located or identified on submittal documents in general congruence with WMS field and archival mapping information.

*New or additional mapping **IS REQUIRED** and must be re-submitted for further review and verification.**

_____ Presence of stream channels and/or drainageways is unknown **AND** field verification is not possible at this time. WMS will verify as soon as conditions and prioritized resources allow.

* *Streams omitted in error by WMS or others remain subject to MOA Code and must be shown in new mapping upon identification of the error.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N | WMS written drainage recommendations are available. | <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary | <input type="checkbox"/> Final |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N | WMS written field inspection report or map is available. | <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary | <input type="checkbox"/> Final |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N | Field flagging and/or map-grade GPS data is available. | | |

Inspection Certified By:

Date:



1/24/2022

A photograph of a small, clear stream flowing through a dense forest. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding greenery. Several large, fallen tree trunks are scattered across the stream, creating small rapids and pools. The forest is thick with various types of trees and undergrowth, including ferns and wildflowers. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

FEBRUARY 2022

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department and the planning team would like to recognize and thank all of the individuals and organizations who have worked to create the Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan. A special thanks to members of the Community Advisory Group for their dedication, insight, and assistance.

RUSSIAN JACK PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL (RJCC)

NORTHEAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL (NECC)

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

Sherry Wright, RJCC

Gary Snyder, East High School
Cross-Country Coach

Kristi Wood, NECC

Carla McConnell, NECC +
Anchorage Sports Association

Kendra Kloster, NECC + RJCC

Lisa McGuire, RJCC Treasurer

Renea Miller, RJCC

Steve Cleary, Alaska Trails

Kristin Myers, Park Neighbor

Kevin Keeler, Park Neighbor

Mick Brogan, President, First Tee

Jason Leonardis, Boys & Girls Club
Soccer

Erin Kirkland, Parks and Recreation
Commission (2018-2020)

Eric Milliken, Parks and Recreation
Commission + East Anchorage
Resident

Dante Petri, Arctic Cyclocross

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BETTISWORTH NORTH

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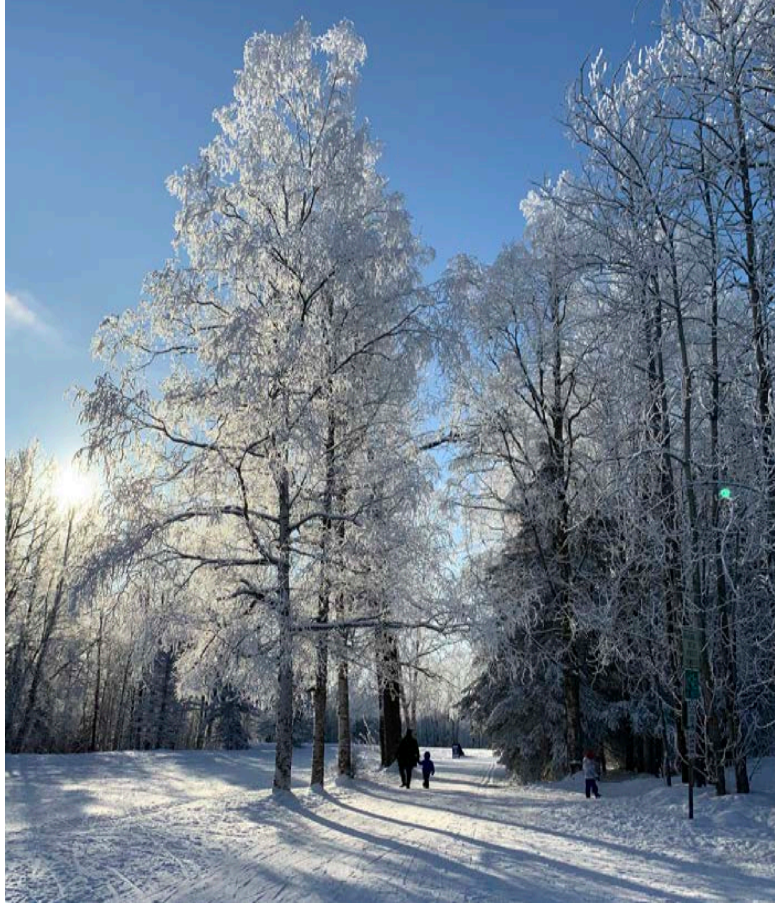


INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Russian Jack Springs Park is one of Anchorage's oldest and most popular parks. Located in the heart of East Anchorage, the 324-acre park features a range of developed facilities and significant natural areas. The park provides opportunities for year-round recreation while preserving important ecosystem functions.

Since the property was first purchased in 1948, Anchorage's population has grown over ten-fold. While there is an increasing demand for recreational facilities in Anchorage, the community also wishes to maintain the natural and scenic character of Russian Jack Springs Park.



PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The 2021 Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan is an update to the 1979 and 2002 master plans and provides a guiding vision for the next 20 years at Russian Jack Springs Park. The Master Plan aims to balance recreational uses with the preservation of important natural resources. It identifies current and future needs, addresses issues and concerns, and establishes a framework for the future management, maintenance, and development of Russian Jack Springs Park. The Master Plan provides recommendations to balance public access and recreation with environmental health to ensure the long-term sustainability of the park for future generations.

Specifically, the Master Plan intends to:

- **Understand** community recreation needs as it relates to facilities at Russian Jack Springs Park.
- **Develop** strategies to address issues and public concerns.
- **Identify** and **prioritize** future improvements consistent with the community vision for the park.
- **Balance** the development of new facilities with the conservation of natural areas.
- **Develop** a guiding document that provides the framework for the future management, maintenance, and development of the park.

Property boundary of Russian Jack Springs Park



HISTORY

CULTURAL HISTORY

The first people arrived in the Upper Cook Inlet region following the end of the last ice age around 10,000 years ago. Archaeological records show that the abundant land and marine resources of the Upper Cook Inlet sustained generations of early peoples from numerous cultures. About 1,000 to 1,500 years ago, the Athabaskan-speaking Dena'ina people arrived in the Upper Cook Inlet region. Archeology, linguistic and oral traditions suggest that the Dena'ina migrated into the Upper Cook Inlet from the area west of the Alaska Range and Upper Kuskokwim River. The Dena'ina homeland, Dena'ina etnena, encompasses more than 41,000 square miles in area. When European explorers arrived in the 1700s, the Dena'ina population was between 4,000 and 5,000 people.¹

The upland areas of Chester Creek near modern day Russian Jack Springs Park was likely well known by the Dena'ina people and used for hunting, gathering, trapping, and fishing. The Dena'ina referred to Chester Creek as "Chanshtnu" or grass creek. According to accounts documented in *Shem Pete's Alaska*, "quite a few Dena'ina people had cabins and houses on lower Chester Creek in the 1920s to 1940s." Bill Pete recalls "Old Man Mike Peteroff built a nice cabin down Chester Creek, about a half a mile where there was good spring

water" — possibly referring to the Russian Jack Springs. Additionally, the Dena'ina word "Nunggee" refers to the upland direction away from the inlet, which may refer to modern day Nunaka Valley.

The first American settlers arrived in Anchorage in 1911. By 1915, the population of Anchorage had grown to over 2,000, as people arrived to work on the new Alaska Railroad. The City grew steadily over the decades and by 1960 more than 44,000 people lived in Anchorage. During 1950s and 60s, the City expanded east to the area around Russian Jack Springs Park with housing built in Nunaka Valley, Airport Heights, Anchor Park, and the Russian Jack neighborhood. One early settler in the area was Jacob "Russian Jack" Marunenko who squatted on the site of the current park bearing his name in the 1920s-30s.

In 1943, the U.S. military purchased the tracts of land encompassing the current Russian Jack Springs Park. Five years later, the City of Anchorage purchased the land for use as a city park and the springs as a secondary fresh water supply source. In 1951, the site was used as a city "prison farm" and alcohol rehabilitation facility. A few years later, development of the park for recreation began.²



Runners at the Chalet area, 1978



Children playing around the Chalet, 1978



Original ski chalet, 1978



Original ski area, 1978

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY



1960



1970



1980



1990



2002



2010

1920s-30s

Homesteader Jacob "Russian Jack" Marunenko lives on the site

1943

U.S. military purchases the tracts of land encompassing the current Russian Jack Springs Park

1948

The City of Anchorage purchases two parcels for use as a city park, the fresh water of Russian Jack Springs was reserved as a secondary water supply source

1951

Russian Jack Springs site was used as a city "prison farm" and alcohol rehabilitation facility

1952

Girls Scouts receive a use lease from the former city for the day camping area north of Debarr Rd.

1954

Park first called "Russian Jack Springs Park" in a report by a city engineer

1964

Lion's Club opens "Camper Park" in the northeast corner of the park

1967

Construction begins on the first greenhouses (completed in 1971)

1968

Development of south Russian Jack Springs Park (roads and parking lots, day camp shelter and restroom, sledding and skiing hills, ski trails + ½ mile of lighting, ski jump, original ski chalet); Development of north Russian Jack Springs Park expansion of Lion's Club camper park

1969

Golf course opens

1971

Development of North Russian Jack Springs Park at Pine St & 6th (softball field, 4 tennis courts, restrooms and warm-up hut)

1972-73

Development of north Russian Jack Springs Park (picnic shelter, restroom, parking area, bike trail)

1974

Development of north Russian Jack Springs Park at Pine St. & 6th Ave. (softball field)

1975-76

Short section of bike trail and lights developed

1978

Development of north Russian Jack Springs Park at Pine St & 6th and Cartee Area (4 softball fields, 2 access roads and parking areas, 4 tennis courts, lighting, Debarr Rd. widened to 5 lanes, bike trails in north and south Russian Jack Springs Park)

1979

First park Master Plan completed; Original ski chalet burns down

1980s

Development of north Russian Jack Springs Park (2 softball fields, play area)

1983

Chalet is rebuilt in current location

1997-99

Development of north Russian Jack Springs Park (2 soccer fields, play area expanded, multi-use trail extension, parking lot upgrades at Cartee)

2002

Master Plan update is approved at the Planning and Zoning Commission

2006

Off-leash dog park space designated by Assembly

2013

Polar Bear playground opens

2014

Golf Course greens and tees upgraded

2016

Outdoor Learning Labs installed in partnership with Nunaka Valley Elementary School

2017

Skate Park opens

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS

This Master Plan serves as guidance for future development and maintenance at Russian Jack Springs Park. The Master Plan offers recommendations within a larger web of planning documents – including comprehensive, area-specific, use-based and functional plans – that constitute a framework for growth and development in Anchorage. The following section summarizes plans and policies that influence and support the Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan. An Appendix starting on page 144 lists specific goals, objectives, and actions within these plans that relate to Russian Jack Springs Park.

ANCHORAGE BOWL PARK, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND RECREATION FACILITY PLAN, 2006

The *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resources, and Recreation Facility Plan* (Park Plan) provides a systematic approach for the planning of parks, natural use areas, and recreation within the Anchorage Bowl. Russian Jack Springs Park is classified as a Special Use Park and includes significant Natural Resource and Community Use area.

The Park Plan includes goals relevant to Russian Jack Springs Park such as: prepare natural resource plans for large parks and greenbelts; promote winter recreation and tourism; increase maintenance, expansion, and facility upgrades, including at the Mann Lieser Memorial Greenhouses; continue upgrades to athletic facilities; and continue upgrades to trailheads and trail networks.

ANCHORAGE BOWL 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2001 + ANCHORAGE 2040 LAND USE PLAN, 2018

The Anchorage Assembly adopted the *Anchorage Bowl 2020 Comprehensive Plan* in 2001, which provides a 20+ year development guide for Anchorage. The Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan supports the following goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan: neighborhood identity and vitality; safety; harmony with nature; natural open space; well-preserved wetlands, diverse wildlife habitats, and a sustainable, accessible system of recreational facilities, parks, trails and open spaces that meets year-round neighborhood and community-wide needs.

The *2040 Anchorage Land Use Plan* serves two primary purposes: 1) to designate the future location and intensity of different land uses in the Anchorage Bowl and 2) to help ensure the distribution of land uses will continue to accommodate Anchorage's changing population. Russian Jack Springs Park will remain as a park or natural area according to the Land Use Plan Map. It will support the planned increase in residential density, neighborhood center development, and transit-supportive development by providing easily accessible recreation opportunities and maintaining natural open space.

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN, 1979 + 2002

The 1979 *Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan* is a comprehensive document that set out to "guide the future development of Russian Jack Springs Park to meet the growing and changing recreational needs of tomorrow's residents of Anchorage." This first plan iteration demonstrates the long-standing community desire to balance the preservation of natural resources with recreational facilities in this park.

A master plan and site development update earned Parks and Recreation Commission approval in 1997, followed by Planning and Zoning Commission approval in 2002. Based on public input, the update recommends extending the multi-use lighted trail in the park's north section (especially for winter use), improving vehicle access and relieving pressure on chalet parking, and developing recreational facilities.

EAST ANCHORAGE DISTRICT PLAN, 2014

The *East Anchorage District Plan* seeks to enhance the quality of life for current and future East Anchorage citizens by planning for future population growth and change in the district as defined by the community's vision. The Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan aligns with goals of the District Plan to promote greenspace access and non-motorized transportation.



NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The *Anchorage Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* is comprised of three plans.

Areawide Trails Plan, 1997

The *Areawide Trails Plan* guides local and state agencies, organizations and private citizens in the establishment of trail facilities throughout the Municipality as part of the overall transportation system. The plan recommends that Russian Jack Springs Park provide natural trails, running and jogging trails, and interpretive trails featuring the springs, riparian habitats and area history. Trail lighting should be provided on additional cross-country ski trails to increase winter use.

Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, 2007

The *Anchorage Pedestrian Plan* establishes a 20-year framework to enhance the pedestrian environment and increase opportunities to choose walking as a mode of transportation. Walking is a significant means of transportation in East Anchorage; according to the results of the 2002 Anchorage Household Travel Survey, 6.6 percent of all trips taken by East Anchorage residents were walking trips. The Pedestrian Plan recommends improving and expanding pedestrian facilities and improving neighborhood connectivity.

Anchorage Bicycle Plan, 2010

The *Anchorage Bicycle Plan* provides a vision to meet the diverse needs of cyclists in Anchorage through expanded bicycle infrastructure. The existing paved multi-use pathway in both the north and south sections of Russian Jack Springs Park connects to the University-Medical (UMED) District and the Chester Creek Greenbelt, one of the backbones of the city's bicycle network. The Bicycle Plan and Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan share similar goals to improve bicycle facilities. The Bicycle Plan also discusses more specific bicycle infrastructure projects such as upgrades to separated pathways and improving signage along the Pine St. bicycle lane.



CHESTER CREEK WATERSHED PLAN, DRAFT 2014

The *Chester Creek Watershed Plan* was drafted in 2014 but not adopted by the Anchorage Assembly. This plan addresses issues confronting the Chester Creek Watershed and identifies actions to improve the creek's water quality. As the Middle Fork of Chester Creek emerges as a spring in Russian Jack Springs Park, the objectives discussed in the Watershed Plan pertain to this Master Plan.

ANCHORAGE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN, 2019

The *Climate Action Plan* prepares Anchorage for the impacts of climate change. Urban Forests and Watersheds are one of the seven sectors highlighted in the plan. The *Climate Action Plan* discusses objectives related to forest management, invasive species outbreak response, maintaining and improving urban forest and watershed resiliency, and prioritizing low-impact development.

ANCHORAGE WETLANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN, 1996 (10-YEAR UPDATE)

The *Wetlands Management Plan* identifies actions to protect classified wetlands and minimize water quality degradation. It seeks to balance natural resource protection with appropriate development. The Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan prioritizes the stewardship of its watershed, wetlands and natural features. Wetland management strategies are discussed further in the Waterways section on page 66.



PLANNING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Planning and public involvement are essential to the long-term success of the Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan was developed using an incremental approach that included information gathering, visioning, concept development, natural resource management and master plan development, and approvals. Recommendations are based on the community's vision for the future of Russian Jack Springs Park and are guided by several factors including existing conditions, public preferences for management and development, and best practices in natural resource and public lands management.

INFORMATION GATHERING

Outreach, inventory of existing conditions, identification of user group & park needs, issue identification, community profile, data collection, property and land use research

VISIONING

Community visioning, synthesis of community input into common themes, identification and prioritization of potential future improvements, exploration of solutions to issues

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

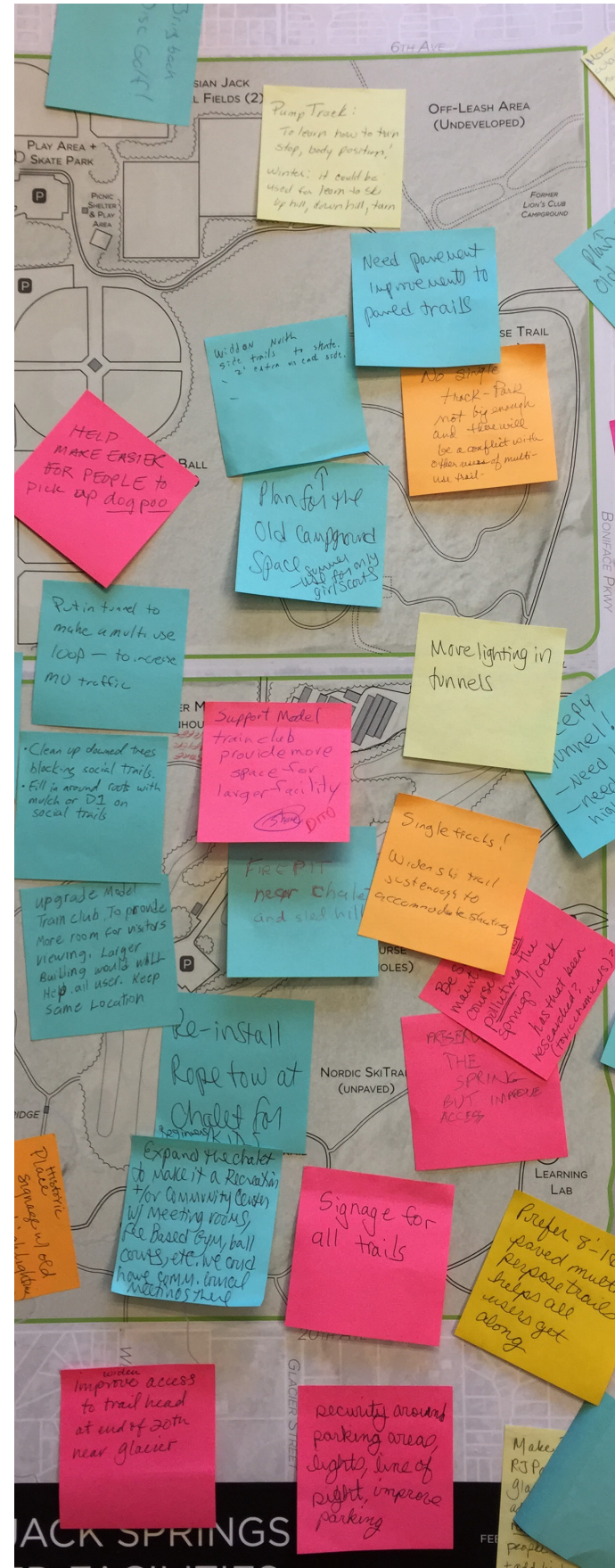
Draft a vision statement, formalize common themes into core values or guiding principles, develop and review concept alternatives, synthesis of concepts into a preferred alternative

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Finalize a preferred alternative, review with Advisory Group, develop recommendations, draft master plan report

APPROVALS

Public hearings for final approvals (Parks and Recreation Commission; Planning and Zoning Commission)



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Meaningful public involvement ensures that the future management and development of Russian Jack Springs Park is consistent with the desires of the community.

The Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan is the product of a comprehensive and collaborative multi-year process driven by public engagement and stakeholder input at each stage. Public involvement in the creation of this Master Plan included a survey, five advisory group meetings, two public workshops, and various stakeholder interviews. Feedback gleaned from conversations and workshops with the public, supported by the advisory group meetings and results of the online survey, led to the development of the preferred concepts presented in this Master Plan.

Survey

The planning team created an online survey asking about park use, priorities to be addressed in planning, and the types of changes people hoped to see at Russian Jack Springs Park. The team distributed this in February 2019 through Community Councils and social media. Outreach methods for engaging the community included two mailed postcard invitations to the first public workshop and flyers posted at local businesses, public gathering places, and park entrances. Parks and Recreation shared advertisements on social media and Nextdoor, established a project website with meeting dates and materials, and distributed email notices via the Federation of Community Councils. The survey received **436 responses** and over **2,000 comments**.

Stakeholder Outreach

In addition to the organized public feedback process, various stakeholder groups were consulted during the master plan update. Parks and Recreation conducted early outreach to stakeholder groups including the **park maintenance team and staff** at the Lidia Selkregg Chalet and Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouses. Outreach also included **park user groups** like the Anchorage Sports Association, Arctic Orienteering Club, and Junior Nordic. In December 2018, Parks and Recreation delivered presentations at the **Parks and Recreation Commission** and **Watershed and Natural Resources Commission** meetings.

Public Workshop and Open House

Two public events engaged neighborhood residents and the general community. The first was a public workshop held early in the master plan development process on February 27, 2019 to learn what the public envisioned for the park 20 years from now. **54 attendees** participated in a visioning exercise and provided feedback on park activities, facilities, access and connections, safety, and maintenance. This discussion led to the development of common themes and preliminary alternatives.

The second event was a family-friendly open house held on September 29, 2019 with **46 people**. The goal was to better understand the community's preferences for future upgrades and refine priorities for future investment.

Advisory Group

A **fifteen-member** Advisory Group served as a working group and community sounding board. Members represented a well-rounded variety of community voices, including community councils, recreation organizations, sports associations, and neighboring residents. The Advisory Group attended **five meetings** to provide ideas, guidance, and feedback throughout the master plan development process. The Advisory Group also reviewed drafts of the plan and provided recommendations.



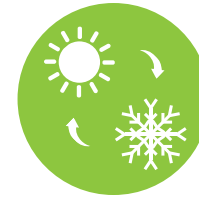
Advisory Group site visit, August 2021



Public Workshop #1, February 2019

COMMON THEMES AND COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Throughout the planning process, public input and discussion resulted in seven common themes. The themes identify current issues and priorities for the future management and development of Russian Jack Springs Park.



YEAR-ROUND COMMUNITY ASSET

Russian Jack Springs Park is a valued asset for recreation, education, and community-gathering in a unique natural setting across all seasons.



SERVING DIVERSE USERS

Russian Jack Springs Park is a park for all ages and abilities. A wide range of recreational opportunities serves a diverse demographic of park users and make Russian Jack Springs Park a destination for the entire Anchorage community.



BALANCE OF NATURAL AREAS AND FACILITIES

Russian Jack Springs Park's unique natural resources are protected and balanced with the development of facilities that allow for the sustainable enjoyment of the land.



SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE

Parkgoers want to feel safe using and confident navigating the well-maintained park.



TAKING CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE

Improving the existing facilities and infrastructure at Russian Jack Springs Park invites users to keep coming back.



UNIQUE PARK CHARACTER

Russian Jack Springs Park is distinguished by a long history of use and continues to serve as a home base for many user groups today.



EAST ANCHORAGE FOCAL POINT

Russian Jack Springs Park provides important recreation facilities at a central, accessible location in East Anchorage.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

CONTEXT AND LAND USE

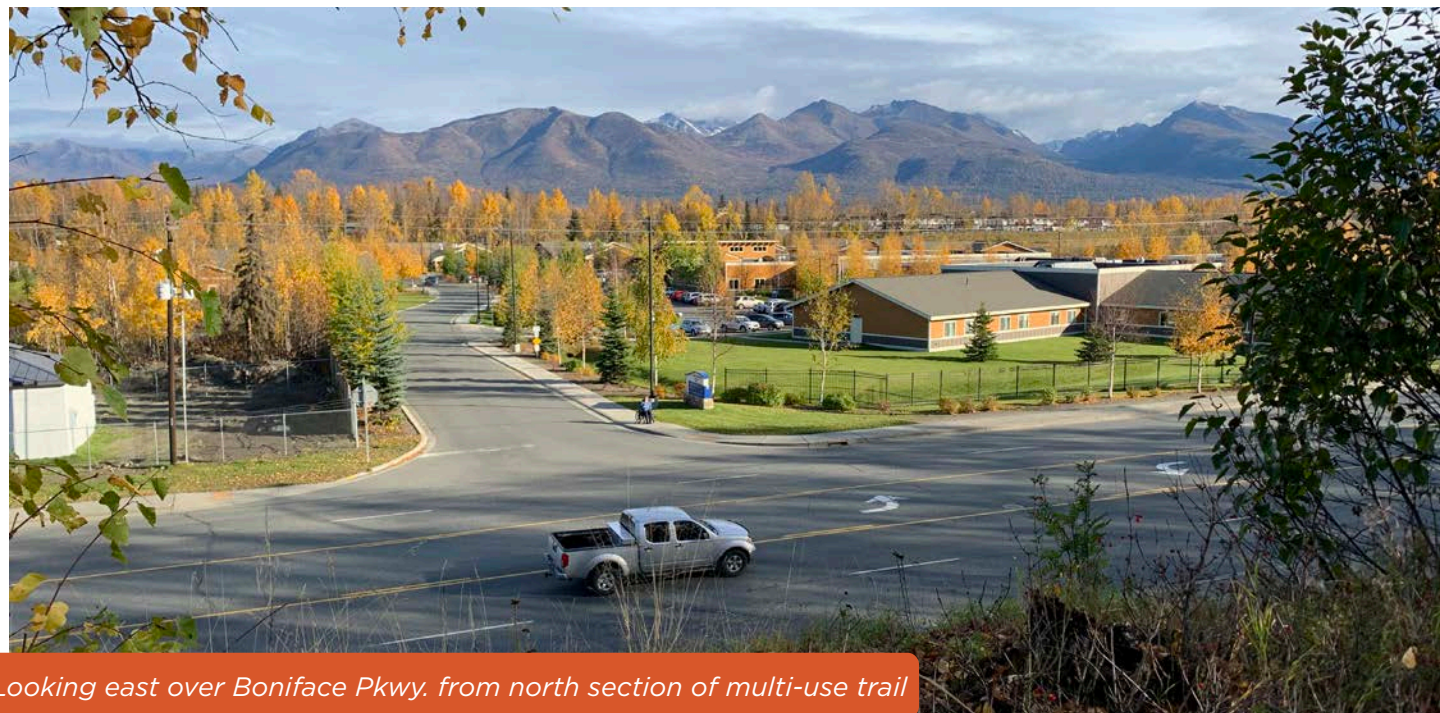
Russian Jack Springs Park is located in northeast Anchorage. The park is bordered by Boniface Parkway to the east, 6th Avenue to the north, Pine Street to the west, and 20th Avenue and Northern Lights Boulevard to the south. Debarr Road runs east-west through the park, forming distinct north and south sections that encompass approximately 150 acres each. An additional 26 acres of parkland southwest of the park – which connects the park to the Chester Creek Trail system and local schools – is also included in this Master Plan. Current municipal property information identifies the park as 323.63 acres with the southern portion of the park larger than the north.³

Russian Jack Springs Park is located in the most densely populated area of Anchorage and is surrounded by a mix of land uses including residential, commercial, and institutional. Nearby residential housing includes a mix of single and two-family homes, and medium to high density multi-family housing.⁴ Commercial development near Russian Jack Springs Park is concentrated along Debarr Rd. at the intersections of Boniface Pkwy. and Bragaw St. The *East Anchorage District Plan* identifies the intersection of Debarr Rd. and Boniface Pkwy. as a “Neighborhood Center” and the intersection of Debarr Rd. and Bragaw St. as a “Town Center.”⁵

A variety of institutional lands can be found near Russian Jack Springs Park, including parks, schools, and other community assets. Seven schools are located within a half mile of the park, including six elementary schools and one high school: Ptarmigan Elementary, Wonder Park Elementary, Williwaw Elementary, Russian Jack Elementary, Nunaka Valley Elementary, Winterberry Charter, and Bettye Davis East Anchorage High School.

The park is also located a short distance from the University-Medical District (UMED), one of Anchorage’s major employment centers which features the University of Alaska Anchorage and Alaska Pacific University, Providence Medical Center, and the Alaska Native Medical Center.

There are 22 parks within one mile of Russian Jack Springs Park featuring a range of recreational activities. Notable large Community Use and Special Use Parks include: Nunaka Valley and Cheney Lake Park to the east; Goose Lake, University Lake, and Tikishla Park to the south and east; Dave Rose and Davis Park to the north. Smaller Neighborhood Use parks include Williwaw, San Antonio, and Ira Walker Park.



Looking east over Boniface Pkwy. from north section of multi-use trail

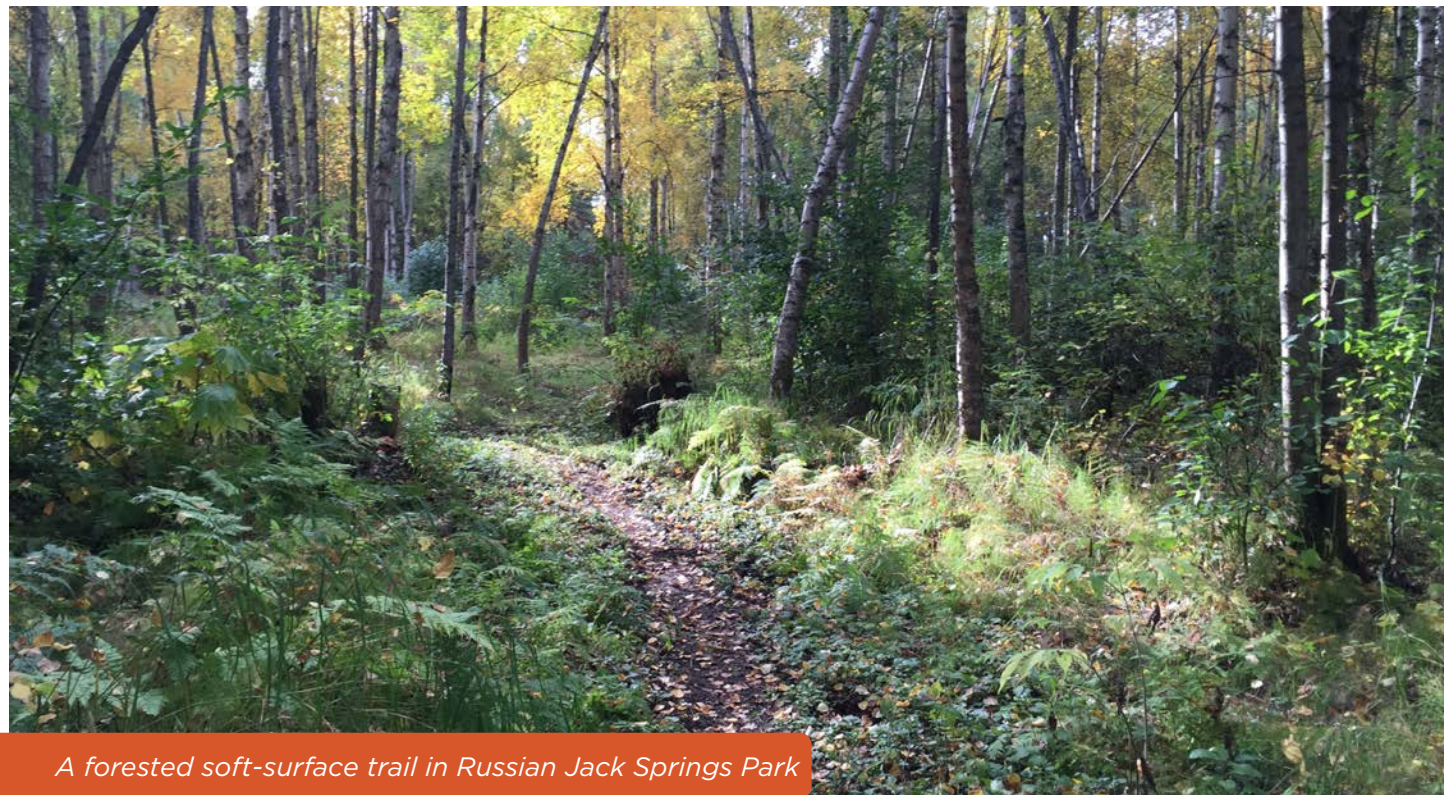
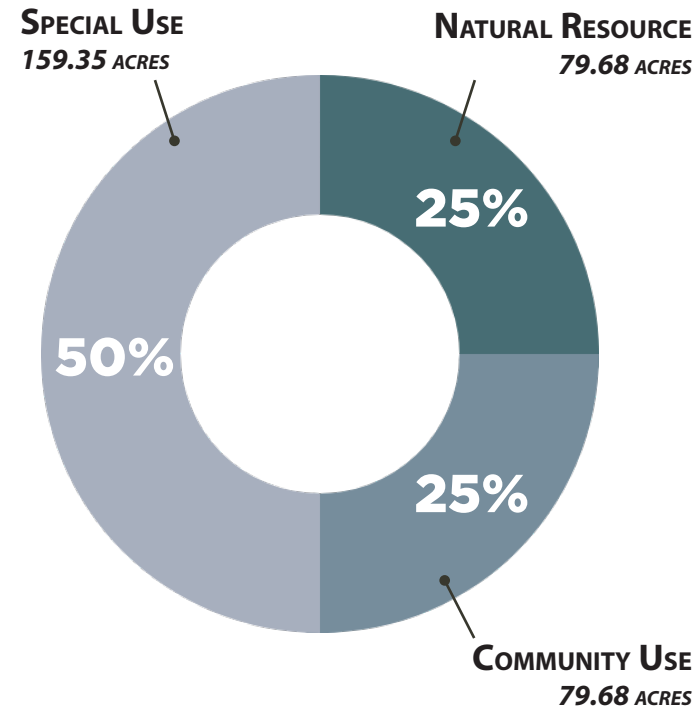


Nearby landmarks, schools, and parks, including the Chester Creek Greenbelt Trail

PARK CLASSIFICATION

Anchorage parks are classified based on their size, function, service area, and development. According to the 2006 *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resources and Recreation Facility Plan*, Russian Jack Springs Park is classified as a Special Use Area (50%) with significant acreage of Community Use, Natural Resource, and Natural Resource Reserve land.

Russian Jack Springs Park falls into the Outdoor Recreational Facilities category of Special Use Areas because of the park's seasonal sports complexes and winter recreation facilities. Special Use Areas account for roughly half of the park's total acreage. The other half is divided equally between Community Use Areas and Natural Resource Areas. Community Use parks are larger in size and serve a broader purpose than neighborhood parks, while Natural Resource Areas are lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics or buffering. Twenty additional acres are identified as Natural Resource Reserve Acres — areas that retain most of their natural vegetation but have features that make development possible with limited cost and minimal disturbance to the surrounding ecosystem.⁶



A forested soft-surface trail in Russian Jack Springs Park

COMMUNITY PROFILE

East Anchorage is the most economically and socially diverse area of Anchorage. Thirty percent (88,084) of Anchorage's total population (298,225) lives within two miles of Russian Jack Springs Park.⁷ Within this area, income, population and housing tenure vary greatly by census tract.

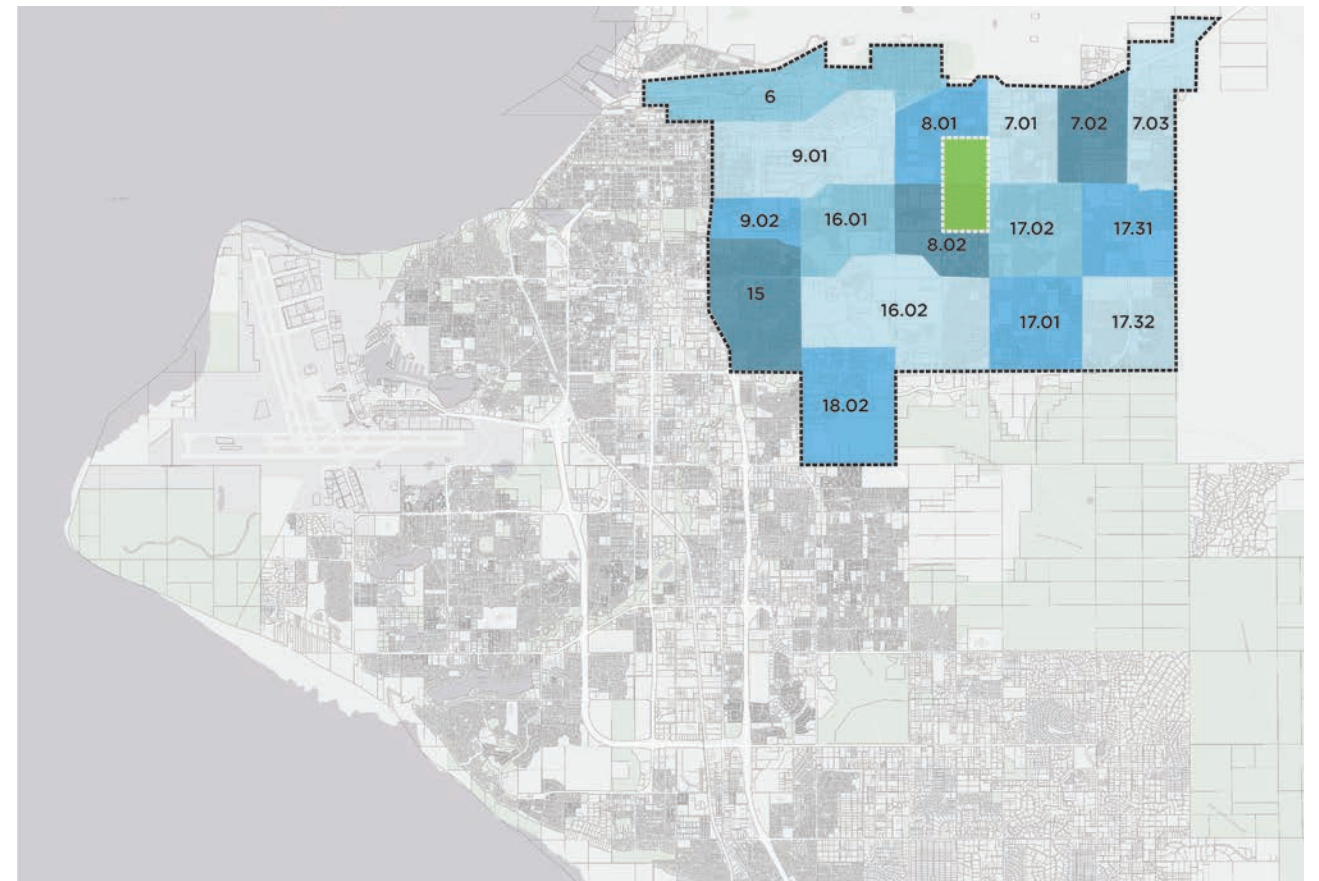
Between 2000 and 2017, population growth in East Anchorage was steady at 11%, slightly slower than Anchorage during this time (15%). Youth under 18 years account for 25% of the total population while the population 65 and older accounts for 9.8%. In general, the population is growing older. From 2000 to 2017, the youth population 18 and under declined (-6%) while the population 65 years and older grew dramatically (+68%) during that same period. The current median age is 32.4 (+1.2%) which is on par with Anchorage citywide (33.1).

East Anchorage's population is also more diverse than Anchorage as a whole; Pacific Islander (6%), Asian (11%), African American (9%), and Alaska

Native (10%) populations account for a larger percentage of the population than Anchorage as a whole.

The median household income (\$70,714) is less than Anchorage as a whole (\$82,271) and varies greatly across census tracts from \$36,844 to \$96,089. Five census tracts have median household incomes over \$90K: census tracts 15, 17.01, 17.02, 17.31 and 17.32. Three census tracts have median household incomes less than \$50K: census tracts 6, 9.01, 9.02.

Housing tenure (renter vs. owner) is on par with Anchorage as a whole (60% owner-occupied, 40% renter-occupied). Housing tenure tends to correlate with median household income, where census tracts with higher median incomes having higher rates of owner occupancy and vice versa.



Census Tracts with 30% of their area within 2 miles of Russian Jack Springs Park

ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS

STREET CLASSIFICATION

Russian Jack Springs Park is bordered by Boniface Pkwy. to the east, 6th Ave. to the north, Pine St. to the west, and 20th Ave. and Northern Lights Blvd. to the South. Debarr Rd. runs east to west and divides the park into north and south sections. Boniface Pkwy. and Debarr Rd. are Class III Major Arterial roadways with Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts over 24,000 in 2019. Pine St. bordering the west side of the park is classified as a Neighborhood Collector with 2,000 to 10,000 AADT. 6th Ave. and 20th Ave. – bordering the park to the north and south– are local neighborhood streets with relatively low traffic volumes.



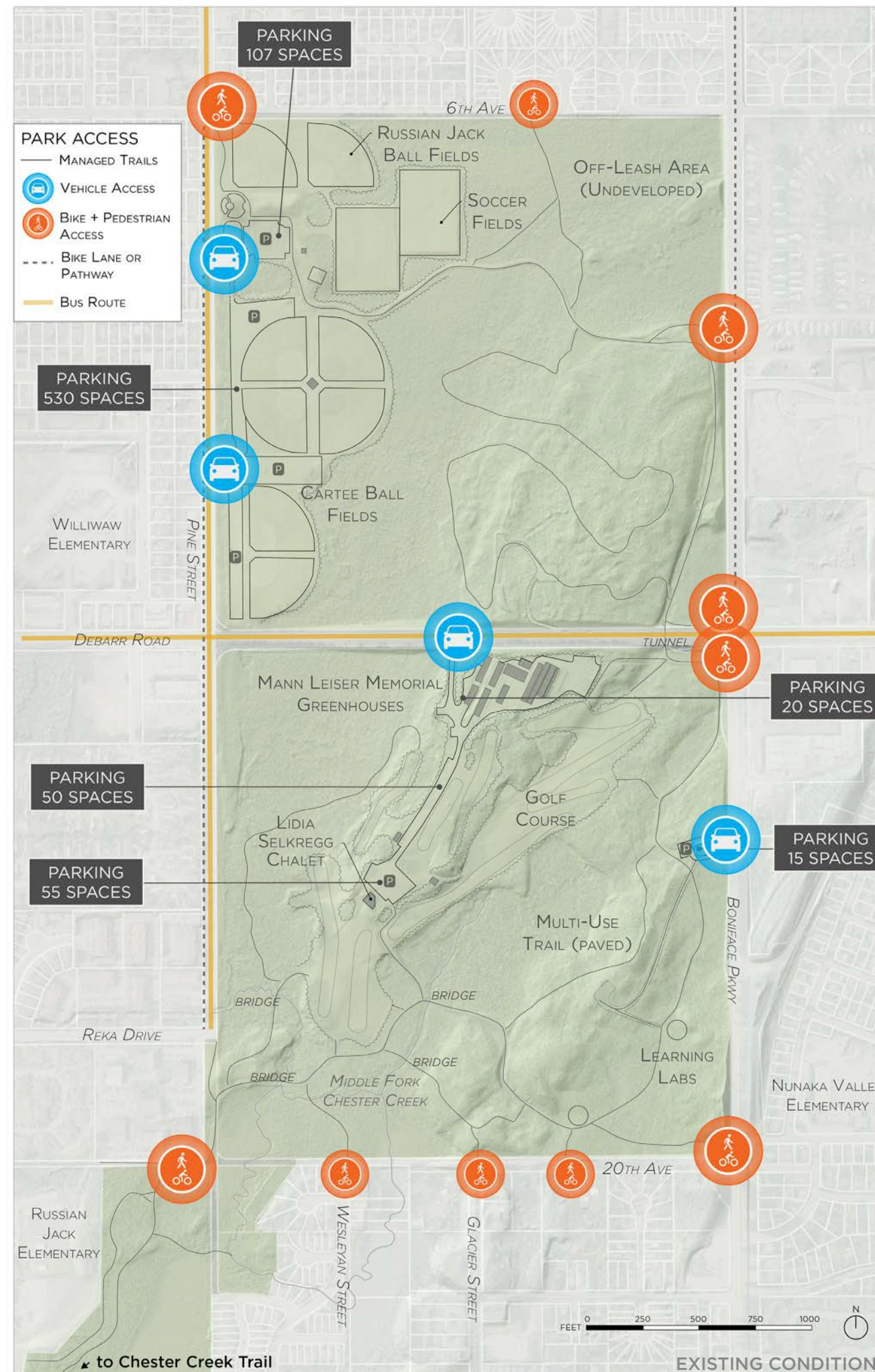
Debarr Rd. and Pine St., looking north

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Russian Jack Springs Park is accessible by public transit from two routes. Route 30 travels east-west along Debarr Rd. with stops at Pine St., Selkregg Lane, and Boniface Pkwy. This route connects the Muldoon Transit Hub in East Anchorage and the Downtown Transit Hub. Currently, buses travel every 15 minutes. Route 21 travels north-south along Pine St. with stops at 6th Avenue and San Roberto Ave. This is a local route connecting the Mountain View and Russian Jack neighborhoods with the Northway Mall. Buses currently run every 30 minutes.



E 6th Ave. (northern boundary of park)



PARKING

Vehicle access and parking is available at several locations where facilities are developed in Russian Jack Springs Park.

North Russian Jack Springs Park Parking

In north Russian Jack Springs Park, parking is located at Cartee Fields and the Polar Bear Playground with access from Pine St. From north to south, 107 parking spaces are available at the Polar Bear Playground lot. This parking lot was redeveloped in 2012 and includes permeable pavement.

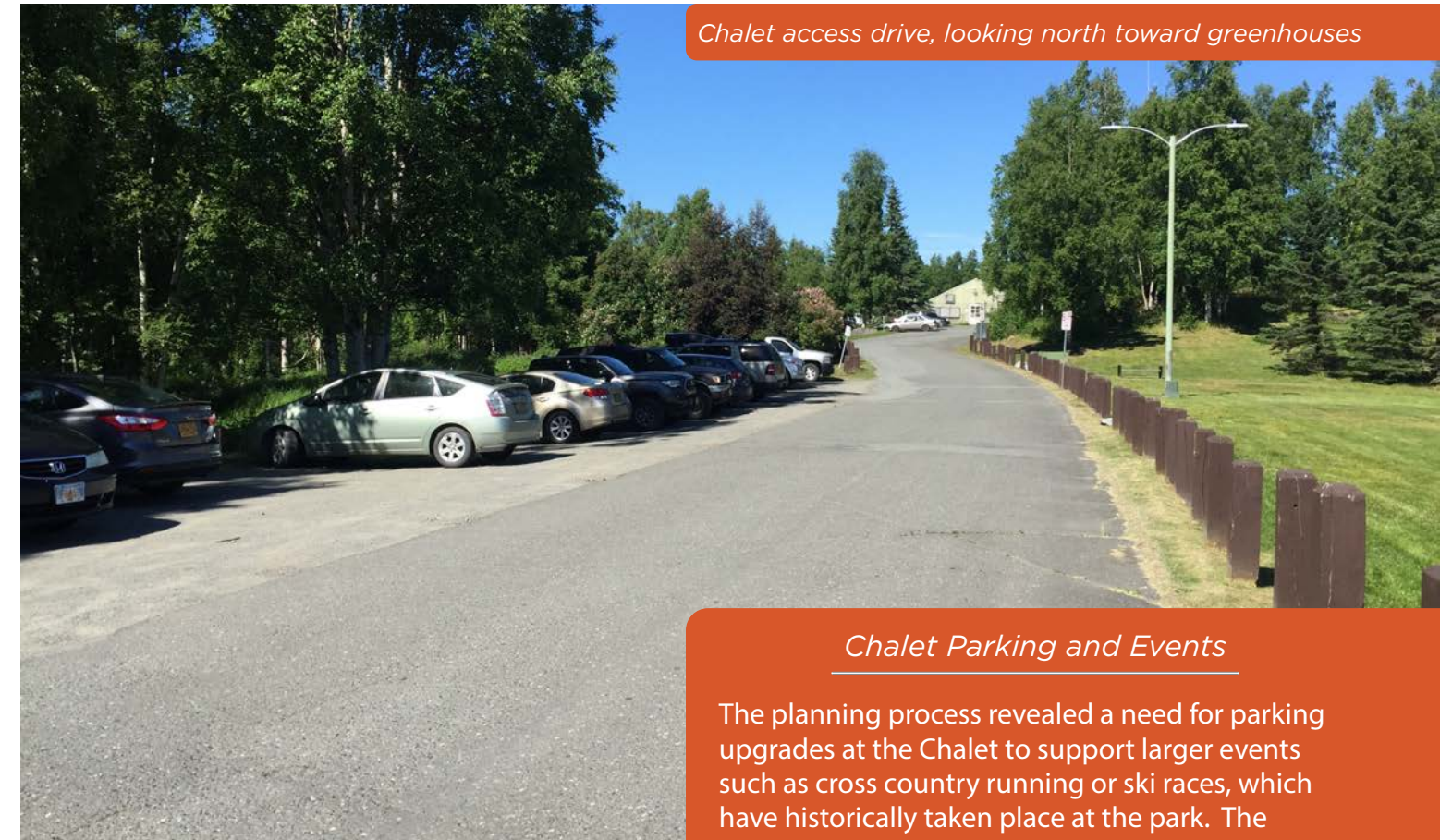
530 parking spaces are available in three lots at Cartee Fields. The parking area west and north of Cartee Fields 1-4 is gravel and has space for 240 vehicles. The main parking lot for Cartee Fields is directly south of the four-field complex and includes 152 paved parking spaces. The parking area for Cartee Fields 5-6 has space for 138 vehicles and is primarily gravel with the northern third consisting of paved asphalt.

South Russian Jack Springs Park Parking

In south Russian Jack Springs Park, parking is located off of Selkregg Lane at the Chalet and Greenhouse as well as a small parking lot off of Boniface Pkwy. Parking for the greenhouse includes 20-25 spaces. 55 parking spaces are available at the Chalet. Approximately 50 parking spaces are available in a gravel lot west of Selkregg Lane between the greenhouses and chalet. Between 15-20 parking spaces are available in a small parking lot accessible from the southbound lanes of Boniface Pkwy.



Northwest parking lot (access to play areas, ballfield, and skate park)



Chalet access drive, looking north toward greenhouses

Chalet Parking and Events

The planning process revealed a need for parking upgrades at the Chalet to support larger events such as cross country running or ski races, which have historically taken place at the park. The current configuration of the parking lot and narrow width of Selkregg Lane limit access for buses and emergency vehicles during events that bring many vehicles to the area. Future upgrades to the parking lot and Selkregg Lane should consider vehicle access and circulation for events to ensure that emergency vehicles have access and sufficient parking.



Chalet parking and paved entrance area

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Russian Jack Springs Park is accessible by bike and on foot from local neighborhoods and the Chester Creek Trail system. People entering from the neighborhoods north, south, and west of the park can access the park by crossing neighborhood and two-lane roads. Access from the neighborhoods east of the park is more challenging, particularly North Russian Jack Springs Park, as traffic volumes along Boniface Pkwy. limit access. Sidewalks along Debarr Rd. provide bike and pedestrian access to Selkregg Lane and the Russian Jack Springs Park multi-use trail near Boniface Pkwy.



Informal park access from 20th Ave. + Wesleyan Dr.



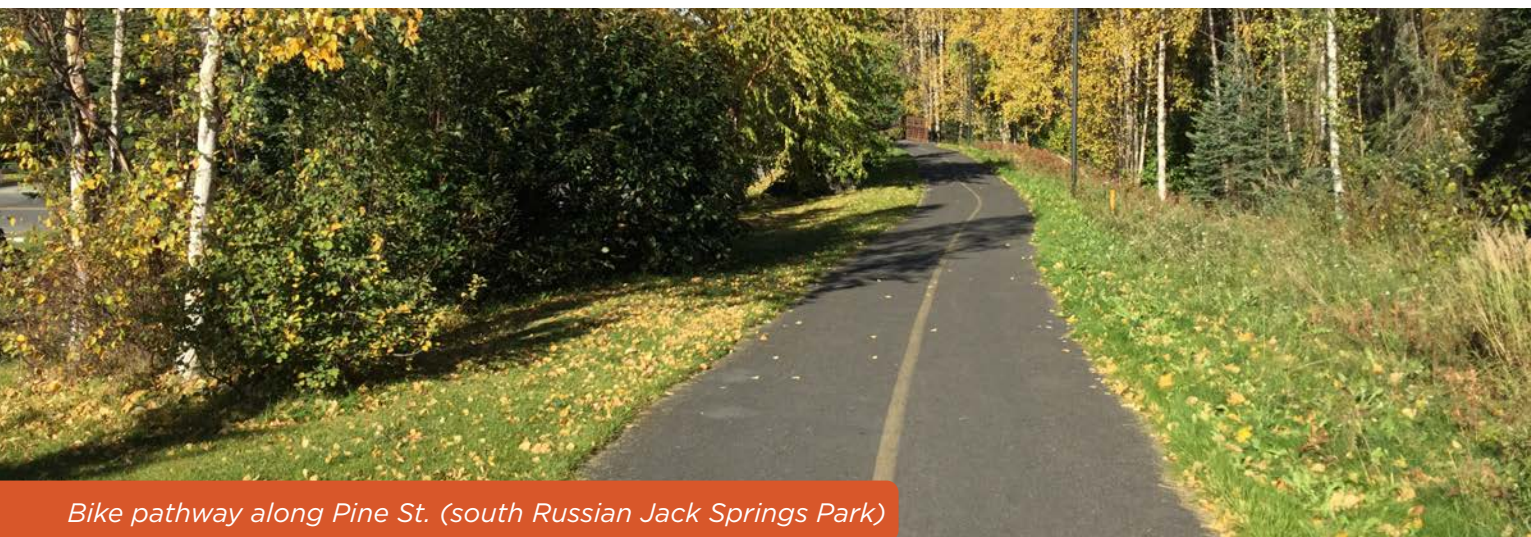
Tunnel to Nunaka Valley Elementary School

South Russian Jack Springs Park Bike and Pedestrian Access

In South Russian Jack Springs Park, access to the park is generally good. West of the park, a paved off-street bike path runs north-south along Pine St. between Debarr Rd. and Reka Dr. South of Reka Dr., bicyclists and pedestrians can access the park from the multi-use trail. This trail connects the park to the Chester Creek Trail system providing links to the UMED District, neighborhoods to the west, as well as Midtown and Downtown.

Three trails provide neighborhood access to the park from the south along E 20th Ave. The first is a gravel soft-surface trail at the intersection of Wesleyan Dr. and 20th Ave. which connects to the paved multi-use trail south of the golf course. A second access point at Glacier St. and 20th Ave. connects to the Nordic ski trail and multi-use trail. A third access point at the east end of 20th Ave. connects to the paved multi-use trail and includes a gate for maintenance and emergency vehicles.

East of the park, a tunnel links the multi-use trail to Craig Dr. under Boniface Pkwy., providing safe non-motorized access to the park from the Nunaka Valley neighborhood.



Bike pathway along Pine St. (south Russian Jack Springs Park)

North Russian Jack Springs Park Bike and Pedestrian Access

Access to North Russian Jack Springs Park is generally good from the west and north. The park is accessible from 6th Ave. along the northern park boundary. A developed soft-surface trail between St Lazaria Cir. and Izembek Cir. connects to wetland and forested areas in the northeast corner of the park. A paved trail provides access at the corner of 6th Ave. and Pine St.

From the west, bicyclists and pedestrians can access the park at the 8th Ave. (Polar Bear Playground), 6th Ave. and Cartee Fields. Bike lanes and improved pedestrian crossings were constructed along Pine St. north of Debarr Rd. in 2020.

Access from the east side of North Russian Jack Springs Park is more challenging, with the only formal crosswalk at the intersection of Boniface Pkwy. and Debarr Rd. A separated bike path travels north-south along the park side of Boniface Pkwy. and connects to the park via a paved trail spur approximately 1,500 feet north of the intersection at Debarr Rd.



Pine St. + 6th Ave. area in winter



Pathway along Boniface Pkwy., looking south



Striped bike line along Pine St., looking north

DEVELOPED FACILITIES

Developed facilities in Russian Jack Springs Park are concentrated in two areas: In north Russian Jack Springs Park along Pine St. between 6th Ave. and Debarr Rd. and south Russian Jack Springs Park along Selkregg Lane. Facilities in the north section include the Polar Bear Playground, skate park, soccer fields, softball fields and Cartee Complex. In the south section, Selkregg Lane provides access to the golf course, trail system, greenhouses, sledding hill and Lidia Selkregg Chalet.



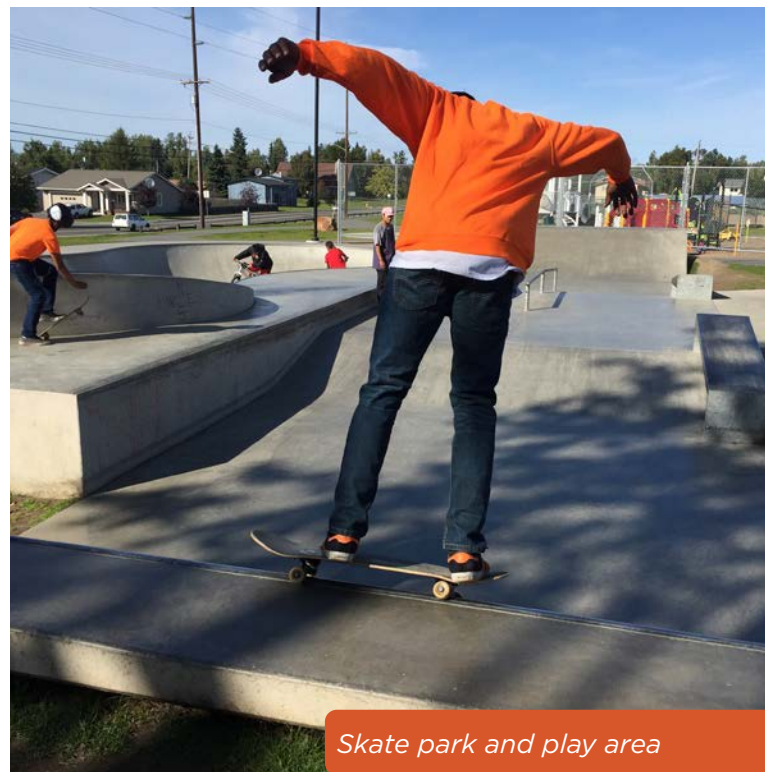
Aerial view of north park facilities



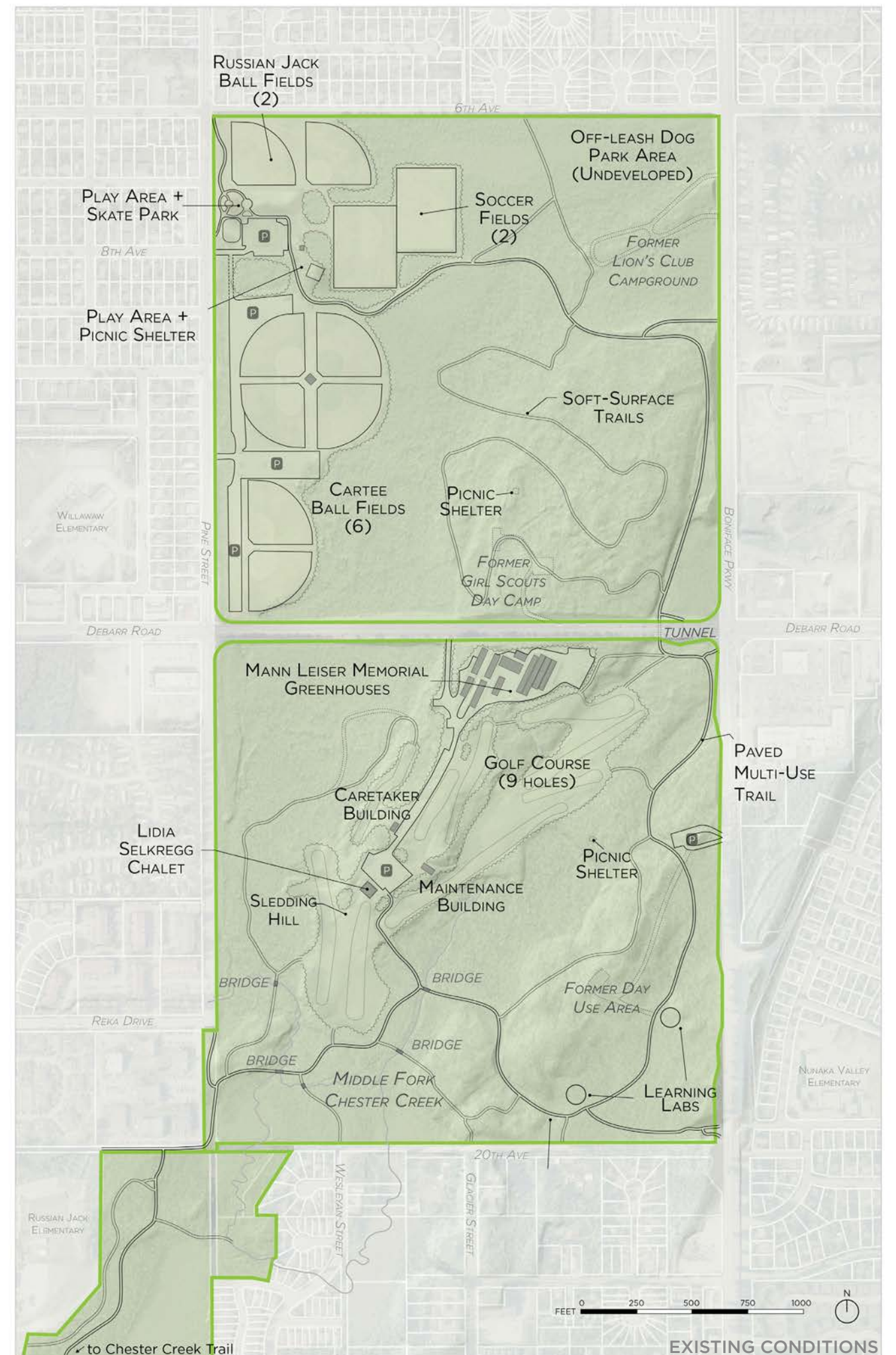
Golf course and Lidia Selkregg Chalet



Public greenhouse entrance



Skate park and play area



NORTH RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK



Cartee Fields Softball Complex (6)

The Cartee Fields Softball Complex in north Russian Jack Springs Park is accessible from Pine St. Cartee Fields 1-4 are orientated around a central concessions building. The ballfields have artificial turf infields are fenced and include irrigation. These ballfields are well used and in generally good condition. Cartee Fields 5-6 are located directly south of the Cartee Fields 1-4. The fields are fenced include irrigation and are in fair condition. The Anchorage Sports Association (ASA) is the primary user group for Cartee and Russian Jack Fields. The ASA organizes league and tournament play from May through September. The ASA has identified the need for upgrades to the dugouts, fencing, and concessions building, the installation of traffic controls to prevent unauthorized vehicle access, and additional parking.



Russian Jack Softball Fields (2)

The Russian Jack Softball Fields are located in the northwest corner of Russian Jack Springs Park. The ballfields are fenced, include irrigation and are in generally fair condition.

Russian Jack Soccer Fields (2)

The Russian Jack Soccer Fields are located directly east of the Polar Bear Playground parking lot and include two full-size soccer fields. Soccer fields are oriented north-south and can also be converted to four youth soccer fields. The soccer fields have been historically used by Rush Soccer, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Anchorage Youth Soccer Club. Use of the soccer fields varies year to year, with some years seeing minimal use. The soccer fields are also used for large events such as the Bonny Sosa Tuesday Night Races. In winter, the field perimeter is groomed for cross-country skiing. The public engagement process revealed a need for better access to the fields for maintenance vehicles.



Picnic Shelter and Play Area

A picnic shelter, small play area and open lawn is located 50-150 feet east-southeast of the parking lot. Facilities are older than the Polar Bear Playground but are still well used during the summer months. The shelter is often rented out by groups on the weekend during the summer.



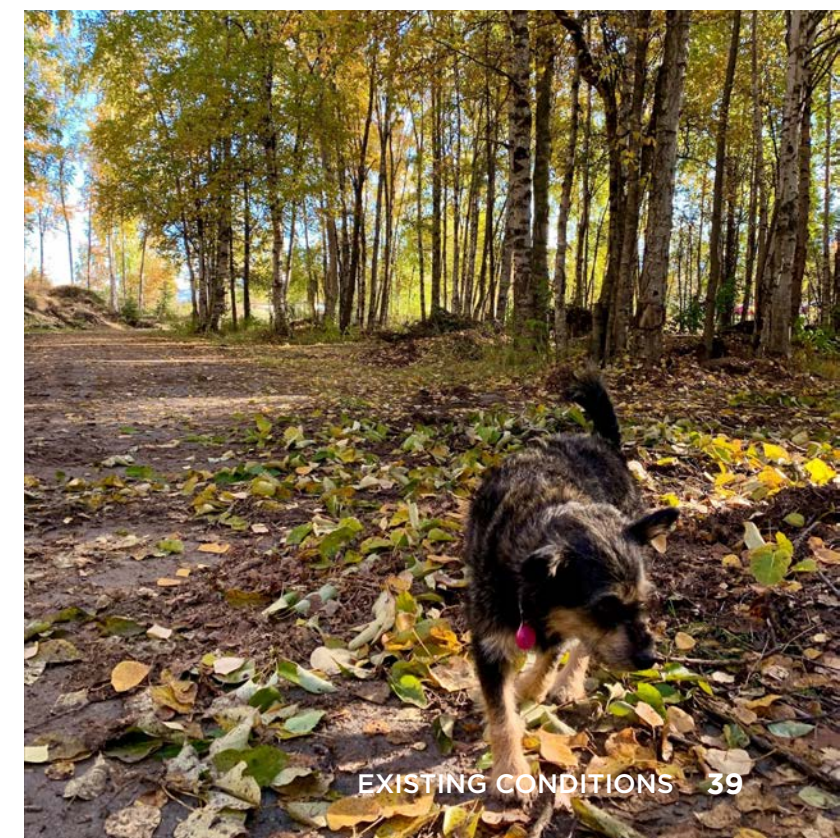
Girl Scouts Day Camp

The Girl Scouts Day Camp was one of the first developed areas (1952) in Russian Jack Springs Park. The Day Camp has not been used in many years as the Girls Scouts now host camps in Wasilla and Chugiak. Facilities include a driveway from Debarr Rd., an unused picnic shelter, deteriorating paved parking areas, and soft-surface trails. Access to this area is challenging due to existing slopes, limited lines of sight, driveway orientation and high traffic volumes on Debarr Rd. Due to its secluded nature, the area currently attracts unauthorized camps and other non-park type uses.



Off-Leash Dog Park

In the northeast corner of Russian Jack Springs Park, an off-leash dog park occupies the former Lion's Club Camper Park. The off-leash area was established by an ordinance of the Anchorage Assembly in 2003. The space is forested with a few amenities including mutt mitts, trash cans and signage.





NORTH RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK

Skate Park

A 3,500 square-foot concrete skate park is located just south of the Polar Bear Playground. The skate park opened in 2017 and at the time was the first concrete skate park in the Anchorage bowl. The skate park features a small street plaza area and bowl. The skate park is popular and often crowded with skaters of all ages.



Polar Bear Playground

The Polar Bear Playground is one of Anchorage's signature play areas and one of the most popular features at Russian Jack Springs Park. Built in 2013, the 10,000 sq. ft. play area features Alaska-themed play equipment for 2-5 and 5-12 years old. Play surfacing is engineered wood fiber. The play area includes two small concrete plazas with seating. A small grassy knoll approximately 10-12 feet high is directly east of the play area.



NORTH RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK: HISTORIC PHOTOS

Cartee Fields, 1978



Girl Scouts day use area, 1978



Lion's Club camper park, 1978

SOUTH RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK



Lidia Selkregg Chalet

The Lidia Selkregg Chalet was built in 1983 and serves as a public meeting space, warming lodge and club house. The Chalet is open year-round typically from 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. in the summer and 12:30 - 8 p.m. in the winter. Facility rentals are available for parties, meetings, and special events. The main room can be configured several ways to accommodate table seating for 56 people, theatre seating for 75 people, or standing room for 123 people. Parks and Recreation staff manage the facility and host seasonal programs, workshops, and events. Members of the public consider the Chalet an underutilized asset with great potential for increased usage through programming, concessions, and community events.



9-Hole Golf Course

The 9-hole golf course at Russian Jack Springs Park first opened in 1969 and has been in operation for 50 years. The golf course occupies a footprint of approximately 20 acres on land originally cleared for the "prison farm" in the 1950s. The golf course is open from April 1 - October 31. Golf clubs and pull carts are available for rent in the chalet. As of 2019, golf course fees are \$8/round or \$150/season pass. In 2014, the greens and tees were upgraded. In 2018, a total of 2,334 rounds of golf were recorded.



Chalet and surrounding facilities



Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouses

Operating since 1971, the Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouses produce flowers and landscape plantings for parks and public spaces throughout Anchorage. Ten greenhouses operate year-round to produce more than 76,000 flowers annually. A tropical greenhouse is open to the public between 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. seven days a week and includes a fishpond and small aviary. The public greenhouse is also available to rent for special occasions and small events and is a well-loved facility.



SOUTH RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK

Caretaker Building

The Caretaker Building is one of the oldest buildings in Russian Jack Springs Park. Built as part of the original "prison farm," the Caretaker Building is today home to the Northern Lights Model Railroad Club. The Model Railroad Club has operated at Russian Jack Springs Park since 1981. The model railroad occupies 900 square feet and includes a public viewing area. The Model Railroad Club meets on Friday evenings and hosts open house events during the annual Fur Rendezvous. The building is in poor to fair condition and it has been noted that the foundation has settled. Depending on the costs, the building may need to be removed, rebuilt, repaired, or replaced.



South Picnic Shelter

An older picnic shelter is located in the forest between the Boniface Pkwy. parking lot and the golf course. The picnic shelter was added in the early 1970s. Today, the shelter is secluded and underused by the general public, making it a site that attracts misuse and unauthorized activity.



Outdoor Learning Labs (2)

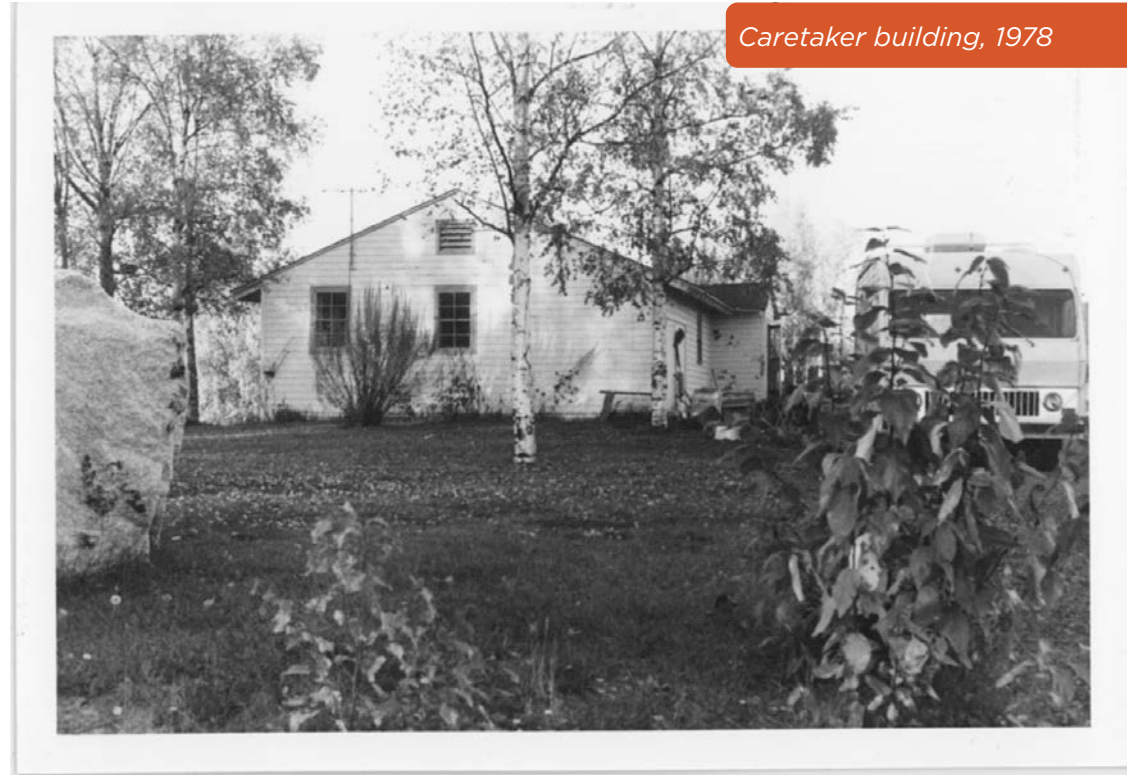
Two outdoor learning labs were developed at Russian Jack Springs Park in 2017 in partnership with Nunaka Valley Elementary School. The outdoor learning labs function as outdoor classrooms with interpretive information and space for instruction. The learning labs consist of a 20' by 20' gravel pad, wood posts for seating and a talking board for instruction.



SOUTH RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK: HISTORIC PHOTOS



Original ski chalet, 1973



Caretaker building, 1978



Ski area facility, 1978

South picnic shelter, 1978



Lower chalet - Looking fwd. East

TRAILS

Russian Jack Springs Park's trails are a year-round destination for East Anchorage residents. The park features both paved and soft surface trails with trail usage varying by season and activity. A paved multi-use trail provides a scenic route through the park and links facilities within the park to neighborhoods and the Chester Creek Trail system. A network of soft-surface trails provides additional recreational opportunities, often in undeveloped areas of the park, allowing for a peaceful and immersive experience in nature. In the winter, Russian Jack Springs Park features groomed trails for classic and skate skiing.

Russian Jack Springs Park's extensive trail system includes both managed trails and unmanaged foot paths or social trails. Managed trails include: 8-10' paved multi-use trails, 6-10' soft-surface Nordic ski trails, and 18-36" soft-surface trails. Russian Jack Springs Park has a total of 6 miles of managed trails – 2.9 miles of paved multi-use trails and 3.1 miles of soft-surface trails. In winter, trail mileage increases with the grooming of skate skiing lanes on the golf course, resulting in a total of 8.2 miles of groomed trails.

With approximately six miles of trails over 323 acres (0.5 square miles), the intensity of recreational trail use is classified as low-to-medium density.⁸

Trail Activities and User Groups

-  Walking/Hiking
-  Mountain Biking
-  Jogging/Running
-  Orienteering
-  Nordic Skiing (classic + skate)
-  Rollerblading/ Roller Skiing
-  Cycling
-  Dog Walking
-  Nature Appreciation + Wildlife Viewing
-  Commuting through the park



Paved Multi-Use Trails

Russian Jack Springs Park has roughly 2.9 miles of paved multi-use trails. The paved trails connect destinations within the park to neighborhoods and the larger Chester Creek greenbelt system. The multi-use trail is 8-10' wide with soft shoulders. Multi-use trails are the most developed trail type and is intended for use by a wide variety of trail users.



Managed Soft Surface Trails

Russian Jack Springs Park has approximately 3.1 miles of managed soft surface trails. Soft surface trails range from narrower hiking and biking trails to wider Nordic ski trails.

Hiking and biking trails are typically 18-36" wide and are constructed using native materials or imported gravel. These trails are intended to support a variety of recreational pursuits and are ideal for hiking and singletrack mountain biking. Nordic ski trails are typically 6-10' wide, consist of native soils, and are popular for hiking and biking in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter.

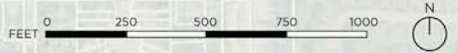
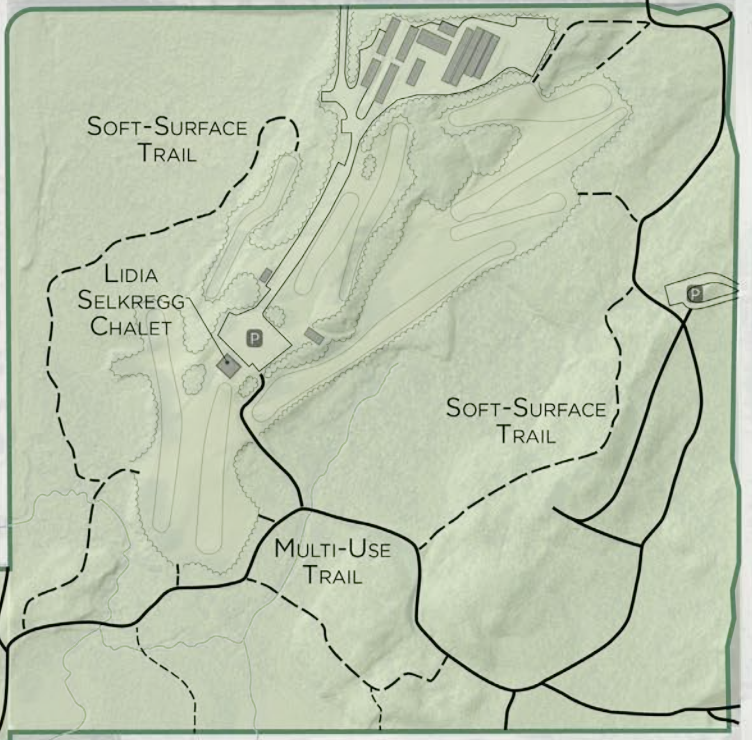
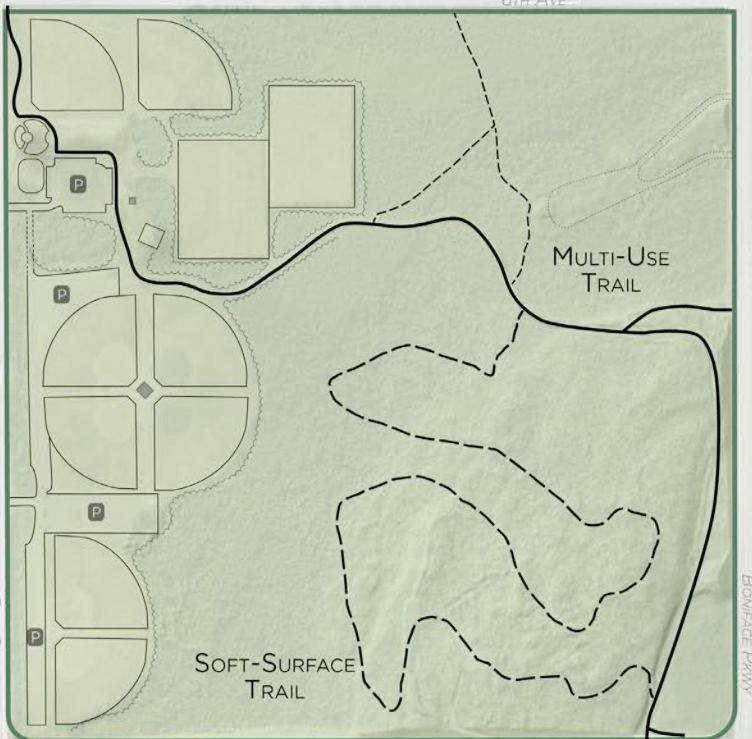


Unmanaged Soft Surface Trails

Russian Jack Springs Park also has an extensive network of informal social trails. Social trails are unmanaged soft surface trails typically 6-18" wide. These trails often originate as game trails or walking paths resulting in the continued trampling of vegetation over time. There are an estimated 5 miles of unmanaged footpaths in Russian Jack Springs Park.

SUMMER TRAILS

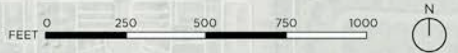
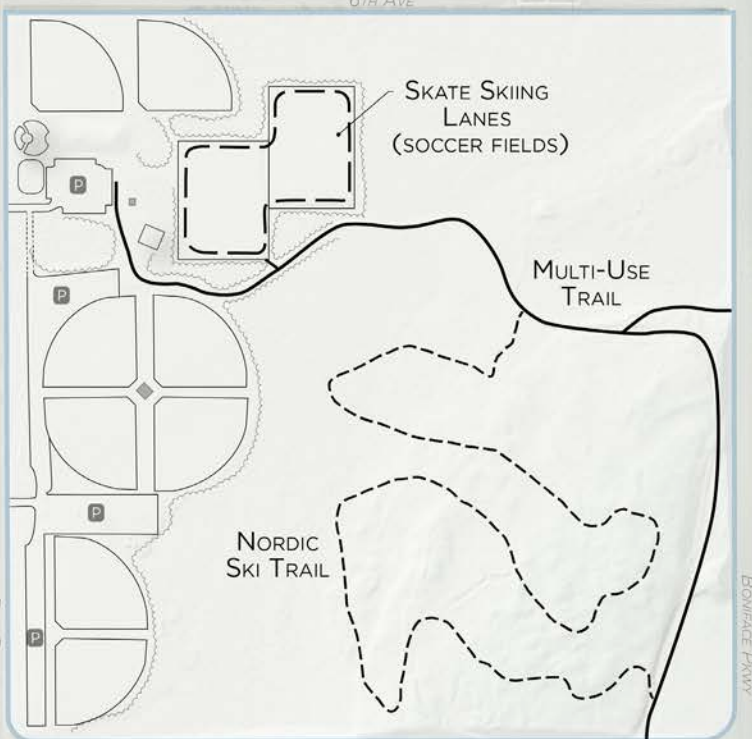
- MANAGED TRAILS**
-  PAVED MULTI-USE TRAIL (8-10')
 -  SOFT SURFACE TRAIL (WIDE 6'-10')
 -  SOFT SURFACE TRAIL (NARROW 18-36")



to Chester Creek Trail

WINTER TRAILS

- GROOMED TRAILS**
-  MULTI-USE TRAIL (8-12')
 -  SKATE SKIING LANE (10-18')
 -  NORDIC SKI TRAIL (4-8')



to Chester Creek Trail

Winter Trails

Russian Jack Springs Park has a long history of cross-country skiing and includes some of the earliest developed ski trails in Anchorage. Today, Russian Jack Springs Park is home to the Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage's (NSAA) Junior Nordic program and is a training ground for East Anchorage middle and high school ski teams. Throughout the winter, the park regularly hosts programs that introduce local school students to cross-country skiing and the trail system. Russian Jack Springs Park currently has 8.2 miles of groomed ski trails ranging from forested classic-only ski trails to 18' wide skate skiing lanes on the golf course. Additionally, a loop around the soccer fields in North Russian Jack Springs Park are groomed for both classic and skate skiing in the winter.

Nordic Ski Trails: Russian Jack Springs Park has a well-established network of Nordic ski trails. These trails are typically groomed to a range of 4-8' wide. The width of these trails makes them ideal for classic skiing and challenging for skate skiing.

Multi-Use Trail: The Multi-Use trail at Russian Jack Springs Park is groomed at 8-12' wide and when snow depth allows a classic track is set. The trail is used widely throughout the winter for walking, commuting, biking, and cross-country skiing.



Nordic ski trail (soft-surface)

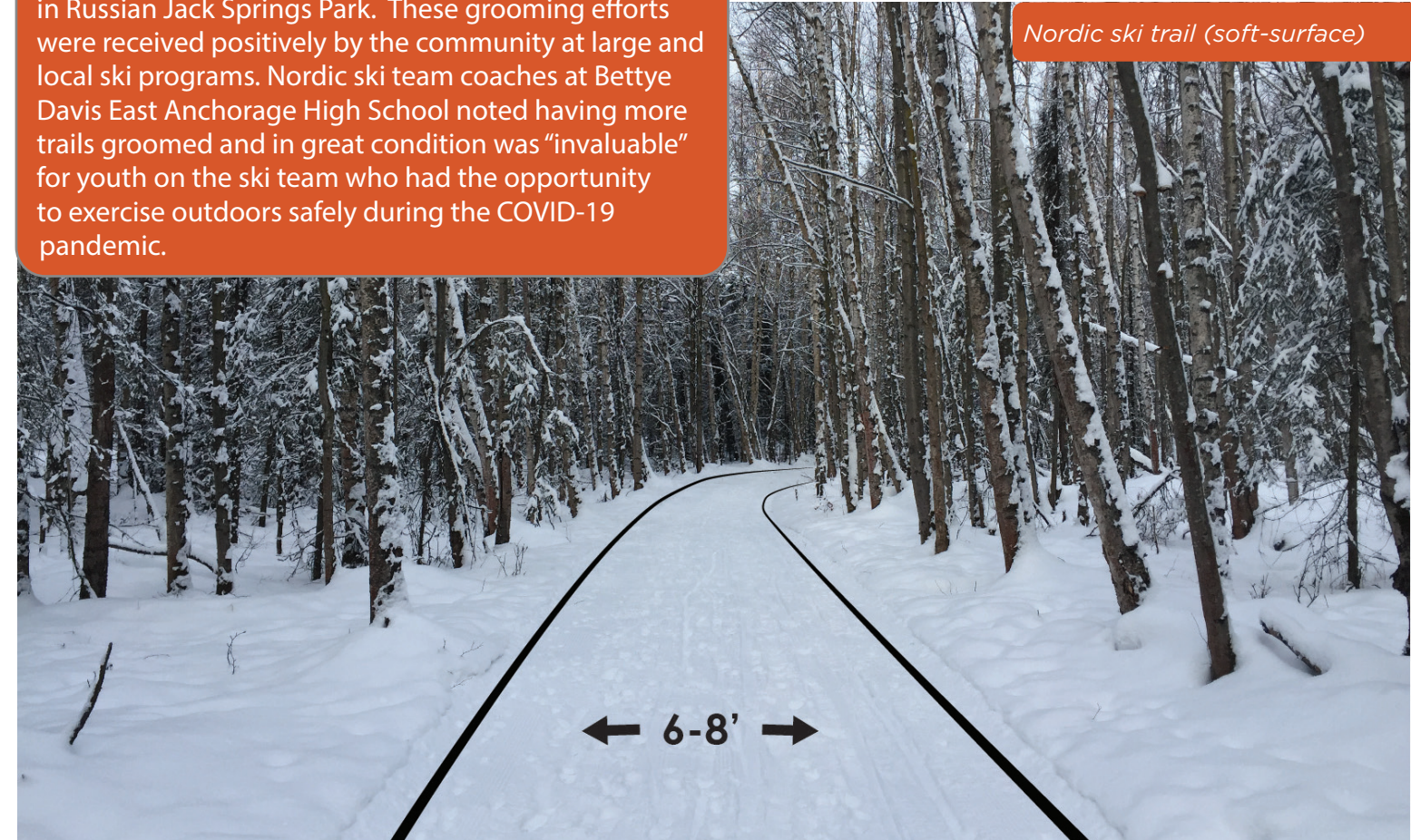
Skate Skiing Lanes: During the winter months, the golf course at Russian Jack Springs Park is converted into a network of groomed skate skiing lanes. Skate skiing lanes are wider than other groomed trails, typically 10-18' wide. These skate lanes often include a classic ski track and can accommodate both skate and classic skiers.



Skate skiing lane on golf course

Winter Trail Grooming Community Response

In the 2020-21 winter season, the Parks and Recreation Department increased grooming frequency on trails in Russian Jack Springs Park. These grooming efforts were received positively by the community at large and local ski programs. Nordic ski team coaches at Bettye Davis East Anchorage High School noted having more trails groomed and in great condition was "invaluable" for youth on the ski team who had the opportunity to exercise outdoors safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Nordic ski trail (soft-surface)



Multi-use trail in winter

SEASONAL USE

Russian Jack Springs Park is used throughout the year for a variety of recreational pursuits that evolve with the seasons.

SUMMER

Summer (May-September) is high season at the park. Organized sports utilize the soccer fields and softball fields for league play. The Boys and Girls Club, Rush Soccer, and Anchorage Youth Soccer League permit the soccer fields. The Anchorage Sports Association permits the six Cartee Fields and two Russian Jack Fields. The trails are well used throughout the year but see the most usage during the summer months with hikers and joggers, mountain bikers, and geocachers. The golf course operates from April through October or until the first snowfall, with over 2,000 rounds of golf usually recorded in a season. The Polar Bear Playground, Skate Park, and picnic shelter are highly used during the summer months.



Bicyclist on paved multi-use trail



Looking south from the Chalet, 1978

SHOULDER SEASONS

Trail use during the spring (March-April) and autumn (October-November) shoulder seasons varies year to year depending on spring melt conditions and fall precipitation. Sports groups typically finish league play in September and use of the fields slows down. Historically, high schools have used Russian Jack Springs Park for cross-country running races during the fall. Also, the popular Bonny Sosa Tuesday Night Races host one or two running events at Russian Jack Springs Park each fall. These events draw upwards of 1,000 participants of all ages. Arctic Cyclocross also hosts bike races during the fall at Russian Jack Springs Park.



Bonny Sosa Tuesday Night Races



Skier on the golf course



Chalet driveway parking area, 1978

WINTER

Winter (November-March) is a popular season for outdoor recreation at Russian Jack Springs Park. Skiing, sledding, fat-tire biking and walking are common activities in winter. The park's 8.2 miles of groomed cross-country skiing trails are heavily used by local schools and the Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage's (NSAA) Junior Nordic program. The sledding hill is also a popular and well-used amenity.



NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

OVERVIEW

The Natural Resource Management Plan provides recommendations for the management of natural resources within Russian Jack Springs Park. It is intended to guide Parks and Recreation land managers by outlining goals, objectives and action items. The Natural Resource Management Plan is one part of a master plan which aims to balance the development of recreational facilities with the preservation of natural areas.

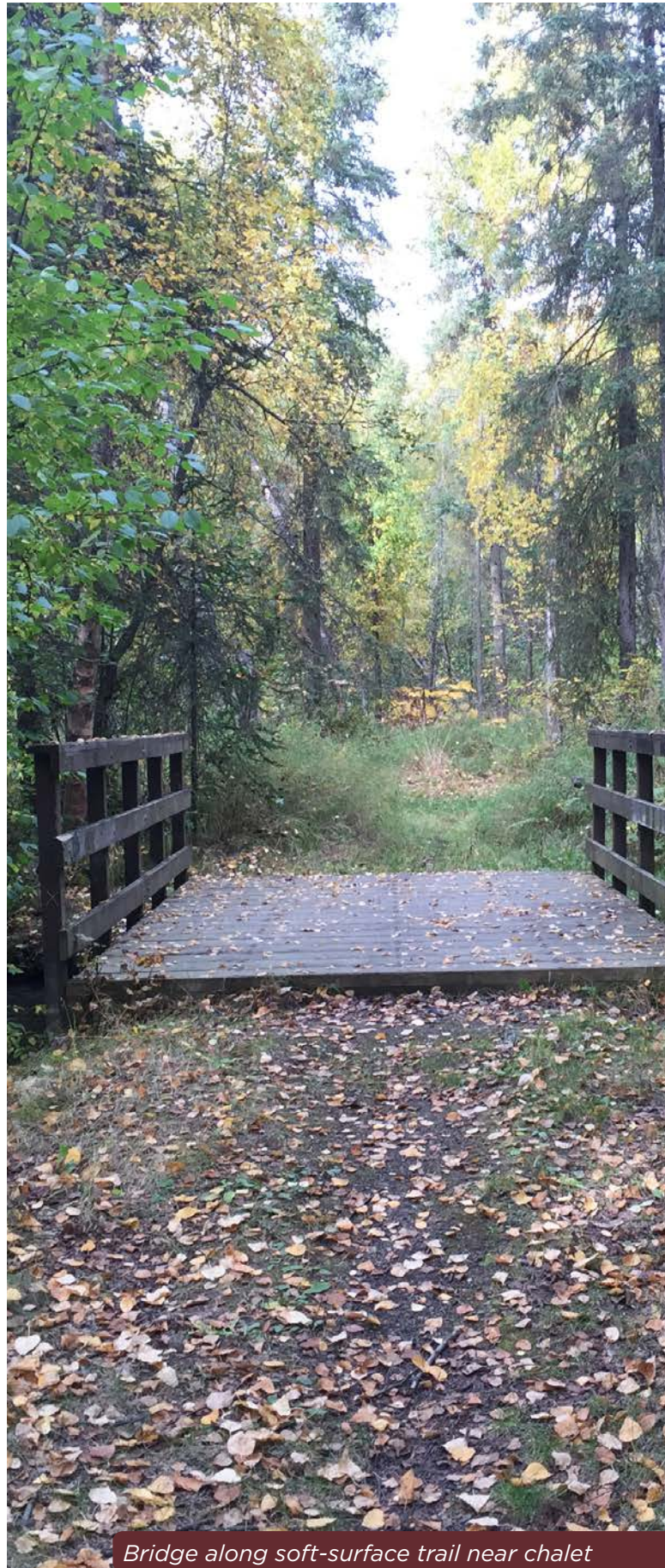
NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES

Russian Jack Springs Park features natural areas that enhance livability while performing important ecological and environmental functions. These areas are valued for their beauty and character, and also provide opportunities for nature appreciation, wildlife viewing, and recreation.

Natural environments provide a wealth of benefits that contribute to the quality of life, health, and well-being of the population. Healthy natural environments also provide important ecosystem services such as filtering stormwater, removing CO², and providing habitat for fish and wildlife.

The benefits of healthy forests, streams, and wetlands include:

- **Clean air** through carbon sequestration
- **Improving water quality** through the filtering of pollutants and contaminants
- **Flood control** through stormwater attenuation
- **Groundwater recharge**
- **Habitat** for birds, fish, and wildlife
- **Habitat** for insects and pollinators
- **Reduces the costs** of expensive downstream treatment services
- **Mitigates** the urban heat island effect
- Mental and physical **health**
- Places for **healthy recreation**



Bridge along soft-surface trail near chalet

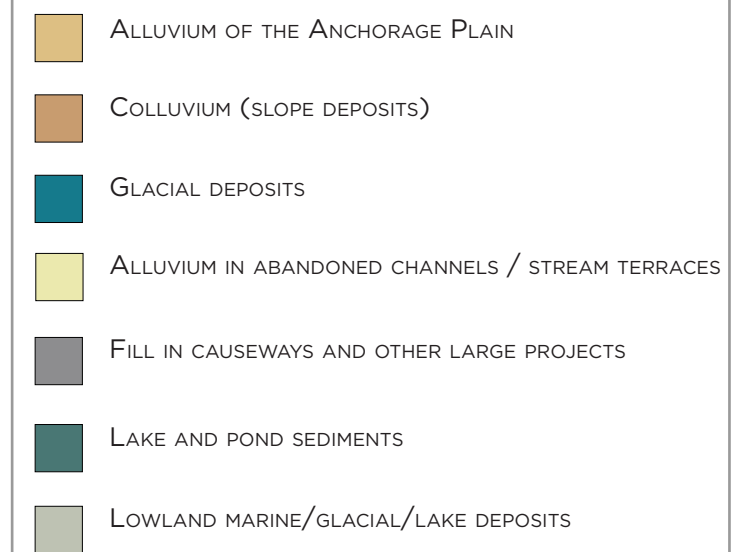
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

This section provides an overview of the natural environment of Russian Jack Springs Park. It describes the underlying geology, topography, and seismology and provides general information about the vegetation and water resources that enhance park users experience as well as provide important ecosystem services and habitat for Alaska's birds, fish and wildlife.

SURFICIAL GEOLOGY

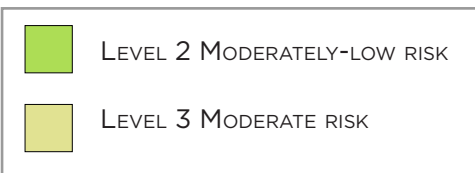
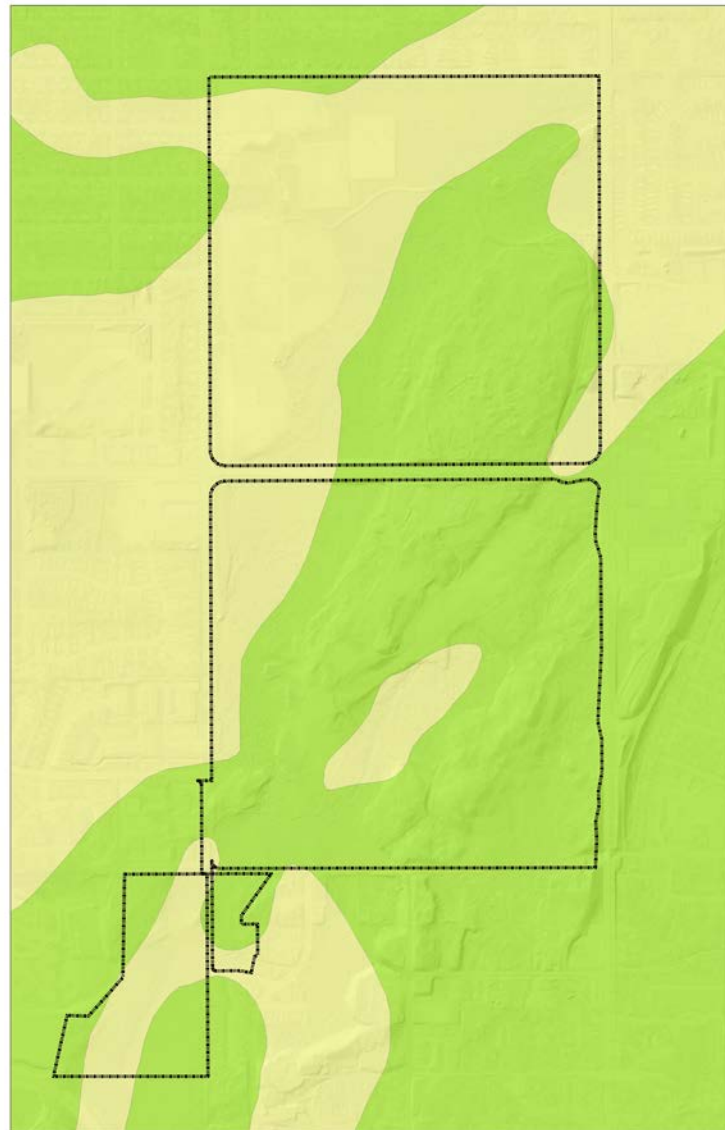
Surficial geology refers to the unconsolidated materials that lie beneath landforms. In the Anchorage Bowl, the majority of unconsolidated materials were deposited 10,000 to 25,000 years ago as a result of the last period of glaciation.

The surficial geology of the northern area of the park consist mainly of course grained alluvium underlain with peat. A large glacial deposit forms the hill stretching north to south across Debarr Rd. The southern portion of the park is more diversified consisting of fine-grained lake sediments, course-grained glacial alluvium, moraine deposits, and course-grained stream alluvium. A second large glacial deposit forms a hill at the southeast corner of the park which continues across Boniface Pkwy. into Nunaka Valley West Park.⁹



SEISMIC ZONE

Lands within Russian Jack Springs Park are classified as having moderately low (Zone 2) to moderate (Zone 3) susceptibility to ground failure from seismic activity. Seismic zones in the park tend to correspond to areas of elevation change and topography, with hills and slopes generally less susceptible to failure than low-lying areas. Susceptibility to ground failure should be considered when choosing a site for buildings or other types of development requiring a foundation.



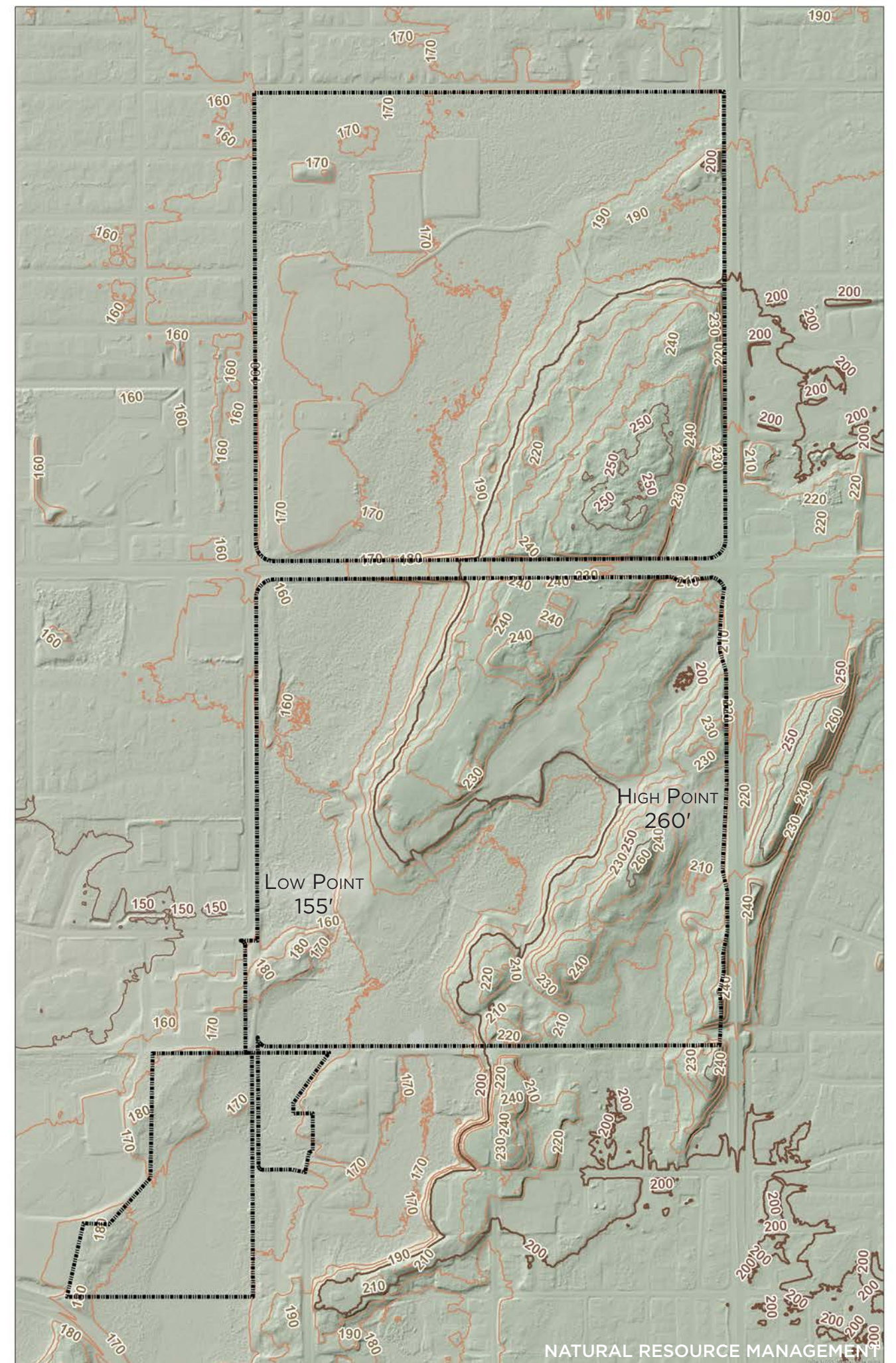
TOPOGRAPHY

The topography of Russian Jack Springs Park is mainly influenced by natural geological processes such as glaciation and stream deposition, resulting in varied surficial geology and topography. Some features, such as the Debarr Rd. cut, the golf course, and the sports fields in north Russian Jack Springs Park have altered the landscape to accommodate development. However, much of the park remains relatively undisturbed.

Elevations within Russian Jack Springs Park range from 155 to 260 feet above sea level. The low point in the park is where the Middle Fork of Chester Creek exits the park along the western boundary just north of the intersection of Pine St. and Reka Dr. The park's highest point is east of the Chalet at the top of the hill above the Boniface Pkwy. parking lot.

The western half of North Russian Jack Springs Park is relatively flat, around 170 feet above sea level, and is home to the Cartee Sports Complex, playground, and soccer fields. The northeast corner of the park sits at approximately 190 feet above sea level. Continuing south, a large hill rises to 250 feet, lowering to 230 feet at Debarr Rd.

South Russian Jack Springs Park is generally more varied with the western third at or around 160 feet above sea level, except for a small rise in the southwestern corner of the park. The greenhouses and chalet sit at 240 feet and 230 feet respectively and are a continuation of the large hill extending north across Debarr Rd. East of the chalet, the elevation drops to 180 feet above sea level in a small valley at the spring. Continuing east, the elevation rises again to the park's high point of 260 feet above sea level. Another small hill rises in the southeast corner of the park.



VEGETATION

Overview

Inventory of Tree Canopy

Plant Communities and Characteristics

Vegetation in Russian Jack Springs Park is a mosaic of forest community types typical of the Anchorage Bowl. Forest community types vary by location and are influenced by factors such as elevation, soils, slope, drainage, and solar gain. These factors combine to create unique forest communities. These range from lowland spruce and treeless bogs to upland forest of mixed spruce and birch to dense stands of pure birch forest. Each forest community supports understories of mixed shrubs and smaller plants.

Vegetation in Russian Jack Springs Park has evolved over time. Since 1950, development in and around the park has caused natural functions such as drainage patterns to change resulting in an evolution of plant communities. A review of historic aerial imagery shows dramatic growth of black spruce in the north and northwest lowland portions of the park, marking a transition from treeless bog to spruce bog.

Tree canopy accounts for 72% of Russian Jack Springs Park.¹⁰ This is a slightly larger proportion than other parks in Anchorage over 100 acres, where tree canopy averages 69%. Urban forests provide benefits to mental health and well-being and provide cleaner air, shade, and habitat for wildlife. Tree canopy also can mitigate the heat island effect found in urban areas and provide cool places for people to rest during heat waves.

Spruce Bog

- Cold waterlogged soils, typically poor drainage
- Small stands of black spruce underlain by sphagnum mosses, sedges, grasses, heath shrubs
- Common associated vegetation: Paper birch and white spruce, Labrador tea, prickly rose, willows, bog blueberry, red-fruit bearberry, crowberry, lingonberry



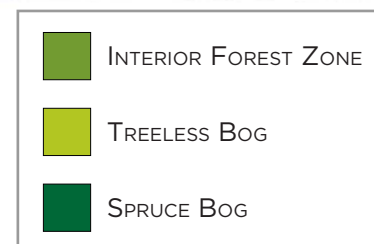
Treeless Bog

- Soils too waterlogged for trees, poor drainage
- Vegetation is primarily grasses, sedges and mosses with some small shrubs
- Common associated vegetation: sphagnum moss, small willows, ericaceous shrubs, dwarf birch, cranberry, blueberry, and Labrador tea



Interior Forest Zone

- Soils with fair to good drainage
- Predominant forest type in Anchorage Bowl (sea level to 1800' in elevation)
- Common tree species: White spruce, paper birch
- Other tree species: Balsam poplar or black cottonwood and willow and alder in floodplains or along streams (cottonwood line the multi-use trail throughout the park)
- Common associated vegetation: wild rose, lingonberry, bunch berry, northern red currant, American red currant, Labrador tea, Watermelon berry, devil's club ¹¹



2012 Windstorm

On September 4th and 5th, 2012, a major windstorm swept through Anchorage blowing down thousands of trees and knocking out power to 50,000 homes. Within Russian Jack Springs Park, the storm blew down large stands of trees which have remained leaning or uprooted for years. While some areas of the park have been cleaned up, many trees have yet to be managed.

In 2020, Parks and Recreation Department tree crews worked to address areas where hazard trees remain near trails and facilities at Russian Jack Springs Park. The Master Plan recommends a continuation of cleanup efforts to remove hazard trees and provide for safe recreation.

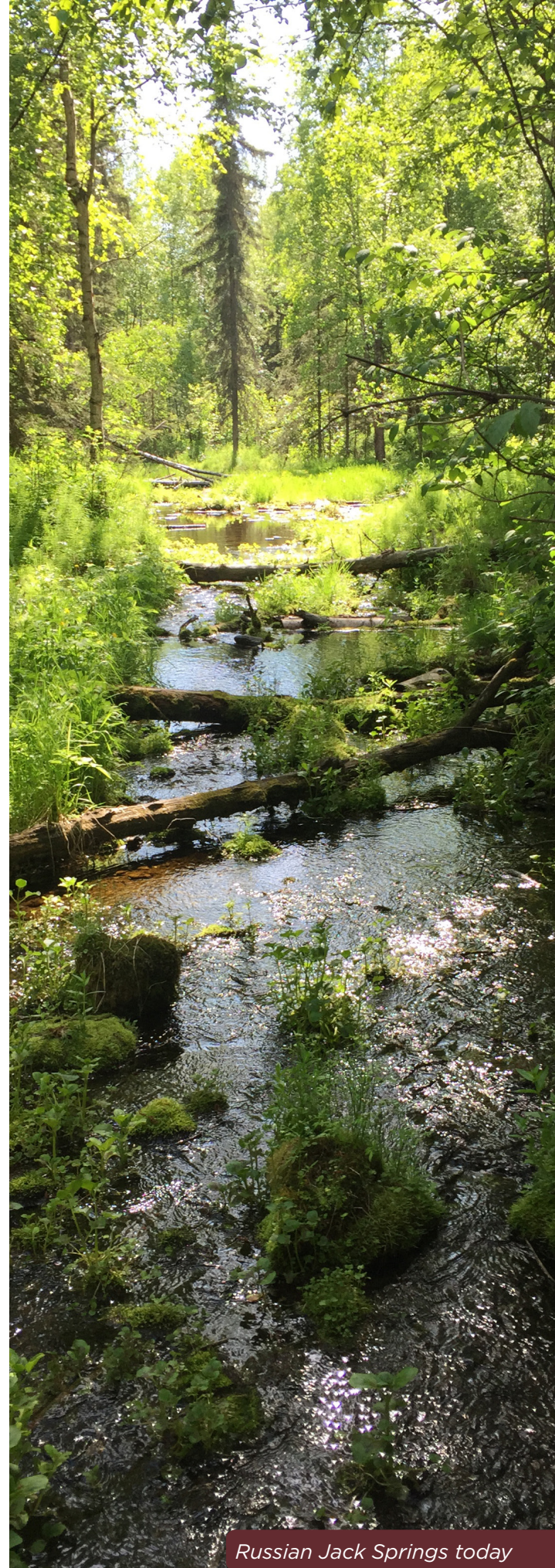
WATERWAYS

Russian Jack Springs

The Russian Jack Springs is a freshwater spring located approximately 575 feet east of the Chalet in south Russian Jack Springs Park. The springs form the headwaters of the Middle Fork of Chester Creek and are a unique and defining feature of the park. Despite being well known, there is very little documented knowledge of the geology and hydrology of the springs and vicinity.

Early research by the USGS¹² suggests that the springs have a deep artesian source (100-250ft below ground surface). However, seasonal variability in flow rates and surficial geology indicate that the source of the springs may be shallower than previously thought. While a more in-depth study is needed to fully understand the geology and hydrology of the springs, several factors point to a shallow source.

Geology: As late as 10,000 to 25,000 years ago, glaciers occupied the Anchorage area. These glaciers laid down a relatively shallow but dense layer of silty glaciomarine sediments. These sediments provide a moderately thick separating layer, which channels shallow surface groundwater to the upgradient side of the park hills. In Russian Jack Springs Park, glacialmarine deposits tend to align along a gradient from northeast to southwest creating the conditions for shallower ground water sources to be captured and contribute to spring flow.



Russian Jack Springs today



Russian Jack Springs in February 1978

Seasonal Variability: Seasonal variability in the flow of the Russian Jack Spring indicates a hydrologic connection to shallow source water. Monitoring of flow rates show large fluctuations and seasonal variability not typically found in deep artesian sources. Russian Jack Spring flows typically peak immediately following major rainfall events at about 5 to 7 cubic feet per second (cfs) in autumn compared to low annual flows of 3.7 cfs in spring and mid-summer.

The area around Russian Jack Spring is in healthy condition with excellent water quality.¹³ However, the shallow nature of spring source water and sensitive habitat should be considered in the future development, management, and maintenance of Russian Jack Springs Park.¹⁴



Middle Fork Chester Creek



Riparian zone

WATERWAYS

Streams

From the springs originates the headwaters of the Middle Fork of Chester Creek. The creek flows south to north, forming a large U. One mile west of the headwaters, the Middle Fork joins the main tributary of Chester Creek, the South Fork, in Tikishla Park.

Floodways (500 and 100 year)

Russian Jack Springs Park does not contain Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapped floodways. Based on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), Russian Jack Springs Park is classified as Zone X: Area of Minimal Flood Hazard. This Zone X classification references “areas determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplain.”

Riparian Zone

The riparian zone refers to the interface between land and water and is a crucial component of the ecosystem. These areas typically support cottonwood, spruce, and birch trees; poplar, alder, and willow thickets; as well as herbaceous plants and grasses. Riparian zones provide areas for ground water recharge and flood control as well as help to protect water quality from pollution and runoff. Riparian areas also provide important habitat for birds, fish and wildlife.

Development Setbacks

Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) establishes stream protection setbacks to protect water quality in local streams. AMC 21.07.020B regulates activities such as the development of buildings and the storage of hazardous materials within stream setback zones. AMC 21.07.020B establishes a 50-foot total setback for Chester Creek (Streamside Zone - 25 feet + Riparian Edge Zone - 25 feet). Further, the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan recommends to “maintain a 100-foot setback from Chester Creek and tributaries to protect anadromous fish resources.”¹⁵ Certain recreational activities such as soft surface trails and the installation of interpretive information and amenities such as benches are generally permitted within stream set-back zones.

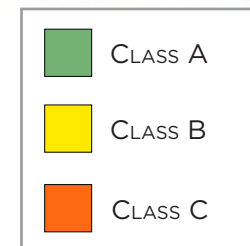
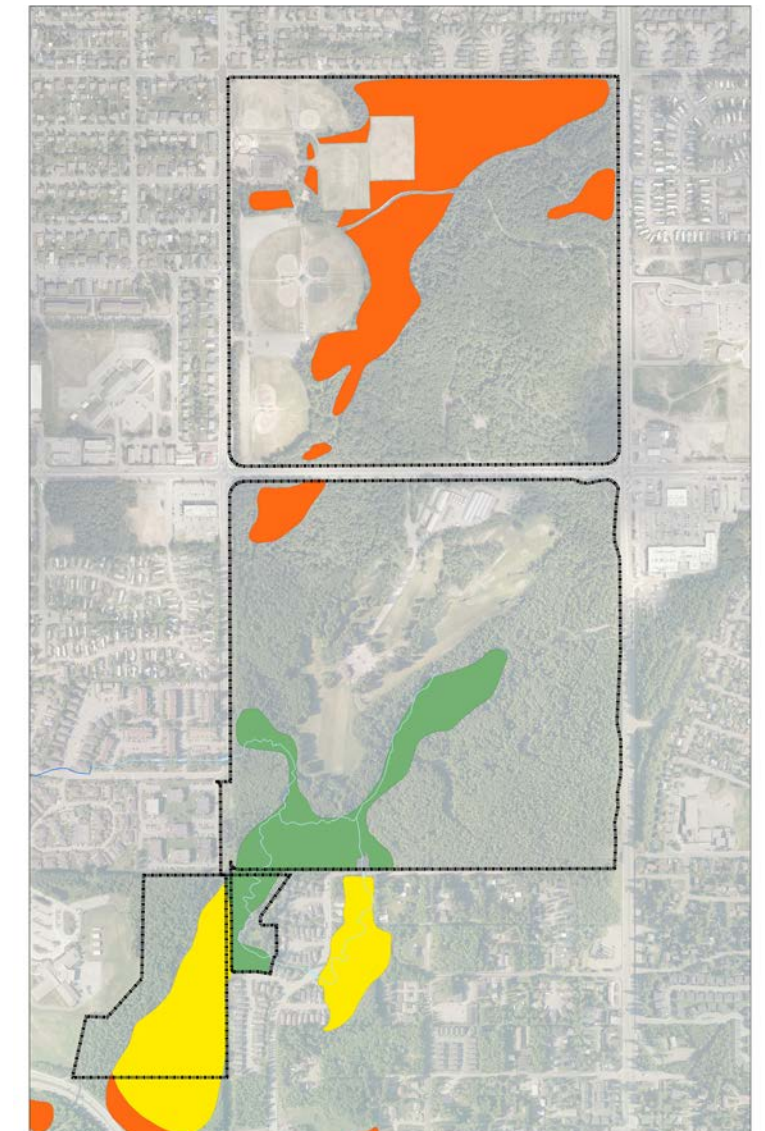
WETLANDS

The Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan identifies two classified wetland sites at Russian Jack Springs Park. These sites encompass a total of 79.56 acres, approximately 73 acres of which are within Russian Jack Springs Park.

Wetlands are assessed based on hydrology, habitat, species occurrence, and social function, which determine wetland designation. Under this methodology, Class “A” wetlands are considered the highest value and therefore have the most restrictive limitations on development. The two sites at Russian Jack Springs Park include “A”, “B”, and “C” wetland designations.

Site 17 is located in South Russian Jack Springs Park and includes both Class “A” and “B” wetlands. Class “A” wetlands are located within the park boundaries and directly correspond to low-lying areas surrounding the Middle Fork of Chester Creek. This system of wetlands continues south of the park boundary where it assumes the Class “B” wetlands designation.

Site 7 is located in North Russian Jack Springs Park and includes Class “C” wetlands. Wetland areas correspond to low-lying areas east of the soccer/softball fields and upland forested areas. These wetlands extend just south of Debarr Rd. to a low-lying area in the northeast corner of South Russian Jack Springs Park. A small area of Class “C” wetlands is also designated between the multi-use trail and dog park/former campground near Boniface Pkwy.



FISH AND WILDLIFE

Russian Jack Springs Park provides habitat to a variety of birds, fish and wildlife. At over 300 acres in size, the park's undeveloped natural areas provide important habitat and foraging opportunities for large mammals such as moose and bears. Moose are a common sight throughout the year as they forage in the park and along the Chester Creek Greenbelt. Bears also frequent the park often attracted to areas where garbage has not been properly disposed. Examples include surrounding neighborhoods, unauthorized camps on parkland, and popular picnic areas. Lynx are a less common but occasional sight in Russian Jack Springs Park, and the park also provides habitat for smaller mammals such as rabbits, squirrels, muskrats and foxes. Ermine, mice, and voles also live throughout the park.

Nesting birds and waterfowl are also common in areas of the park. This includes both year-round populations, seasonal and migratory birds. According to the 1979 Master Plan and current knowledge, this includes Owls, Redpoll, Raven, Black-Capped Chickadee, Boreal Chickadee, Black-billed Magpie, Gray Jay, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker and Spruce Grouse, Robins, Thrushes, Goshawk, Blackbirds, Swallows, Juncos, Sparrows, Warblers, Brown Creepers, Pine Sisking, Dippers, Sandpipers, Gulls, Yellowlegs, and Snipes.

Anadromous fish are found in both the Middle and South Fork of Chester Creek. According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game - Coho, Pink, and Dolly Varden have been documented in Chester Creek.¹⁶



Flora and fauna education in the Learning Lab



Moose crossing the golf course

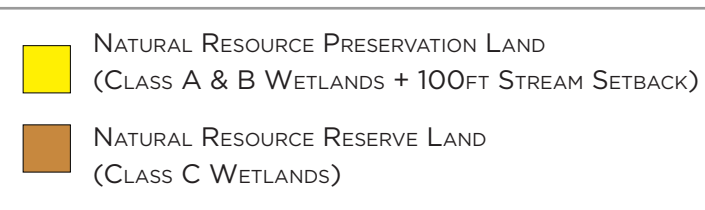
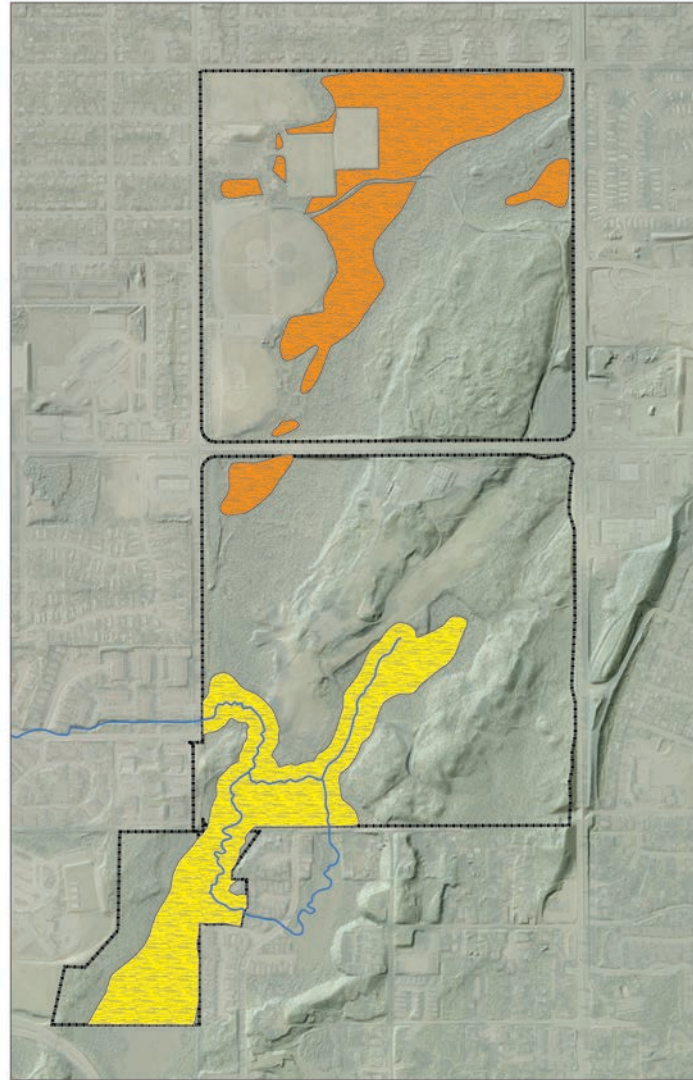
NATURAL RESOURCE USE AREA DESIGNATION

OVERVIEW

The 2006 *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan* provides classifications intended to serve as guidelines to develop an equitable system of parks, recreation facilities and natural open space for the Anchorage Bowl.¹⁷ Russian Jack Springs Park is classified as a Special Use Area but includes lands to be set aside for the preservation of significant natural resources. The Park Plan recommends that these Natural Resource Use Areas be defined through the formal park master planning process.

Based on the Park Plan, Natural Resource Use Areas are defined as “lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics or buffering. The objective with these lands is to enhance the livability and character of the community by preserving as many of its natural amenities as possible; conserve natural features of the land; retain and filter storm water; serve as buffers between incompatible land uses; lend definition to neighborhood areas; provide non-motorized links between residential areas, parks and schools; protect wildlife and fish habitat and populations; and to provide recreational opportunities close to home.”¹⁸

The Master Plan recommends the designation of two categories of Natural Resource Use Areas in Russian Jack Springs Park: **Natural Resource Preservation Land** and **Natural Resource Reserve Land**. Together, these areas encompass approximately 73 acres.



NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION LAND

Approximately **38 acres** are designated Natural Resource Preservation Land. These lands include important waterways and wetlands in South Russian Jack Spring Park including the ‘Russian Jack Spring’, the Middle Fork of Chester Creek, and Class A and B Wetlands. These areas perform important environmental functions and have high ecological values. This designation also includes a 100-ft development setback from Chester Creek within Russian Jack Springs Park to protect important riparian forest.

Natural Resource Preservation Lands in Russian Jack Springs Park are part of a larger system of wetlands, waterways, and greenspace. These important natural resources extend beyond the boundaries of Russian Jack Springs Park providing habitat for a variety of birds, fish and wildlife.

Protection of these areas enhances the livability of the community and character of the park. Natural resource areas provide places for quiet recreation. They also lend identity to the community and provide buffers between incompatible land uses.

Protected Natural Resources

- Middle Fork Chester Creek
- Riparian Forest
- Class A and B Wetlands
- Russian Jack Springs

NATURAL RESOURCE RESERVE LAND

Approximately **35 acres** are designated Natural Resource Reserve Land. These lands include all class C wetlands which are primarily located in north Russian Jack Spring Park. These areas perform a variety of natural functions but have features that make future development possible with limited cost and minimal disturbance to the surrounding ecosystem.

Protected Natural Resources

- Class C Wetlands

RECREATION IN NATURAL RESOURCE USE AREAS

Although Natural Resource Areas are resource-based rather than user-based, they can provide passive recreational opportunities including access points; trails and greenways; nature appreciation, interpretation and education; and other uses that cause minimal resource impact. These areas may require maintenance and low-impact changes to the landscape, such as providing low-level lighting at trailheads and access points.

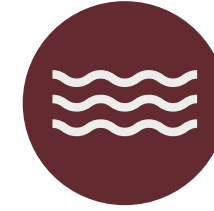
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Goal: **Understand, promote, and protect natural resources at Russian Jack Springs Park.**

- **Objective:** To define “Natural Resource Areas” consistent with the 2006 *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan*
 - *Action:* Identify lands within Russian Jack Springs Park to be classified Natural Resource Preservation Land, Natural Resource Conservation Land, and Natural Resource Reserve Land
 - *Action:* Develop a map of Russian Jack Springs Park “Natural Resource Areas” showing classifications
- **Objective:** Monitor and manage parkland to minimize any potential negative impacts to the natural environment
 - *Action:* Work with state and local partners to collect data, research, and monitor wildlife, habitat, water and other natural resources
 - *Action:* Monitor changes to the park environment over time from human or natural causes
 - *Action:* Develop management solutions to identified issues consistent with the park’s natural resource management goals
- **Objective:** Balance the development of facilities with the preservation of natural areas
 - *Action:* Assess the potential impacts on natural resources throughout the planning, design, and development of new recreation facilities at Russian Jack Springs Park
- **Objective:** Encourage a culture of stewardship and public awareness regarding the importance of natural resources
 - *Action:* Provide interpretive and educational information highlighting the unique natural features of Russian Jack Springs Park and the importance of stewardship and conservation



WATER QUALITY

Goal: **Protect water quality resources for human and environmental health.**

- **Objective:** Protect water quality by minimizing the impacts of development near Chester Creek corridor
 - *Action:* Maintain a minimum 100-foot stream setback for development unless otherwise recognized as an allowable use in Anchorage Municipal Code 21.07.02B
- **Objective:** Protect wetlands and the natural function and values of wetland areas.
 - *Action:* Follow the recommendations for classified wetlands outlined in the 2012 Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan
- **Objective:** Recognize the Russian Jack Springs as an important and unique natural feature
 - *Action:* Work with state and local partners and universities to better understand the hydrology and geology of the springs
 - *Action:* Establish a development setback of 300 feet from the Spring; except for uses recognized as an allowable use in Anchorage Municipal Code 21.07.02B
 - *Action:* Provide interpretive and/or educational information recognizing the Russian Jack Springs



Russian Jack Springs

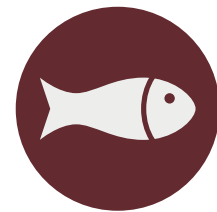
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, continued



FOREST HEALTH

Goal: **Manage forests to provide clean air and water, habitat for wildlife, beautiful scenery, and places for recreation.**

- **Objective:** Enhance forest health through best management practices
 - *Action:* Clean up remaining down or leaning trees from 2012 windstorm
 - *Action:* Remove and clean up homeless camps in forested areas in coordination with the municipality's camp abatement and outreach plan
 - *Action:* Mitigate effects of spruce bark beetle and remove dead trees
 - *Action:* Re-forest select areas where facilities are no longer in use and where extensive tree damage has occurred
 - *Action:* Remove invasive plants including European Bird Cherry (*Prunus Padus*)



FISH AND WILDLIFE

Goal: **To protect habitat and provide for native fish and wildlife populations.**

- **Objective:** Protect habitat to support fish and wildlife populations
 - *Action:* Work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to monitor fish and wildlife populations over time and to address changes or issues as they arise
 - *Action:* Mitigate adverse human-wildlife interactions through monitoring, public information, and management actions





4 MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

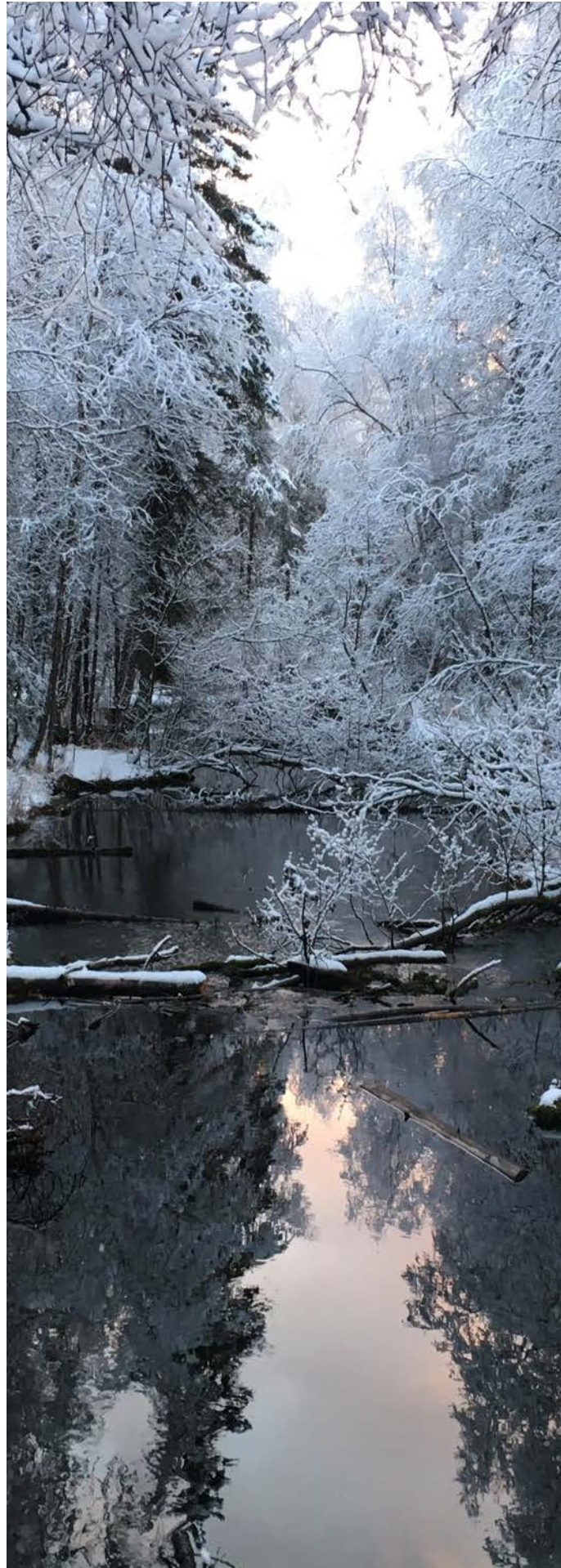
The Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan provides a framework for the management, maintenance, and development of Russian Jack Springs Park over the next 20 years. The plan is the product of extensive community engagement and embodies the community's vision to provide active and healthy year-round recreation while preserving important natural resources for future generations.

VISION

The vision statement embodies the community's shared values, goals, and desires for Russian Jack Springs Park. This statement synthesizes the range of contributions from the advisory group, community workshop attendees, and online survey respondents. A cohesive vision for the future adds clarity to decision making during implementation.

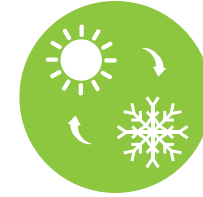
Russian Jack Springs Park is an accessible East Anchorage destination providing a range of active and passive recreational opportunities as diverse as the community it serves.

Featuring trails through expansive natural areas and facilities supporting sports, free play and educational programming, people of all ages are encouraged to connect year-round with the natural environment and experience the community spirit that **Russian Jack Springs Park** will continue to foster for generations to come.”



CORE VALUES

The planning process revealed several themes in which there was general agreement among members of the public regarding the qualities that make Russian Jack Springs Park special. These qualities or core values guide the development of this Master Plan and provide a foundation for the management, maintenance and development of the park.



YEAR-ROUND COMMUNITY ASSET

Activate the park for all seasons and promote year-round recreation opportunities.



SERVING DIVERSE USERS

Provide recreation opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.



BALANCE OF NATURAL AREAS AND FACILITIES

Maintain a balance of developed facilities and natural areas.



SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE

Facilitate easy access to the park as a central destination in East Anchorage.



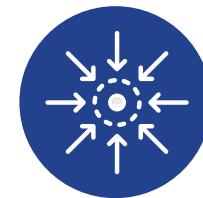
TAKING CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE

Ensure a safe, clean and well-maintained park.



UNIQUE PARK CHARACTER

Retain the unique character and honor the history of the park.



EAST ANCHORAGE FOCAL POINT

Invest in the park as an important neighborhood asset and community-wide attraction.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Master Plan provides recommendations to guide the development of Russian Jack Springs Park. Recommendations address community-identified issues such as access, safety, maintenance, and overall usability by identifying priorities for future investment. The public process identified six focus areas within the park for improvements. The planning team developed a series of concepts for each area and shared these with the community. This chapter presents the preferred concepts based on feedback from the public and the Advisory Group.

The concepts provide graphic representations of the desired future conditions for the park and are expected to evolve during the design and development process. Thus, a series of general recommendations accompanies each concept to help planners and decision makers understand the intent of the concept, the issues being addressed, and the broader goals of area redevelopment.

NORTHWEST GATEWAY

- Develop 6th Ave. pathway
- Add landscape buffer along Pine St.
- Upgrade amenities to support use of play areas, skate park, and picnic shelters
- Add permanent restrooms or port-a-potty screens
- Upgrade sports facilities

NORTHEAST GATEWAY

- Develop parking lot off of Boniface Pkwy.
- Provide connector to main multi-use trail
- Install directional signage and wayfinding
- Develop a fenced off-leash dog park
- Add signage and informational kiosks

LIDIA SELKREGG CHALET AREA

- Renovate chalet to expand use
- Improve parking area and circulation
- Extend the multi-use pathway
- Improve sledding hill safety
- Upgrade heating, cooling, and lighting at the Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouses
- Upgrade golf course amenities

BONIFACE SOUTH GATEWAY

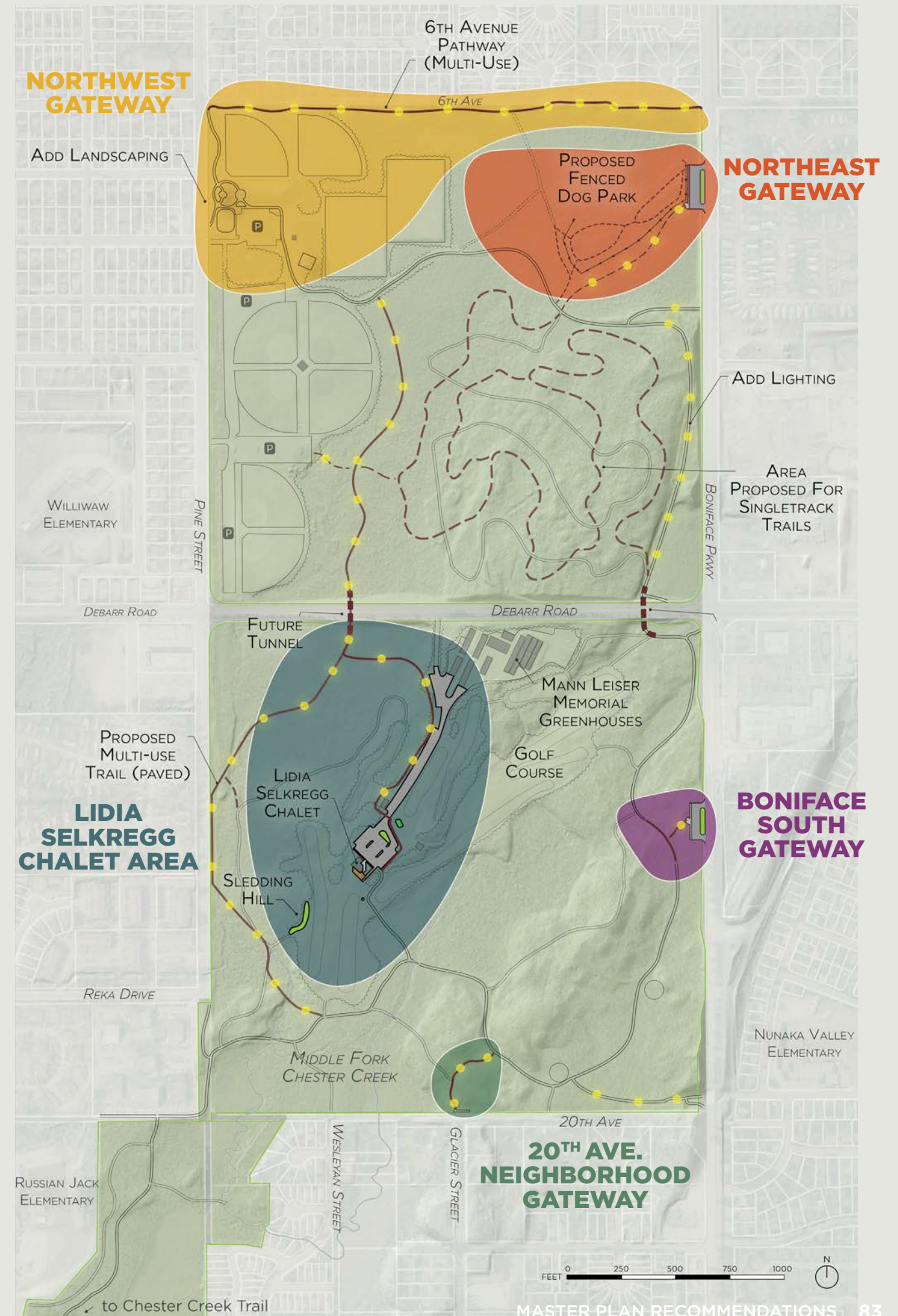
- Enhance visibility and safety of parking lot
- Expand the open lawn and install a new picnic shelter (or relocate existing)
- Provide bike racks, trash cans, and informational kiosks
- Install directional signage and wayfinding
- Install lighting at parking and picnic shelter areas

20TH AVE. NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAY

- Restore vegetation around 20th Ave. and Glacier St.
- Provide a wayfinding kiosk and park signage
- Construct a paved, multi-use path connecting to existing trails
- Install lighting at entrance and along pathway

PARKWIDE TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

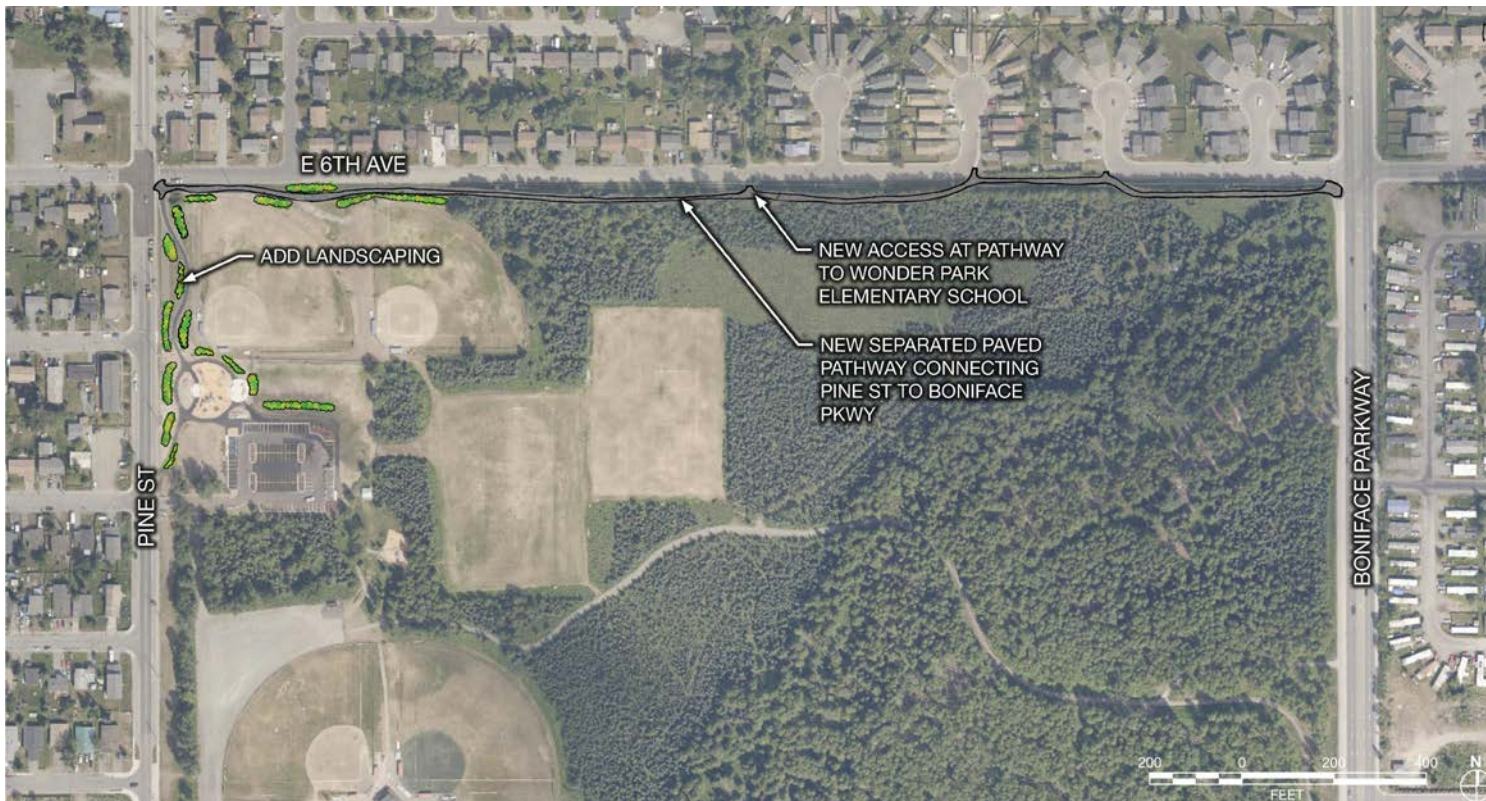
- Re-pave the multi-use trail
- Improve sight lines on existing trails
- Upgrade or repair bridges and tunnels
- Restore width and tread on select soft surface trails
- Add lighting, benches, wayfinding, and kiosks
- Develop a new paved multi-use trail and tunnel connecting north to south










NORTHWEST GATEWAY

The northwest corner of Russian Jack Springs Park is a popular community gathering space and serves as a gateway to the park. The Northwest Gateway features the Polar Bear playground, skate park and picnic shelter as well as sports fields and access to the trail system. The diversity of recreational opportunities and proximity to single- and multi-family housing makes this a popular park destination.

The Master Plan recommends new amenities and regular maintenance to ensure that these assets continue to serve the public. The Master Plan also recommends adding landscaping and improving bike and pedestrian access along Pine St. and 6th Ave.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

-  Upgrade overall site amenities to support use such as trash cans, bike racks, picnic tables, benches, and signage.
-  Increase maintenance and sanitation including regular trash pick-up and graffiti removal.
-  Work with other agencies to ensure that future upgrades to Pine Street include safe bike and pedestrian facilities.
-  Add park rules and information signs as well as maps and wayfinding kiosks to help the public navigate the park.
-  Develop permanent restrooms or identify a location that is suitable for port-a-potties and add decorative screening.
-  Add landscape trees and shrubs to create separation from Pine Street and to improve visual aesthetics and the park environment.
-  Consider a sand volleyball court near the picnic shelter to provide additional opportunities for recreation.

6th Ave. Pathway

The Master Plan recommends developing a new pathway along 6th Ave. to create a safe connection from the neighborhood to the park. The street currently lacks a sidewalk or separated bike path. A new paved pathway would connect Pine St. to Boniface Pkwy. along the northern boundary of Russian Jack Springs Park and provide links to the Wonder Park Elementary School corridor.



Skate Park

The skate park is located just south of the Polar Bear Playground. The skate park opened in 2017 and features a small street plaza area and bowl. The skate park is popular and often crowded with skaters of all ages. The Master Plan recommends monitoring and maintaining the skate park and addressing issues as they arise. Further recommendations include adding rules signage and considering upgrades or decorative fencing for the chain link fence separating the skate park and playground.

Polar Bear Playground

The Polar Bear Playground is one of the most iconic features in Russian Jack Springs Park. Built in 2013, the 10,000 sq. ft. play area features Alaska-themed play equipment and has engineered wood fiber play surfacing. The area currently has some supporting amenities; however, the popularity of the area often means that trash cans fill up beyond capacity. The Master Plan recommends adding new amenities and landscaping to improve the appearance and cleanliness of the park. Specific recommended actions are to consider changing wood chips to unitary fall surfacing such as pour-in-place, tiles, or artificial turf to improve accessibility for those with mobile disabilities and to add trash cans and increase frequency of pick-up.



Picnic Shelter and Play Area

A picnic shelter, small play area, and open lawn are well used during the summer months. The shelter is often rented out by groups on the weekend during the summer. The Master Plan recommends continued maintenance and vegetation management as well as the potential for a sand volleyball court in this area. Vegetation around the shelter should be managed to maintain sightlines and safety.

Cartee Fields Softball Complex

The Cartee Fields Softball Complex is the home of the Anchorage Sports Association and is popular during the summer months with tournaments and league play. Cartee Fields 1-4 are orientated around a central concession building and are the primary fields for league and tournament play. Cartee Fields 5-6 are also used for league and tournament play but are less developed. The Master Plan maintains the existing layout of fields and parking, identifies upgrades to facilities, and makes recommendations to address issues.

Continued use over the years has resulted in the need for general upgrades and additional investment. Upgrades range from basic repairs, such as replacing dugout roofs and fixing benches, to larger more capital-intensive renovations of the concessions building and turf replacement.

The Master Plan recommends partnership with the Anchorage Sports Association (ASA) to fundraise and invest in the Cartee Complex.

Recommendations:

- Repair dugouts – upgrade benches, fix fencing and replace roofs
- Add traffic control measures such as bollards, boulders or fencing to limit unauthorized vehicles from accessing fields
- Renovate the concessions building
- Continue field upgrades to turf and fencing

Russian Jack Softball Fields

The Russian Jack Fields serve as secondary ball fields to the Cartee Complex. These fields tend to see fewer overall days of play in the summer months and are currently in fair condition. The fields are envisioned to see continued use in the future with upgrades to improve play and usability, including drainage improvements, addressing heaving, and fence repairs,

During the master planning process, it was recognized that these fields are relatively underutilized and could potentially be repurposed for other recreational uses in the future. While the Master Plan recommends that these fields continue as ball fields, the Master Plan also acknowledges that community priorities may evolve, and that future conversations regarding the highest and best use of this space may identify an alternative use or development.

Recommendations:

- Address drainage issues and low-lying wet areas
- Upgrade and/or repair fencing and dugouts as needed
- Repair areas damaged by heaving
- Monitor use and consider expanding future use

Soccer Fields

The soccer fields at Russian Jack Springs Park are used for sports and events with frequency of use varying by season and year. The Master Plan recommends general upkeep and maintenance of the fields to support continued use. Improving access to the fields for maintenance vehicles and large mowers was identified as a potential area for upgrades.

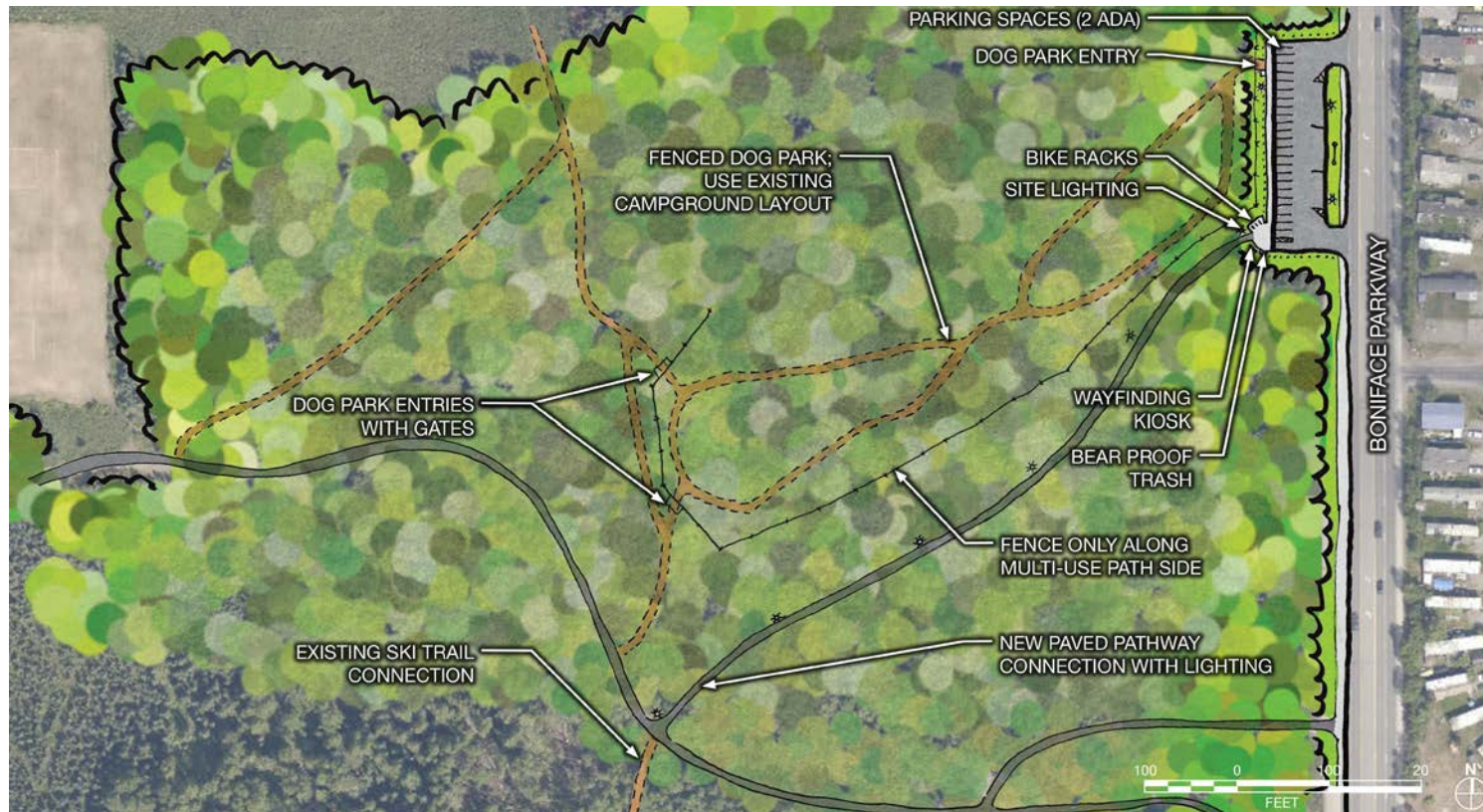
Recommendations:

- Maintain fields for soccer and events
- Improve access to the fields for mowing and maintenance vehicles







NORTHEAST GATEWAY

The Master Plan envisions the Northeast Gateway as a launching point for exploration into the park with paved and soft surface trails and a designated off-leash dog park. The proposed off-leash dog park will repurpose the existing footprint of the former campground loop, providing a unique experience among Anchorage's dog parks. The area will also serve as the main access point for multi-use, singletrack mountain biking and ski trails in north Russian Jack Springs Park. The Northeast Gateway provides opportunities for recreation in an undeveloped, natural setting that is easily accessible.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

-  Develop a new parking lot that is accessible from Boniface Pkwy.
-  Construct a new paved pathway connecting the parking lot to the main multi-use trail and install directional signage and wayfinding to direct park users to facilities and points of interest within the park.
-  Develop a formal off-leash dog park space utilizing the former camper loops and provide amenities such as fencing, double entrance gates, signage, mutt mitts, and trash cans.
-  Provide lighting and pedestrian amenities including bike racks, trash cans, and informational kiosks to improve safety and user experience.

Northeast Gateway Parking Lot

The Master Plan recommends the development of a new parking lot to support recreation in northeast Russian Jack Springs Park. The parking lot should provide direct access to the off-leash dog park area and include a trailhead that connects to the larger trail system. If possible, the parking lot should incorporate the existing driveway entrances and lower standing berms to allow for clear sight lines in and around the parking lot and to deter negative activity. The parking lot should also include lighting, landscaping, and amenities such as bike racks, bear resistant trash cans, wayfinding kiosks, and benches.

Northeast Gateway Access, Connections, and Circulation

The Master Plan recommends the development of a new paved multi-use trail to connect the parking lot to the larger trail system in Russian Jack Springs Park. Future site design should consider circulation patterns, elevations, and other natural features when determining the final layout and location of the trail. Existing vegetation should be preserved to the greatest extent practicable. The trail should include directional signage and wayfinding to help park users navigate to points of interest and facilities within the park. The trail should also include lighting to improve safety.



Unused northeast entrance



Existing multi-use trail

Off-Leash Dog Park

Off-leash dog parks are popular destinations for residents to exercise and socialize with their pets. The former camper loops at Russian Jack Springs Park now provide pathways and open space that create a dog park experience unlike anywhere else in Anchorage. However, the off-leash dog park area at Russian Jack Springs Park has seen infrequent use over the years, due in part to insufficient parking and a lack of clearly delineated boundaries. Adding a fenced off-leash area will provide clear and secure boundaries for dogs and their owners. Fencing will also reduce user conflicts in the area as well as help to protect the surrounding park vegetation cover.

The Master Plan recommends upgrades to facilitate greater public use of the off-leash dog park, including standard 6' fencing, double entrance gates for on/off leash transition, and amenities such as mutt-mitts stations, rules signage, and bear-resistant trash cans. The forest and vegetation within the off-leash area should be retained where possible to preserve the forested dog park experience.







LIDIA SELKREGG CHALET AREA

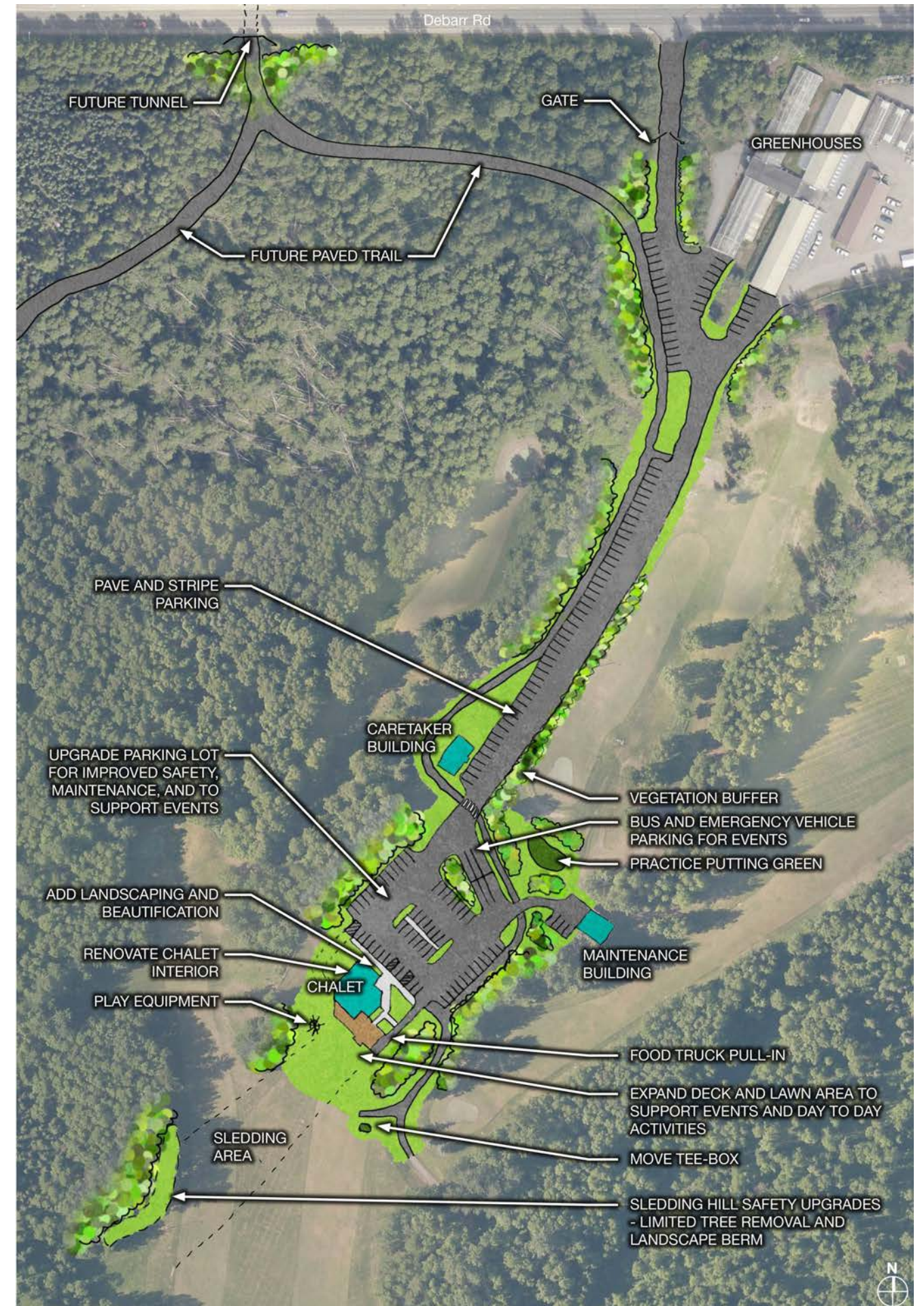
The Lidia Selkregg Chalet, municipal greenhouses, and golf course have been a longstanding hub for community gathering and recreation in Russian Jack Springs Park. The area is popular throughout the year, with activities such as cross-country skiing, sledding, and fat tire biking in the winter; and golfing, biking and hiking in the summer. Despite being well used, facilities in the area are aging and in need of investment and upgrades.

The Master Plan recommends improvements to the Chalet, parking areas, and surrounding recreational facilities. The following recommendations provide needed upgrades to existing assets and support continued recreation and community gathering.



RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Renovate Chalet interior to modernize the space and optimize flexibility to host a variety of community events and regular programming.
-  Upgrade parking lot to support day-to-day use and community events and remove unused paved area outside of chalet.
-  Extend the multi-use pathway and improve non-motorized circulation through the area.
-  Modify the sledding hill to provide for a safe runout zone.
-  Upgrade heating, cooling, and lighting at the Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouses.
-  Upgrade golf course amenities and surroundings to improve quality of play.



Chalet Renovation

The Lidia Selkregg Chalet has a long history and special place in the heart of the Anchorage community. The Master Plan envisions continued use in the years to come with investments in facility upgrades to support a variety of educational and recreational programming as well as community-sponsored events. Renovations are needed to modernize the building and to optimize the Chalet's function as a community gathering place. Upgrades to the facility should seek to improve the overall use, function, and appearance of the building and should consider modernizing the building for increased energy efficiency.

Recommendations:

- Renovate Chalet interior to modernize the space and optimize flexibility to host a variety of community events and regular programming
- Expand Chalet deck and lawn area to support community events, specialty programming, and day-to-day activities
- Provide a space for a food truck or other concessionaire next to the Chalet to support use
- Add landscaping around the chalet to improve the visual aesthetics of the facility
- Consider adding a small play area for children.

Chalet Parking and Access Drive

The Master Plan recommends upgrades to the access drive and parking areas to improve the overall use, function, and safety of the area. Upgrades are intended to support day-to-day use and events. Any changes should account for pedestrian safety and vehicle circulation, seasonal maintenance and site drainage and should incorporate landscaping and beautification. Along Selkregg Lane, the Master Plan recommends the paving and striping of the parking area in combination with a treed landscape buffer along the east side of the road to minimize the potential for damage from stray golf balls.

The Master Plan also recommends that the main Chalet parking area should be upgraded to support day-to-day use and events. Upgrades should consider bus parking and emergency vehicle access necessary to support larger events such as high school races and larger community events.

Recommendations:

- Upgrade parking lot to support day-to-day use and community events
- Remove unused paved areas along the periphery of the parking lot and replace with grass and landscaping
- Add landscaping to the Chalet area parking lot
- Pave and stripe parking area along the west side of the Selkregg Lane
- Provide dedicated bus and emergency vehicle parking near Chalet to support events
- Consider a gate near the driveway entrance off Debarr Rd. to limit after-hours access
- Provide a treed landscape buffer on the east side of Selkregg Lane to increase separation from the golf course and access drive/parking area

Circulation Upgrades and Multi-use Pathway Extension

An extension of the multi-use pathway is envisioned for the chalet area to improve bike and pedestrian circulation and provide additional non-motorized connections to park facilities. The pathway should connect to the existing multi-use trail east of the chalet and extend north to the greenhouses with the potential to connect to a future multi-use trail and tunnel on the west side of the park.





9-Hole Golf Course

The Master Plan recommends continued use of the golf course at Russian Jack Springs Park. The golf course is envisioned to maintain its current footprint with upgrades to existing facilities and new amenities to improve the quality of play. Some modifications of the golf course near the chalet are identified in order to support other recreational activities such as sledding and programming of the chalet.

Recommendations:

- Regrade slopes around elevated greens to improve the transition between the fairway and greens
- Replace aging amenities such as benches and signage
- Relocate the first tee (downhill/east) to provide additional buffer between day-to-day chalet use and active golf play.
- Add a practice green
- Provide a treed landscape buffer on the east side of Selkregg Lane to increase separation from the golf course and access drive/parking area
- Consider select use of the golf course for larger community-sponsored events



Caretaker Building

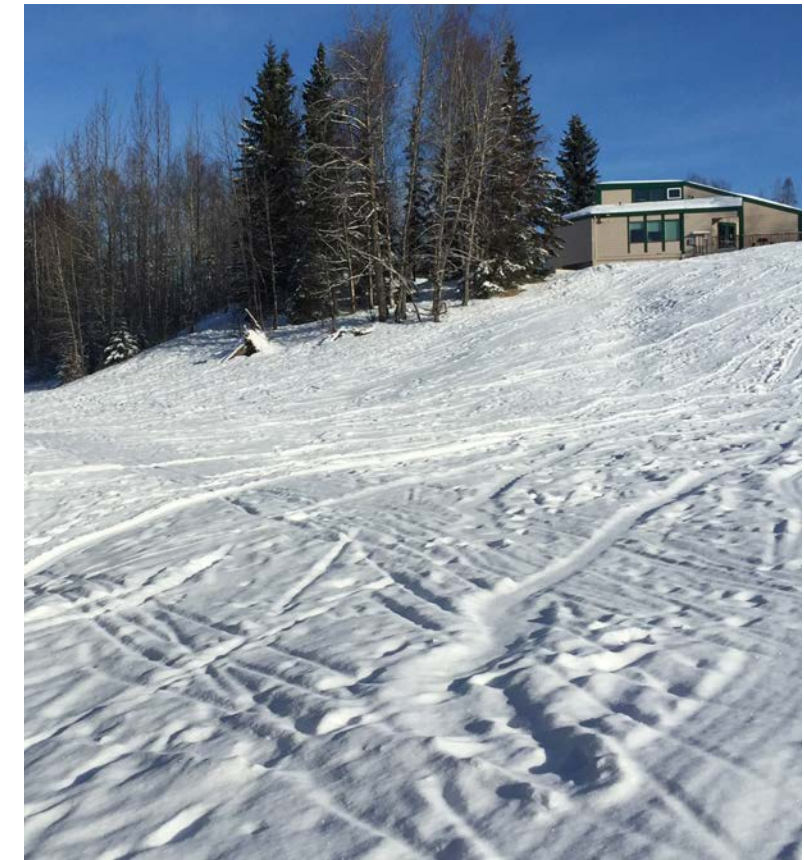
The Caretaker Building is home to the Northern Lights Model Railroad Club. The building is close to the end of its life cycle and is likely beyond repair. Consideration should be made to accommodate the Model Railroad Club in another location if the building is removed.

Sledding Hill

The sledding hill at Russian Jack Springs Park has long been a favorite family destination during Anchorage's long winters due to the size of the hill and proximity to the Chalet. However, the orientation of the hill and mature vegetation in the runout zone has created safety concerns which this Master Plan seeks to address. The Master Plan recommends site upgrades such as removing trees, moving light fixtures, and/or re-grading slopes to ensure that children and adults can sled safely and without obstructions. Where tree removal is necessary, the preference is for selective cutting.

Recommendations:

- Modify the sledding hill to provide for a safe runout zone
- Consider tree removal, moving light fixtures, and/or re-grading of slopes as potential options for improving sledding hill safety



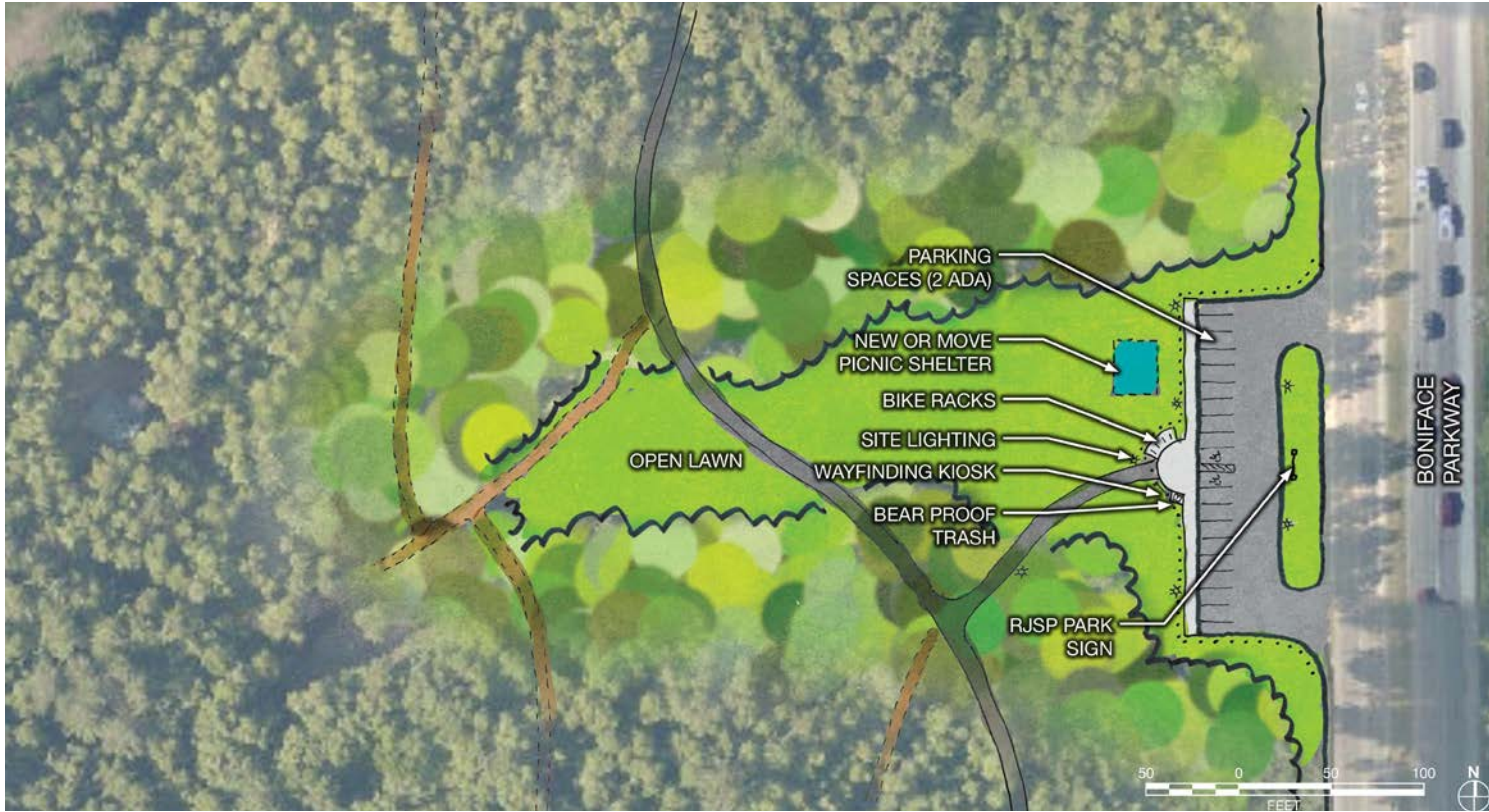
Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouses

The Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouses are an essential facility for the Parks and Recreation Department, providing year-round cultivation of flowers for the beautification of Anchorage parks each summer. The Master Plan recommends continued upgrades of the Mann Leiser Greenhouses including the conversion to energy efficient LED lights, upgrades to heating and cooling systems, and general facility upgrades. Additionally, the Master Plan recommends further evaluation of greenhouse structures and systems to determine a timeline for replacement of greenhouse buildings.








BONIFACE SOUTH GATEWAY

The Boniface South Gateway provides a destination space on the east side of the park for recreation and small community gatherings. The Boniface South Gateway reimagines this former picnic area as an inviting gateway into Russian Jack Springs Park with a redesigned parking lot and features such as a picnic shelter and open lawn, new amenities, and access to paved and soft surface trails for skiing, biking, walking and nature appreciation.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

-  Reconstruct the parking lot to enhance visibility from Boniface Pkwy for improved security and access.
-  Expand the existing open lawn and install a new picnic shelter or relocate the existing shelter to support community use.
-  Provide pedestrian amenities including bike racks, trash cans, and informational kiosks to improve user experience.
-  Install directional signage and wayfinding to direct park users to facilities and points of interest within the park.
-  Provide lighting to improve safety and user experience, especially around the parking lot and picnic shelter areas.

Boniface South Parking Lot

The Master Plan recommends a redesign of the parking lot at the Boniface South Gateway to address longstanding safety and security concerns caused by its current secluded location. The redesigned parking lot should provide for better visibility into the park allowing for improved safety and security. Design of the parking lot should consider Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. The parking lot should also include lighting, ADA parking spaces, and new amenities to support community use.



Existing parking area and lawn

Circulation and Trails

With the redevelopment of the parking lot, the main multi-use trail should be modified to improve overall circulation in the area. The current configuration of the multi-use trail, parking lot and driveway up to the former picnic area includes a sharp turn, elevation changes, and no clear wayfinding. The Master Plan recommends re-aligning the multi-use trail in this area and adding wayfinding to improve circulation and help park visitors safely navigate the park. The former driveway could remain paved or revert to a soft-surface trail.

Picnic Shelter + Open Lawn

A main feature of the Boniface South Gateway will be the picnic shelter and open lawn. As the parking lot is redeveloped closer to Boniface Pkwy., the additional space allows for an expansion of the open lawn and the development of an easily accessible picnic shelter. The picnic shelter could be replaced, or the existing structure could be moved from the former day use area to the west. Former outbuildings in the South Boniface area should be rehabilitated or removed. If removed, port-o-potties with decorative screening should be provided by the parking lot.



Existing trails from parking area

Hilltop Picnic Area

The former picnic area at the top of the hill provides some of the best views of the Chugach Mountains in Russian Jack Springs Park. Due to its hidden location, the Master Plan does not recommend new development in this area. However, the Master Plan recommends restoring this area into a more natural state along with some benches and signage in areas where views are favorable. Being close to a well-used trail, this area is ideal for respite and views. The paved driveway could remain or revert to a soft-surface trail.







20TH AVE. NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAY

The 20th Ave Neighborhood Gateway is located at the intersection of the E 20th Avenue and Glacier Street in south Russian Jack Springs Park. The Master Plan identifies pedestrian level upgrades to better serve neighbors visiting the park and to address ongoing issues of dumping and after-hours activity. The Master Plan replaces the undeveloped pull out at 20th Ave and Glacier Street with vegetation and other vehicle control measures to eliminate parking for non-park related activities. Site lighting and information kiosks formalize the entrance and an ADA accessible trail provides access to trails within the park. Visitors traveling to the park by vehicle will be encouraged to use other more established parking areas within the park.



Existing park entrance at 20th Ave. and Glacier St.

RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Revegetate the undeveloped vehicle pull out at Glacier St. and 20th Ave. to discourage parking and unwanted activities such as dumping.
-  Install access control measures such as bollards, boulders, or landscape plantings to prevent vehicles from entering paths or trails.
-  Provide a wayfinding kiosk to orient and direct park users to facilities and points of interest.
-  Construct multi-use pathway access from 20th Ave. to connect to existing pathways (align pathway to existing contours to reduce major earthwork and achieve accessible grades).
-  Install site lighting at gateway entrance and along pathway.
-  Provide pedestrian amenities such as bear-proof trash receptacles, kiosks, and park signage.

PARKWIDE TRAIL AND AMENITY IMPROVEMENTS






The trails at Russian Jack Springs Park offer visitors a unique opportunity to experience wilderness in the urban context of East Anchorage. The park features an extensive network of paved and soft surface trails that are popular among nature enthusiasts, active recreationalist, and commuters. Yet, many of the trails in Russian Jack Springs Park need repairs and the community desires future investment in new trails and amenities.

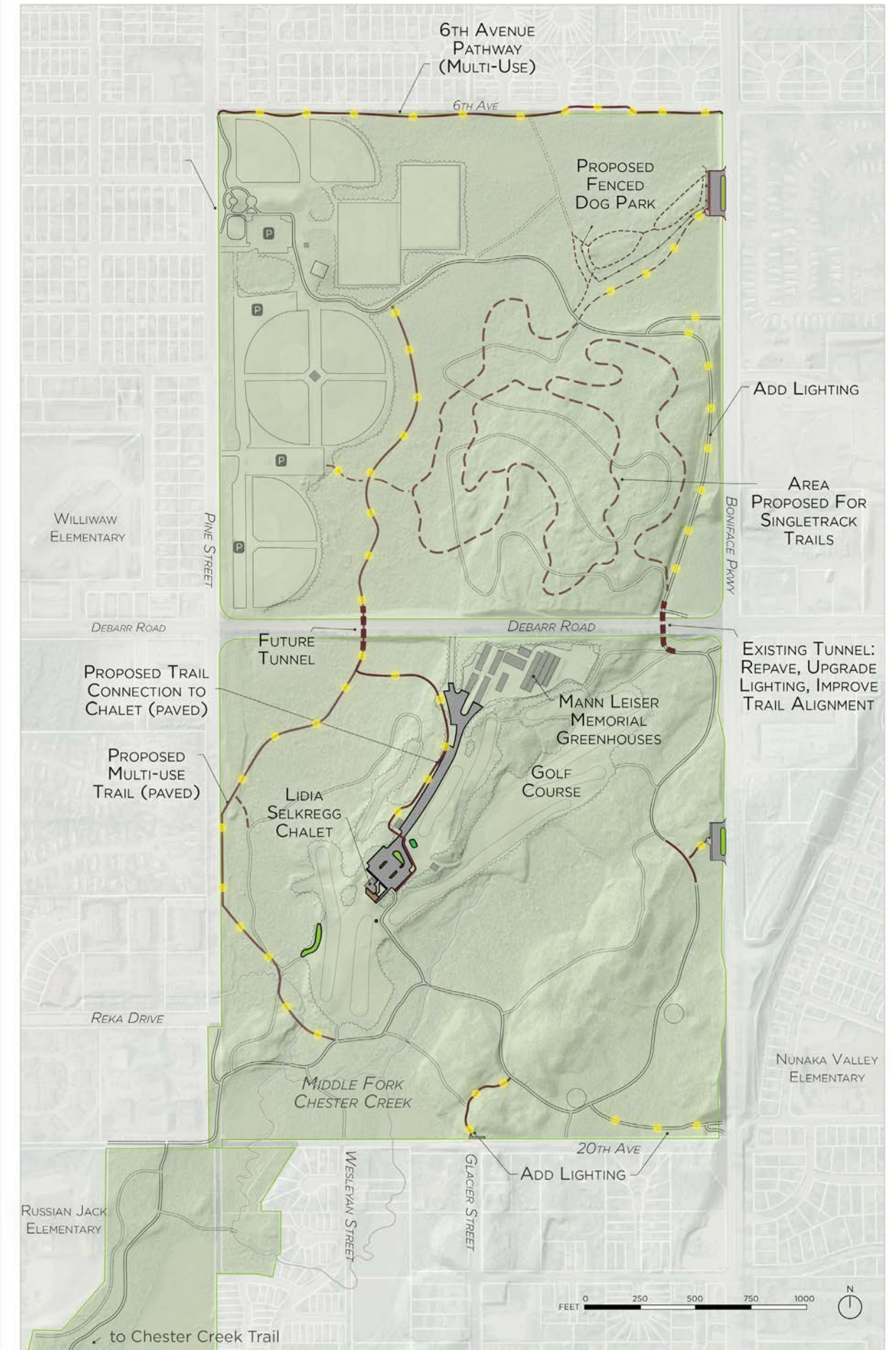
The Master Plan provides recommendations that address deficiencies in the existing trail system and identifies new trails and amenities to improve safety and expand recreational opportunities.



NOTE: Recommendations in this section are organized from the most developed (paved multi-use trail) to the least developed facility (unmanaged soft-surface trails).

RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Upgrade and maintain existing paved multi-use trails including pavement replacement, site line improvements, additional lighting, and bridge upgrades.
-  Upgrade existing Nordic ski trails to improve usability.
-  Develop new singletrack trails in North Russian Jack Springs Park to provide for new recreational opportunities and activation of space.
-  Develop a new paved multi-use trail and tunnel in the western portion of Russian Jack Springs Park that connects the north and south portions of the park and creates an internal park loop.
-  Add trail amenities such as benches, wayfinding signage, trail kiosks, and lighting to improve navigation and highlight destinations within Russian Jack Springs Park.



Trail Specifications

	Paved Multi-Use
WIDTH	8' - 10'
CLEARANCE	12'- 14'
CLASS	Class 5: Fully Developed
SURFACE	Asphalt with soft surface shoulder
USE	Skate + classic skiing Walking Dog walking Orienteering Running Cycling Commuting Rollerblading Nordic skating
MANAGEMENT	Managed

Existing Paved Multi-Use Trails

Paved multi-use trails are the arteries of Russian Jack Springs Park that connect facilities and destinations within the park to neighborhoods and the larger Anchorage trail system. In many areas of the park, tree root damage and general lifespan issues have caused the multi-use trail to deteriorate, and upgrades are needed.

The Master Plan recommends upgrades to existing multi-use trails, including the rehabilitation and/or replacement of deteriorating asphalt, installation of lighting in missing sections, and the addition of new amenities such as wayfinding signage, kiosks, and maps. These trail upgrades were identified as one of the top priorities during the master planning process.

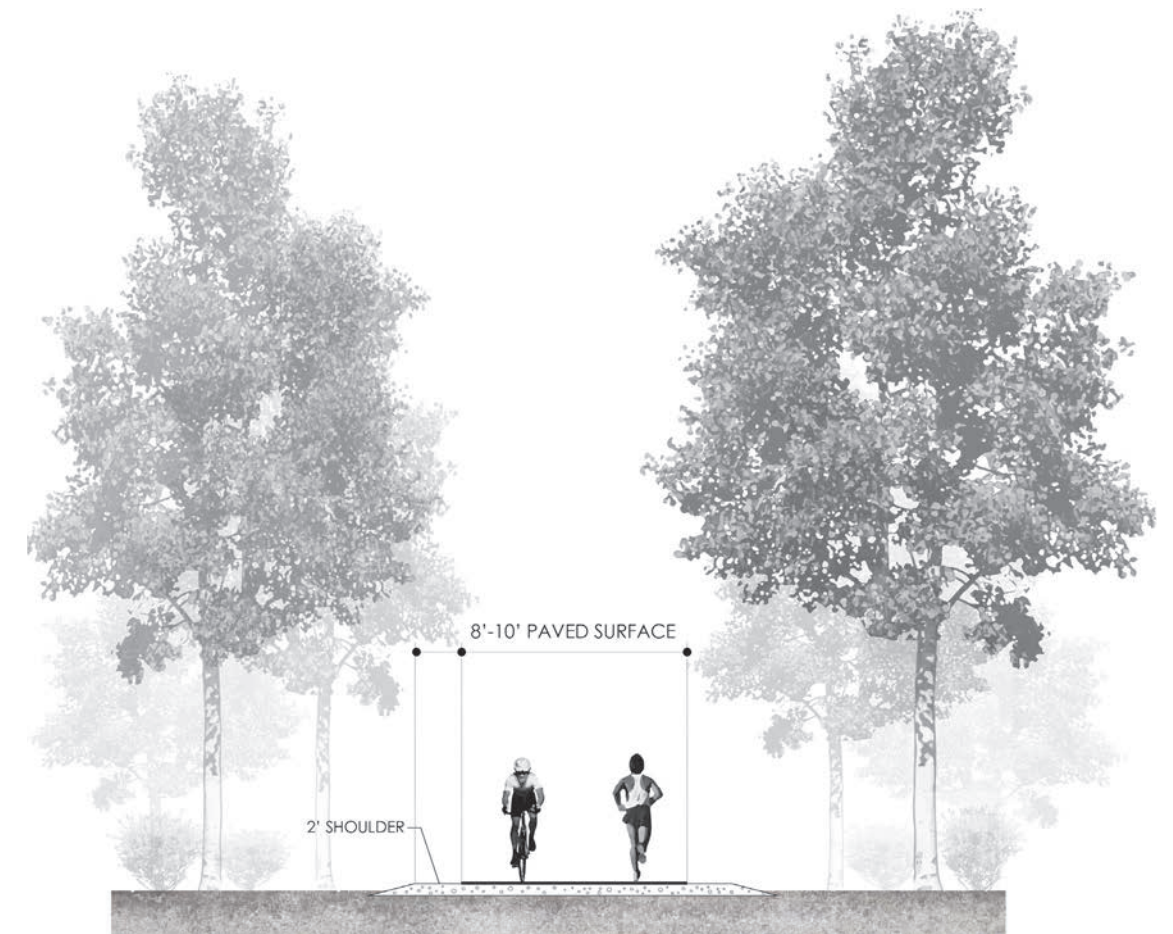
Recommendations:

- Improve the existing pedestrian tunnel under Debarr Rd. with upgraded lighting, an improved trail alignment, and repaved surface
- Rehabilitate cracking and deteriorating multi-use pathways to improve safety and usability for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Maintain multi-use trails in the winter for all users, including skiers, bikers, dog walkers, hikers and runners
- Upgrade existing lighting to high-efficiency LED lighting and add lighting to missing sections of multi-use trail:
 - North Russian Jack Springs Park parallel to Boniface Pkwy. (approximately 1000 l.f.)
 - Nunaka Valley spur trail to tunnel
- Develop and install signage and wayfinding throughout the park to help park and trail users navigate the park.
- Add amenities such as benches, kiosks, and information signage to improve the park experience.

West Russian Jack Springs Park Multi-Use Trail and Tunnel

The master planning process revealed a strong desire within the community to develop a paved multi-use trail in the western portion of Russian Jack Springs Park. The trail would serve several purposes: 1) provide new opportunities for recreation within the park; 2) improve internal circulation and access to facilities within the park; 3) provide a second connection between north and south Russian Jack Springs Park; and, 4) improve safety with the addition of lighting and amenities.

The proposed trail would create an internal loop trail and would provide for improved access, circulation and connections between north and south Russian Jack Springs Park. The trail creates a large internal park loop trail and provides direct connections to facilities such as the greenhouses and Lidia Selkregg Chalet, Cartee Fields, cross-country skiing and singletrack trails.



Trail Specifications

	Nordic Ski Trail	Skate-Skiing Lane
WIDTH	6' - 8'	10' - 18'
CLEARANCE	8' - 12'	12' - 22'
CLASS	Class 3: Developed	Class 4: Highly Developed (seasonal)
SURFACE	Summer: native soils, graded, smooth Winter: groomed snow	Summer: lawn, smooth Winter: groomed snow
USE	Classic skiing Walking Nature appreciation Dog walking Hiking Orienteering Running Biking	Skate and classic skiing
MANAGEMENT	Managed	Managed

Nordic Ski Trails

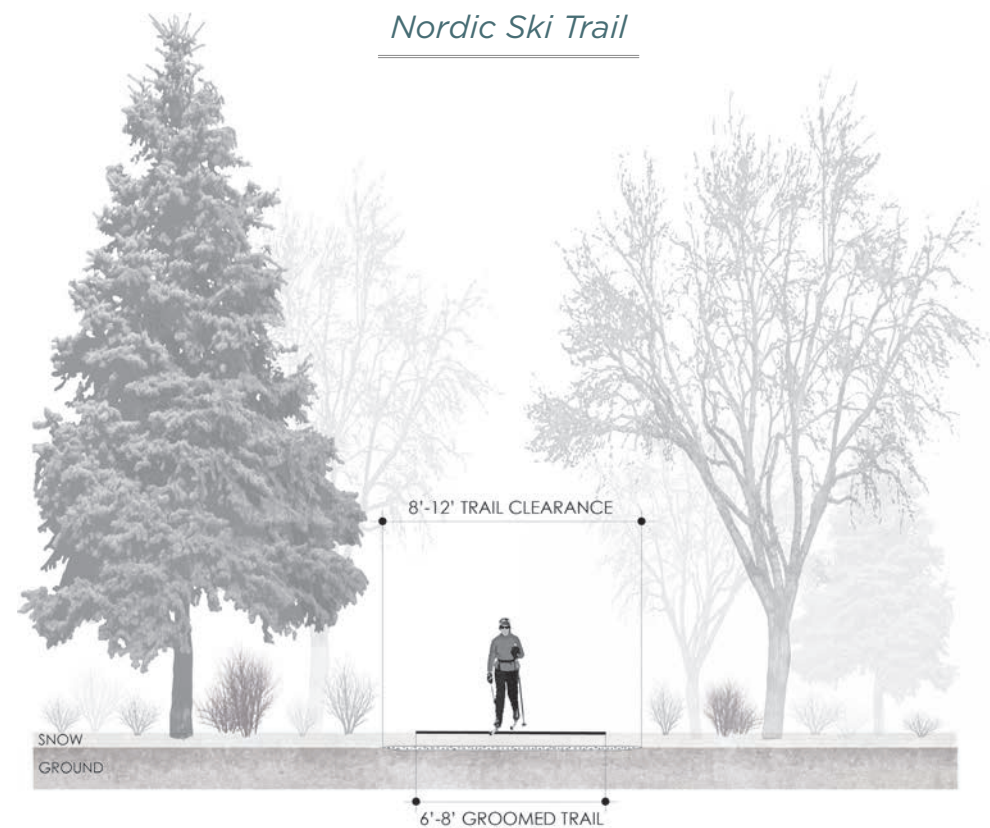
Russian Jack Springs Park has long history of cross-country skiing and today is home to 8.2 miles of groomed trails. The Master Plan envisions continued use of the park for Nordic skiing with some trail upgrades to improve usability and overall experience. Most upgrades focus on the classic-only trails, as the skate skiing lanes are located on the golf course and can be modified via grooming patterns. The plan also recommends continued winter grooming of the north soccer field ski loop to enhance seasonal use in the north section of the park.

Upgrades to the classic-only Nordic trails focus on re-aligning select sections of trail to eliminate sharp turns and improve flow. The Master Plan also recommends general maintenance such as clearing overgrown brush and trail tread upgrades to improve drainage and minimize erosion. Additionally, the Master Plan recommends the installation of trail kiosks with signage, maps, and wayfinding to help skiers navigate the trail system.

Skate-Skiing Lane



Nordic Ski Trail



Trail Specifications

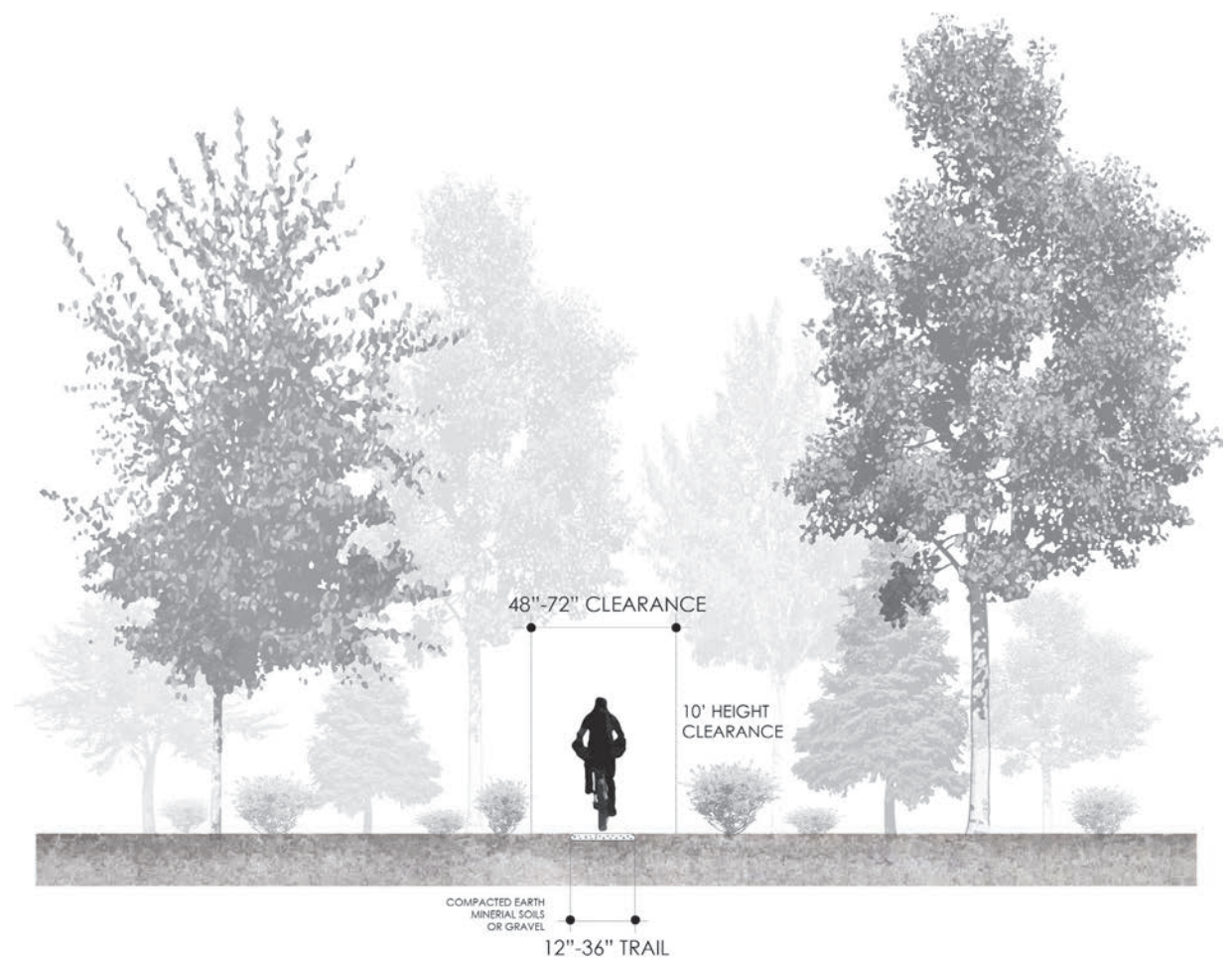
	Singletrack + Hiking Trails	Unmanaged Soft-Surface Trails
WIDTH	12" - 36"	6" - 18"
CLEARANCE	48" - 72"	18" - 36"
CLASS	Class 2/3: Moderately Developed to Developed	Class 1: Minimally Developed
SURFACE	<i>Singletrack</i> : mineral soils, smooth <i>Hiking Trail</i> : gravel or native soils	Primitive, native soils, ungraded, rough
USE	Nature appreciation Mountain biking Dog walking Hiking Orienteering Running Walking	Nature appreciation Walking Hiking Orienteering Wildlife
MANAGEMENT	Managed	Unmaintained

Singletrack Trails

Singletrack mountain biking has become a popular sport in Anchorage over the past decade with new trails in Kincaid Park, Hillside/Far North Bicentennial Park, and Mirror Lake in Chugiak. Yet, there are currently few, if any, developed singletrack trails in East Anchorage. During the master planning process, new singletrack trails were identified as one of the top priorities for future development at Russian Jack Springs Park.

The Master Plan recommends the development of singletrack mountain bike trails in north Russian Jack Springs Park in the area currently set aside for Nordic skiing. The development of singletrack trails in combination with Nordic ski trails has proven successful in other locations and provides opportunities for year-round trail recreation in this relatively underused area of the park. Further, the location of singletrack trails in north Russian Jack Springs Park balances the community's desire for new trails with the preservation of sensitive natural areas in south Russian Jack Springs Park such as the spring, the Middle Fork of Chester Creek, riparian areas, and wetlands.

Singletrack trails should be geared towards riders of all abilities and skill levels and utilize existing contours and features. The Master Plan does not propose a specific layout for singletrack trails in north Russian Jack Springs Park; rather, it provides a general area for future trail development by identifying potential locations for future access and connections to parking and the larger trail network.



Unmanaged Soft-Surface Trails

In addition to more formally developed Nordic ski trails, Russian Jack Springs Park is home to a large network of smaller soft surface trails. These trails provide for an intimate and immersive experience in nature and are used regularly by neighbors and park users. Many of these trails are unmanaged social trails or game trails that have evolved over time with continued use. The Parks and Recreation Department does not typically manage or maintain social trails on parkland but does monitor these trails to address safety and environmental issues.

Over the years, some former social trails have been upgraded to create a more sustainable tread and improve access to neighborhoods or park facilities.

The Master Plan recognizes that the community may wish to formally upgrade existing social trails or develop new soft surface trails in the future. Future proposals should be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Department and the Parks and Recreation Commission and should be upgraded to Class 2/3 standards for hiking trails.



Nordic ski trail



Paved multi-use trail



Example singletrack, Valley of the Moon Park

PROGRAMMING

Russian Jack Springs Park offers a diverse range of recreational activities for park users of all ages and abilities. The new and improved facilities identified in this Master Plan will help facilitate special events and expand educational and recreational programming. With a renovation of the Lidia Selkregg Chalet, the addition of a picnic shelter and open lawn in the Boniface South Gateway, and new and upgraded parking lots and access points; Russian Jack Springs Park will be well suited to host a variety of community events. As the facilities that host programming are for the use and enjoyment by the community, the Municipality should work with community partners and businesses to help sponsor events and program the park. Revenue potential from facility rentals could provide a return on investment over time for the Municipality.



A First Tee event on the golf course with Polaris K-12

MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Maintenance of all park facilities is a key component of this Master Plan. Regular maintenance and management will keep park facilities in a desirable condition and is important to the public's perception of safety and quality of facilities. One park-wide strategy is to update all trash cans in the park to bear-resistant trash cans. The Parks and Recreation Department is carrying out this transition throughout Anchorage. The interpretive signage plan throughout the park should also be used as a tool to encourage proper stewardship of the park.

A clean and well-maintained park also increases community pride and stewardship of their public places. Opportunities to partner with community organizations to share resources and responsibilities are encouraged where appropriate to keep costs manageable and help harness a stronger sense of community ownership. Over time, use of park facilities and trails should be monitored to understand trends in park use and to address issues as they arise.

With the improvements outlined in this Master Plan, Russian Jack Springs Park will continue to be special place for generations to come and a source of pride for East Anchorage residents.



A volunteer during the 2012 Playground Palooza



5 IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

The Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan provides a guide for the management, maintenance, and development of Russian Jack Springs Park over the next 20 years. The following implementation section describes some of the steps needed to realize the community's vision defined in this Master Plan. Timelines for implementation strategies are approximate and based on the information, knowledge, and priorities of the community at the time of master plan development. Priorities may shift in the community and consequently affect the proposed timeline. Cost estimates are planning level and intended to help decision makers understand potential future investment costs.

PLAN APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

Master plan approval is a three-step process.

- 1 Russian Jack and Northeast Community Councils
- 2 Parks and Recreation Commission
- 3 Planning and Zoning Commission

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: TITLE 21 LAND USE REGULATIONS

Implementation of the Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan will conform to zoning and land use regulations established by Anchorage Municipal Code, Title 21 Land Use Planning. As master plan improvements are implemented through site design; on-site development shall adhere to all required property setbacks, stream setbacks, landscape requirements, parking requirements, allowable uses and dimensional standards to ensure conformance with Title 21 regulations. Some improvements may require additional review and approvals from the MOA Planning Department, Urban Design Commission, and other regulatory agencies, as determined by Title 21.

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS (M.A.S.S.)

Implementation of the Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan at the site design level will conform to specifications for construction established in the Municipality of Anchorage Standard Specifications (M.A.S.S.).



FUNDING SOURCES

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The Municipality of Anchorage uses the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as the main planning and budgeting tool to identify desired public facilities and capital improvements over a six-year cycle. Park development projects are not typically top priorities on the CIP but do receive support and funding when available.

Municipal Park Bonds

Historically, park improvement projects have been funded in large part by the passage of voter supported Municipal Park Bonds. Continued engagement with the public and successful implementation of park projects demonstrates the value of investments in park improvement projects. Additionally, AMATS which uses Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Transportation Alternatives (TAP) funding for non-motorized transportation projects within and between Anchorage Parks has been a successful funding mechanism. When applicable, Park Bonds provide the local match to federal non-motorized transportation funds.

State and Federal Grants

State and federal grants provide various levels of funding for capital improvement projects in parks. In recent years, state legislative grants have helped fund millions of dollars in investments in Anchorage parks. However, this source of funding has proven less reliable in times of budgetary uncertainty. A variety of federal grants are also available and worth pursuing. For example, the recently completed Muldoon Town Square Park Master Plan (now Chanshtnu Muldoon Park) was used to support a successful Land Water and Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant application, which yielded \$750,000 in funding to further park development. Successful state and federal grants may be leveraged to apply for additional private or public grant funding where applicable.

Public-Private Partnerships

Implementation of the improvements identified in this Master Plan for Russian Jack Springs Park may benefit from funding from non-governmental sources. Collaboration with community partners such as the Anchorage Park Foundation have proven successful in leveraging available funds and matching grants. Philanthropic interests provide another potential source of funding for park improvements. Organizations such as the Rasmuson Foundation, have worked closely with the Anchorage Park Foundation to invest millions of dollars into improving Anchorage Parks. Local business and major corporations have also contributed to park improvement projects over the years and provide another avenue for funding.

For smaller projects, the Anchorage Park Foundation's Challenge Grant Program provides matching grants to individuals and organizations up to \$40,000. These challenge grants have been extremely successful in mobilize community support and resources for smaller capital projects.

Additionally, recreational organizations who benefit from park facilities have and may continue to provide programming, fundraising and facility maintenance support. Organizations such as the Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage (NSAA), First Tee Alaska, Alaska Trails, Single Track Advocates (STA), and the various soccer and baseball leagues could be potential sources for beneficial partnerships.

Fundraising

Anchorage residents, organizations, and business owners who support the vision of Russian Jack Springs Park may be inclined to contribute time or resources to the future park development. The Master Plan supports and encourages continued engagement with local stakeholders to build community ownership and leverage funds to provide added value to park improvement project.

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	ESTIMATED COSTS	TIMEFRAME	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER*
1	Master Plan Approvals	\$5,500	3 to 6 months	PRD, PRC, PZC, MOA Planning Dept.
2	Fundraising for Improvements	TBD	Ongoing	PRD, Residents, Advisory Group, Anchorage Park Foundation, User Groups
3	Monitor and Manage Natural Resources	TBD	Ongoing	PRD, ADF&G, MOA Watershed Mgmt., USFWS
4A	Existing Trail Improvements , Trail Lighting, Wayfinding and Maintenance	\$750,000 - \$1.5 Million	1-2 years	PRD, YEP, AMATS
4B	Upgrade Existing Tunnel	\$1 - 2 Million	5-10 years	PRD, PM&E, DOT&PF
4C	New Trail and Tunnel Improvements (North to South Russian Jack Springs Park Connection)	\$2.5 - \$5 Million	5-10 years	PRD, PM&E, DOT&PF
5	Northwest Gateway: Pine St. /6 th Ave. and Additional Landscaping Improvements	\$500,000 - \$750,000	Ongoing	PRD, PM&E
6	Northwest Gateway: North Sports Fields Improvements	\$500,000 - \$1.5 Million	Ongoing	PRD, Sports Leagues
7	Northeast Gateway: Parking Lot and Dog Park Improvements	\$500,000 - 750,000	2-5 years	PRD, DOT&PF
8	Boniface South Gateway: Parking Lot and Pavilion Improvements	\$500,000 - \$750,000	2-5 years	PRD, DOT&PF
9	20th Ave. Neighborhood Gateway: Improvements	\$100,000 - \$250,000	2-5 years	PRD, PM&E
10A	Lidia Selkregg Chalet Area: Facility Improvements	\$500,000 - \$750,000	2-5 years	PRD
10B	Lidia Selkregg Chalet Area: Chalet Renovation and Modernization	\$750,000 - \$1.5 Million	5-10 years	PRD
10C	Lidia Selkregg Chalet Area: Access Drive and Parking Improvements	\$750,000	2-5 years	PRD
11	Review and Update Master Plan	\$25,000	Long-Range 10-20 Years	PRD

* IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)

PRD = Parks and Recreation Department

PRC = Parks and Recreation Commission

PZC = Planning and Zoning Commission

PM&E = Project Management and Engineering Department

AMATS = Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions

YEP = Youth Employment in Parks

State/Federal

DOT&PF = Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

DF&G = Alaska Department of Fish and Game

USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



6

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: RESOLUTIONS



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska Parks & Recreation Commission

632 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 630
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519
Tel 907-343-4355



PRC RES NO. 2022-01 RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, Russian Jack Springs Park is a 324-acre Special Use park that serves the year-round recreation needs of both nearby residents and the Anchorage community at large,

WHEREAS, Russian Jack Springs Park features important natural resources and a variety of developed facilities including the Lidia Selkregg Chalet, golf course, municipal greenhouses, play areas, sports fields, picnic shelters, paved and soft-surface trails; and

WHEREAS, the *Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan* is an updated to the 1979 and 2002 Master Plans and provides a 20-year vision for the management, maintenance, and development of the park; and

WHEREAS, the *Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan* includes a Natural Resource Management Plan which outlines goals, objectives and action items intended to balance the development of recreational facilities with the preservation of natural areas; and,

WHEREAS, the master planning process was driven by public engagement and stakeholder input and included presentations to community councils, interviews with user groups, online surveys, public workshops, and an Advisory Group representing a diverse range of interest, community, and stakeholder groups; and,

WHEREAS, the Master Plan identifies six areas of focus to address community-identified issues and desired future improvements: this includes the Northwest Gateway, Northeast Gateway, Lidia Selkregg Chalet Area, Boniface South Gateway, 20th Ave. Neighborhood Gateway, and Parkwide Trail Improvements; and,

WHEREAS, the Northwest Gateway is one of the park's most popular destinations and recommendations intend to support existing uses; this includes landscaping, new amenities, sports field upgrades, bike and pedestrian circulation upgrades, and regular maintenance; and,

PRC Resolution 2022-01
January 13, 2022
Page 2 of 2

WHEREAS, the Northeast Gateway creates a new access point into Russian Jack Springs Park from Northeast Anchorage and re-envision the long unused campground as a launching point for exploration into the park with paved and soft surface trails, a designated off-leash dog park area, a new parking lot, and upgraded amenities; and,

WHEREAS, the Lidia Selkregg Chalet Area is a popular year-round destination with aging facilities in need of investment and upgrades; recommendations seek to improve usability and community gathering space through Chalet modernization, parking lot and circulation upgrades, modification of the sledding hill to improve safety, upgrades to the golf course, greenhouse facility upgrades, and new amenities; and,

WHEREAS, the Boniface South Gateway reimages the former picnic area as an inviting gateway into the park with a redesigned parking lot and features such as a picnic shelter and open lawn, new amenities, and access and circulation upgrades to paved and soft surface trails; and,

WHEREAS, the 20th Avenue Neighborhood Gateway provides a formal, developed neighborhood access point to the park and includes pedestrian scale upgrades such as site lighting, information kiosks, ADA trail access, and revegetation; and,

WHEREAS, the Master Plan includes Parkwide Trail Improvements to address deficiencies in the existing trail system and identifies new trails and amenities such as new singletrack trails, upgrades to existing Nordic ski trails, rehabilitation of existing paved multi-use trails, a new paved multi-use trail and tunnel in the western portion of park, lighting, bridge replacement, wayfinding, and trail amenities; and,

WHEREAS, the recommendations proposed in the Master Plan are based on community and stakeholder input and have been vetted by the Advisory Group through deliberation and consensus; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the *Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan* as submitted by the Parks and Recreation Department.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 13th day of January 2022.

Chair Grace Johnston
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

Joshua Durand, Director
Parks & Recreation Department

**RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION 2021-002**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL (RJCC) IN SUPPORT
OF THE PROPOSED MASTER PLAN FOR RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK**

WHEREAS, Russian Jack Springs Park is a 324-acre Special Use park located in the heart of East Anchorage,

WHEREAS, Russian Jack Springs Park is used for year-round recreation and features the Lidia Selkregg Chalet, a golf course, municipal greenhouses, play areas, sports fields, picnic shelters, paved and soft-surface trails, and significant natural resources,

WHEREAS, in 2019 the Parks and Recreation department began a public process to update the 1979 and 2002 versions of the Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan,

WHEREAS, the proposed Master Plan provides a community vision to provide active and healthy year-round recreation and preserve important natural resources for the next 20 years at Russian Jack Springs Park,

WHEREAS, the proposed Master Plan summarizes actions desired from the community to improve park access, safety, maintenance, and overall usability, as well as outlines natural resource management objectives,

WHEREAS, the proposed Master Plan provides conceptual diagrams describing improvements to major use areas of the park alongside park-wide trail and amenity upgrades,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the RJCC supports the proposed Master Plan for Russian Jack Springs Park.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS APPROVED by the Russian Jack Community Council on September 8, 2021 by a vote of: FOR 10, AGAINST 0, ABSTAIN 0.



President, Russian Jack Community Council

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE

PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1 SUMMARY

Wednesday, February 27, 2019
Williwaw Elementary School
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Project Team & Attendance

MOA Parks & Recreation Department

Steve Rafuse, Project Manager
Josh Durand, Parks Superintendent

R&M Consultants, Inc.

Van Le, AICP, Planner & PI Lead
Taryn Oleson, Planner & PI

Bettisworth North

Mark Kimerer, ASLA

Advisory Group Members in Attendance

Kristi Wood, NECC
Kristin Myers, Park Neighbor
Mick Brogan, First Tee President
Erin Kirkland, PRC/East ANC Resident
Eric Milliken, PRC/East ANC Resident
Carla McConnell, NECC/ANC Sports Association
Lisa McGuire, RJCC/Park Neighbor
Dante Petri, Arctic Cyclocross
Gary Snyder, East High Cross Country Coach

Elected Representatives in Attendance

Pete Peterson, Anchorage Assemblymen

Total Attendance: 53 people signed into the meeting

Meeting Materials:

1. PowerPoint Presentation
2. Station Graphics
3. Sign In
4. Comment Forms

Workshop Outreach

- (2) Workshop Invite Postcards mailed to 1208 addresses within 550 ft. of park and to all Community Councils
- Flyers posted at access points and trail junctions in RJSP
- Flyers posted at area businesses
- Flyers shared with area churches/congregations
- Federation of Community Councils email notification
- KSKA Alaska Public Media news brief
- Event shared on Nextdoor reaching 45,984 accounts
- Direct email outreach to Community Councils within one mile of the park
- Direct email outreach to Anchorage Assembly and State Representatives
- Facebook Event
- E-Newsletter Emails
- Project Website updates
- Russian Jack Community Council Attendance 01/09/19
- NECC Attendance 1/17/19 & 2/21/19
- NECC Parks Committee 1/17/19 & 2/21/19
- Advisory Group Meeting 1/31/19

Workshop Summary

The first workshop for the Russian Jack Springs Park (RJSP) Master Plan Update was held in the Multi-purpose room at Williwaw Elementary School, on February 27th, 2019. As attendees arrived, they were greeted by members of the planning team who explained the format of the meeting and helped them sign in. Display boards with maps, photos, graphics, and information about the planning process were available for viewing as workshop participants arrived.

At 6:15PM, Steve Rafuse from Anchorage Parks and Recreation welcomed workshop participants and introduced the planning team. Steve then provided a brief overview of the workshop agenda and how participants could provide comments throughout the event. The workshop continued with a formal presentation.



The presentation outlined the goals of the master planning process, described the history of planning and development at RJSP, highlighted important natural resources, and included a photo tour of the park. The presentation also illustrated parks and recreation facilities in and around Russian Jack Springs Park to provide areawide context. The presentation concluded with the question asking participants "What does your ideal Russian Jack Springs Park look like?"

Following the presentation, Van Le led a large group visioning exercise. She asked attendees to imagine what the park might look like in ten years, encouraging them to dream big. Many workshop participants shared what they value about RJSP and what they envision for their future Russian Jack Springs Park. Comments from this exercise are summarized on the follow page.

Following the large group visioning exercise, workshop participants went to breakout stations. Seven stations featuring a range of topics were arranged around the room.

Workshop Stations:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. About RJSP & Master Plan | 5. Winter Recreation |
| 2. North RJSP Facilities | 6. Access and Connections |
| 3. South RJSP Facilities | 7. Trails |
| 4. Natural Resources | |

Each station included maps, photos, aerial imagery, and other graphics and was facilitated by a member of the RJSP Master Plan advisory group. Workshop participants were encouraged to share comments directly on the posters using post-it notes as well as to fill out comment forms. After an hour, the facilitator from each station provided a report back to the large group and shared the common themes.

The workshop concluded with a 'thank you' from the planning team and brief description of next steps and how members of the community can continue to participate in the master planning process. The meeting ended at the scheduled time of 8:00 PM.

Visioning Exercise Summary

The following is a summary of workshop participant comments from the visioning exercise.

- Great Park with so many great features, but even more potential.
 - Park is under-utilized
- Railroad club building is outdated – update it and make it more public friendly and accessible as it's currently underused facility with potential.
- Water Quality should be a high priority – outflow near Reka Drive is especially concerning.
- There is no recreation center in this area and we need one – Russian Jack could provide the opportunity to serve as a rec center by expanding the Chalet to include a gym, better gathering places.
- Increase the active users in the park to bring positive change and legitimate uses to areas currently being used for illegitimate or illegal activities
 - More users = More safety
- Increase the connection between the North and South sides of the park. They are physically separated and there is no opportunity to make a loop between the two sides on trails.
 - Current tunnel under Debarr is not welcoming ("scary") and needs an upgrade.
 - Add another trail grade-crossing tunnel to connect north and south ends of the park to make it a loop
- Reforestation – restore the areas where trees have been downed and keep the wild areas wild
- Singletrack trails should be incorporated into the park – trails would support beginner to intermediate level riders/users, and would be intended to serve the local area and immediate neighborhoods (not like Kincaid where they serve the whole Anchorage Bowl)
 - BMX track and pump track facility for kids to learn to ride
 - Cyclocross races are growing in popularity – it would be great to have a trail designed to accommodate a use like that at least once a year
 - Singletrack would be a positive use
- Clear signage of use-specific v multi-use trails (where are the ski only trails?)
- Available restrooms
- Possible relocation of the greenhouses could leave an opportunity to redevelop that sight
 - Add community gardens if the greenhouses relocate
- Expanded opportunities for kids in East Anchorage to learn to ski and skate – don't need a lake or pond but potentially a skate ribbon like the one at Muldoon Chanshtnu Park, and would love to see snow making for skiing
- Develop a positive plan for the old campground area
- Address the littering in the summer especially – add more trashcans and dog-poop stations and signage
- Love the wild, quiet environment of the park
 - Vision is to keep it as wild as possible



Comment Form Summary

The following comments were submitted on comment forms and are organized by topic and/or area:

- RJSP is unique to Anchorage and full of potential
- "I value absolutely everything about Russian Jack Springs Park; from the trails to playgrounds, from the skate park to the ball parks, from wild beautiful areas to the chalet and greenhouses. The park is a gem in our city that out to be preserved and used respectively by all, and property maintained." – Lisa McGuire
- Keep it as wild as possible
 - Having a wild, quiet natural space to walk, ski and bike is a huge bonus or the mental health of people living in any city
 - I like that the park has non-developed areas that give one the sense of nature isolation while being within a large urban area.
 - Keep the woods- it's the only wooded park in Midtown/East Anchorage
 - No new development requiring tree clearing of any kind.
- School/Community Engagement
 - More school involvement in the park
 - Encourage year-round forest, wetland exploration by area elementary schools- it's a fabulous lab
 - More outreach to get more people to use the park
 - Expand learning partnerships with schools and nature-oriented groups like at Campbell Creek Science Center – get kids outside
 - Encourage Mighty Bikes organization to start mountain bike summer classes for kids using the existing trails
- Love what the community did with Whisper Faith Park, it's a great set up and could easily fit into RJSP
- The north side seems to be more youth oriented; is there a way to get more adults using that half?

Safety

- Better lighting and more of it, especially the neighborhood connectors from Nunaka Valley and the multi-use trail from Pine Street to Boniface Pkwy.
- Demolish old structures, I have many female friends that don't venture into RJSP due to safety concerns and the old structures are sketchy
- Concerns about the possibilities that there may be some hidden camps in the park and it can feel a little uncomfortable if that is happening. That is my main concern of the area- I've come across camps in the areas I am walking the trails, especially the north side, there have been camp fires I fear getting out of control and parties happening in the summertime.
- Homeless camps off social trails leaving trash
- There were several comments tonight that increasing park usage would drive out the homeless camps – the Chester Creek trail has had an increasing problem with large homeless campsites and in an effort to stop those camps many areas of the trail have been expanded so now there is basically a super-highway along the river and through the woods. Increasing usage is a double edge sword, possibly decreasing the experience of those seeking a more natural experience, away from the hustle and bustle of Anchorage life.

Activities

- Skiing
 - more regular filling of the tunnel connecting the north and south sections of the park, perimeter trail should be multi-use
 - widen the Nordic ski trail on the north side slightly
 - continue to maintain the unpaved Nordic ski trail on the south side, north west of the chalet
 - skiers are a minority on the north side trails – are used as multi-use trails and MOA maps say the "Nordic ski trail" on the north side is multi-use
- Biking
 - Fat Bikes – prefer singletrack, cross-country ski interactions are not a big deal as proven by other places in town.
 - The topography lends itself to adding a few amazing beginning (kid friendly) bike trails – these would be a huge boom to the amount of traffic the polar bear park sees
 - Singletrack mountain bike trails would be good addition
 - Use YEP summer employees to create and maintain RJSP singletrack bike trails, using the many *existing* trails in the north and south sections
 - Upgrade existing single tracks for biking and seriously consider adding singletrack trails
 - No BMX or Cycle Cross in FJSP – it is being developed in Muldoon currently
 - Really bummed the single track trails funding had to be returned – a small community-sized system like Mirror Lake would be a huge benefit to the East and U-Med district residents.
 - Add bike Pump Track (dirt) to skate park
- Sledding
 - Mow down trees at the dangerous part of the sledding hill!
 - Remove the one light pole in the sledding impact zone
- Running
 - Enjoy the non-paved trail for trail running in the summer and use the multi-use paved trails in winter
 - Love the trail lighting for winter running – should expand to include a more clear loop or connection to the north side that feels safe in the winter/dark
- Trail use
 - having exclusive-use trails will cause more conflicts than it solves; no real need
 - Choose a pair of ski loops to maintain as ski-only groomed trails – revive some of the old ski trails – sign the ski only trails
 - I appreciate the ski grooming on the trails in the winter and although I am a skier, I like the multi-use aspect of most of the trails so that more people can enjoy the outdoors
 - Love the lighted trails in winter!

Access & Connections

- Park is key for connectivity from Chester Creek to Glenn Hwy Trails
- Reestablish trails in the area south of Debarr road, west of the greenhouses and north of the of the unpaved Nordic ski trail north of the Chalet and parking lot (northwest corner of south half of park)
 - This area is not activated and has a lot of potential
 - Rebuild the old wooden ski classic trails in this area and clear downed trees

- This area needs to be thinned/managed – there are semi-permanent camps there too as a result of the thicket and people avoid it as a result
- Put a new tunnel on west side under Debarr to connect the north and south ends better.
- Existing tunnel between north and south sides is dangerous – must have clear paving and sufficient lighting
 - Widen the existing tunnel – it's arrow and dangerous
 - Higher clearance is needed in the tunnel
 - Better lighting
 - More snow in winter, less gravel
- Something should be done about one of the entrances to the park at E 20th and Glacier St – the spot is currently infamous for discarding appliances, cars, etc. Solution could be eliminating this spot by planning trees there
- Maintain and improve neighborhood access
 - Better neighborhood interpretation and walkway access
 - Pedestrian crossings on Pine Street at E 8th Ave to Polar Bear Park – sidewalks in the neighborhoods are needed as well
 - Better signage and/or structures on the sidewalk/road to make a better visible connection to Mountain View and Ship Creek Trail
- Lighting
 - Light the trail connection to Nunaka Valley
 - Finish lighting the multi-use trail on the north side from the tunnel through Pine St.
- Install a short median and signage to prevent east-bound drivers on Debarr from driving un the turning lane to avoid traffic during rush hour – they are dangerous to park users trying to turn left into the park entrance
- Parking Lots
 - No expanding parking at expense of natural areas
 - Parking lot off Boniface
 - Remove it -only ever see drivers just loitering here and it's uncomfortable for kids on the trail to pass right by strangers sitting in cars in a hidden parking lot
 - A lot of drug deals and other illegitimate use happens here – put a gate up
 - Remove odd small parking lots or enlarge them to a size where they feel a lot safer for park users

Facilities

- Chalet
 - An additional chalet for a recreation center
 - Community center (RJSP facilities could serve this purpose)
 - Make the chalet more 'usable' to be the public – maybe opening up the space more
 - No expansion of the chalet
 - What happens in the public park chalet? Can non-profit groups meet there for free?
 - More programming at the chalet
 - Entry level/beginner programming – a lot of different income levels are around the park
 - Gardening, permaculture, foraging, food preservation, skiing, roller-skiing, biking, golfing with areas in park for hands-on learning
 - Reinstate rote tow at chalet

- Gear rental out of the Chalet – skis, bikes, etc. to encourage new/novice, occasionally tourist users – or even a library type model to borrow gear so money is not a barrier to recreation
- Would like to see continued support of the Northern Lights Model Railroad Club in the former caretaker cabin. The trail club has supported itself with no \$ assistance from the Muni – 4 generations of my family have used this facility and would like to keep this location available
- Bring back the Girl Scout Day Camp or find another non-profit to use it?
- Remove all old pavilions and unused buildings
 - Former hilltop picnic area should be restored and be a covered picnic area
 - Girl Scout Camp – either upgrade and improve with functional and clean outhouses or demolish
 - Former girls scout pavilion is in a low topographic spot and feels very out of place – coming across it as a lone trail runner/skier feels unsafe
 - Former Campground – either upgrade, open and maintain or demolish
 - Could be used for parking in North East section of the park
 - Remove old shelters and concrete pads to discourage illegal camps and loitering
- Dog Park
 - Fence dog park, signage at the dog park and add signs in south section of the park or dog owners to use dog park on north side
 - Would be great to have a usable dog park – one currently is place in inadequate/pointless; there is one dinky trail in swampy land, poor signage, no fence and is dangerous next to the busy road and bike trail.
 - Fenced in dog park would be used year round
 - Maybe fence the soccer field – people are using the area as a dog park now since there is not a usable dog park in Russian Jack and it would be used more than the soccer field use that only sees activity a few months in the summer
- Greenhouse
 - Love the greenhouses, families have traditions of coming here for holidays
 - Community garden space near greenhouses
 - The public greenhouse is great and would be nice if it had more hours and programming
 - Allow someone to run a healthy café near chalet or greenhouses!
 - Public restrooms that isn't a port-a-potty
- Public restroom on the Pine Street side
- Do NOT create a bunch of new paved trails – keep it soft and wild

Maintenance

- Improvements to paved trails
 - Rehab existing multi-use paved trails
- Maintain and keep ski trails
 - More frequent snow grooming of RJSP trails – classic, no skating, both north and south
- More trash cans, especially by the bridges along the trail
 - More trash cans and maintenance near the ballfields/soccer fields and polar bear park/skate park
- Ideally RJSP needs a full time caretaker
- Maintain natural areas

- Avoid removing trees and damaging “improving” woodlands, wetlands – work with these great resources
 - Maintain forest canopy as is – reforestation project could be tied to nearby schools
 - Keep it an area of wild in the middle of the city
- Clean up downed trees and brush
 - Harvested timber from downed wood and live wood could be a resource for building amenities in the park
 - Thin vegetation next to the trails in order to reduce surprise wildlife encounters
- Upgrade bridges to accommodate a heavier groomer from NSAA during the really bad icy/bulletproof spells that happen

Signage

- Additional Wayfinding signage/emergency locators in north portion of the park
- Better signage – the trails are very confusing
- New wayfinding signs need to point to destinations kids are actually looking for (ex. Polar bear park)
- Drastically increase/improve signage and ability for people to pick up after their dogs and dispose of poop
 - Enforce poop laws
- Add signage for “Do not feed the Ducks” by the small pond on E 20th Street between the Wesleyan and Glacier Streets – sign needs to have an explanation as to why the public shouldn't engage in feeding the ducks; the absence of the sign attracts a constant flow of people as well as ducks that create congestion on this arrow road.
- Create beautiful signage honoring the history of RJSP land starting with before homesteading/moonshine Russian Jack
- Sign multi-use and exclusive-use trails – there is a lot of user confusion on the trails and where they can and cannot be
- Better signage to let trail users know about the connectivity possibility to other parklands in the area (Cheney Lak, S Fork Chester Creek Greenbelt, Glenn Hwy, etc.)
- Consider boardwalk with interpretive signs at the springs and in the Class A wetlands in the southwest corner of the park.

Map Board Notes

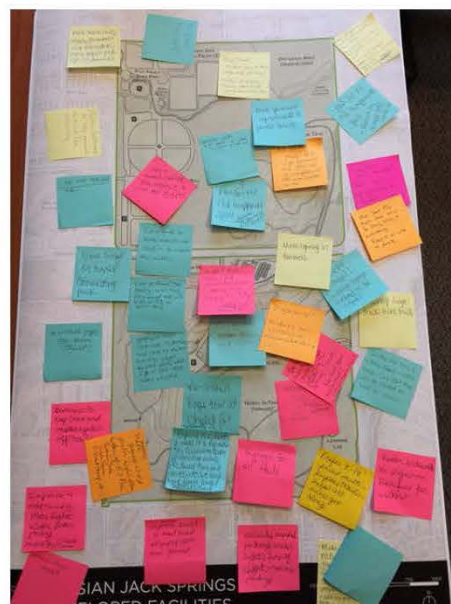
The following comments were submitted on map boards and are organized by topic and/or area:

General

- We love the north area as-is for hiking, biking + orienteering, keep it as wild as possible
- plan for the old campground space - summer use for only girl scouts
- plan for the old campgrounds space - reforest it, remove old shelters
- More school involvement in the park

Winter Recreation

- Re-install rope tow below chalet!
- re-install rope tow at Chalet for beginners/kids
- cut trees – bottom of sledding hill
- snowboard 1/2 pipe on hill
- firepit near chalet and sled hill
- Snow making
- designate a set of trails as ski-only w/ signage, not all - but a pair of main loops, keep the rest groomed multi-use
- make ski trails a few (very few) feet wider - to very much improve the skiing + grooming
- make classic trails - so you can skate
- make ski trails 3-4 feet wider for both skate and classic - like APU
- keep up the grooming on all smaller ski trails
- Widen ski trails a few feet – APU style – so that they can be skated as well as classic
- Widen ski trail just enough to accommodate skating
- Widen north side trails to skate, 2 extra on each side
- connect or let volunteers do this - woodchips and make dry connect Cartee Complex to Classic Ski Trail
- Better grooming (more snow/less gravel) in this tunnel please



Signage and Wayfinding

- Wayfinding signs with map and directions to chalet
- Want additional wayfinding signs in north park + emergency locators
- signage for all trails
- wayfinding signs with maps and directions back to Chalet
- Signage for access
- historic place - signage w/ old photos highlighting history of RJ Park - Russian Jack, Prison Farm, G Scout Camp, etc.

Access

- This park is very accessible to multiple neighborhoods including all income levels. This is so important! Particularly to Mt. View + Russian Jack
- barriers to keep cars and motorcycles off-trails
- widen improve access to trailhead at end of 20th near Glacier
- Make 2 entrances to RJ Park off 20th + Glacier more safe - add light at each to reduce drug dealing + people dumping trash + add big bear proof trash bins

- wheelchair access
- NE – no access
- User-friendly ped/bike crossing of Debarr at Pine
- better sidewalks or signs on Boniface for walkers

Trails

- Like the wild multi-purpose trails – all users get along at the same time
- Prefer 8-10 paved multi-purpose trails – helps all users get along
- Need pavement improvements to paved
- Fill in around roots with mulch or D1 on social trails
- More lighting in tunnels
- tunnel
- need bridge or tunnel connecting park
- Tunnel to circle loop! (see 1997 proposal)
- Put in tunnel to make a multi-use loop- to increase multi-use traffic
- More single track trails (mtbs)
- More single track trails...
- Develop single track bike trails
- Single tracks!
- No single track – park not big enough and there will be a conflict with other users of multi-use trail
- trails
- improve + add tunnels; more lights; wider, better paving; mutt mitts/trash cans
- Old campground roads can become trails
- Would be nice if the (classic ski trail) looped back south
- Creekside Trail
- safe connection in summer, so biking not on golf course (from greenhouse area to tunnel)
- Trails that contour the various ridgelines

Natural Resources

- If any new development or enhancements are made, use the existing developed footprint + keep the rest of the park wild!
- Removal of downed/leaning trees
- Plant trees (lost in the windstorms), do not limb trees
- Clean up downed trees blocking social trails
- Keep park natural – just maintain current trails – no single track trail
- Keep Russian Jack Park as WILD and undeveloped as possible
- Downed trees need to be cleared out
- Reforest where downed trees exist, plant trees around polar Bear – very barren!
- preserve the spring but improve access
- Spring area and upper stream should be left alone
- Creek needs to be cleared of litter + trash
- Creek water quality near Reka goes down – need to resolve
- Be sure that any maintain golf course is not polluting the springs/creek - has that been researched (toxic chemicals?)

New Activities

- bring back disc golf
- Pump track: to learn how to turn, stop, body position! winter: it could be used for learning to ski uphill, downhill, turn

- Bike Park Ideas – 1) BMX Track, 2) Pump Track, 3) Start/Finish Area

Amenities

- more trash cans, signs, parental/kids' education; more trash pick-up in the summer
- help make easier for people to pick up dog poo

Dog Park

- Dog park fence – enclosed, better signs, not right next to Boniface
- Dog park fencing and mutt mitts
- Maybe fence in soccer fields for dog park?
- Dog Park fencing
- Dog park stairs disrepair
- Who removes dog poop?

Ball Fields

- Rehab ball field outfields, sprinkler system for ballfields

Play Area

- Bathrooms in playground area (winter)
- Playground needs trees

Chalet, Greenhouse, Model RR

- Expand the chalet to make it a recreation and/or community center w/ meeting rooms, fee based gym, ball courts, etc. We could have community council meetings there
- more programming (?) at the chalet, cafe/food trucks for people using the park, hot tub in winter, great location for school aged kids, chalet has potential for more art/passive rec
- public bathrooms at the greenhouse that isn't the port-a-potty
- support model train club provide more space for larger facility
- support model train club provide more space for larger facility
- Update model train club, to provide more room for visitors viewing. Larger building would will help all user. Keep same location

Safety

- security around parking areas, lights, line of sight, improve parking
- Creepy tunnel! need lights, need to be higher
- Better lighting (more!) – multi-use trail from Pine Street to Boniface Pkwy
- Camps – what can we do?

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Open House #2 - Concept Design Workshop

Saturday, September 28, 2019

12 pm to 3pm

Russian Jack Springs Park - Lidia Selkregg Chalet

Meeting Goal:

Anchorage Parks and Recreation is updating the master plan for Russian Jack Springs Park. The master plan will provide a framework for the management, maintenance, and development of facilities and other park assets over the next 20 years. To ensure that the master plan aligns with the desires of the community, Parks and Recreation hosted a second public workshop in the form of an open house event.

The second open house builds upon previous public involvement efforts and progress to date. The goal of the open house is to better understand the community's preferences for future upgrades and refine priorities for future investment.

Project Team & Attendance

MOA Parks & Recreation Department

Steve Rafuse, Project Manager
Annie Dubois, Park Naturalist

R&M Consultants, Inc.

Van Le, AICP, Planner & PI Lead

Bettisworth North

Mark Kimerer, ASLA, Landscape Architect

Advisory Group Members in Attendance

Kristi Wood, NECC
Kristin Myers, Park Neighbor
Mick Brogan, First Tee President
Lisa McGuire, RJCC/Park Neighbor
Renea Miller
Sherry Wright

Public Officials in Attendance

- Christopher Constant, Anchorage Assembly
- Pete Peterson, Anchorage Assembly
- Ivy Sponholz, State Representative
- Bill Wielechowski, State Senator

Workshop Outreach

- Flyers posted at access points and trail junctions in RJSP
- Flyers posted at area businesses
- Flyers shared with area churches/congregations
- Federation of Community Councils email notification
- Event shared on Nextdoor reaching 45,984 accounts
- Direct email outreach to Community Councils within one mile of the park
- Direct email outreach to Anchorage Assembly and State Representatives
- Facebook Event
- E-Newsletter Emails to 367 emails
- Project Website updates
- 47 People signed into the open house

Open House Summary

The Concept Design Workshop was open house style with stations set up around the room, staffed by members of the Master Plan Team to facilitate conversations, spark inspiration, and collect input from attendees. The event was well attended and featured activities for families and children as well as greenhouse tours, guided tours to the RJ Spring, a model RR demo, golf demo by first tee, and kids' games activities.

Attendees provided feedback on multiple concepts, but the following were common themes that emerged:

- Trails – upgrade, repair and repave the existing trails. Lighting in the tunnel should be improved and overall trail lighting could be improved. Singletrack trails should be incorporated but comments are divided on how to do so (new trails, maintain existing ones, location next to or away from paved multi-use trails).
- Golf – the nine-hole course is a unique and enjoyed feature that should be preserved and continued with improved maintenance and management.
- Dog Park – a fenced in dog park, with separate areas for small and large/all dogs, should be built and potentially relocated to a less marshy spot, and a parking lot should be constructed at or near the dog park.
- Chalet, Model RR Building, and Greenhouse – great facilities with potential. Expand the use of the buildings by community groups/event and upgrade the facilities to better accommodate a higher use.
- Winter Recreation – continue to maintain groomed and lit ski trails, need to do something to mitigate the safety issues with the bottom of the sledding hill.
- Parking & Access – increased non-motorized access (safe access) is needed especially in the north half of the park. Parking areas should be redesigned to increase safety and visibility, and the location of parking areas should be reexamined to see if they are most appropriate where they are or if they should be relocated/eliminated/created.
- Wayfinding, Education and Signage – increased wayfinding is needed throughout the park to navigate the trail system and find developed facilities. Opportunities to provide educational information and interpretive information exist and should be taken.

Concept Stations and Posters:

- Access
 - 20th Ave (2 concepts)
 - Boniface Pkwy South (3 concepts)
 - Boniface Pkwy North (3 concepts)
- Facilities
 - NW RJSP - Polar Bear Playground Area
 - South RJSP Greenhouse/Chalet Area including parking lot and sledding hill (2 concepts)
 - Minor Upgrades

- 1. Maintenance and minor facility upgrades, sledding hill modifications, re-pave parking lot
- ii. Major Upgrades
 - 1. expanded programming & opportunities for greater community use, possible concessions, sledding hill modifications, parking lot improvements, expand chalet deck, move 1st tee short distance to accommodate additional community use of inside/outside chalet, possible small play area, trail connection to potential 2nd tunnel
- 3. Former Facilities
 - a. Girl Scout Camp
 - b. Day camp area in S RJSP
- 4. Trails
 - a. Aerial image showing managed trails (3 concepts)
- 5. "What we've Heard So Far..."
 - a. Site Analysis and Summary of Public Input Poster
 - b. Agreement Items/Common Themes Poster

Summary of Comments:

Comments were collected on comment forms and are organized below by topic area.

Golf

- Greater on course enforcement of course rules to keep free loaders off the course and accelerate the pace of play.
- Please enforce the golf course rules:
 - Make members display a large membership card on their bag/cart
 - Course staff should check golfers to make sure they are annual members or paid daily green fees
 - No dogs, no players sharing clubs, etc.
- Preserve the 9-hole golf course, it is the only recreation the city provides to encourage a healthy activity for senior citizens
- Put in practice putting green in the small spoil area currently notched into the west side of the NO 2 fairway
- Practice putting green area southwest of the Chalet area, west of the sledding area.
- Artificial turf on green is fine but they need to be lowered to where they are reasonable playable.
- Add signage along parking area near Chalet warning people parking their vehicle there about golf balls April- October
- Cut north side soccer field grass "short" to allow golfers to practice driving long irons there
- Disc Golf – south side paved areas are ready for disc golf. Will handle heavy use well. Could connect through tunnel to paved areas around old Girl Scout area for a nine hole recreational disc golf course. Could also add an 18-hole recreational disc golf course on the existing ball golf footprints.

Soccer

No specific comments were received regarding soccer at RJSP; however, the conversion of a soccer field for use as a dog park was suggested and is categorized under Dog Park

Trails

- Maintain and repair multiuse trails and current earth trails

- Singletrack can be added later after repair of multiuse trails
- Upgrade, repair, replace paved paths in park
- I am mostly hoping to advocate for repaving the bike paths/tunnels because of the number of bumps, cracks, holes, etc. make it difficult for biking, roller-skiing as well as pushing a chariot
- Pine street is getting/will become a major bike transportation corridor; the bike lanes are not protected and winter time bike commuters will be moving N/S along Pine. A direct Multi-Use trail along/near Pine is needed for safe travel for these vulnerable roadway users.
- Would love to see some single tracks, beginner to intermediate skill level
 - Strongly encourage new mountain bike trails
- Like proposed entry from Pine on South side
- Not sure new single-track that parallels the paved trail makes sense in RJ South (as shown in the "trail corridor circuit" concept). While that technique was recently successful along Chester Creek, the characteristic of that section of Chester Creek are entirely different from RJ South. There is plenty of other singletrack very close to the paved trail that already provides a singletrack experience, plus that section of RJ South doesn't have the feature of a creek to follow...just not a good fit.
- No new singletrack trails, no tree cutting and very minimal limb trimming
- New/upgraded tunnel under Debarr connection north and south sides of the park
 - Need better lighting in and around the tunnel
- Some of the trail should have lighting – moonlighting XC skiing is great but skiing in the dark in this park can be scary, for running and walking also
- Groom under tunnel in winter for skiing from Nunaka Valley into park
- Like Purple Multi-use Trails (north and south), like the Green singletrack mountain bike trails (north and south)
- Like extra wide soft trails
- Add paved trail along 6th Ave.
- Sticky Note Comments on Trail Upgrades:
 - North Trails Hub:
 - Need to increase access to the trailer parks on east side of Boniface. Overpass?
 - Overall over Debarr, would like more lighting on trails to increase accessibility for skiers, runners and bikers year round.
 - Use overpass instead of existing/upgrading the Debarr tunnel because it's safer and less scary
 - South Trails Hub:
 - Love the singletrack! All of it
 - Trail Corridor Circuit:
 - Really like the tunnel (new addition connecting north to south)

Skatepark

No specific comments were received about the skatepark.

NW RJSP – Polar Bear Playground Area

- There are currently no direct connections from Pine to the paths without meandering around the playground
- Create a community garden over by the Polar Bear Park or in the Girl Scout camp area, increase year-round use – could use one of the ball parks since it is under utilized
- Need more trees as buffers around Polar Bear and Ball fields – more trees to cut down dust and noise around the fields.

Chalet

- Add a play area south of the Chalet with toddler equipment and baby swing – there are not any play equipment for kids in the southern portion of the park
- Upgrade chalet, perfect for solar
- Install windows that open to help cool the facility and that face sunsets in the public use areas.
- I like the minor upgrades vs major (no parking lot expansion)
- We need more activities and programming at the Chalet – yoga, karate, chess games, whatever!
- More community events in the Chalet!
- Like “major” improvements around Chalet

Garden/Greenhouse

- Love the lights every year at the garden/greenhouse
- Tie into community garden possibility in Girl Scout area – some cleaning is needed but create a
- Create area in the greenhouse for real meetings of public, stay at home parents, meet-up groups, etc.
- Love the greenhouse, please keep it open to the public

Model Railroad

- Newer larger facility to accommodate a larger train layout, better visitor facilities at the Northern Lights Model Railroad Club building
- Expand railroad building to have a meeting space for community to increase exposure for club and avalanche space to meet in Anchorage (12 step), businesses, etc.
- Continued use would be lovely, they have been a good community outreach and we have visited repeatedly
- Larger, newer building for railroad building, also other groups can use the public space.
- Sticky Note Comments on Chalet Area Concepts:
 - Caretakers house is the Northern Lights Model Railroad Clubhouse

Skiing & Winter Recreation

- Restore facility and area for beginner skiers
- Please make the sledding hill safer (next to Chalet) for kids
- Sledding hill needs to be realigned so no tree cutting is necessary
- Promote cross-country skiing
- Revive rope tow and create a snowboard park on the sledding hill area south of the Chalet

Parking & Access

- Keep parking areas visible
- Make parking lots similar to Chanshtnu Muldoon Park with narrow part of lot towards the road and the length of the parking lot extending into the park to increase sense of place in the woods but still keep increased safety and visibility for lot from the road. This especially needs to be done for all the lots on Boniface.
- We would prefer to have NO parking on East 20th. Parking has currently encouraged debris dumping, burning and damaged vehicle dumping, and general bad behavior – we prefer to leave East 20th Ave foot//stroller/bike access only. Upgrade access for non-motorized traffic along E 20th with added signage and lighting.
- I support the development of the parking area off Debarr to the North side of the park as a community Gateway

5

- If the access from Boniface near the old Lion's Club playground is enlarged/modified, care should be taken to maintain the existing characteristics of the special spruce trees that are currently there. I can walk the site with you to show you what we are concerned with, as it's hard to glean from a map or graphic.
- Having the parking lot off of Boniface is not a good idea – Boniface is a high speed street that could be very dangerous and could cause undesirable activities to occur.
- My main use and focus on the park is neighborhood and bike access. Currently, the northern portion of the park (especially Polar Bear Park) is VERY MUCH a commuter park. All facilities are set up for those who arrive by car and park in the parking lot. As a parent and PTA member of Williwaw Elementary, I see many kids crossing Pine from the neighborhood without any supporting safety features. Vehicles traveling north on Pine have no indication of slowing or stopping until the stop sign at 6th. I understand that crosswalks are controversial, but in this instance they would MAYBE help drivers check or pedestrians, especially quick unsupervised children. Also, the only sidewalk access to into the park is the meandering path to the west of the Playground. I would love to have direct access to the bike path from Pine either along the south end of the parking lot or connecting the softball parking lot (which already has a protected –or dedicated? - lane along the north side) to the sidewalk or bike lane on Pine. Make RJ a Neighborhood Park.
- Sticky Note Comments on Boniface South Access:
 - Upgrade Existing with Minor Expansion
 - Yes Please – removal of shelter
 - Prefer this option – do not like the parking being so exposed to Boniface traffic in #3
 - Community Gateway
 - This parking
 - Like this with picnic shelter, but moved back from parking lot more
 - Five post-it “votes” in favor of this option

Dogs/Dog Park

- The addition of a dog park is a great idea!
- Fenced dog area with preferred parking off Boniface.
- Fenced in dog park option is more appealing from a public safety perspective, however, suggest following the model at Whisper Faith Kovach with “small” dog area surrounded by large area which can be used for any sized dogs.
 - 1 acre is not big enough for two areas however – make it larger.
- Like larger fenced dog area, 8' fence, small and large dog fenced area, keep dog trails as well, parking visible from road
- Parking for dog park access should be fully visible from the fenced dog park area to prevent – or at least limit- vandalism opportunities.
- Dog trails similar to others like University Lake or Connors Bog would be a nice idea too, depending on what the community recommends.
- The park needs a fenced in dog park. People use the current soccer fields as a dog park, so why not just fence it in and make it official. A fence provides safety for the dogs, a large space for dogs to run and play. The current off leash dog use area is not easy to find and it's a marsh. It is not usable. Plus, it's right by a busy road and not safe for dogs or traffic. It would also be great to have some agility exercises in the fenced in dog park.
- Add signage and receptacles for cleaning dog poop and include information on the problems and quantity of dog poop
- People with dogs should clean up after their animals and observe the signage

6

- Not in favor of designated "off-leash" dog trails – use a fenced area instead with 25 or less parking spots.
- Sticky Note Comments:
 - Northeast Gateway – Off Leash + Trail Access
 - Don't like the idea of off leash dog pathway without fence. Also, way too many parking spots
 - Not in favor of off leash path which would be shared with bikes and skiers and walkers!
 - I like this if an options to reduce user conflict exists
 - I like this dog trail system if combined with option #3 parking (closes to Boniface)
 - Northeast Gateway – Fenced Dog Park + Trail Access
 - Three 'votes' in favor of this option

Education

- Add lots of historical information for park, especially if you remove 'abandoned' buildings/structures
 - Russian Jack himself, prison info, garden for muni, made into park when? Trail development, etc.
- Increased educational signage would improve the sense of ownership by Anchorage residents

Wayfinding

- Maps in different parts of the park for other areas, so that folks can learn more about what is possible to do in the park, and so they don't get lost.
- Signage for wayfinding throughout the park – we have gotten lost multiple times
- Signage/mapping of both single track and paved trails that show how they interconnect (Ex. Chester Creek)
- Improve/develop trail signage

Girl Scout Camp

- It would be nice to see the former Girl Scout Camp turned into a day use area for picnics, etc.
- Girl Scout Camp area – retain vegetation, scenic views are a really good idea to feature here.
- Could be used as staging ground for outdoor events, running/bike races, outdoor survival classes, etc.
- Create a community garden over by the Polar Bear Park or in the Girl Scout camp area, increase year-round use – could use one of the ball parks since it is under utilized

Other:

- Improve lighting to increase sense of safety for female trail users (all users).
- Clean up dead/partially fallen trees – maintain natural space along stream beds to prevent erosion – replant trees as needed.
- Generally improve sightlines throughout the park to improve safety
- Any tree removal should be selective in advance – large mature trees should be exempt.
- Disc Golfers were rowdy, who littered, were drunk, used pot and profanity.
- Need anti-litter signage and more trash cans



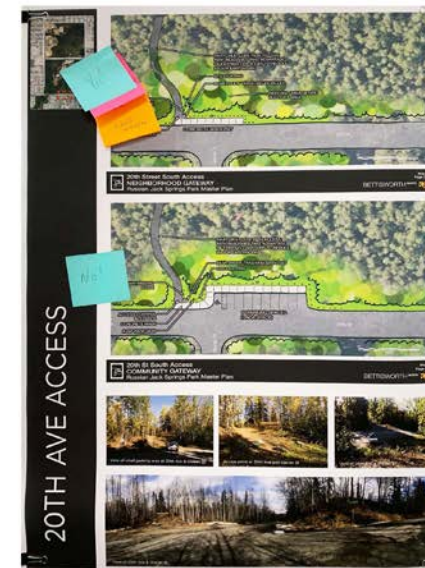
Boniface Parkway Access - North

- General preferences leaned toward a fenced dog park to reduce trail user and dog walker conflicts.
- Off leash trails were not preferred.
- 25 parking spaces or fewer that is fully visible fenced dog area to prevent vandalism.
- Overall preference was for the parking lot that is directly adjacent to Boniface Parkway



Boniface Parkway Access - South

- General preferences leaned toward the Community Gateway option.
- The removal or moving of the existing picnic shelter was preferred however if replaced, create some distance between it's location and the parking.
- Community Gateway parking option may be a challenge due to traffic speeds and access, an alternative configuration may be needed.



20th Avenue Access

- General preferences leaned toward no parking at 20th Avenue.
- The need for improvements for non-motorized access from and along 20th Avenue were expressed.



Trail Upgrades

- General preferences leaned toward maintaining, repairing, and repaving existing paved trails and unpaved trails.
- Some comments supported an additional tunnel under Debarr while others supported an overpass.
- Better access to the northeast portion of the park from adjacent neighborhoods was mentioned.
- New singletrack trails received mixed reactions, from full support to no support.
- Adding a paved path along 6th Avenue was mentioned.

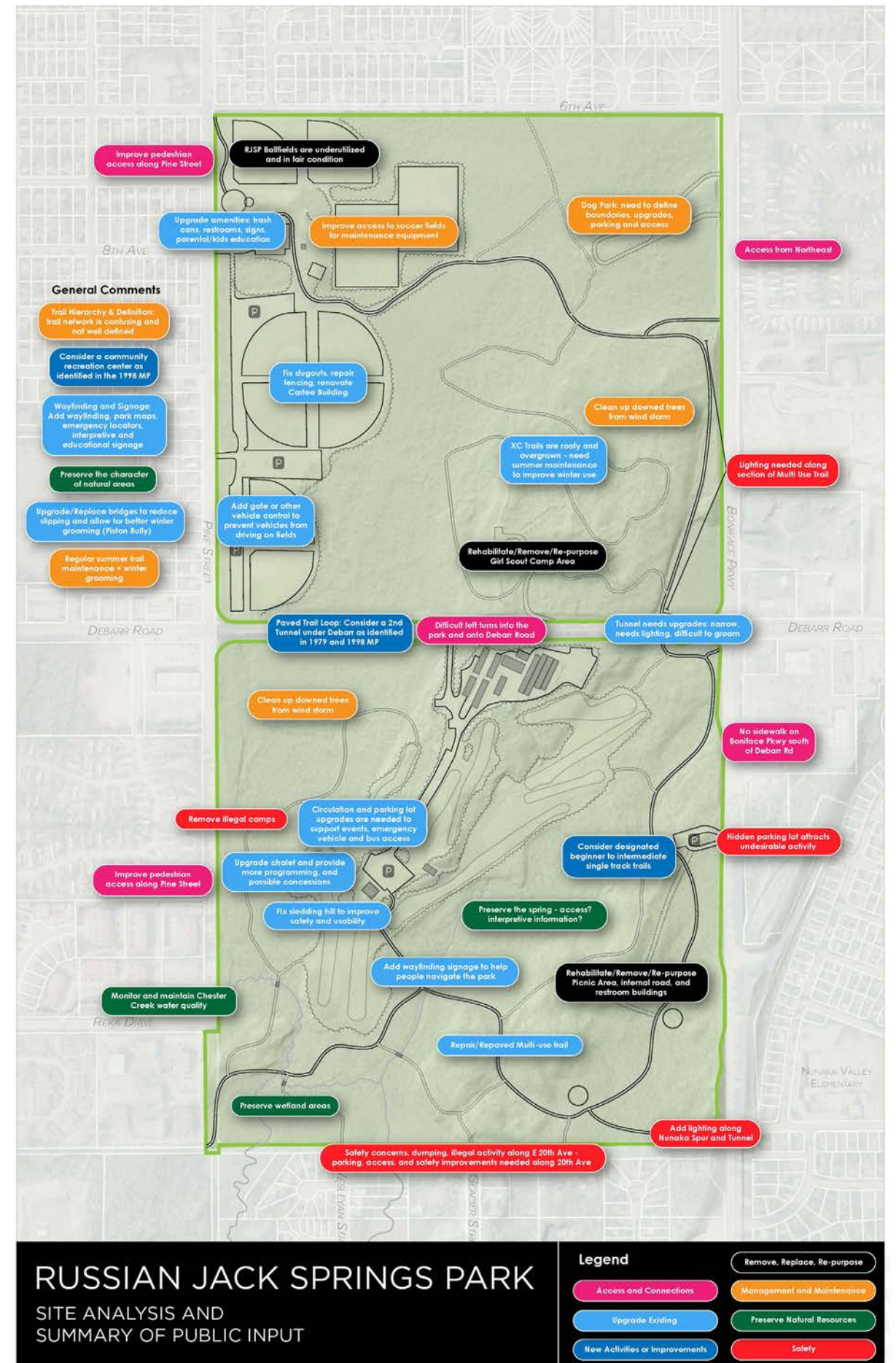


North Russian Jack Spring Park

- General preferences leaned toward making the north are of RJSP more of a neighborhood park with safer access/crossings at Pine Street.
- Add more trees and plantings to soften/buffer from sports fields.
- Current connections from Pine Street to the paths meander through the playground area. A more direct connection was mentioned.
- Options mentioned for the soccer fields were fenced dog park or golf driving range.

Chalet Area

- General preferences leaned toward adding more programming and community events to the Chalet Area.
- Improvements to the building were preferred as well as to the model railroad building.
- Suggestions for creating a community meeting space in the greenhouses were made as well as improving the surrounding area with a community garden.
- A play area and putting green were suggested for the west side of the Chalet.
- Preferences for the parking expansion were mixed.



APPENDIX C: RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS

Continued from page 16. This section lists goals, objectives, and recommendations from existing plans that overlap the 2021 Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan.

ANCHORAGE BOWL PARK, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND RECREATION FACILITY PLAN, 2006

- Prepare natural resource plans for large parks and greenbelts to identify provisions for access, recreational development, and environmental protection.
- Promote winter recreation and tourism by creating winter recreation areas or “destination” venues at key locations.
- Increase maintenance, expansion and facility upgrades for existing facilities including the Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouses.
- Continue upgrades to trailheads and trail networks.
- Provide upgrades to existing park area:
- Continue to upgrade athletic facilities and expand the soccer fields,
- Prepare study to evaluate economic potential for upgrading camping facilities,
- Improve development of grass greens, improved layout for safety, practice area and other facilities to create quality learning center for junior, senior, and beginning golfers,
- Expand winter and summer use with a safe sledding area, Nordic ski start/finish, and improve picnic/playground facilities.

EAST ANCHORAGE DISTRICT PLAN, 2014

Community & Housing:

- Help communities create and celebrate their identity by developing neighborhood gateway sites.

Environment:

- Ensure that there are parks, trails and open spaces that are easily accessible to residents throughout the community.
- Maintain and enhance a network of natural open spaces throughout the community that preserves and enhances East Anchorage’s scenic vistas, fish, wildlife, and plant habitats, and protects their ecological functions and values.
- Consider open spaces as essential infrastructure just like sewer, water and roadways.

Transportation:

- Create and maintain safe, attractive pedestrian and bicycle connections between neighborhoods, schools, commercial areas and neighborhood centers.

ANCHORAGE BICYCLE PLAN, 2010

- Goal 1: Improve connectivity and safety of the transportation network.
- Goal 2: Establish a bicycle network that adequately responds to the transportation needs and desired of Anchorage residents.
- Goal 3: Develop and maintain a bicycle network that enhances safety by improve compatibility among bicycles and other transportation modes.
- Goal 5: Provide support facilities and amenities designed to enhance the bicycle network and encourage the use of bicycling as a practical transportation system.
- Other projects mentioned:
 - Separated Pathway connecting Pine Street to Russian Jack Trail connection (design, construction project)
 - Upgrade Russian Jack Springs Park separated pathways (design construction project)
 - Shared Roadway bicycle facility on 6th Ave from Pine Street to Boniface Parkway (signage project)

ANCHORAGE PEDESTRIAN PLAN, 2007

- Goal 1: Create a safer, more walkable city that will encourage winter pedestrian activity and make walking a safer and more attractive activity.
- Policy 1.2: Improve and expand year-round maintenance of pedestrian facilities
- Goal 4: Improve community connectivity by providing safe, convenient, year-round pedestrian routes within and between neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, and public facilities as well as between major employment centers and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

ANCHORAGE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN, 2019

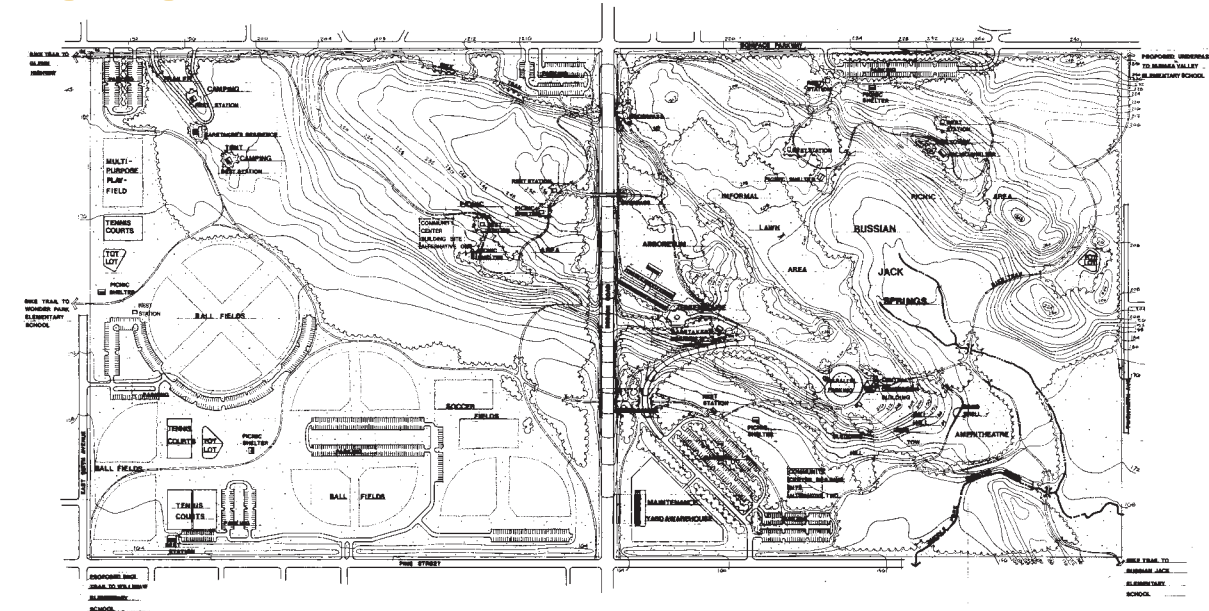
- Goal: Support wildfire mitigation and improve forest management to prepare for increased risk of wildfire.
- Goal: Improve stormwater management to mitigate flooding and promote better water quality.
- Goal: Increase capacity to respond to invasive species outbreaks.
- Objective 22. Maintain or improve the resilience of the urban forest and watershed in Anchorage to promote ecosystem services and buffer against extreme weather events.
 - Action 22E: Support efforts to protect and restore extended riparian corridors, such as Potter Marsh, to maintain wildlife and fish habitat, including efforts to reestablish historical surface channels and connectivity.
 - Action 22F. Promote and expand weed pulls, tree plantings, spruce beetle identification and management, wildfire mitigation, and other educational activities that promote stewardship among the public, businesses and homeowners.
- Objective 23: Improve stormwater management to reduce flooding and promote better water quality.
 - Action 23B: Incentivize and prioritize the development of 'green infrastructure' such as parks, wetlands, riparian and wildlife corridors, natural drainageways, and low-impact development.
 - Action 23D: Expand public education about the value of watersheds, rain gardens, and low-impact development to address stormwater runoff.
- Objective 24. Reduce the establishment and spread of invasive species to make our urban forests more resilient to environmental change.

CHESTER CREEK WATERSHED PLAN, DRAFT, 2014

- Return Chester Creek to a more natural hydrologic scheme: eliminate flood hazards, maintain flows for habitat reserve and/or widen existing floodplains where necessary.
- Provide habitat for diversity of wildlife along Chester Creek.
- Maintain and enhance existing wildlife corridors, riparian habitat, greenbelts, and parks.
- Promote community and municipal awareness and stewardship of Chester Creek.
- Protection of wetlands for stormwater buffer and protect privately owned wetlands near Russian Jack Park.

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN

1979

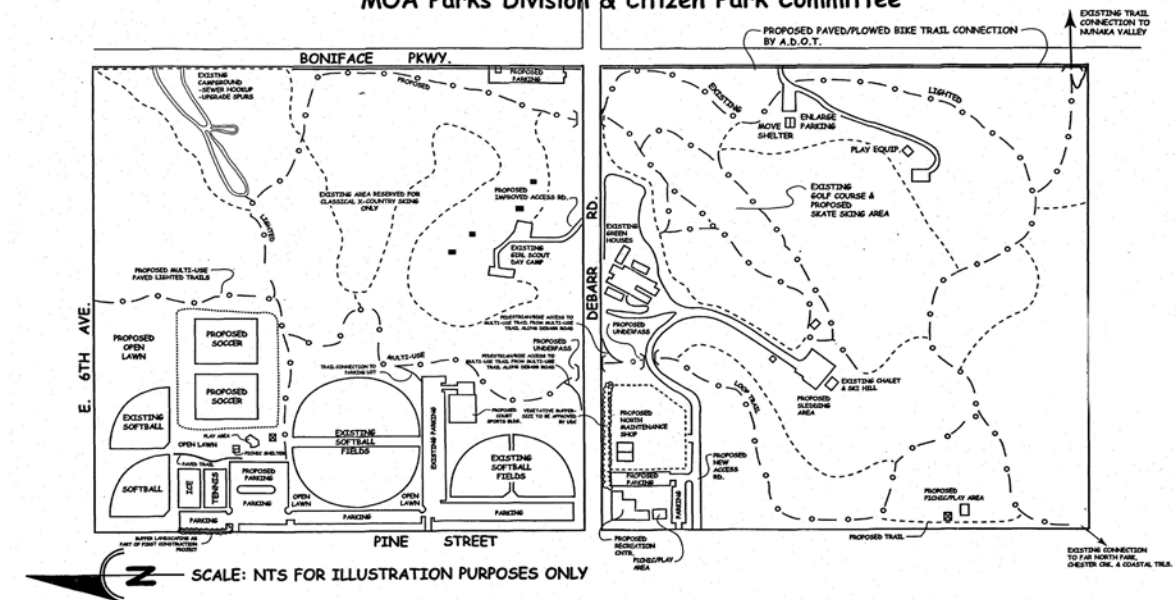


MASTER PLAN
RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK



2002

Plan prepared by: Municipality of Anchorage / Cultural & Recreational Services Department
Parks & Beautification Division / Design & Development Section in coordination with
MOA Parks Division & Citizen Park Committee

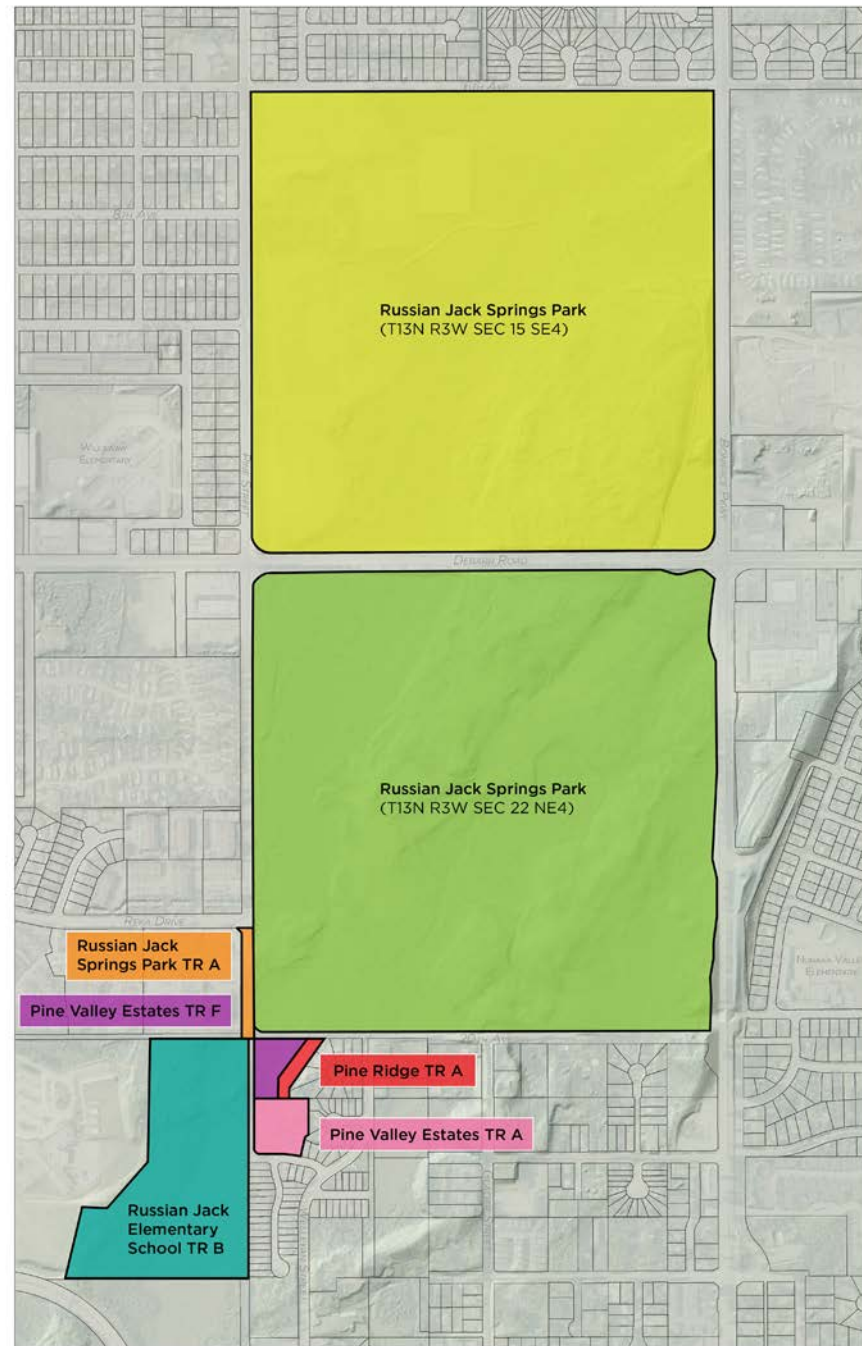


RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN

As approved by the Municipal Parks and Recreation Commission under PRC #97-50 on December 11, 1997
Submitted for: MOA Office of Planning, Development and Public Works Project Management and Engineering for P&ZC Site Plan Review
Revised per P&ZC Conditions as Approved on February 11, 2002

APPENDIX D: PROPERTY INFORMATION

<p>Russian Jack Springs Park (T13N R3W SEC 15 SE4) Parcel: 005-141-01-000 Zoning: PL1-p Grid: SW1337 Area: 148 acres</p>
<p>Russian Jack Springs Park (T13N R3W SEC 22 NE4) Parcel: 005-081-01-000 Zoning: PL1-p Grid: SW1437 Area: 149.38 acres</p>
<p>Russian Jack Elementary School TR B Parcel: 005-091-08-000 Zoning: PL1 Grid: SW1536 Area: 21.15 acres</p>
<p>Russian Jack Springs Park TR A Parcel: 005-162-43-000 Zoning: PL1-p and R-3 Grid: SW1436 Area: 0.99 acres</p>
<p>Pine Valley Estates TR A Parcel: 006-311-19-000 Zoning: R-2M Grid: SW1537 Area: 2.04 acres</p>
<p>Pine Valley Estates TR F Parcel: 006-311-78-000 Zoning: R-2M Grid: SW1537 Area: 1.44 acres</p>
<p>Pine Ridge TR A Parcel: 006-311-80-000 Zoning: R-2M Grid: SW1537 Area: 0.64 acres</p>



APPENDIX E: ANCHORAGE WETLANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES, ENFORCEABLE AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

<p>(SITE 17) CLASS "A" AND "B" WETLANDS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NORTHERN LIGHTS/WESLEYAN & RUSSIAN JACK PARK (45 acres approx.; Public & Private Ownership)</p> <p>("A" wetland scores: Hydrology = 94; Habitat = 84; Species Occurrence = 85; Social Function = 72)</p> <p>("B" wetland scores: Hydrology = 95; Habitat = 70; Species Occurrence = 53, Social Function = 58)</p> <p>Black spruce forested, southern edge on the north side of Northern Lights Blvd is designated "C" wetlands. Remainder classed as "B" wetlands due to higher habitat, flood control and water quality values. A fork of Chester Creek flows through the northern extent of the wetlands. Portion of the wetland in Russian Jack Park is designated as "A." Wetland has values to Chester Creek for stormwater and flood attenuation, water quality, habitat and open space/aesthetics. Maintain a 100-foot setback from Chester Creek and tributaries to protect anadromous fish resources.</p> <p>"C" wetlands North of Northern Lights Blvd, West of Pine St: Eligible for General Permit. GP Site Restrictions and Design Criteria: Construction timing window; wetland delineation; BMPs for local flooding, dewatering of adjacent wetlands and stormwater controls required. A 15-foot transitional buffer shall be maintained between fill permitted under General Permits and "B" wetland.</p>
<p>(SITE 7) CLASS "C" WETLANDS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NORTH RUSSIAN JACK PARK (34.56 acres; Public Ownership)</p> <p>(Scores: Hydrology = 102; Habitat = 60; Species Occurrence = 18; Social Function = 75)</p> <p>Includes site at SE Debarr Rd. and Pine St. Values for stormwater attenuation and water quality. General Permit applicable. GP Site Restrictions and Design Criteria include: Setback = 25 feet from drainageways, Construction Timing Window, Identify Surface Water Features and BMPs to prevent Local Flooding and Stormwater Functions</p>

APPENDIX F: REFERENCES

INTRODUCTION

1 “Dena’ina Archaeology” by Douglas Reger. From The Dena’ina way of Living, edited by Suzi Jones, James A. Fall and Aaron Leggett, 2013.

2 The Dena’ina Way of Living, Patricia H Partnow, Ph.D. for the Anchorage Museum;

Introduction to Dena’ina Culture and History, James A. Fall; The Dena’ina way of Living, Edited by Suzi Jones, James A. Fall and Aaron Leggett, 2013;

Chugach State Park Management Plan, Alaska DNR, May 2011;

Shem Pete’s Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena’ina (James Kari and James A. Fall; Principal contributor Shem Pete, 2003

3 MOA Property Information, July 2018, Municipality of Anchorage, <https://muniorg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=493d6c82574c43d981bd2aaa384b3d60>

4 Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan, September 2017, Municipality of Anchorage

5 East Anchorage District Plan, March 2014, Municipality of Anchorage

EXISTING CONDITIONS

6 2006 Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resources and Recreation Facility Plan

7 Study Area: (16) Census Tracts with 30% or more of their total area within two miles of Russian Jack Springs Park.

8 Metrics for “Intensity of Recreational Uses” is defined in the Far North Bicentennial Trail Improvements Plan (p20-23)

9 1979 Master Plan; Municipality of Anchorage GIS Data

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

10 Source: Anchorage Bowl Tree Canopy Assessment prepared for the Alaska Department of Natural Resources by the Davey Resource Group, 2018.

11 Environmental atlas of the Greater Anchorage Area Borough, Alaska by Lidia L. Selkregg. Anchorage, Alaska: Resource and Science Services, Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, University of Alaska, 1972;

Alaska trees and shrubs (No. 410) by Leslie A. Viereck and Elbert Luther Little. US Forest Service, 1972.

12 Hydrology and the Effects of Increased Ground-Water Pumping in the Anchorage Area, Alaska (USGS WSP 1779-D, 1964) (authors: D.J. Cederstrom, Frank W. Trainer, and Roger M. Waller)

13 Anchorage Waterways Council, 2012, Report Card for Middle Fork of Chester Creek

14 Note: Research and analysis provided by Scott R Wheaton, Engineering Geologist and Watershed Scientist, summarized by Steve Rafuse, MOA Senior Park Planner

15 Source: Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan, page 45, 2012, Municipality of Anchorage

16 Alaska Department of Fish and Game 2013

17 Classifications are based on guidelines adopted from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

18 2006 Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan

