

# Chapter 4. Transportation

## Overview

Transportation includes circulation by roads, trails, and transit. Most of the Hillside enjoys a decent road system that is not too crowded and is generally safe. Many Hillside residents and visitors to the area value recreational trails. Some of these trails are established, managed public trails; others cross private land.

The Hillside road system is generally able to handle current demands; however, in some areas problems are developing as the Hillside continues to grow. These issues (congested intersections, concerns with emergency access on substandard roads, and safety concerns) will intensify as the area expands from 8,500 residences today to 14,500 residences at build-out.

Demand for trails is likewise continuing to grow. Traditional routes across private land are being lost or relocated as development occurs. Existing trailheads are often overcrowded. In several locations where trail access is strong, trailheads are absent and few options exist to construct and maintain needed trails.

New approaches are necessary to address the transportation-related impacts of past development and to respond to future growth. Major Hillside District Plan strategies to address these issues are summarized below:

- Designate a system of primary and secondary roads to relieve congestion and improve emergency access.
- Improve connectivity and emergency access by providing more than one way to drive through the area, while protecting neighborhood quality and character.
- Designate a system of high-priority trails and access points to Chugach State Park.
- Reserve routes of future trails and roads as part of an integrated built/green infrastructure approach.
- Develop a district-wide mechanism to fund needed capital improvements and to maintain roads and trails.



### Primary and Secondary Roads

Primary and secondary streets in this plan are identified to show the key roads that access the Hillside District, existing and future neighborhoods, schools, parks and other destinations. The terms “primary and secondary” do not determine the formal functional classification of these roads; most existing roads are already classified. While some of these streets will be built to collector standards, the large majority will be built to rural or urban residential subdivision street standards. The objective of mapping primary and secondary roads is to identify roads that today or in the future will serve more vehicles than roads serving individual local neighborhoods, and therefore are priorities for future maintenance and capital improvements. The reader should recognize the set of existing major roads on the lower Hillside (lower Rabbit Creek, DeArmoun, Huffman, O’Malley and Abbott Roads) are state owned and maintained and will continue to be the State’s responsibility.

## Context: Planning Issues Summary



Many Hillside residents commented on their love of the “country road atmosphere” that they enjoy. These images show the variety of country roads currently existing on the Hillside.

### Road Congestion and Safety

A limited number of problem areas and intersections were identified where congestion and safety are concerns, at least at certain times of the day. Most of these problem areas are tied to daily school traffic and/or fast traffic on steep, icy roads. The Golden View Drive-Rabbit Creek Road intersection is a prime example. Traffic modeling was performed under full build-out scenarios on a variety of road network options to determine effective solutions to congestion resulting from gaps in the Hillside District’s road network (see HDP Policy 9-A Background). These traffic models resulted in the HDP Roadway Connections (HDP Map 4.1). As the Hillside develops, these connections are vital to ensure that intersections like Golden View Drive and Rabbit Creek Road do not exceed capacity.

### Connectivity and Emergency Access

Some areas require new or improved roads to serve existing and projected future growth, particularly to provide for emergency access and egress. This will also help relieve congestion in problem areas.

Often, as subdivisions develop adjacent to one another, roads that previously functioned or were designed as residential roads begin to function more like collectors. Increased traffic on previously quiet residential streets leads to maintenance, safety, and quality of life issues. This plan establishes a clearer hierarchy of primary and secondary roads that can help reduce these impacts.

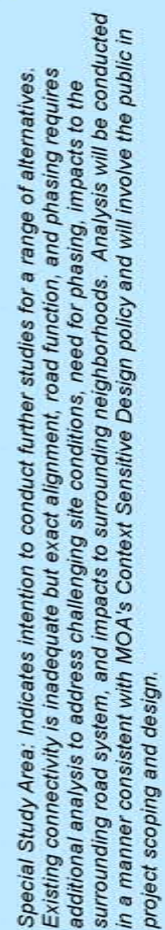
Some areas on the Hillside lack adequate routes for emergency access. In the public survey, the only concern that the majority of Hillside residents consistently reported as at least “a problem” was the issue of wildfire safety. Substandard roads, multiple homes on private “driveways,” and roads that are poorly maintained and poorly designed often create serious problems for emergency vehicles. Local fire crews report that fire engines and ambulances often have trouble finding and reaching homes to provide critical emergency services.

### Road Development Standards

Road standards appropriate for the rest of Anchorage are not always considered suitable for roads on the Hillside. Some residents desire a rural road standard that would allow for less removal of vegetation and different surfacing options to fit with the area’s character. At the same time, residents want to



## Roadway Connections





(This page intentionally left blank.)

hold down road maintenance costs. Over time, gravel roads are significantly (about ten times) more costly to maintain than paved roads.

All Municipality of Anchorage transportation projects are reviewed using “A Strategy for Developing Context Sensitive Transportation Projects” policy adopted by the Anchorage Assembly (AR 2008-237) in November 2008. This context sensitive solutions strategy is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to project development, involving stakeholders at the earliest phase to ensure the transportation project is in harmony with land use and the environment so as to make the improvement blend in with the surrounding community.

## **Trails**

Hillside residents and visitors enjoy getting out to walk, bike, and ski. Roadside pedestrian pathways are lacking in most parts of the Hillside District. These routes have the potential to provide important transportation links, for example, connecting neighborhoods to schools. Many traditional trails located away from the road system cross vacant private land, and may be lost or realigned as development occurs. Mechanisms are not currently in place to provide the funding to build, maintain, and manage a trail network to serve the Hillside District.

## **Management and Maintenance of Roads and Trails**

The Hillside District is currently a patchwork of split responsibilities for road maintenance. Some roads were built below current standards, necessitating increased maintenance. These deficiencies, which were only minor annoyances in the past, have become more noticeable as the area has continued to grow. The Limited Road Service Areas (LRSAs), Rural Road Service Areas (RRSAs), and independent entities generally provide very satisfactory road maintenance services in most areas they serve, but, by law, cannot provide for capital improvements or for drainage improvements.

The concept of coordinating municipal road improvements and land use goals with State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) improvements is important to safety, travel efficiency, and land use efficiency. The ADOT&PF owns and maintains the arterial roads on the Hillside. These roads have a strong impact on land use and transportation patterns. Some of the proposed changes to municipal roads will increase traffic along ADOT&PF roads and intersections,

## Goal and Policy Summary

### GOAL 9. Roads

Improve the system of Hillside roads to respond to current use and expected growth:

- Improve road safety through, for example, physical changes in roads and intersections, speed limits, improving sight distance, minimizing cresting over roads, and improving strategies for providing road access in steep areas;
- Improve road connectivity while maintaining neighborhood character, particularly in areas where new development is likely to occur;
- Identify and design collector and arterial roads to avoid excessive and high-speed traffic in residential neighborhoods. The collector street system should be designed to discourage through traffic and to discourage continuous links between arterials;
- Provide improved emergency access and egress; and
- Align and design roads with regard for natural setting and neighborhood character by minimizing cut-and-fill, preserving views and landmark natural features, controlling traffic speeds, and modifying lighting.

Primary Policy	Implementation
9-A. Identify proposed future road connections to improve the system of primary and secondary roads within the Hillside District.	Map approved with adoption of the Hillside District Plan; improvements follow as determined by the Hillside road management entity and available funding.
9-B. Apply recently adopted municipal road standards, and amend as appropriate, to accommodate challenging site conditions and rural character including bedrock, steep slopes, and sub-alpine and alpine elevations with the purpose of minimizing cut-and-fill, disruption to natural drainage, and visual impacts. In the new standards, include the use of gravel roads in limited circumstances.	See HDP Policies 14-M and 14-N.
9-C. Prioritize maintenance and upgrades of primary and secondary roads, placing emphasis on projects that address existing safety and efficiency concerns.	General intent established in the Hillside District Plan; implementation by the Hillside road management entity.
9-D. Upgrade Old Seward Highway to a multi-modal facility while retaining its rural and recreational character.	Responsible agencies pending funding: MOA Parks and Recreation Department, MOA Traffic Department, and MOA Non-motorized Transportation Coordinator to coordinate with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), Chugach State Park (CSP), and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).
9-E. Prior to the establishment of the Hillside Road Management Entity, avoid new public projects that increase problems on substandard parts of the existing road system.	MOA Project Management and Engineering Department and MOA Planning and Zoning Commission as guidance to CIP.

#### GOAL 10. Trails

Develop a Hillside trails system to benefit Hillside residents and visitors to the area:

- Design the trail system so that it links neighborhoods and connects to schools, parks, area destinations, access points to Chugach State Park and the citywide trail system; and
- Develop trails that serve a variety of uses and users, including trails that serve as transportation and recreation.

Primary Policy	Implementation
10-A. Identify proposed trails and trailheads to improve the system of trails within the Hillside District and provide access to Chugach State Park.	HDP Map 4.6 approved with adoption of the Hillside District Plan and supersedes the existing Anchorage Trails Plan (for the Hillside study area). Means to obtain trails and trailheads include the subdivision process, purchases, land trades, and donations.
10-B. Provide a range of trailheads and parking areas to Chugach State Park, including neighborhood and auto-access trailheads.	Trails and trailhead policy approved with adoption of the Hillside District Plan. Specific location and implementation by MOA Parks and Recreation Department, Chugach State Park and Planning. Planning resources need to be identified.
10-C. Apply Anchorage Bowl trail standards for recreational, off-street rights-of-way, as well as roadside facilities.	Standards developed by the MOA Parks and Recreation Department; no action is required.

#### GOAL 11. Transit

Improve viability for transit within the Hillside District, including:

- Supporting the opportunity and potential for park-n-ride lots on the Hillside; and
- Promoting transit service for the lower Hillside (west of Elmore).

Primary Policy	Implementation
11-A. Future route structuring by People Mover should consider service to the University/Medical area from the lower Hillside.	MOA Public Transportation Department (as they carry out service evaluations).
11-B. Create park-n-ride lots in the Hillside District, as needed. Priority is on the lower Hillside in the area between Huffman Road and Rabbit Creek Road near the Seward Highway.	MOA Public Transportation Department (as they carry out service evaluations).

**GOAL 12. Funding, Maintenance and Operations**

Create an enhanced and efficient maintenance, operations and capital program for roads and trails within the Hillside District.

Primary Policy	Implementation
12-A. Establish a new Hillside District funding and management entity to manage and finance roads, drainage, built/green infrastructure watershed protection and aquifer recharge, and trails at a watershed and/or community-wide scale.	Anchorage Assembly, Hillside residents; initiative led by MOA Project Management and Engineering Department. See HDP Chapter 6.
12-B. Extend the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area boundary to include the entire Hillside District as well as the initial mile of Chugach State Park.	Anchorage Assembly, Hillside residents; initiative led by the MOA Parks and Recreation Department. See HDP Policy 14-B.
12-C. Create a new funding and management program targeted on improved Chugach State Park access.	Anchorage Assembly, Hillside residents; initiative led by the MOA Parks and Recreation Department. See HDP Policy 14-C.
12-D. Develop maintenance, repair and schedule priorities for roads and trails.	Hillside Road, Trails and Drainage Service Area/funding and management entity (once formed).

including currently hazardous intersections on Rabbit Creek Road, and along the severely substandard Old Seward Highway south of Rabbit Creek Road.

The Old Seward Highway from Rabbit Creek south to Potter Creek forms a corridor largely within a natural setting, connecting several large tracts of parkland and natural open space land, as well as a limited number of residential lots. The community has identified this roadway and the lands along it as very important for their wildlife viewing and habitat values, nature appreciation, public recreation, and scenic qualities. This plan supports a context-sensitive design for the future upgrade of this stretch of the Old Seward Highway to retain the highway's rural and recreational character and to integrate natural landscape features, natural resource values, and recreational uses into the road design. The Hillside District Plan supports a byway character with moderated speeds and recreational access features, rather than a typical arterial design.



## Policies and Policy Background

The remainder of this chapter presents strategies for roads and trails to improve pedestrian and vehicle transportation in the Hillside study area. Additional background information is included in the documents referenced in Appendix A. Hillside District Plan Supporting Documents.

### **Goal 9. Roads**

**Improve the system of Hillside roads to respond to current use and expected growth:**

- **Improve road safety through, for example, physical changes in roads and intersections, speed limits, improving sight distance, minimizing cresting over roads, and improving strategies for providing road access in steep areas;**
- **Improve road connectivity while maintaining neighborhood character, particularly in areas where new development is likely to occur;**
- **Identify and design collector and arterial roads to avoid excessive and high-speed traffic in residential neighborhoods. The collector street system should be designed to discourage through traffic and to discourage continuous links between arterials;**
- **Provide improved emergency access and egress; and**
- **Align and design roads with regard for natural setting and neighborhood character by minimizing cut-and-fill, preserving views and landmark natural features, controlling traffic speeds, and modifying lighting.**

### **Policy 9-A**

Identify proposed future road connections to improve the system of primary and secondary roads within the Hillside District.

#### **Background**

Road upgrades and connections were evaluated to meet the existing and future growth and safety needs in the study area. (See Map 4.1 Proposed Roadway Connections.) For purposes of the plan, key roads illustrated on the map are designated as primary

or secondary roads. These designations do not determine the formal functional classification of streets as collectors, arterials, and freeways.

- **Primary streets:** As illustrated in the plan, primary streets are streets that would attract and serve the most traffic and provide a primary connection from secondary and other streets into and away from the Hillside.
- **Secondary streets:** Secondary streets help bring the local traffic from housing areas and connections to schools, Chugach State Park, and local parks. In subdivisions, they also serve as the key roadway that most residents use to enter their homes.

The plan establishes a hierarchy of roads so that they function as a system, from small roads (which focus on land access) to highways (which move people longer distances at higher speeds). In the Hillside District Plan, primary and secondary roads are identified as priorities for future maintenance and capital improvements, as they serve a larger use and public benefit, in addition to individual local neighborhood needs.

The recommended road network is based on three assumptions:

**First**, the actual creation of many of these road and trail routes hinges upon the pace and location of future development. The road network on Map 4.1 is intended to provide a framework so that as development occurs, routes have been identified to serve this growth. Identifying the general location of these routes now can help illustrate the possibility and intention for a complete network of roads in advance of development, rather than trying to identify and cobble routes together parcel by parcel as land is developed. The future construction of these roads will help distribute traffic through a street network in order to avoid overloading any single street with all area traffic. This network of streets also is key to avoiding the congestion and safety issues that will arise if roads are developed in a more piecemeal and unplanned manner. This system of routes can be built as the area grows, ensuring connectivity, improved emergency access, and options for evacuations.

**Second**, not every road has been identified in this plan. For instance, not all possible subdivided areas depict secondary road networks. Moreover, the subdivision process may require additional secondary or local connections depending on the location, lot layout, and density of the proposed development.



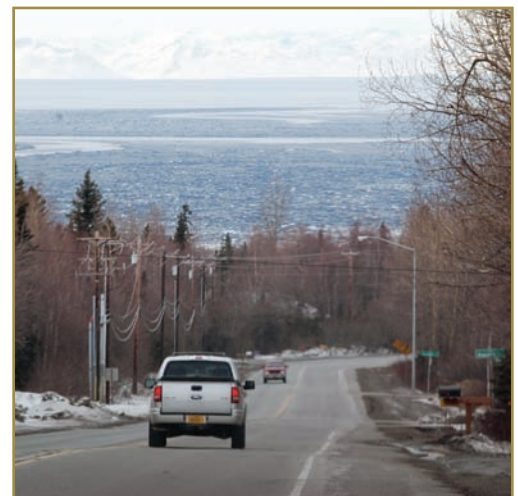
**Third**, routes need not be constructed in the exact location as depicted on the map. The routes were drawn on a planning level; with the intent to avoid major impacts, consider constructability, and maintain acceptable grades. However, design and permitting requirements and input from the neighboring/affected communities and community council are likely to change some of the routes.

Furthermore, the following issues have been identified for the four special study areas noted on Map 4.1. Scoping may raise further issues.

- A. North-south connections between DeArmoun and Rabbit Creek Road in the area from Elmore to Evergreen Street. Connections in this area will need to resolve the most practical creek crossings, traffic control through the neighborhoods, and intersections with Rabbit Creek Road in light of its predicted Level of Service (LOS) F traffic. Challenges along the Elmore alignment include grades and sightlines (particularly at the Rabbit Creek Road intersection), grades down to Elmore Creek, the valley at Rabbit Creek, the natural gas line, and the water utility line.
- B. East-west connection of Jamie Road or Shangri La area to 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. This east-west connection must be phased after connections to Mountain Air Drive are in place and improvements have relieved congestion along Golden View Drive from 152nd to Rabbit Creek Road in order to avoid further impacts to the Rabbit Creek/Golden View intersection. Grades and soils are further concerns.
- C. North-south road connection from Bainbridge Road to DeArmoun Road. The construction of a road intersection at the curve on lower DeArmoun Road is not desirable until the realignment of the road is complete or further safety improvements are made on it at the Bainbridge Road alignment.
- D. East-west connection from south Golden View Drive to lower Potter Valley Road. The road will have to be designed to serve as a collector for new development in the existing Legacy Pointe area, as well as carry traffic from the upper Hillside, as an alternate route to Golden View Drive. The alignment and design must consider grades, wetlands, streams, traffic volumes, and the amount of cut-and-fill. The new collector



The lower part of Rabbit Creek Road is known for difficult winter driving conditions.





The proposed road network takes into account an increased traffic capacity in some areas, as well as emergency access and impact on the character of the area's neighborhoods.

must be phased with improvements to the lowest curve on Potter Valley Road and the intersections of the Old and New Seward Highways as traffic volumes increase.

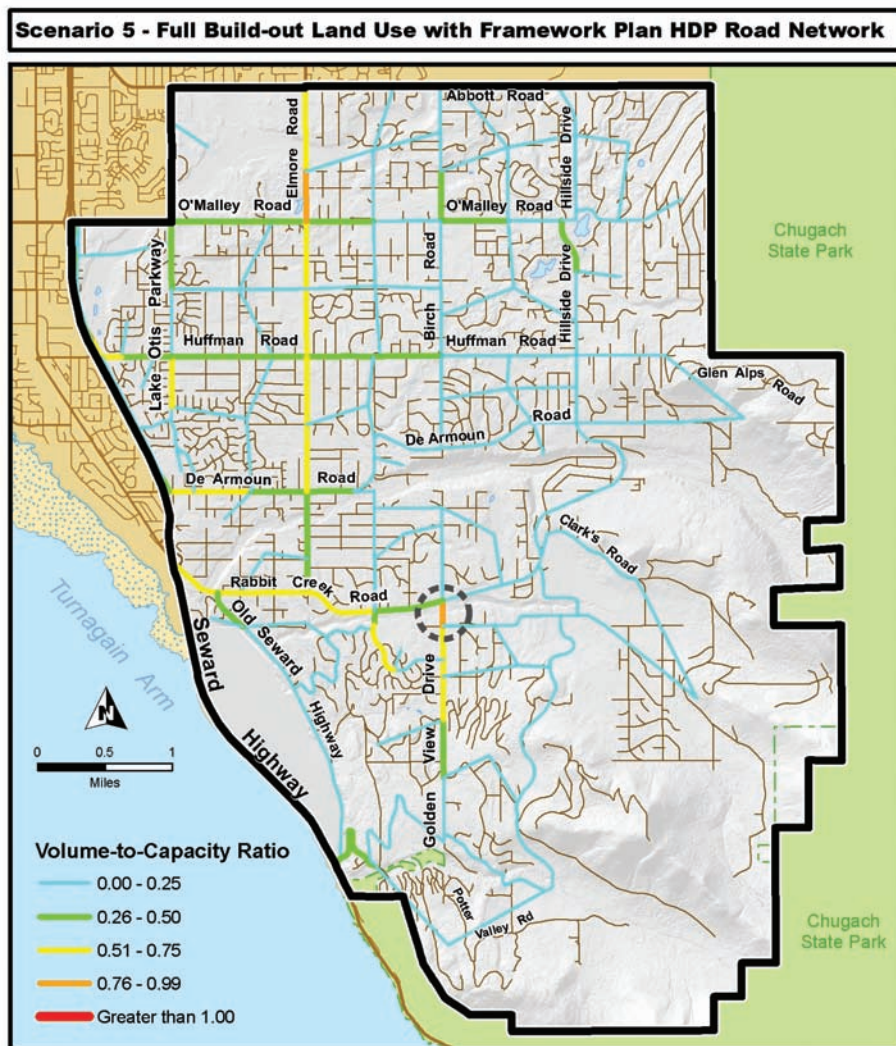
### Evaluation of Proposed Road Network

- Traffic Projected with the Base Case, Build-out Land Use Scenario:** As part of this planning process, a traffic model based on the build-out land use scenario was developed. This model evaluated the performance of the existing road system with and without the proposed Hillside District Plan road network of primary and secondary roads. Several scenarios were examined during the Hillside District Planning process and are described in the HDP Framework Plan Supplement, "Transportation Alternatives Report" of October 2008 (referenced in the list of Hillside District Plan Supporting Documents, Appendix A). Without the proposed roads, Golden View Drive was the only road that was projected to be significantly over capacity (Table 4.3, Scenario 2). With the road connections and full build-out, the model indicates that Golden View Drive and Rabbit Creek Road perform well under capacity (Table 4.3, Scenarios 3 and 4).

Map 4.2 corresponds to Scenario 5, Full Build-out Land Use with Framework Plan HDP Road Network. Scenario 5 assumes full build-out of the Hillside and the full set of road connections proposed in the HDP Framework Plan, minus road segments such as Bridgeview Drive to Golden View Drive and Rabbit Creek Road to Hillside Drive, which were pulled out of the full HDP roads network due to neighborhood concerns and potential wetland impacts. Results from the model indicate an increase in traffic volumes on Elmore Road and Golden View Drive for Scenario 5, as compared to Scenarios 3 and 4, but the intersection remains under capacity. With the recommended connections (Map 4.1), all Hillside roadways are anticipated to function without unacceptable congestion (Map 4.2). The critical improvements needed to reduce the congestion along Golden View Drive are the additional connections to Rabbit Creek Road from Mountain Air Drive (running east of and generally parallel to Golden View) and the new road through the Legacy Pointe Subdivision (at the south end of Golden View Drive, extending down to Potter Valley Road). In addition, the plan proposes improving internal circulation in the area by extending 156th Avenue (which runs parallel to and just south of Rabbit Creek Road) east of Golden View Drive to Mountain Air Drive.



Map 4.2  
Hillside Traffic Projections at Full Build-out



Map 4.2 shows Hillside traffic projections for Scenario 5 (Full Build-out Land Use with Framework Plan HDP Road Network).

Table 4.3, shows the Volume-to-Capacity Ratio for Golden View Drive between Rabbit Creek Road and Ricky Road (circled in the map with a dotted line) under each of the five traffic scenarios examined in the HDP Framework Plan (referenced in Appendix A). Color shading in the Average Daily Traffic Count column of Table 4.3 corresponds to the color coding in the map legend.

This traffic modeling analysis was performed as part of the Hillside planning process to evaluate the performance of the existing road system with and without the proposed Hillside District Plan road network of primary and secondary roads.

Table 4.3  
Volume-to-Capacity Ratio

Scenario No.	Scenario	Average Daily Traffic Count: Golden View Drive between Rabbit Creek Road and Ricky Road
1	LRTP Traffic Forecast (2027)	11,235
2	Full Build-out Land Use, with LRTP Improvements	14,856
3	Full Build-out Land Use, with Full HDP Road Network	9,038
4	Full Build-out Land Use, with Full HDP Road Network and Increased Density on Lower Hillside	9,113
5	Full Build-out Land Use with Framework Plan HDP Road Network	11,574



One of many Hillside roads that does not meet Municipality of Anchorage standards.

- **Traffic Projected with the Lower Hillside Controlled Growth Land Use Scenario:** The team examined anticipated traffic levels based on a lower Hillside Controlled Growth Land Use scenario (in which the housing density in the lower Hillside would have increased), with proposed roadway improvements in place. The model results indicate that the added density would modestly increase traffic on the lower Hillside but that none of the roadways would be over capacity. The roadways that would be affected by additional trips are Elmore Road, lower O'Malley Road, and lower DeArmoun Road.
- **Emergency Access:** The recommended road network was designed to address fire risk and current limitations of emergency and evacuation routes for moving equipment and fire fighting personnel. Wildland fire risk for some areas of the Hillside is of great concern, and a number of areas lack road network connectivity. A map of transportation issues on page 19 of the April 2008 Transportation Alternatives Report (Transportation and Trails Supplement to the Hillside District Plan Framework Plan, referenced Appendix A. Hillside District Plan Supporting Documents) shows the highest risk areas for wildfires and how the proposed roadway network responds to these areas. This plan recommends key connections to the existing road network to provide better emergency accessibility.
- **Impact on Neighborhood Character:** Recommended roadway connections will affect the residential quality of some neighborhoods. This is, to some extent, already occurring in an unplanned manner. Cut-through traffic happens in multiple locations on roads not designed for this purpose. Key concerns of cut-through traffic and high-speed traffic in neighborhoods should be mitigated through road design. Some connections may have emergency-only gates (e.g., Luna Street at Prominence Pointe) to avoid funneling traffic off primary local roads onto neighborhood streets.

### Policy 9-B

Apply recently adopted municipal road standards, and amend as appropriate, to accommodate challenging site conditions and rural character, including bedrock, steep slopes, and sub-alpine and alpine elevations with the purpose of minimizing cut-and-fill, disruption to natural drainage, and visual impacts. In the new standards, include the use of gravel roads in limited circumstances.



## Background

Over the course of preparing this plan, a number of people suggested the need for new or modified road design standards for the Hillside. Prior to completion of the Hillside District Plan Public Hearing Draft, the Municipality adopted new road standards for the Municipality as a whole, including the Hillside. These new standards are included in the Design Criteria Manual (DCM). Because many people are not aware of these new standards, they are summarized in Table 4.5 (also addressed by HDP Policies 14-M and 14-N).

Road design standards are set considering the way roads function within the system and the physical character of the land. Standards ensure proper design and a safe operating environment. Special consideration must be given when designing roads in a hillside environment. Slopes, depth to bedrock, cut-and-fill, drainage, wetlands, and topography pose unique challenges and require innovative strategies on the Hillside. Hillside residents have made clear their preference for roads that fit the rural character that exists in much of the district (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4  
Rural Roads – Typical Section

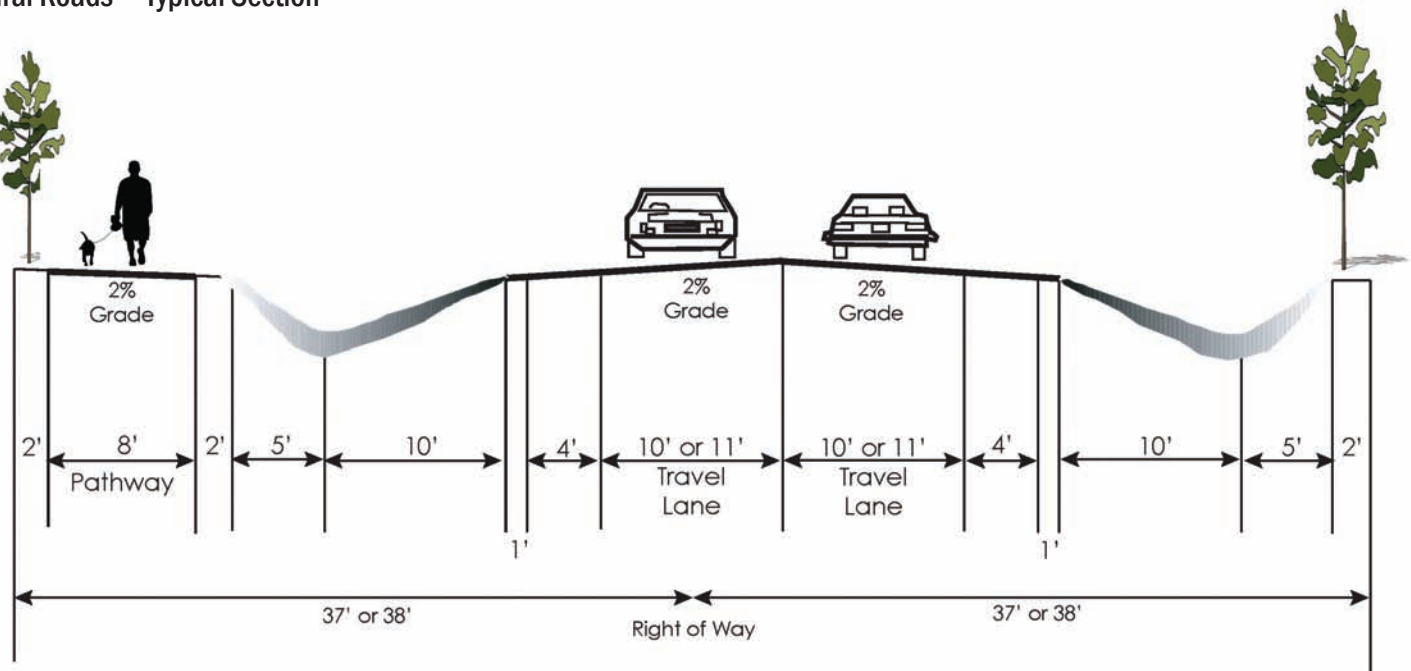


Figure 4.4 is the typical section for a rural collector. For local secondary roads, a typical section would have a 50-foot right-of-way and would include 20- to 24-foot surface widths (10- to 12-foot travel lanes), depending on average daily traffic (see Table 4.5). These local roads would include 2- to 4-foot shoulders, wide enough to accommodate pedestrians.

This recently adopted set of MOA road standards is briefly summarized below; a more complete discussion of these standards is presented in the Implementation Chapter.

- Develop a road system that reflects Hillside character. Paving is required on public roads, but strip-paving (no curbs and sidewalks) and narrower rights-of-way are allowed in specific situations. This approach is intended to recognize the need for adequate emergency access, the desire to retain rural character, and the tradeoff between construction costs and maintenance costs.
- Road standards will vary based on context. The Hillside District Plan defines three areas where different road standards are appropriate:
  - Urban: Portions of the Hillside District that are within the Anchorage Roads and Drainage Service Area (ARDSA).

**Table 4.5**  
**General Standards for New Roads**

Setting (related to Land Use Map)	Average Daily Traffic (ADT) greater than 2,000	ADT 2,000 to 500	ADT 500 to 100	ADT less than 100
Areas three dwelling units per acre (DUA) or greater: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential</li> <li>• Commercial</li> <li>• Park and Natural Resources</li> <li>• Community Facility in areas generally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface paved (with curbs and gutter)</li> <li>• Min Surface Width: 24'</li> <li>• Max Slope: 8%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface paved (with curbs and gutter)</li> <li>• Min Surface Width: 24'</li> <li>• Max Slope: 8%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface: strip-paved</li> <li>• Surface width: 20'</li> <li>• Max slope: 10% (Option for 12% with variance*)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface: strip-paved</li> <li>• Surface width: 20'</li> <li>• Max slope: 10% (Option for 12% with variance*)</li> </ul>
Areas less than three dwelling units per acre (DUA): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential</li> <li>• Park and Natural Resources</li> <li>• Community Facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface paved (with curbs and gutter)</li> <li>• Min Surface Width: 24'</li> <li>• Max Slope: 8%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface: strip-paved</li> <li>• Surface width: 24'</li> <li>• Max slope: 10%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface: strip-paved</li> <li>• Surface width: 20'</li> <li>• Max slope: 10% (Option for 12% with variance*)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface: gravel or strip-paved</li> <li>• Surface width: 20'</li> <li>• Max slope: 10% (Option for 12% with variance*)</li> </ul>

*\*The variance is a solution of last resort; it is not to be used as a standard practice or considered the minimum acceptable design to work from. See also HDP Policies 14-M and 14-N.*

- Central Hillside: Rural DCM standards, with the possible exception of major east-west streets.
- Southeastern: Rural DCM standards.

Table 4.5 shows the standards for new roads. The standards allow for narrower rights-of-way for low traffic volume roads in rural settings. Rural streets are strip-paved (paved streets without curb and gutter or sidewalks), with shoulders wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, drainage ditches, and low ambient light levels (detailed in Chapter 6. Implementation, Part 2: Development Standards and Procedures). Urban streets typically have curb and gutter, lights, storm drains, and sidewalks.

These are minimum standards; if an individual, developer, homeowners association, LRSA, RRSA, or independent entity prefers higher standards, this plan does not preclude such a decision. Detailed road design standards can be located in the municipal Design Criteria Manual and the Subdivision Standards of Title 21. The design standards for all the existing major east-west streets connecting the Hillside to the Seward Highway (Rabbit Creek Road, DeArmoun Road, Huffman Road, O'Malley Road, and Abbott Road) are state owned; and the design standard applied to these streets is determined by the State.

Existing primary or secondary streets that are currently not paved should be priorities for paving, with the final decision on timing to be determined working with local LRSAs, RRSAs, independent entities, and the proposed Hillside-wide management entity board. Other streets that are currently not paved may be gradually improved over time to reduce dust and maintenance costs. This will occur slowly, based on available funding and considering neighborhood character and preferences. Increased paving may result in higher-speed traffic unless adequate traffic-calming measures are taken. The survey conducted for the HDP showed that the majority of Hillside residents living on large lots consider unpaved roads an integral part of their rural lifestyle.

The neighborhood will have an opportunity through the context sensitive solutions strategy approach to participate at the earliest phase to ensure that the transportation project is in harmony with land use and the environment so as to make the improvement blend in with the surrounding community.



### **Policy 9-C**

Prioritize maintenance and upgrades on primary and secondary roads, placing emphasis on projects that address existing safety and efficiency concerns, with optimum use of existing infrastructure and supporting efficient growth patterns.

#### **Background**

Map 4.3 identifies the general set of new and/or improved roads needed on the Hillside. Decisions on the specific priorities for making these improvements will be worked out in the future by the Hillside Roads, Trails and Drainage Service Area. In support of the infill, redevelopment, and transportation efficiency policies of Anchorage 2020, it is not a priority to publicly fund Hillside road or drainage extensions that primarily serve undeveloped residential land (i.e., fix existing problems before funding new projects). Road, drainage, and utility extensions that primarily serve undeveloped residential lands shall remain the responsibility of the proposed development.

### **Policy 9-D**

Upgrade Old Seward Highway to a multi-modal facility while retaining its rural and recreational character.

#### **Background**

The Old Seward Highway should be upgraded through a context-sensitive design to retain the highway's rural and recreational character and to integrate natural landscape features, resource values, and recreational uses with the road corridor improvements. The design should ensure safe multi-modal connectivity between parks and open space areas along this route, including: municipal parkland at both Rabbit Creek and Little Rabbit Creek; the Bird Treatment and Learning Center; trails and other open space features shown in the Hillside District Plan and the HLB Potter Valley Land Use Analysis; Potter Marsh (Coastal Wildlife Refuge); and destinations of Chugach State Park (Potter Valley greenbelt, historic Potter Station, and Turnagain View trailhead).

### **Policy 9-E**

Prior to the establishment of the Hillside Road Management Entity, avoid new public projects that increase problems on substandard parts of the existing road system.

#### **Background**

Because there are large undeveloped tracts and many substandard roads in the Hillside District, proposed road upgrades and

extensions have the potential to spur traffic increases on substandard roads well outside of the extension areas. The road management entity (locally controlled by Hillside residents) will have the responsibility to track and coordinate with plans by ADOT&PF and the MOA Traffic Department, including prioritizing future funding requests. Such coordination and funding will not occur until HDP Policy 12-A (to form the management entity) is implemented. Until the management entity is in place to coordinate the phasing of major road upgrades, there is a general intent to avoid new public projects that increase problems on substandard parts of the road system. This does not impede private funding of road extensions.

### **Goal 10. Trails**

**Develop a Hillside trails system to benefit Hillside residents and visitors to the area:**

- **Design the trail system so that it links neighborhoods and connects to schools, parks, area destinations, access points to Chugach State Park and the citywide trail system; and**
- **Develop trails that serve a variety of uses and users, including trails that serve as transportation and recreation.**

### **Background**

Trails are an important form of community infrastructure and serve a wide array of functions in the Hillside District. Multi-use trails and sidewalks (in and around neighborhoods, near schools, and along major streets) are an integral part of the total transportation system, providing mobility and accessibility. Within parks and open spaces, trails and footpaths provide healthy recreation opportunities, enhance community life, raise nearby property values, attract visitors, and provide access to some of Anchorage's notable outdoor attractions, including Chugach State Park.

Trails in the Hillside District are popular with local residents and visitors. At least 200,000 users a year come to the Chugach through the Hillside area each year (from all across Anchorage and beyond) usually seeking a parking spot first, and then some form of access to open land. Based on the level of use at existing trailheads (described in sidebar page 1-16), most of these visitors want to reach the scenic alpine country and ridges found in the



Roads double as pedestrian paths: Golden View Drive (above); out for a stroll on Potter Valley Road (below).





The Hillside area provides a wide range of trails including roadside pedestrian paths, popular bike routes, and walking trails on public (and private) land.



state park; some walk through land that might look like state park open space but is in fact private property.

In addition to this destination demand, many Hillside residents enjoy walking on the (mostly) quiet roads in their neighborhoods. Over time, the continuing growth of the area will tend to reduce opportunities for quiet walks through neighborhoods.

In many places on the Hillside, trails infrastructure and management of parking areas, trash services, signage, and general trails use has not kept pace with demand. Evidence of these problems includes overflowing parking areas, parking in places not intended as trailheads, and, on occasion, problems with trespass, trash, and vandalism.

A range of conflicts and user pressures have mounted over the years, reflecting this strong demand and historic limitations in services, access, and management. These issues are intensifying with new development and will likely escalate as remaining undeveloped private land is developed on the southeast Hillside. In response to these issues and opportunities, the Hillside District Plan provides policy on two major topics:

- Trails, trailheads, and infrastructure needed now and into the future to adequately serve demand.
- Improved means to fund, acquire, develop, and maintain this system, and an improved institutional arrangement to fairly and efficiently fund this work.

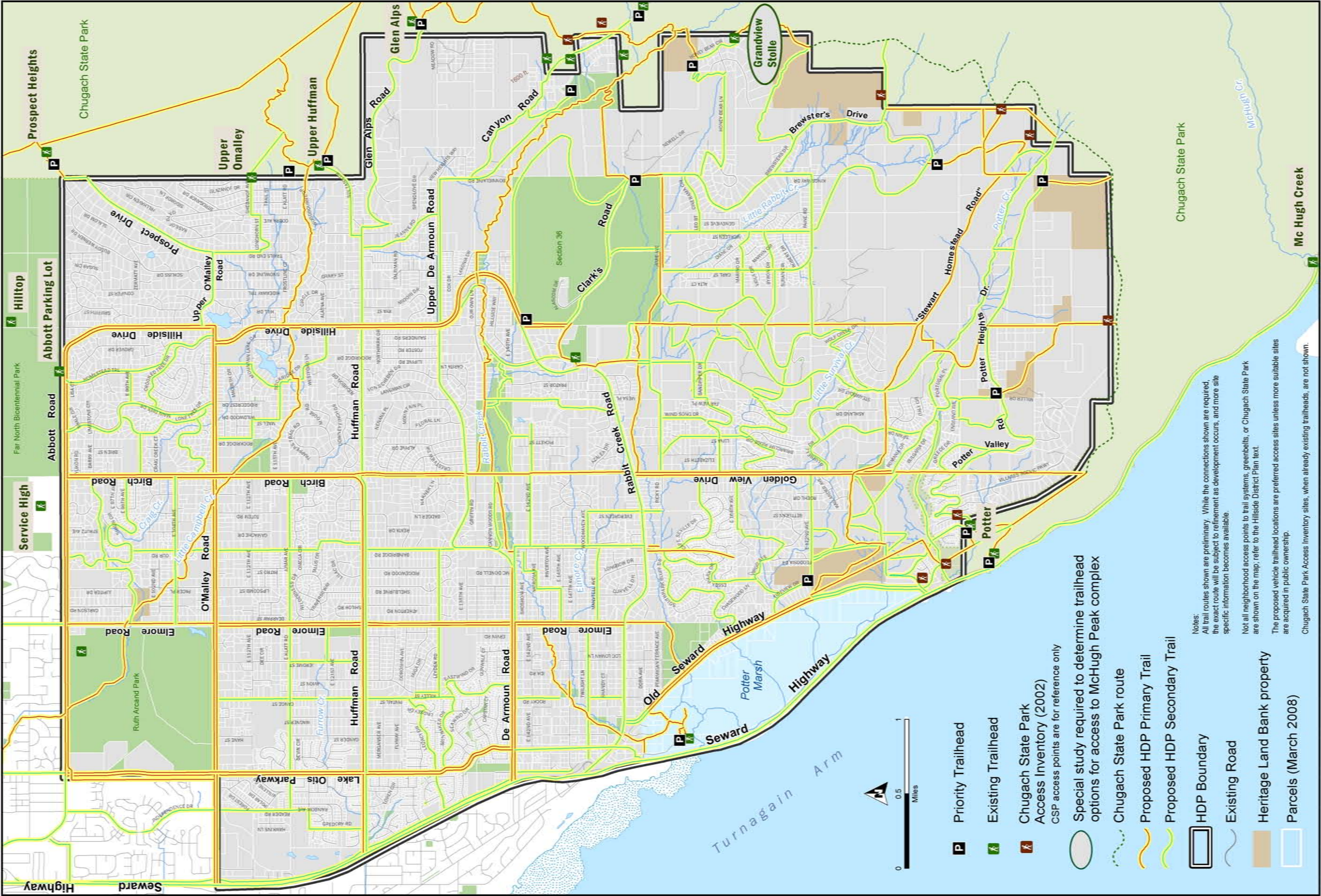
### **Policy 10-A**

Identify proposed trails and trailheads to improve the system of trails within the Hillside District and access to Chugach State Park.

### **Background**

The Hillside District Plan establishes a Hillside-wide network of trails, mostly running east-west or north-south. Trails are planned at regular intervals, linked with larger trailheads about every mile on public lands along the border with the Chugach State Park. This system will serve local and regional needs well into the future. The trail system recognizes the desire for both roadside and natural-setting trails and the need to link Hillside trails to trails in the remainder of Anchorage. Similar to the roadway plan, trails are categorized as primary (regional access) or secondary (district access), as illustrated in Map 4.6 Existing/Proposed Trail Routes. Similar to the three assumptions for roads, trail routes and trailhead locations shown on the map are not necessarily the final







(This page intentionally left blank.)

alignments that will ultimately be constructed. The network was drawn at a planning level, with the intent to avoid major impacts, leverage existing public lands and access easements, and consider constructability. Also similar to the approach to roads, while Map 4.6 identifies all the priority regional and district trails in the Hillside District, it is clear that there are local trails that may be needed within or between adjoining neighborhoods; these are not shown on the trails map. Such trails, which serve a more localized function than either regional or district trails, may be identified at the time of development. The HDP acknowledges that there are also some important, long-established trails on private land not shown on the trails map. While these cannot be required to be protected in future developments, reservation of these trails for public use is nonetheless desirable, if means are available.

The possible trail and trailhead network was developed by analyzing previously adopted plans, natural land features, legal access issues, and by gaining input from the public, agencies, and landowners. The network is intended to balance the public desire for connectivity with private property concerns. Trail routes are focused, to the extent possible, on public lands, section lines, and (where necessary) along roadsides. Sometimes these trails follow straight lines and are therefore steep or are located where they provide a more constrained route than what may have existed prior to development.

The map does show some key trail links crossing private land. These trail routes, generally identified in the adopted Municipality of Anchorage Areawide Trails Plan, face challenges similar to new road connections in terms of location, design, and construction. The objective of the HDP is to identify these important connections and routes and express the public intent to make trail connections across or around private property for connectivity to the same extent as the roads indicated in this plan. The HDP recognizes that some traditional use trails will be lost, while alternative options for accommodating access will be explored until an acceptable private/public arrangement can be made.

Most access points to these trails are primarily intended to serve residents living in the area, and thus may include little or no public parking. During platting, special attention will need to be focused on locating trailheads to avoid unsafe or illegal parking situations and undesirable impacts to traffic and neighborhoods.



Points of access into Chugach State Park exist in several places on the Hillside. Many people desire more access points, but selecting sites and paying for access improvements are challenging issues requiring careful site selection, coordination with nearby residents, and improved trailhead management.



*Much of the opposition by land owners and developers to trails reflected the current lack of management of trail activities, rather than intrinsic problems with trails.*



Potter-Steamboat winter trail.

## **Policy 10-B**

Provide a range of trailheads and parking areas to Chugach State Park, including neighborhood and auto-access trailheads

### **Background**

Demand for better ways into Chugach State Park continues to grow, particularly demand for quick access into scenic alpine terrain. As noted previously, existing access points are overcrowded (such as the Glen Alps and the informal trailhead leading up Rabbit Creek and the backside of Flattop Mountain), with parking that overflows onto adjacent streets. Several small, newly established (and/or newly discovered) access points in the southeast Hillside are also experiencing rapid growth in use. Unwanted side effects of this increasing demand are also growing, including trash problems, disruption of neighborhood character, and wear and tear on roads.

While some people believe that the solution to these issues is to reduce demand, this is not an option. Past experience shows that demand for park access will continue to increase whether or not facilities are improved. The numbers of Anchorage residents and visitors will continue to grow, along with public enthusiasm for Chugach State Park. There is a clear and growing need for access to the McHugh Peak complex, including access from the Bear Valley area; and there are few easy, obvious ways to respond to this demand. Possible alternatives include: HLB land on ridge (site identified in the draft plan); lower elevation sites in the Section 36 parcel; acquisition of private land in the upper Bear Valley area; access at the Brewster Homestead, and expansion of the existing Honey Bear site.

The MOA will work with Chugach State Park, local landowners, and future service area to further explore options and determine what site best meets the interests of local residents and the trail users.

Consequently, a new, more proactive policy is needed – a “package approach” to improved Chugach access. Elements of this package are:

- 1. Improved Access Points:** Identify, reserve, and improve multiple pedestrian and small trailhead parking access points to Chugach State Park to diffuse and spread use, and to reduce crowding at any one location.
- 2. Alpine Access Priority Trailhead Improvements:** Provide one or more, larger-capacity trailheads at points that can handle

crowds and more traffic without adverse effects on adjoining neighborhoods; this may require new land acquisition and/or Heritage Land Bank land trades.

3. **Improved Funding and Management:** Develop significantly improved new ways to pay for capital improvements and operations and maintenance. This must include law enforcement, collection of park access fees, and trail (and road) maintenance.

### Improved Access Points

Fifty percent of all Alaskans live within 30 minutes of the Chugach State Park, and the large majority of the demand from this population is directed to the four dedicated, improved public access sites along the park's border in the Hillside District Plan study area. This plan moves toward implementing existing public policy in support of improved Chugach Access<sup>1</sup> using a three-tiered access approach along the Chugach State Park border:

- Provide neighborhood access easements. Developing subdivisions should provide pedestrian access between lots or at the end of streets and cul-de-sacs within the subdivisions targeted at meeting the needs of the subdivision and immediate neighborhood. These easements would not have parking provided as these locations are not proposed to serve users other than residents within walking distance.
- Provide neighborhood access points. These locations would provide local trailheads and limited parking spaces approximately every quarter-mile or as recommended in the Chugach State Park Access Plan. These locations are intended to serve primarily as access points and recreational amenities for nearby residents; consequently, parking would be provided for less than 10 vehicles, similar to that provided for neighborhood parks such as Moen Park off of Golden View Drive. These parking spaces should be located on Chugach State Park land where physical site conditions allow. Thus roadway rights-of-way should be dedicated when physically possible so that they connect to the Chugach State Park boundary, allowing extension of the roadway by Chugach State Park. Where physical constraints within the park preclude this, parking should be provided in the right-of-way or allocated in the platting process working with developers to provide for limited parking. These parking spaces will need to be developed so that they do not encourage illegal or unsafe parking. Several small pullouts located in the Prospect Heights



Powerline trail to Glen Alps, the best known and frequently overcrowded entry point to Flattop Mountain and Chugach State Park.

---

1 - Note: Anchorage 2020 Plan (policy 55 and 65); Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan strategy 4 (pages 44-45), strategy 6 (page 49); strategy 7 (page 51); park classification 4 (page 69); park classification 5 (pages 70-71); also pages 81, 83, 88-90, and 97; Alaska Statute 41.21.121 (construct necessary facilities); Chugach State Park Master Plan (Recreation Development Zone along border with Hillside “established to meet intensive recreation needs by providing easy and well defined points of access to parking with facilities as appropriate”); Chugach State Park Trail Plan “large trailheads serve very popular trails and access points . . . planned prior to residential development so that all parties are aware of the proposed trailheads”; Chugach State Park Access Inventory (pages 3-4; 17-18, 21, and Appendix C).



The Hillside District is home to this gully that holds snow late into the spring and serves as a popular destination for backcountry downhill skiers.



Signs at the Honey Bear access point give a sense of the challenges of meeting the large and growing demand for access to Chugach State Park

area (between Glen Alps and the larger Prospect Heights parking area) show how a series of informal access points can fit next to neighborhoods without disruption.

- Provide auto access trailheads approximately every mile along the Chugach State Park border on public lands or as recommended in the Chugach State Park Access Plan. These consist of regularly spaced, improved parking areas labeled “Priority Trailheads.” These facilities are intended to accommodate the significant auto-based demand in a way compatible with existing and future Hillside neighborhoods. Trailhead criteria and design standards include:
  - **Access off a primary or secondary road:** Each trailhead with significant auto-based demand should be located so as to direct traffic toward the main road network and away from local and private roads. Secondary roads for access should be minimized. However, in some cases, the goal of providing priority trailheads may require the use of short portions of the secondary road system. In this case, depending upon neighborhood needs, the secondary road may be improved to a higher standard for the portion that serves the larger public.
  - **Located on sizable public parcels:** The Chugach State Park border is located high in the foothills adjacent to predominantly private land. Recognizing this, existing islands of public land are identified and used as public gateways for park access. These sites, labeled as Priority Trailheads, must be large enough to both accommodate significant auto demand and buffer private landowners. Given the typical slope, wetland, and other development constraints, some land trade and/or acquisition may be required to create workable sites large enough to accommodate at least 30 but potentially up to 150 cars. Parking areas adjoining residential areas should include a substantial natural perimeter buffer to screen parking from adjoining uses. Wherever possible, this should be a 100-foot vegetated buffer, but site constraints may not always allow a buffer of this size.
  - **Provide adequate facilities and ongoing management:** Each priority trailhead will need to include adequate visitor facilities and in some cases small on-site (potentially volunteer) ranger stations. These trailheads should be developed to provide a sustained management presence



to address issues associated with such a highly used park (trash, vandalism, theft, fire, public safety, and restrooms). The Eagle River Nature Center provides one example of how Chugach State Park access can become an asset within a neighborhood (even after being a source of stress and conflict for many years) once adequate facilities and management are provided. The Chugach State Park Access Inventory update evaluated the type of facilities that would best address the needs for a management presence while recognizing scarce Chugach State Park financial resources.

### **Alpine Access Priority Trailhead Improvements**

It is important to meet the strong demand for larger-scale, auto-based alpine access, which can be best done by improving larger-capacity trailheads in the near future. Again, these must be located on public lands that can handle larger crowds and more traffic without imposing adverse effects on adjoining neighborhoods, even if this requires new land acquisition and/or land trades with the Heritage Land Bank. The provision of these parking locations is important for relieving the pressure on neighborhoods to meet demands for access to Chugach State Park. Two areas where there is strong user demand and where currently undeveloped land could accommodate such trailheads include:

- 1. Bear Valley:** The Brewster Homestead at the top of Bear Valley is a key component to a successful access system. However, the Chugach State Park boundary is distant from Brewster Road, and topography and hydrology prevent the extension of a roadway to the park boundary line. Recognizing this, the Municipality should work with the Brewster Homestead landowners and through local nonprofit organizations to acquire a site for parking and trail access to the park boundary in this area. This would connect to access locations on the Potter Valley side of Baldy Ridge, providing a network extending to the south from the Brewster location.
- 2. Potter Valley:** Similar to the Brewster Homestead, the Stewart Homestead should also be considered as a component of the network of public access points to Chugach State Park that provides public parking in order to relieve pressure from neighborhoods. This is another location where the plan recommends working with landowners and nonprofit organizations to provide or acquire parking.

These two proposed primary trailheads in Bear Valley and Potter Valley, in combination with the existing trailheads at Prospect Heights and Glen Alps, meet the goal of a large trailhead about every mile along the Chugach State Park border on the Hillside. Another reason to prioritize these locations is that there is currently limited or no housing development nearby.

### Policy 10-C

Apply Anchorage Bowl trail standards for recreational, off-street rights-of-way, as well as roadside facilities.

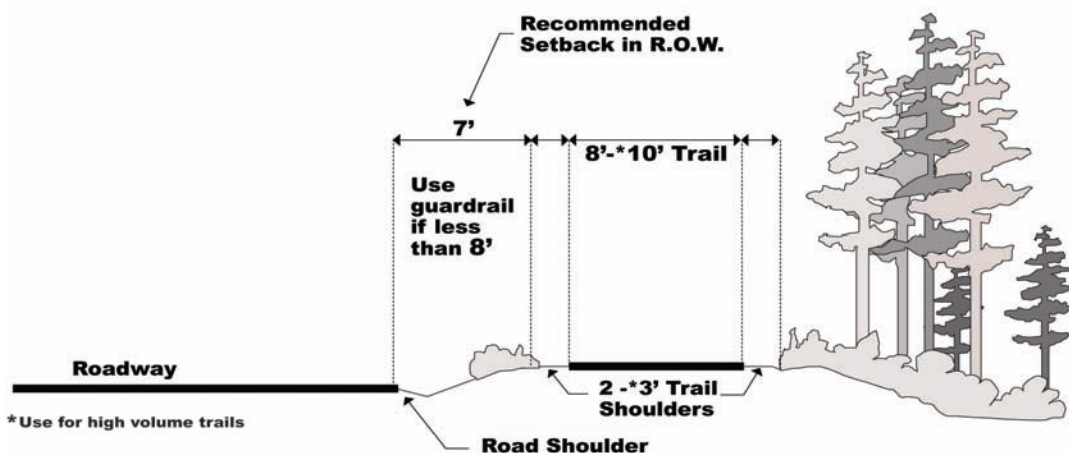
### Background

The Hillside District Plan applies different trail standards in different areas, as outlined below.

**Roadside Trails:** The Hillside District Plan recommends applying adopted Anchorage-wide standards for roadside trails and walkways in the Hillside District. General parameters for planning-level trail location and design are provided in the Areawide Trails Plan, and specific standards and requirements are located in the Municipality’s Design Criteria Manual and Title 21. Roadside trails also would benefit from consistency with Anchorage Pedestrian Plan policies to enhance safety and accessibility, particularly associated with school access and neighborhood connectivity.

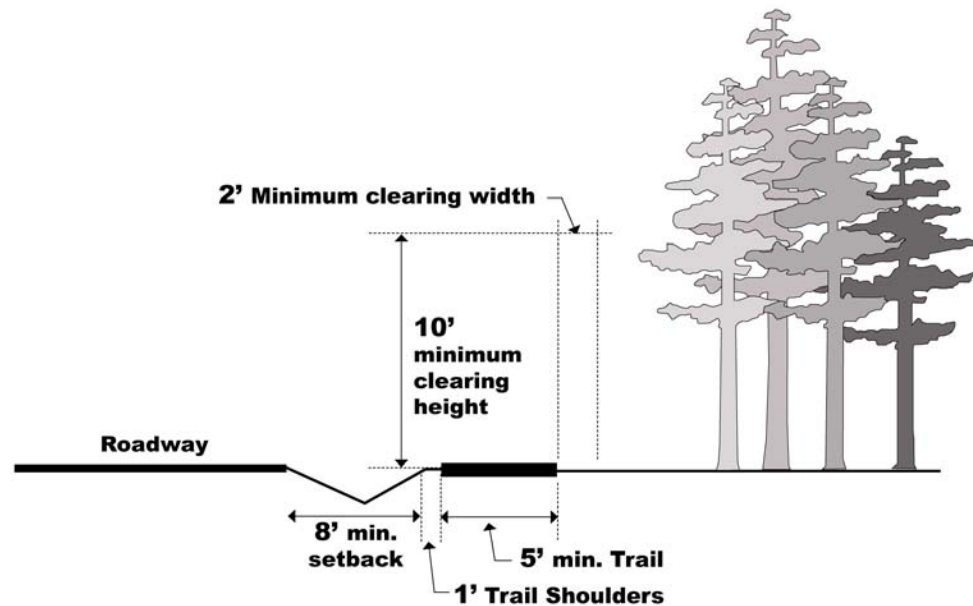
**Figure 4.7**  
**Trail Development**

The following illustrations for trail development show current trail standards. The final design of any trail should best match the surroundings, serve user preferences and expectations, and be consistent with the current Municipality of Anchorage Design Criteria Manual for trail design standards.



**Urban Typical Section:** ADA-accessible separated path, sidewalk, or paved trail located on one or both sides of the roadway.

Figure 4.7  
Trail Development  
(continued)



**Rural Typical Section:** Trail/pathways associated with the road network are recommended to be on one side of the roadway and separated “where possible and appropriate from the roadway to increase pedestrian safety and comfort and provide space for snow storage.”

**Natural Setting Trails:** Natural setting trails and walkways may be located within greenbelts and parks, located along section line or utility easements where no road construction is anticipated, or located in “open spaces between subdivisions to allow connectivity in a natural setting” (recommendation from the October 2006 Hillside Subarea Transportation Study, page 41). It is recommended that, to the extent possible, natural setting trails should be located and developed to take best advantage of views, scenery, and the natural setting, and to be complementary to nearby development.

Trails subject to new Title 21 Subdivision Standards in Section 21.08.040.D Chugach State Park, Community Use Areas, and Natural Resource Use Areas will follow easement provisions required by that municipal code language. Portions of the Hillside present particular challenges to developing trails that are safe, attractive, and have minimal environmental impact. Hillside trails will be designed to maintain and protect the Hillside’s natural setting and rural character. General objectives for trail design are presented below, recognizing that these objectives do not apply in all situations and that flexibility is needed to respond to the unique conditions of individual settings. Because of Hillside-specific slope and erosion considerations, some natural setting



trail segments may require a wider than typical easement, or necessitate the use of retaining walls to ensure safe and reasonable trail development. Where trails are constructed, cut-or-fill slopes associated with development are recommended not to exceed a ratio of two feet horizontal to one vertical foot (2H:1V) to minimize sloughing and support slope re-vegetation. In lower traffic and alpine areas, the use of stabilized single track trails that follow slope contours is recommended. These minimize the disturbance footprint, protect scenic and natural setting values, and will allow greater opportunities for including trails on constrained sites. All natural setting trails are recommended to be developed to a grade of 20 percent or less.

Where possible, separate roadside trails from roads. This can provide a more enjoyable trail experience and reduce problems of winter snow being stored on pathways. Avoid the use of overly steep terrain, including section lines that may provide legal access but are too steep for sustainable use. Where possible, avoid the use of utility easements and avoid locating trails in creek setbacks. For trails in particularly complex steep terrain, consult a professional trail designer.

It is preferable to have public trails on public land. This is more important as the level of use increases. For regional and district trails, the strong preference is for land in public ownership or reserved through public easement; local trails should be on public land where possible but can also be on land held by homeowners associations.

Natural Setting trails may be paved in higher use areas in order to protect natural resources, or they may be soft surface trails developed to a minimal level to retain the natural experience. Multi-use paved trail design standards are provided in the Municipality's Design Criteria Manual. New citywide standards are being developed by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department for soft surface trail classification, development, and maintenance.

#### **Improved Trails and Trailheads Funding and Management**

Many of the adverse side effects of trail use and Chugach State Park access will only be resolved through a better funded, more aggressive management and development program. This must include law enforcement, collection of park access fees, and trail (and road) maintenance and trailhead improvements. Hillside residents have voiced strong support for trails and, based on the Hillside survey results, a willingness to pay more for trails. Clearly,

new ways are needed to pay for capital improvements and for operations and maintenance. Because Chugach State Park access is an Anchorage-wide and regional concern, funding should be obtained from more than just Hillside residents.

A number of parties currently share some role on trail issues; but historically no single entity is responsible, and there has never been a clear or easy way to coordinate efforts. Obvious public entities include: Chugach State Park, the State of Alaska, the Municipality of Anchorage, and the public at large who want legal road and trail access along with adequate services such as parking, rest rooms, trash service, and a management presence to improve safety and prevent illegal activities. Private entities include developers ready to plat and subdivide, homeowners associations, trail user groups, tourism businesses and tourism organizations who want better day trip options, nonprofits, foundations, and conservation organizations.

The challenge in implementing this three-part package is that all these elements need to be in place to fully address Chugach State Park access issues. Incremental development of individual access points, without the full package outlined above, has the effect of directing more demand to a few locations than these sites can easily absorb. This is already happening with the relatively recent opening of the Grandview six-car access point. While the incremental implementation of this package approach does create problems, ultimately it is still the best way to address Chugach State Park access needs, and therefore will be pursued. The right response to the problems at places like the Grandview trailhead is to push ahead and rapidly add additional access points in other parts of the Hillside and Anchorage. By giving Chugach State Park users multiple options, access is dispersed across more destinations and the impact on any one road or neighborhood is reduced. Concluding that no additional Chugach State Park access points are needed is not the right response.

Because of the terrain near the Chugach State Park boundary in the southern Hillside, the HDP proposes several access points to Chugach State Park by developing parking lots on public land near the park boundary, with a primary trail connecting to the park itself. These “walk-in” connections from parking lots are in lieu of road access and may receive heavy use; therefore, they must provide at least an eight-foot-wide gravel surface and a vegetative buffer in any section of the trail connection that may be routed through a subdivision. A 30-foot-wide public easement will be required for these trails to allow for the trail, adjustments

in alignment and construction due to topography and other site constraints, adequate step-aside room for trail users to avoid wildlife, and vegetative buffers to allow a continual natural setting for trail users and privacy for adjoining properties.

Improved funding and management mechanisms for roads and trails are described in greater detail at the end of Chapter 4. Transportation and in Chapter 6. Implementation.

### **Goal 11. Transit**

**Improve viability for transit within the Hillside District, including:**

- **Supporting the opportunity and potential for park-n-ride lots on the Hillside;**
- **Promoting transit service for the lower Hillside (west of Elmore).**

### **Background**

Transit service on the Hillside has varied during the past 25 years. In the early 1980s, transit service was available across the Hillside, including a complementary park-n-ride lot on the lower Hillside adjacent to the Seward Highway between DeArmoun Road and Huffman Road. More recently, a limited service was provided to the Hilltop Ski Area as support for the National Special Olympics event, but overall transit service has not been well used. Limited transit use on the Hillside is due to the lack of concentrated destinations and the lack of concentrated housing to originate and support transit ridership. In addition, breaks in the road network increase the challenges of supporting efficient and timely service.

An on-demand/on-call transit service called “DART” was initiated in the past to help address some transit needs in selected locations on the Hillside. This type of transit service is a hybrid between regular scheduled routes and no service. A resident would call ahead and a regular transit route close to the Hillside would deviate from its regular route and carry passengers as desired. This service was cancelled due to limited use and limited resources to continue it. Currently, the lower Hillside, west of Elmore Road, and the areas near Service High School and South Anchorage High School have the most potential for transit service. Recent efforts to provide and promote service to the high schools and accommodate student needs have not been successful and were removed as a result.



**Policy 11-A**

Future route structuring by People Mover should consider service to the University/Medical area from the lower Hillside.

**Background**

For planning purposes, the Municipality looks for a housing density of about eight to twelve dwelling units per acre as one important consideration of promoting transit service. Other factors that increase the viability of transit service are characteristics such as a major destination or attractions like shopping centers or employment concentrations. The continued low-density residential land use pattern on the Hillside would not make transit service practical in the foreseeable future. Neither the Base Case land use projection nor the slightly altered densities called for in the draft plan change land use densities to a degree that would warrant expanding current transit service area coverage over the vast majority of the Hillside.

Currently, Routes 1 and 2 run south on Lake Otis Boulevard to Abbott Road at the northwest corner of the lower Hillside area. Route 1 turns west and follows Dimond Boulevard and Route 2 turns west and then south through Independence Park to O'Malley Road. Both routes stop at the Dimond Transit Center where transfers can be made. Improvements to the road network may make direct transit service to the University/Medical area possible. Future route structuring by People Mover should consider such service.

**Policy 11-B**

Create park-n-ride lots in the Hillside District, as needed. Priority is on the lower Hillside in the area between Huffman Road and Rabbit Creek Road, near the Seward Highway.

**Background**

The Hillside District Plan supports the idea of revisiting and including future park-n-ride lots in the Hillside area. Locations for these lots are not identified in this plan; however, the recent effort of the Public Transportation Department have seen a preliminary interest, need, and benefit for some Hillside residents for a park-n-ride lot.

## **GOAL 12. Funding, Maintenance and Operations**

**Create an enhanced and efficient maintenance, operations and capital program for roads and trails within the Hillside District.**

Improved funding and management mechanisms for roads and trails are summarized below and described in greater detail in Chapter 6. Implementation.

### **Policy 12-A**

Establish a new Hillside District funding and management entity to manage and finance roads, drainage, built/green infrastructure watershed protection and aquifer recharge, and trails at a watershed and/or community-wide scale.

#### **Background**

The Hillside District Plan recommends establishing a new, integrated roads, trails, and drainage management entity responsible for district-wide projects, similar in character to the Chugiak-Birchwood-Eagle River Rural Road Service Area (CBERRRSA). A new service area would have to be approved through a vote on the Hillside.

The Hillside Roads, Drainage and Trail Service Area (HRDTSA) would have jurisdiction over larger roads (with the exception of state-owned roads, unless agreed upon by both parties), drainage, and trail capital improvements within the entire Hillside District. Regular local neighborhood road maintenance would remain the responsibility of existing LRSAs, RRSAs, and independent entities, although the HRDTSA could be made responsible for road maintenance on selected roads or for special situations that LRSAs and independents would be unable to address. All municipal-owned public roads, drainage, and trail facilities within the area would be subject to the authority granted to the new management entity. Service provision would be set to reflect the most equitable, locally supported funding and service strategy. Taxes raised would be outside the municipal tax cap, but may be subject to the service area's own tax cap.

**Policy 12-B**

Extend the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area boundary to include the entire Hillside District as well as the initial mile of Chugach State Park.

**Background**

The HDP recommends extending the existing Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area boundary to encompass the entire Hillside District, and also extending this boundary approximately one mile into Chugach State Park (as shown on Map 6.4).

Extending the service area boundary to include the entire Hillside District will allow the Municipality to generate and spend funds for projects and actively manage trails and other recreation uses in this increasingly popular recreation destination. Extending the boundary into the State Park will allow the Municipality to be able to partner with the State on projects of mutual interest.

**Policy 12-C**

Create a new funding and management program targeted on improved Chugach State Park access.

**Background**

The Hillside District Plan recommends that a new mechanism be created to raise funds from the Anchorage Bowl as a whole to improve and better manage access to Chugach State Park. Needed improvements include new trails, new trailheads, improvements to access roads, and improved trail management, as described earlier in this chapter.

**Policy 12-D**

Develop maintenance, repair, and schedule priorities for roads and trails.

**Background**

The Hillside Funding and Management Entity will need to set priorities and schedules for the maintenance and repair of roads and trails. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the management entity, an initial prioritization and schedule should be agreed upon with the oversight of and/or input from the Municipality and the State.

(This page intentionally left blank.)