

Eryn Boone:

Suggested Change 1:

Trailheads on residential streets should be pedestrian/bike access only (i.e., trailhead parking not allowed on residential roads). The 2014 Girdwood South Townsite Master Plan encourages transportation modes other than automobile. This has also been a common theme for Girdwood planning in general, including in this Trails Plan, so it makes sense to apply it to trailheads in areas where traffic and vehicles have a negative impact on residents and visitors. Traffic on residential streets is a longstanding common complaint amongst residents. Additionally, in some cases, space does not allow for a parking lot in these residential areas. This applies to Virgin Creek Falls (end of Timberline) and any other future neighborhood trailheads. Alternatives for visitors to access these trails are: getting dropped off by shuttle or private vehicle, or parking at the nearest parking lot, such as the Daylodge. References to this topic in the plan: Page 32, "Improving & Managing Trail Access"; Page 26, "Access: Trailheads & Parking"

Suggested Change 2:

Recommendation to differentiate between activities allowed during winter/summer in Areas for Primitive Trails/Natural Space Areas. Main area of concern is in Natural Space area NS1 (Virgin Creek Natural Space), which is currently frequented in winter by people riding fat bikes, when conditions allow. Need to consider allowing different uses winter/summer seasons to accommodate this. Currently bikes are considered mechanized and not allowed in Natural Spaces, if I understand it right. Winter travel allows multiple paths to be made in the snow if desired for different activities (biking, skiing, snow shoeing, etc.), without impact to the environment after freeze-up and with adequate snow cover. The conditions that have to be present in order for a person to be able to ride a fat bike include a compacted snow surface, which protects from damage to the environment. The speed of fat biking is much slower than regular summer biking, and the sounds generated by fat biking are similar to snowshoeing or skiing on fish-scale skis. References to this topic in the plan: Page 35, "Natural Spaces"; Page 20, "Seasonal Trails"

Motions to introduce to the GTC.

Submitted Jan 10, 2022

Paul Crews

285 Higher Terrace Rd

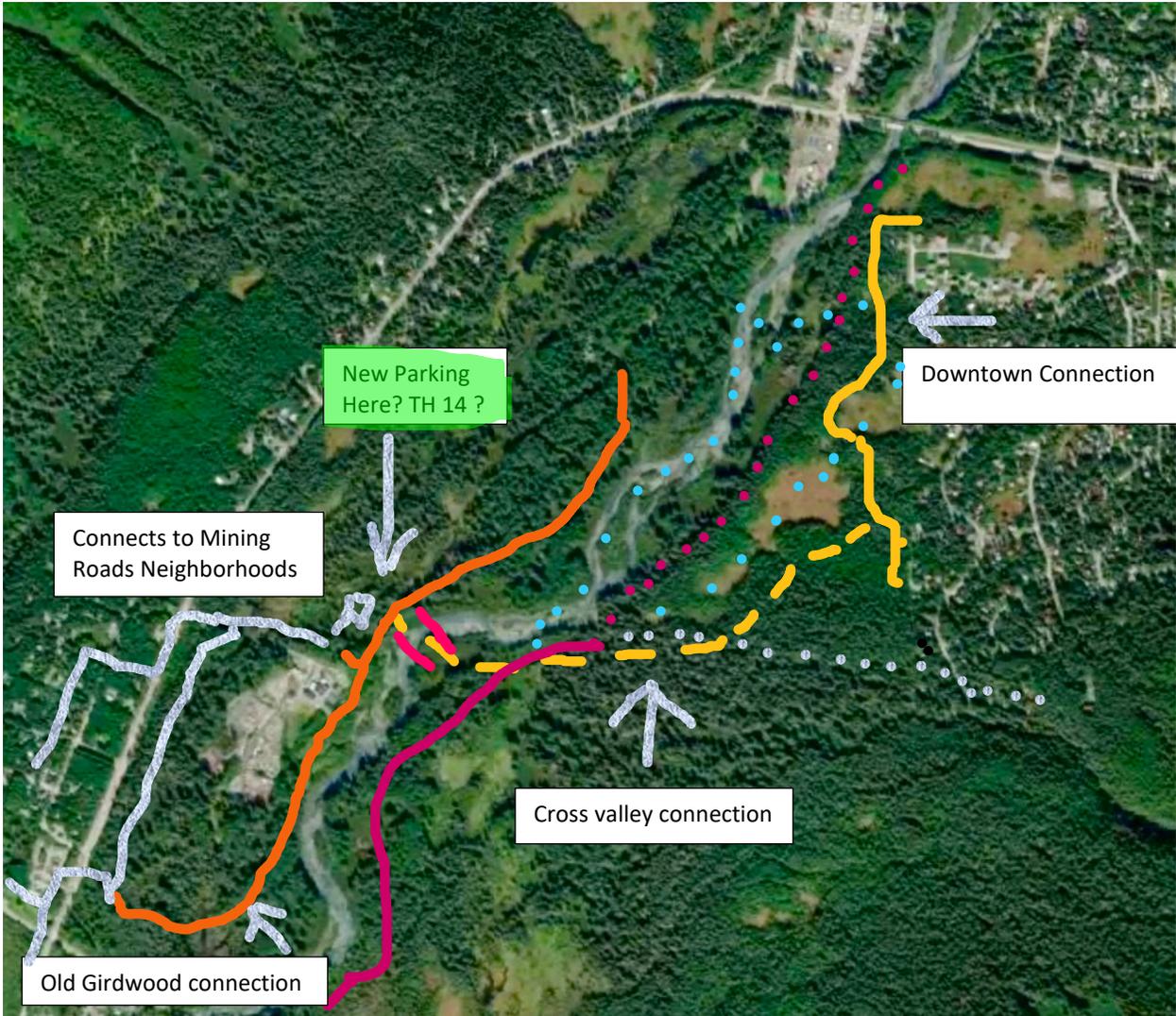
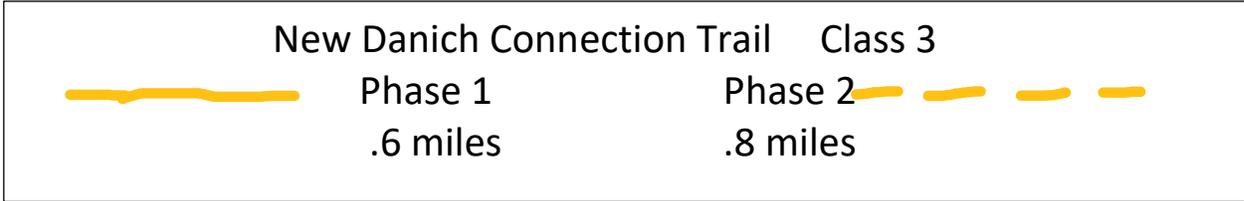
Girdwood, Alaska 99587

- Motion 1 Add to the draft plan a new class 3 trail traversing parcel 6-036 and other nearby lands generally following the route that is indicated on the attached map.

- Motion 2 Add to the draft plan a new site to locate bridge 1. Remove from the draft plan the old location of bridge 1. Select the new location of bridge 1 to correspond with the southern termination of the trail described in motion 1.

- Motion 3 Add new trailhead parking #14 near the southern termination of the trail described in motion #1.

- Motion 4 Amend the approved recommended change of Natural Spaces description on P 35, **Areas For Primitive Trails** by adding the following sentence: [Primitive Trails should be routed or rerouted onto sustainable alignments and hardened when necessary to assure trail sustainability.](#)



New Danich Connection Trail

 New Danich Trail

Phase 1 Trail to Downtown Class 3

 New Danich Trail

Phase 2 Trail to Lower Valley Class 3

 Upper Danich Trail

The Upper Danich Trail is drawn as a trail on the map but very little trail really exists. Trails here are intermittent, are class 1 at best and do not exist at all for most of the route. Should we remove it from the draft map, mark it as a route only, or should we mark a sustainable trail alignment on the ground?

 Lower Danich Trail

 Current winter route

 Iditarod Trail Link

New Danich Trail Connection to Mine Road Neighborhoods, Old Girdwood and Uptown Girdwood. *Bicycle or walking travel from Turin to Hottentot Road via a New Danich Trail is 1.2 miles. The distance between the same destinations via Timberline Drive and the Alyeska Highway bike path is 2.4 miles.*

 Lower Virgin Creek Trail

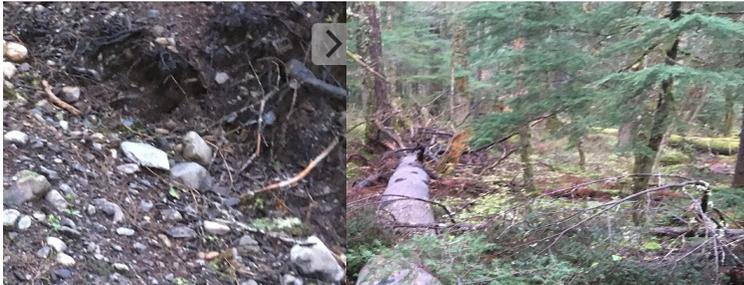
 Relocate Bridge #1

 Add: Parking
Trailhead 14

The area north of the Transfer Site is level with widely spaced cottonwood trees. This is likely one of the cheapest places to build parking. Signs on the Highway can direct Anchorage people to park there for middle valley trail use. This is a logical location for a major trailhead that can serve local residents and **Anchorage** visitors.

The New Danich Connection Trail

- Connects our neighborhoods.
- Draws more residents to trail use and the enjoyment of the out of doors.
- Promotes physical and mental fitness.
- Shortens the walking or pedal distance between Turin Drive and Hottentot Road by **half**.
- Moves trail users away from the river bluff.
- Allows forest trail access to downtown without walking or riding on city streets or paved pathways.
- Provides Timberline residents trail opportunities within walking distance of their homes mitigating the number expensive and destructive parking spaces we are faced with building at our trailheads. Many Timberline area houses have been there for 50 years. *In five decades, the Timberline area residents have never had a usable trail to enjoy.*
- Creates a new cross valley link.
- Creates a means to cross the valley in case of a catastrophic highway bridge failure.
- Provides new access for Old Girdwood, the Mine Road Neighborhoods and Alyeska Highway residents to the lower and mid valley trails.
- Creates winter loops with the Lower Iditarod, the river trails and the Timberline meadows Trail.
- If combined with new parking adjacent to the Transfer Site we could create a [Mid Valley Trail Center](#) that would attract our out -of- town users and would reduce parking pressure the Forest Service and Downtown. We could re-locate the Karolius #5 Trailhead to the ball field (plenty of space most of the time) and re-allocate those funds to extend the Lower Iditarod Trail along the Karolius Road shoulder to the ballpark.
- Traverses ground that allows easy trail building by Girdwood standards because the grades are not steep, the ground is well drained with a gravel sub structure and there are few water problems. The forest is generally well spaced which mitigates tree removals.
- Helps fulfill the community's desire to create more class 3 trails.
- Acts as a non- auto commuter connector.
- Recognizes that our community will rely more in the future on non- gasoline combustion driven transportation and that electrically propelled bikes, e scooters, one wheels, and e skates will grow in popularity.
- Prepares our community for the future when we will have more trail users.
- Designating the trail and bridge as a pedestrian corridor may open funding opportunities.



There are big differences between Class 2 and class 3 trails. See the trails matrix below copied from page 36 of the current Girdwood Trails Management Plan.

Class 2 trails are meant to be narrow and rough including **substantial obstacles intended to increase challenge**. Class 2 trails are often steep. Vegetation is not cleared from the trail. Hiking on class 2 trails is often an athlete endeavor.

Class 3 trails are also narrow but substantial obstacles have been cleared from the walking line. Most trip hazards have been removed or covered with soil. Class 3 trails are flatter and easier to walk on. Overgrown vegetation can be cleared away from the trail. Class 3 trails are often used by less athletic individuals than those who use class 2 trails.

Trail Class Matrix

Trail Classes are general categories reflecting trail development scale, arranged along a continuum. The Trail Class identified for a trail prescribes its development scale, representing its intended design and management standards.¹ Local deviations from any Trail Class descriptor may be established based on trail-specific conditions, topography, or other factors, provided that the deviations are consistent with the intent of the applicable Trail Class.

Apply the Trail Class that most closely reflects the management intent for the trail which may or may not reflect the current condition of the trail.

Trail Attributes	Trail Class 1 Minimally Developed	Trail Class 2 Moderately Developed	Trail Class 3 Developed	Trail Class 4 Highly Developed	Trail Class 5 Fully Developed
Tread & Traffic Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tread intermittent and often indistinct. May require route finding. Single lane, with no allowances constructed for passing. Predominantly native materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tread continuous and discernible, but narrow and rough. Single lane, with minor allowances constructed for passing. Typically native materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tread continuous and obvious. Single lane, with allowances constructed for passing where required by traffic volume in places where there is no reasonable opportunity to pass. Native or imported materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tread wide and relatively smooth, with few irregularities. Single lane, with allowances constructed for passing where required by traffic volume in places where there is no reasonable opportunity to pass. Double lane where traffic volume is high and passing is frequent. Native or imported materials. May be hardened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tread wide, firm, stable, and generally uniform. Single lane, with frequent turnouts where traffic volume is low to moderate. Double lane where traffic volume is moderate to high. Commonly hardened with asphalt or other imported material.
Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles common, naturally occurring, often substantial, and intended to provide increased challenge. Narrow passages; brush, steep grades, rocks and logs present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles may be common, substantial, and intended to provide increased challenge. Blockages cleared to define route and protect resources. Vegetation may encroach into trailway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles may be common, but not substantial or intended to provide challenge. Vegetation cleared outside of trailway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles infrequent and insubstantial. Vegetation cleared outside of trailway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles not present. Grades typically < 8%.

Things to think about

- An early mantra of the former trails plan subcommittee was “trails out my back door”.
- Another mantra was “connect our community with trails”
- The Timberline neighborhoods have not had any usable trails for fifty years.
- If Timberline residents have nice trails to enjoy near their homes we will not need as many parking spaces at our trailheads.
- Trailhead parking lots are expensive to build and maintain, they are land intensive and they eliminate forest.
- Building new parking lots may be more expensive than the cost of building the trails themselves.
- If we wish to improve our community’s physical and mental health, help the environment and use our cars less, we should build trails that make it easy for our citizens to use their feet, their pedals, or their skis.
- The electric age is upon us. Not only will we use our bikes and our feet more but we will see a big increase in the use of e bikes, one wheels, e scooters and e skates. We need to get ready.
- Girdwood’s population and trail use will grow. We need to get ready.
- We should develop foot travel routes that shorten distances between destinations in order to encourage pedestrian travel.

Personal Notes

I first visited Girdwood nearly 70 years ago as a child. The Old winding Seward Highway had recently been completed to the Kenai. They had recently paved the road.

I remember having lunch at the Little Dipper Inn, the little café/bar/hotel that was Girdwood's happening place. It was located next to the railroad tracks on the west side of Old Main Street. I watched it burn down after the 1964 earthquake.

Anyway, there was no Alyeska Highway at the time. Post-earthquake money built the highway the next year. The old Crow Creek Road used to cross the tracks by the Little Dipper Inn then go up the overgrown road across from the Forest service that we now use to get to the Lower Iditarod Trail. The old Crow Creek Road was a two lane rough muddy mine road at the time. There were a few small houses along the road. A few of the original houses are still lived in.

The resort was built before the earthquake and the highway was then upgraded. The original route to the resort crossed the valley about where the Merc is now, then it crossed the river over a railroad flat car as a bridge. Travel continued up Davos Road and ended where Powder Hound is today. The Old Day Lodge parking lot was where the magic carpet lift is now located.

I helped my dad build one of the first shacks below the ski area in 1962. We used an outhouse and a wood stove. Not many people in Anchorage had money for real second homes in those days, especially right after the earthquake. There were a lot of shacks.

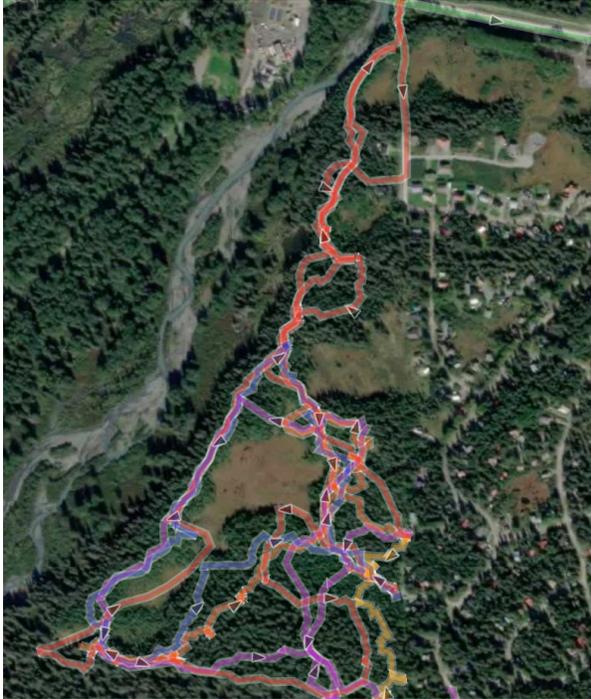
I have lived here full time more than 50 years now.

Every day I feel like the luckiest person in the world because I am a Girdwood resident.

So, I have witnessed all the change in Girdwood. What sticks in my mind though is that after 50 years the residents of the Timberline neighborhoods have never had a useful trail through the forest to enjoy. Our resident neighbors deserve better.

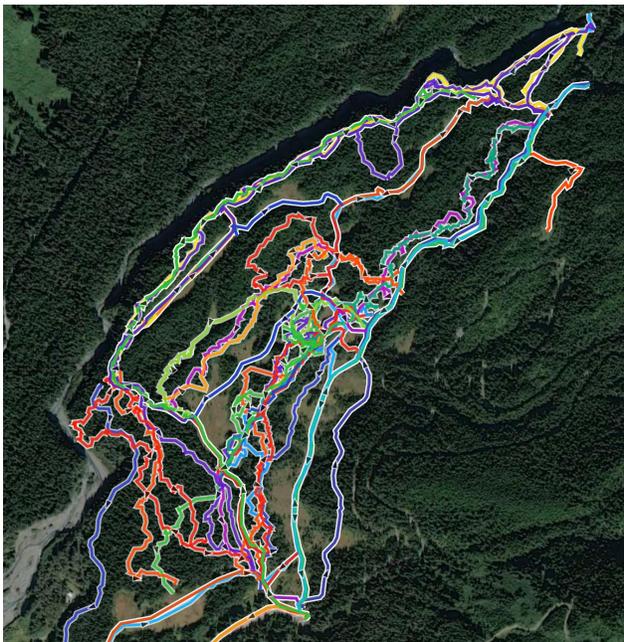
Paul Crews
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I have explored our trail study areas many times. I know where most of our drainages run and where many of the wet places are. Some of my tracks appear on the next page.



These are some tracks I did not delete. I usually do not turn on my GPS tracker anymore because I usually know where I am.

Timberline area



Upper Valley area

1/11/22

Kyle and Holly,

Girdwood Trails Master Plan
Trail Committee Submission

Deb Essex - Motions to Girdwood Trails Master Plan

First, thank you both for keeping this plan moving forward. I find it to be of enormous importance – for the Girdwood Mountain Bike Plan to move forward in the UDC, and especially since Girdwood will be on the “Alaska Long Trail” route bringing even more trail users to the valley. The general outdoor recreation boom has everyone’s attention.

This entire plan is about the well-being of our community, our trails, and the enthusiastic visitors. To keep us all mentally and physically healthy through trail use, we have the important task to create a meaningful, fun, safe, and connected trail system that will keep the community returning to for years to come.

Thank you for your time.

1) I move that the primitive trail areas be removed from the maps.

We all agree that un-developed areas are critical for wildlife and to everyone's enjoyment of the Girdwood Valley and its trail system. However, designating these specific areas will make it difficult to appropriately respond to increased use in any of these areas or address issues with infrastructure concerning altering use patterns. Inability to address these kind of issues could ultimately cause damage to the natural areas, wetlands, and trails that we all agree are so important. I ask that we focus on designating the trails – primitive through developed – with signage including trail names, maps, allowed uses, and distances.

Designating specific areas as primitive trail areas' is a land use topic, not a trail subcommittee topic. Our task at hand was to create a Master Trail Plan. I was on the subcommittee and feel that we definitely fell short on our responsibility to create a dynamic plan of an expanding trail system to address increased usage, GTC goals of additional trail connection, signage, climate change impacts, access, and the positive economic impact of trail users. We should focus on trailhead signage including uses of the trails to keep the primitive trails and wetlands protected.

Area 1) Doesn't allow for trail connection to neighborhoods from Town Center and between established trails. Leaving ones vehicle in the driveway is a key value in Girdwood, and having trails in our backyard have been stated as a value repeatedly. Well, this is our backyard. Let's focus on protecting the wetlands and primitive trails in the lower valley while connecting a neighborhood route in the upper Timberline area from Alyeska Highway to Virgin Creek Trail to bypass the roads.

Area 2) Isn't in alignment with previous land use plans referenced in Master Plan nor congruent with the Girdwood public surveys. The current primitive trail area inclusion in this Master Plan does not align with the GNSC's mission to build and maintain a year-round multi-use trail system as it restricts the majority of uplands in the upper valley to primitive trails only - no groomed trails and no biking – summer or winter. Never before has this restriction been submitted in a land use plan, trails plan, parks and open space plan, transportation plan, or Resort development plan in Girdwood. Previous plans and future plan should recognize this as a recreation corridor.

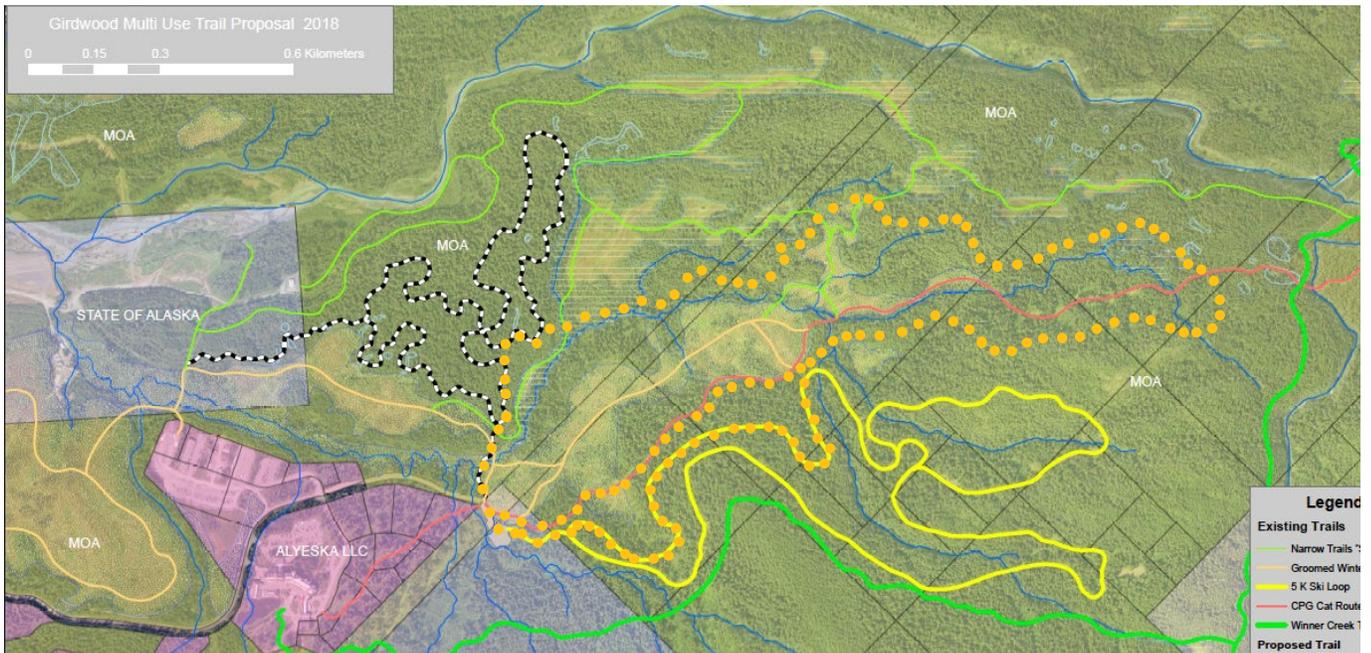
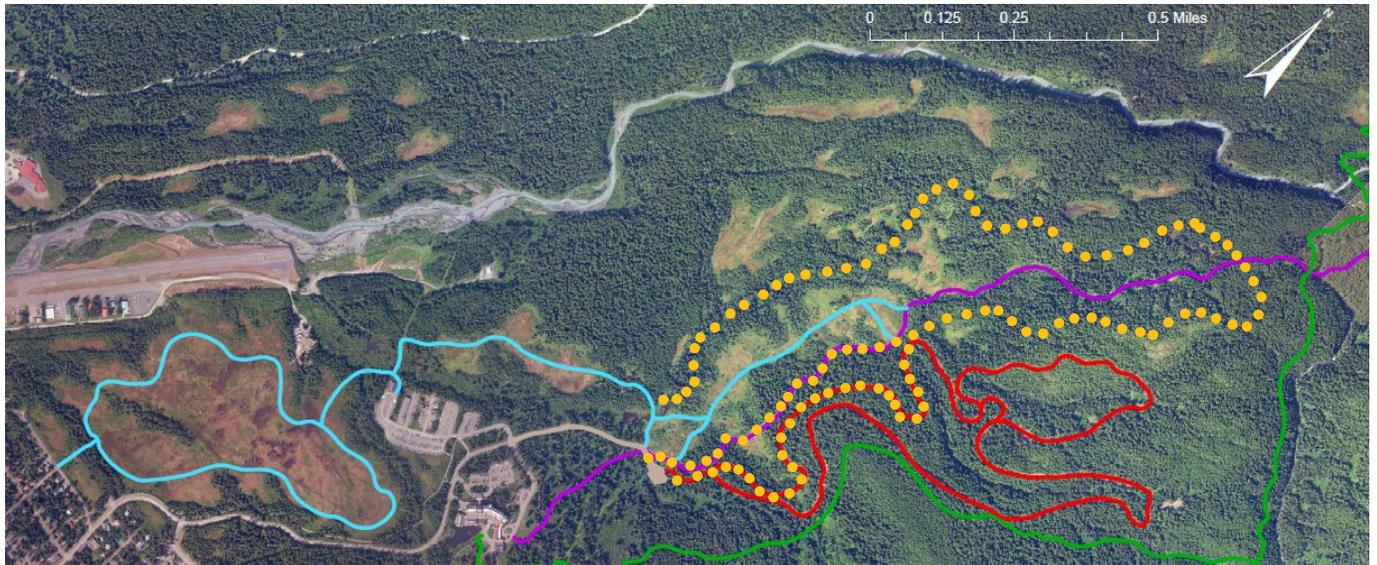
Area 3) Isn't in alignment with previous land use plans referenced in this Master Plan. This area is flanked by two extremely well-known primitive trails in the Girdwood Valley (Berry Pass and Crow Pass). This area has been defined in previous plans as a future recreational area and commercial recreational area. This was not discussed at any length in the GTP committee.

2) **I move to connect the Upper Joe Danich trail with the Virgin Creek Trail.** This would be in response to the community's comments and help alleviate Timberline traffic and over-crowded trailheads from the Timberline and Virgin Creek neighborhoods. A sustainable trail loop within this Timberline / Virgin Creek area could provide a safe connection to Hightower Town Square for the neighborhood, and from the Town Square parking to the Falls. Historically, as a community grows, more trails are created for both transportation and recreation. When these needs are not met, social trails start to pop up and the well-maintained trails in place are overloaded . This is where we are in Girdwood. The majority of our trails were not designed for recreation, but are the remnants of old mining and logging roads. It would be ideal to keep the Lower Danich and Wagon Trail primitive, and to connect the Upper Danich and Upper Virgin Creek Trail up to the Falls.



3) **I move that we add back an Upper Valley Connector from the Forest Loop to the CPG CAT Track near the CAT Track Bridge.** While the exact area of the connector trail can be discussed in the future, showing a Class 4 year-round looped trail system is congruent with the community survey results and Girdwood Master Plan comments. The trail originally included in the plan was removed because people commented the space was crowded. Yet, if you look at the summer map the GTC created (shown below), no summer trails exist in this area. This area has been repeatedly zoned and defined as Open Space and Recreation Zone. In 2006, HLB commissioned a trail feasibility study to determine where to add 20 Kilometers of multi-use trails to this area. I agree that the primitive trails should remain primitive, but I disagree with this proposed primitive area covering all of the uplands of the Girdwood valley west of the CAT track, thus prohibiting a future multi-use trail system development that includes summer or winter bike travel.





4) I move that we delete the “Primitive Trail Experience” paragraph on page 24 of the **Master Plan**. This is a false narrative. Girdwood’s existing trails were not more primitive as stated in the document, but in fact were once utility roads/ trails built for mining, hunting, and logging. (Abe’s, California Creek, Winner Creek, Danich, Virgin Creek, Crow Creek, Beaver Pond) These trails have been vanishing back into the forest (including the 1969 cross country ski race trail) or have to be constantly brushed to remain open.

Petitioner: Kate Sandberg

I. What is the desired change to Trails Plan?

A. Remove the three primitive areas from the plan. This includes all text and maps.

B. Replace with a protective buffer status of 100 feet on both sides of all valley floor class 1 and 2 trails. These buffers would be explained and identified by text and maps.

- Some buffers may overlap or come up short by Glacier Creek.
- Narrow gauge grooming is not allowed on these winter trails.

As of January 11, 2022, the following trails are included: Upper and Lower Danich, Wagon, Lower Virgin Creek, Abe's, California Creek, Glacier Creek Ridge, Stumpy's Summer and Winter, Upper Meadows Winter, and Toe Slope Trails

II. Why remove the primitive areas designation?

• Not the stated purpose of the GTC to have large areas of designated land, but only to advocate for, protect, and maintain trails.

“Statement of Purpose: The Girdwood Trails Committee (GTC) advocates for, protects, and maintains trails according to the guidelines of the Girdwood Trails Management Plan. The GTC reports to the Girdwood Board of Supervisors.” (Last revision, Sept. 2021)

- Trails Committee would be unable to manage these lands under current HLB land ownership.
- Suggested boundaries of these primitive areas are indistinct and unenforceable.
- No area should be set aside for one purpose—designated biking areas include other trail development.
- Many comments from the community are against this type of designation.

III. Why replace with protective buffer status of 100 feet on each side of all valley floor class 1 and 2 trails?

- Focuses on the trails, not areas of land.
- Is a measurable boundary and wider than an easement can be from HLB.
- Becomes a stated goal of the Trails Committee to protect the more primitive trails from other encroaching trail development.
- Easements for these trails can be sought as well.
- Demonstrates that the Committee values all levels of trail environments.

Reference

Bentrup, G. 2008. Conservation buffers: design guidelines for buffers, corridors, and greenways. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-109. Asheville, NC: Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 110 p

Submitted by: Julie Raymond-Yakoubian

Motion: Vote to adopt the Girdwood Trails Master Plan as it is now (i.e. after incorporation of the votes on recommendations ending at the January 4, 2022 meeting), and add any new proposals that are voted on and accepted by GTC as an additional appendix to the Plan.

Rationale: This action recognizes new/added suggestions, but does not allow new proposals to turn the Plan into something that is not an actual Plan and that would constitute waste and abuse of public resources (including funds and previous volunteer efforts), and disenfranchisement of previous voters, votes, and work of volunteers.

Additional Rationale/Details:

- This approach allows everyone to continue to be heard. It allows for previously unheard/undiscussed ideas which are approved by GTC to be included in an appendix format to the main body of the Plan.
- This approach also acknowledges that post-January ideas/votes have not gone through the same extensive public process as the content of the main Plan, and are being added at the last minute and after a complete diversion from the scope of the Plan followed for years.
- At the same time, this approach also respects the previous work of the Plan Subcommittee and the public. Allowing the simple majority of votes on one day in February 2022 to potentially rewrite the plan constitutes poor planning at best and makes a mockery of the public process, which was designed to ensure our entire community is served and that a purposeful process was followed in drafting this Plan. This is not how community Plans are or should be written, nor how the public was promised over the course of years about how this Plan would be completed. To allow votes on these newly introduced ideas to rewrite the Plan means that all the previous work of the Subcommittee (including years of work, dozens of meetings, and untold hours of volunteer efforts), the participation of the public, 50 thousand dollars of public funds, and previous voters and votes become abused, wasted and disenfranchised.
- The public should be heard at any point in a legitimate process, but what is being proposed for post-January 4 is not legitimate, is outside the original scope (as pointed out by staff), and will be ignoring 2+ years of work over the course of at least 24 public meetings, 2 open houses, and a formal public comment period. This provided voluminous space for the public to make comment and input - which it did - in addition to the public's ability to submit or provide comment at over two dozen meetings (which they also did), making the argument that ideas from the public have not been heard, and that we must deviate from the scope and original process, untenable.

Recommendation for Change of Girdwood Trails Plan

Submitted by Michelle Tenny

Page 42: Trailhead 4

Proposed change: Title - Virgin Creek Falls Trailhead
(not access study)

Keep bullet points 1,2,3

Add bullet point 4:

Upon completion of the above mentioned study, and a review of the suggested alternatives by GTC there will be implementation of the preferred option.

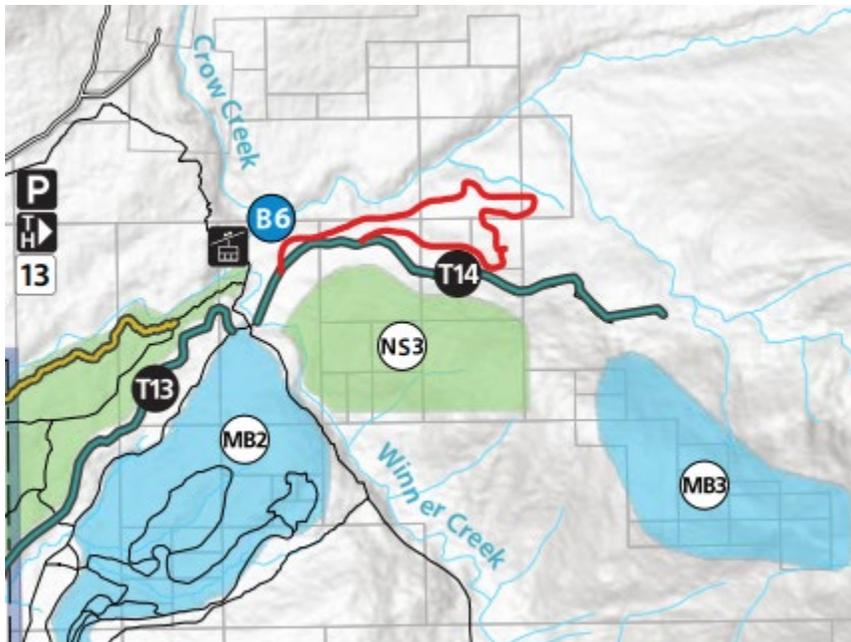
Trails Plan Amendments

1/10/2022

Submitted by Justin and Mary Thomas

1) Add 3-5k loop class 4 trail north of T14.

The terrain here is more suitable for beginner/ intermediate skiing or biking. This is one of the few remaining areas to develop this type of trail allowed in the plan. This would complement T14 (1.38 miles oneway with an average grade of 12.6% and 1,037ft of elevation gain), a trail that would be difficult for most beginner/intermediate users.



2) Amend description of primitive trails

Areas for Primitive Trails: One way in which this plan improves the balance and diversity of Girdwood's trail system is by identifying areas where primitive trails are desired. Areas that prioritize primitive trails without prohibiting other uses serve a variety of purposes, including both conservation and recreation, non-mechanized recreation activities like trail walking, running, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, orienteering, foraging, wildlife viewing, education, solitude, and meditation are the primary uses.

Draft Trails Master Plan Suggested Edits

Barbara Crews

This font is used for text copied from the Draft Trails Master Plan.

Blue text indicates new wordage that I am suggesting for the project descriptions.

T3:

Build a trail connection in the uplands, where possible, between ~~the Lower Iditarod trailhead and Ruane Road California Creek and the Alyeska Highway~~. This new lower valley trail would provide a loop in the lower valley east of the Alyeska Highway, improving connectivity and providing an alternate, unpaved looped route for lower valley residents. The trail should be constructed to Class 3 Bicycle design parameters. ~~For the most ideal trail experience, the utility easement should be avoided. Structures are permitted to traverse wetlands.~~ The trail should be located on HLB lands zoned GOS.

Reasoning:

- I would change the description of where the trail starts and ends to reflect the shortened version of T3 that was approved by GTC.
- I would remove the sentence about avoiding the utility easement as part of what would make this trail easy and inexpensive to construct is that it can make use of the utility easement.
- I would remove the sentence about “structures are permitted to traverse wetlands” because now that the trail ends at Ruane Rd, there aren’t any wetlands that need traversing.
- I am unsure about the sentence about locating the trail on HLB lands zoned GOS. Is that now a moot point since T3 has been shortened? It seems to me that this trail is located on utility easement land.

T5:

Construct an east/west trail connection in the lower valley ~~between the Beaver Pond Trail and the Alyeska Highway Bike Path~~. This trail would allow users to access and exit the Beaver Pond trail about midway, creating a shorter option for those who do not wish to go the entire length of Beaver Pond trail. It would provide trail connectivity for residents of a possible future development of HLB Tract 18A. T5 would be constructed to Class 3 Biking design parameters. The trail alignment should use the existing Juniper Drive easement. If the trail is constructed before parcels 6-010 and/or 6-040 are developed, the trail and associated easement ~~may need to be relocated when the HLB parcels are subdivided and developed~~.

Reasoning:

The staff recommendation for T5 that was approved by GTC did not include any specifics about how the trail description would change. This is a possible rewrite of the trail description in the Draft Master Trail Plan based on my understanding of the changes that staff recommended and that GTC discussed and approved.

- I propose that this sentence be removed from the staff recommendation that was approved by the GTC: ~~T5 should only be considered a priority for development if Tract 18 A is developed.~~
 - I would remove this sentence because I think this trail connection would help create more loop options for the Beaver Pond trail.
 - Many residents of the Mine neighborhoods currently have to drive to get to the Beaver Pond trailheads. This intermediate access route would allow locals to have their “driveway as their trailhead”. This could help reduce the number of cars at the Beaver Pond trailheads.
 - The trail would provide an attractive amenity to a future neighborhood on Tract 18A.
- I changed the trail description wording on the last sentence from “...the trail...will be relocated...” to “...the trail...may need to be relocated ...”. Hopefully, possible future development will be anticipated during the trail design process so that relocation is not necessary.

T6:

~~Provide a trail connection from the neighborhoods of the middle valley to town center. This proposed trail connection would provide a more direct trail connection to town center from the Alyeska Basin Subdivision by shortening the amount of time pedestrians and trail users would have to travel on roads. Avoid wetlands when possible. Boardwalk structures can be used where staying out of wetlands is not feasible. This trail should be kept outside of natural area 1 (NA1) using HLB land zoned GOS and/or GCR-1. Designed to Class 3 bicycle design parameters. Trail would tie into the Alyeska Hwy Bike Path after crossing under the Alyeska Hwy Glacier Creek bridge~~ ~~existing trails before crossing the highway.~~

Reasoning:

- I would remove the first sentence to reduce redundancy.
- I would assume this trail is going to go under the highway bridge rather than crossing the highway. We do not need to create another pedestrian crossing over Alyeska Hwy.

T7:

- Change the sentence from "...the trail...*will be relocated*..." to "...the trail...*may need to be relocated*...". Hopefully, possible future development will be anticipated during the trail design process so that relocation is not necessary.

T8:

~~This trail is shown on many trail plans and forms a natural connection between the Beaver Pond Trail on the south, and the Iditarod on the north crossing Ragged Top Trail on the way. The route traverses an area of old growth rainforest, open marshes, small stream courses and waterfalls. The trail would require a bridge to cross over California Creek to join up with Beaver Pond Trail. This bridge could be built in coordination with the Girdwood Cemetery, whose Master Plan also shows a bridge in this area. This trail connection T8 would provide an important link in the Circum-Valley Loop. Trail would be constructed to Class 2 Hiking design parameters. The proposed route traverses HLB lands zoned both GOS and gR-3. If the trail is constructed before parcel 6-010, zoned gR-3 is developed, the trail and associated easement *may need to be* ~~will be~~ relocated when/if the HLB parcel is subdivided and developed. This trail is identified in the Crow Creek Neighborhood Land Use Study.~~

Reasoning:

- T8 is shown crossing California Creek, but no bridge is mentioned in the text. A bridge would be a major hurdle in the development of T8 and should not be overlooked. In addition, it is important to note that the Girdwood Cemetery Plan includes a bridge over California Creek, so cooperation between GTC and the Cemetery Committee seems like a win-win arrangement.
- Hopefully, possible future development will be anticipated during the trail design process so that relocation is not necessary.

T9:

- Change the sentence from "...the trail...*will be relocated*..." to "...the trail...*may need to be relocated*...". Hopefully, possible future development will be anticipated during the trail design process so that relocation is not necessary.
- No trail classes have been assigned to these trails in the Crow Creek Neighborhood Land Use Plan. In the Draft Trails Master Plan there is no mention of the trail class in the trail description. The only reference to trail class for T9 is in the chart on page 40. The class should be stated in the trail description to help clarify the mix of trails in the plan.

T11:

- No trail class is stated in this trail description. The only reference to trail class for T11 is in the chart on page 40. The class should be stated in the trail description to help clarify the mix of trails in the plan.

T12:

This proposed trail creates an upland route ~~between Stumpy's Summer Trail and the Glacier Canyon Rim~~ between the southern ~~portion and~~ northern portions of Stumpy's Summer Trail. It would replace the sections of Stumpy's Summer trail that traverse the wetlands of Perpetual, Island, and Last Meadows. The trail would create a loop option for hikers on the Winner Creek and Snowcat trails. The proposed trail should be ~~is a primitive, non-mechanized trail~~ constructed to Class 2 Hiking design parameters. Because the trail is located in an Area of Primitive Trails, bikes and other mechanized uses would not be allowed on the trail. The trail should be hardened as necessary ~~would be unhardened as much as possible, however it could~~ ~~hardening is minimally allowed~~ to avoid braiding of trails, resource damage, and to achieve trail sustainability if desired.

Reasoning:

- Stumpy's Summer Trail, in its current form, crosses wetlands and meadows that cannot withstand foot traffic. The trail is only sustainable as far as the southern foot of Perpetual Meadow. T12's purpose is to make Stumpy's Summer Trail a sustainable and usable trail, all the way out to the Gorge. The current trail description does not make this purpose clear.
- The term "non-mechanized" is not strong enough. Many could interpret this wording as meaning "non-motorized". If the purpose of using the term non-mechanized is to say bikes are not allowed, I feel it is best to keep it simple and perfectly clear, and just state bikes are a prohibited use.
- I believe this trail, due to its scenic qualities and the loop options it provides, will be a very popular trail. If the trail receives more traffic than it can handle, there could be braiding or mud-holes created by overuse. A goal of the Draft Trails Master Plan and the Trails Management Plan is to build sustainable trails. It is important that T12 can be hardened as needed to protect the trail and its surroundings.

T13:

The staff recommendation that GTC approved was to add the Forest Loop concept back into the Plan. Due to the development of Alyeska Village, the Forest Loop trail will need to be modified extensively. At least some conceptual version of this trail needs to be shared with GTC and added to the Plan before the Plan gets voted on.

T14:

- T14 is listed as 4 miles long in the Existing Trails chart on p. 20. The Draft Trail Master Plan says "improvements should be considered on both sides of Winner Creek trail" (p. 39). Then in the chart on p. 40, T14 is listed as 1.21 miles long. Does this mean that only 1.21 miles out of the 4 mile long trail are going to be upgraded from Class 1 to Class 4?
- Next to last sentence:

On the north side of Winner Creek a separate, down route for bikes should be constructed separate from the multi-use T14 ~~T13~~ and connecting MB3 to the bottom of the hill.

B3:

Identify a location for a trail bridge to cross Virgin Creek. A bridge would provide a safe, legal, and sustainable connection between lower Virgin Creek and the Wagon Trail ~~and complete a loop in the lower Valley~~. This project must be pursued in concert with the Virgin Creek Access Study (TH4).

Reasoning:

With the removal of T2 (Wagon Trail - Lower Danich Connection), there is no loop.

B7: (this is a new bridge that I propose be added to the Plan)

Construct a pedestrian trail bridge across California Creek as part of the T8 trail project connecting Beaver Pond Trail to the Toe Slope Trail. This bridge is also included in the Girdwood Cemetery Master Plan, so bridge planning and construction could be shared between the GTC and the Girdwood Cemetery.

TH56: (this is a variation on TH5 and TH6 that I am proposing)

There are no restrooms in Forest Fair Park or the campground. This area gets a lot of use from the playground, ballfields, frisbee golf course, and the Lower Iditarod trail. Rather than construct a restroom at TH6, which is on the other side of the highway from the park area, build one where it is most needed.

TH6 (Town Center Trailhead) is not directly connected to any trails and seems to me like an awkward fit as a trailhead. Rather than creating a TH that would be useful, TH6 really seems to be about trying to find a use for the Park & Ride lot.

I would propose instead that both TH6 and TH5 (Kariolus) could be combined into a TH by the ballfields. Easy-to-find connections could be built to the Lower and Middle Iditarod trails. There should be a restroom/permanent vaulted pit toilet constructed here to serve all the people that recreate in this area.

TH8: (Beaver Pond Trailhead)

The Beaver Pond trailhead is often full. Implementing ~~other simple trailhead~~ improvements at other trailheads (Town Square, Girdwood PreK-8 School, Girdwood Cemetery, and improved signage and wayfinding), may reduce the demand for on-street parking in this location. As required, coordinate with AK DOT&PF to investigate the feasibility of an official trailhead in this location.

TH9:

Pursue an official parking agreement with Anchorage School District ~~Girdwood PreK-8 School~~ to provide authorized trail parking in the dirt lot adjacent to the AWWU road. ~~this location~~. Install trailhead, wayfinding, and informational signage as authorized. A trail should be constructed that connects this parking lot to the Middle Iditarod trail. This new connector trail should be located off of the AWWU road, given the planned development of the Holtan Hills subdivision. Perhaps this trail connection could be built as part of the Holtan Hills development.

TH11:

How big a parking lot is being proposed? I would propose an additional 30 spots at a minimum.

Natural Space Description on Page 35:

Areas for Primitive Trails: One way in which this plan improves the balance and diversity of Girdwood's trail system is by identifying areas where primitive trails are desired. Trails in these areas would be limited to class 2 standards unless use of trails within these areas warrants improved trail tread to protect the surrounding environment. Areas that prioritize primitive trails serve a variety of purposes, including both conservation and recreation, where non-mechanized recreation activities like trail walking, running, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, orienteering, foraging, wildlife viewing, education, solitude, and meditation are the primary uses. Mechanized trail use, such as bikes or one wheels, is not authorized.

- If a trail receives more traffic than it can handle, there could be braiding or mud-holes created by overuse. A goal of the Draft Trails Master Plan and the Trails Management Plan is to build sustainable trails. It is important that trails in NS1 can be hardened as needed to protect trails and their surroundings. The sentence I added is from the description for natural areas on p. 16 of the Draft Trails Master Plan.
- The terms “non-mechanized” and “primary uses” are not strong enough. Many could interpret this as meaning “non-motorized” or perhaps biking is a secondary use! If the purpose is to say bikes are not allowed, I feel it is best to keep it simple and perfectly clear, and just state bikes are a prohibited use.

NS1: (Virgin Creek Area of Primitive Trails)

Create a natural space in the Virgin Creek area that is kept in its primitive natural state. Allowed uses include primitive, non-mechanized recreation activities like trail walking, running, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, orienteering, foraging, wildlife viewing, education, solitude, and meditation. Mechanized trail use, such as bikes or one wheels, is not authorized. Trails in these areas would be limited to class 2 standards unless use of trails within these areas warrants improved trail tread to protect the surrounding area. Trails in the area should be kept to Class 1 and Class 2 Design Parameters. Trail boardwalk or bridge structures are authorized to avoid wetlands and streams. Signage should be kept to a minimum. Parking for this level of development would be required either via TH9, TH10, or TH2.

NS2 and NS3 should adopt the same language.

Reasoning:

- The term “non-mechanized” is not strong enough. Many could interpret this wording as meaning “non-motorized”. If the purpose of using the term non-mechanized is to say bikes are not allowed, I feel it is best to keep it simple and perfectly clear, and just state bikes are a prohibited use.
- If a trail receives more traffic than it can handle, there could be braiding or mud-holes created by overuse. A goal of the Draft Trails Master Plan and the Trails Management Plan is to build sustainable trails. It is important that trails in NS1 can be hardened as needed to protect trails and their surroundings. The sentence I added is from the description for natural areas on p. 16 of the Draft Trails Master Plan.
- I would omit this sentence about parking. TH9 (Girdwood School), TH10 (Alyeska), and TH2 (Ranger Station) are all so far from NS1 that it would not even occur to people to use those parking areas.

Amendment 1 to NS1: (wording from the staff recommendation for NS1)

Recommend adjusting the boundary of NS1. The eastern boundary should extend and include Wagon Trail.

Reasoning:

- When we voted down the staff recommendation to move the boundaries of NS1, we effectively removed Wagon trail from the Primitive Trail Area. I think Wagon Trail should remain a Class 1 trail, now that T2 has been removed from the Plan, and that it should be within the boundaries of NS1.

Amendment 2 to NS1: (wording from the staff recommendation for NS1 with my modifications in blue)

The western boundary should be adjusted to remove the Lower Joe Danich Trail from NS1. This would allow the Lower Danich Trail to be upgraded to a Class 3 trail IF AND ONLY IF:

- B1 is ever built and
- a Class 3 connector trail from Lower Danich to Turin and/or Carlina Drive cul-de-sacs is built.

Because this connector trail would be a Class 3 trail within NS1, it would have to be granted an exception to the NS conditions stipulating primitive trails and no mechanized travel.

Upper Joe Danich would remain in NS1.

Reasoning:

- In any discussion of the Joe Danich trail, it should be specified whether you are talking about the Upper Danich trail or the Lower Danich trail. They are entirely different trails, although both are listed as Class 1. However, the Upper trail is barely discernable and has little traffic, while the Lower trail is really a Class 2 trail and has quite a bit of traffic.
- Currently, the Lower Joe Danich ends at the railroad right-of-way and any connection to Lower Girdwood involves illegal trespass on the railroad tracks and crossing the railroad trestle. This trail should not be encouraged as a connector trail by upgrading it to Class 3 until bridge B1 is constructed.
- Currently, the Lower Joe Danich is best accessed in summer by Lower Virgin Creek Trail. Lower Virgin Creek would remain in NS1 as a primitive trail. A new trail through the uplands from the Turin and/or Carlina Drive cul-de-sacs would be needed to create a summertime Class 3 link between the Timberline neighborhoods and Lower Danich. This trail would only be constructed if B1 was built.
- We have an overabundance of Class 1 trails and need more Class 3 trails, especially ones that are longer.

Amendment 3 to NS1:

Construct a neighborhood connector trail (Class 3, bicycle design parameters) in uplands from the Turin and/or Carlina Drive cul-de-sacs to connect to T6, the Barren Ave to Alyeska Highway Connector. Because this connector trail would be a Class 3 trail within NS1, it would have to be granted an exception to the NS conditions stipulating primitive trails and no mechanized travel.

Reasoning:

- This trail would allow residents to travel between Girdwood Town Center and the Timberline neighborhood without having to travel down Timberline Road.
- Timberline Road is busy and dusty, therefore neither safe nor enjoyable to walk/bike on.
- This trail, in combination with Lower Danich and the Lower Iditarod trail would provide a loop trail.

Amendment 4 to NS1:

If none of the 3 amendments above passed, maybe we could consider something like:
Bikes are allowed on the Lower Danich only during the winter.

Reasoning:

- At this time of year, the ground is frozen and there will be no damage to the trail tread due to bike traffic.
- Another concern that was raised had to do with this being a feeding area for bears. In the winter the bears are hibernating.
- There are precedents to this approach; in the winter the Nordic 5K is ski only, and in Anchorage, Rover's Run trail is closed during spawning season due to bears feeding.
- Bikes have historically been allowed on the Lower Joe Danich.

MB1:

Provide purpose-built mountain biking flow trails (Class 2-3 bicycle design parameters) to the west of Abe's trail and Beaver Pond trail. ~~in the area between the California Creek drainages.~~ This mountain bike area would alleviate user conflicts around the Abe's Trail/Beaver Pond/California Creek area. Beaver Pond Trail (out of trailhead 20) ~~and a new built up track~~ would be the up route for bicycle traffic and the proposed T7 ~~Crow Creek Road to Beaver Pond Trail~~ would be the down route. Design intent is to mitigate user conflict in this area to the greatest extent possible by providing purpose-built mountain biking trails and removing faster-speed bicycle traffic from multi-use trails built for hiking. Trailhead access for this area would be located at Town Center, the ~~improved~~ Beaver Pond Trailhead, Cemetery trailhead, or Girdwood Pre-K-8 School ~~Four Valleys Community School.~~

Reasoning:

- MB1 was originally put next to California Creek. It was moved away from the California Creek area early on.

MB2:

Provide purpose-built mountain biking flow trails (Class 2-3 bicycle design parameters) within and around the 5K Nordic Ski Loop. All trails in MB2 should minimize impacts to the Winner Creek Trail viewshed. Trailhead access to the area is from the Arlberg Trailhead, Alyeska Resort for resort guests, Alyeska Resort for the general public if a parking agreement is in place, and the Winner Creek Gorge Trailhead once the bridge over Glacier Creek at the Hand Tram is in place. ~~Additional trails in MB2 will not be authorized until a parking agreement is in place, Arlberg is expanded, or another parking solution is identified.~~

Reasoning:

- There was group consensus for protecting the Winner Creek viewshed and BikeWood was supportive of this language.
- The parking language was rejected at the January 4 GTC meeting.

Miscellaneous Questions and Recommendations

p. 13

Population

The original people of the Girdwood Valley were the Dena'ina Athabascan who *may have visited the valley used the land to trap, hunt, and fish. (in our research for the Iditarod signs, we learned that it is doubtful an Dena'ina lived in the Girdwood valley).* The town of Girdwood was established by goldminers in 1896, and by 1906 had grown to 1500 goldminers and railroad workers. In the 1950's the population of the Girdwood Valley was low and mostly supportive of rail and (the ARR was completed in 1923) highway construction efforts after gold mining ended during WW2. As Alaska began to develop its resources throughout the state, the population began to increase. After the Alyeska Hotel was completed in the mid-1990's population growth slowed as development became constricted by lack of land and available local jobs. During peak times, population in the town can reach 4000 people – double *???? something's missing here!*

p. 15

Revised Chart



p. 16

- Remove reference to the Hand Tram from the Existing Physical Conditions section.

p. 26

- Remove references to the Hand Tram from the Connectivity section. The Hand Tram is now history.

- Access section:

*Parking for trail access is available **year-round** at the USFS Ranger District Office, Beaver Pond Trail, **Arlberg Lot** and Moose Meadows Ski Trails. The following parking options are only accessible during summer: Crow Pass, **Winner Creek Gorge**, **Middle Iditarod**, and ~~Upper Iditarod Trail~~, Upper Virgin Creek Trail.*

p. 35

- Areas of Primitive Trails description

*One way in which this plan improves the balance and diversity of Girdwood’s trail system is by identifying areas where primitive trails are desired. **Trails in these areas would be limited to class 2 standards unless use of trails within these areas warrants improved trail tread to protect the surrounding environment.** Areas that prioritize primitive trails serve a variety of purposes, including both conservation and recreation, where non-mechanized recreation activities like trail walking, running, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, orienteering, foraging, wildlife viewing, education, solitude, and meditation are the primary uses. **Mechanized trail use, such as bikes or one wheels, is not authorized.***

p. 40

- Why is biking prohibited on the Toe Slope Trail? While I like that as a non-biker, it seems odd to be to make this trail non-biking when it connects the Iditarod and Beaver Pond trails, both of which allow biking.

- Supplement to Trail Classification and Length Totals chart:

I found it striking that so many of the new trails in the Draft Trails Master Plan were very short in length. These new trails are doing an excellent job of providing connectivity between parking lots and trails, neighborhoods and trails, as well as between two trails. I decided to name any trail $\leq \frac{1}{2}$ mile a “connector” trail and any trail $> \frac{1}{2}$ mile a “hiking” trail.

Total Number of trails, including existing trails and new proposed trails

Trail Class	Total Number of Trails	“Connector Trails”: $\leq \frac{1}{2}$ mile	“Hiking Trails”: $> \frac{1}{2}$ mile
1	9*	0	9
2	8	0	8
3	19	14	5
4	8	2	6
5	5	2	3

*The Snowcat Summer Trail is counted in this chart as a Class 4, which is its proposed class in the Draft Trails Master Plan

- There are a large number of new proposed trails that are Class 3.
- However, the majority of all the Class 3 trails are short “connector” trails.
- The chart above shows that 55% of the “hiking” trails are Class 1 & 2, as determined by number of trails.
- The Summary Chart on p. 40 shows that 51% of all trails are Class 1 & 2, as determined by mileage.

I think these two charts illustrate that we need more Class 3 trails, especially Class 3 trails that are for recreating, rather than just “connecting”.