

Trail map to a final Trails plan:

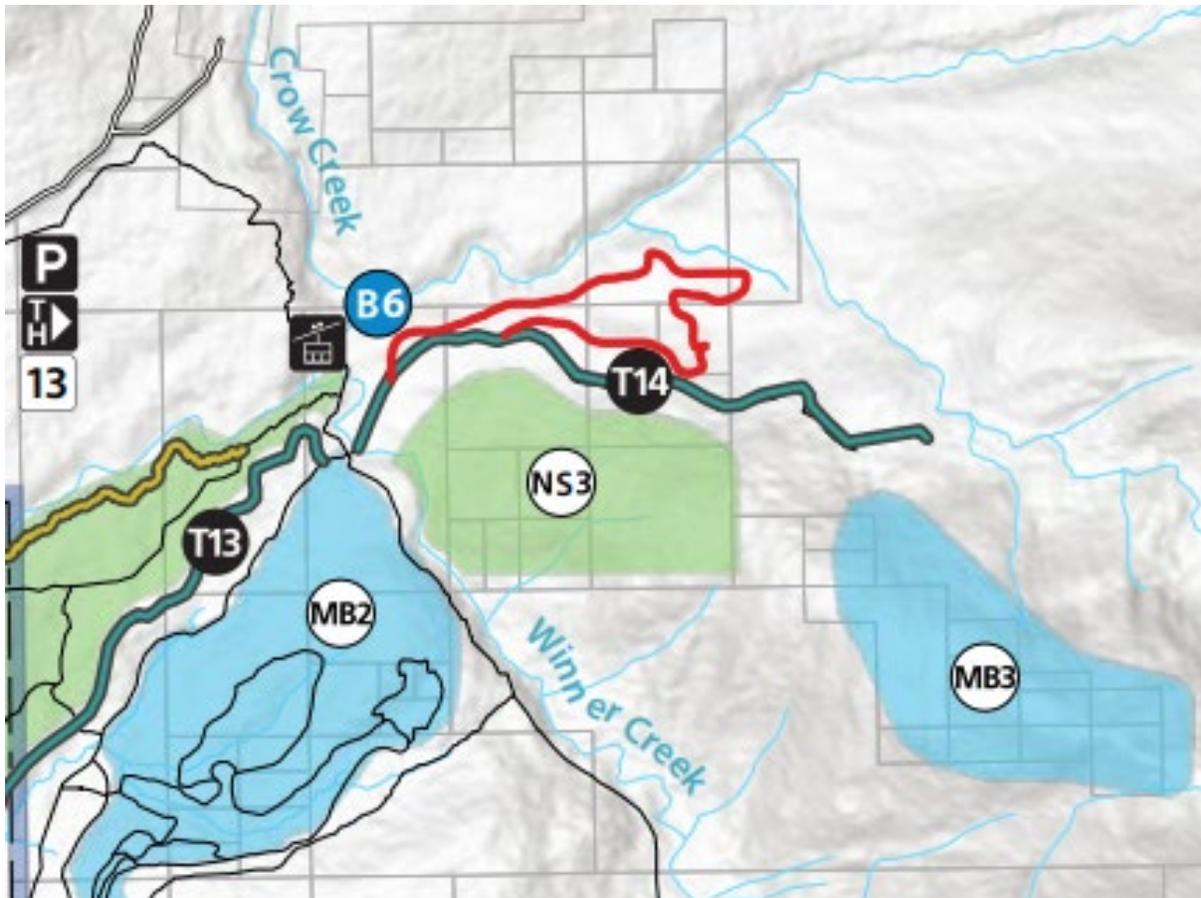
- i. Petitioners present their suggested changes to GTC as submitted on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- ii. GTC Votes on each of the petitioner's changes
- iii. GTC requests additional funding for Huddle AK work from GBOS.
- iv. Huddle adds the approved changes into the existing redline plan
- v. New redline plan is put out for a 30-day review and public comment period
- vi. Comments collected: via Email and/or drop off in person
- vii. Public comment is collated and set of recommendations is prepared by staff/consultant.
- viii. GTC votes on each recommended change from staff/consultant.
- ix. No additional changes to the plan after staff/consultant changes are voted on by GTC. Final redline document is created.
- x. GTC votes to accept final redline GTP, if accepted it moves to LUC & GBOS
- xi. GTC votes to not accept GTP then GTC determines what is next

GTC Member Proposed Amendments to the Girdwood Trails Master Plan Jan 18 2022.  
Proposed changes may not be addressed in the order shown.

Amendment #1 (Raymond-Yakoubian)  
Proposed 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.

Amendment #2 (Tenny)  
Proposed change: Title - Virgin Creek Falls Trailhead. Keep bullet points 1,2,3  
Add bullet point 4: Upon completion of the study and review of the suggested alternatives by GTC there will be implementation of the preferred option.

Amendment #3 (Thomas)  
Proposed change: Add 3-5k loop class 4 trail north of T14. (see map below)



Amendment #4

(Boone/Harrison)

Proposed change: Trailheads on residential streets should be pedestrian/bike access only (i.e., trailhead parking not allowed on residential roads). (Boone/Harrison)

Amendment #5

(Boone/Harrison)

Proposed change: Differentiate between activities allowed during winter/summer in Areas for Primitive Trails/Natural Space Areas.

Amendment #6

(Thomas)

Amend description of primitive trails as follows in red.

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.

Amendment #7

(P Crews)

Proposed Motion: 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.**

Amendment #8

(Essex)

Proposed Motion: Vote to remove all primitive trail areas from the maps.

**Amendment #9 (Essex) – Motion pulled Essex via email 2.21.22**

**Proposed Motion: Vote to connect the Upper Joe Danich trail with the Virgin Creek Trail. (Essex).**

Amendment #10 \*

(P Crews)

Proposed Motion: 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.

See map next page

Amendment #11 \*

(P Crews)

Proposed Motion: 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. (eg Amendment 11)

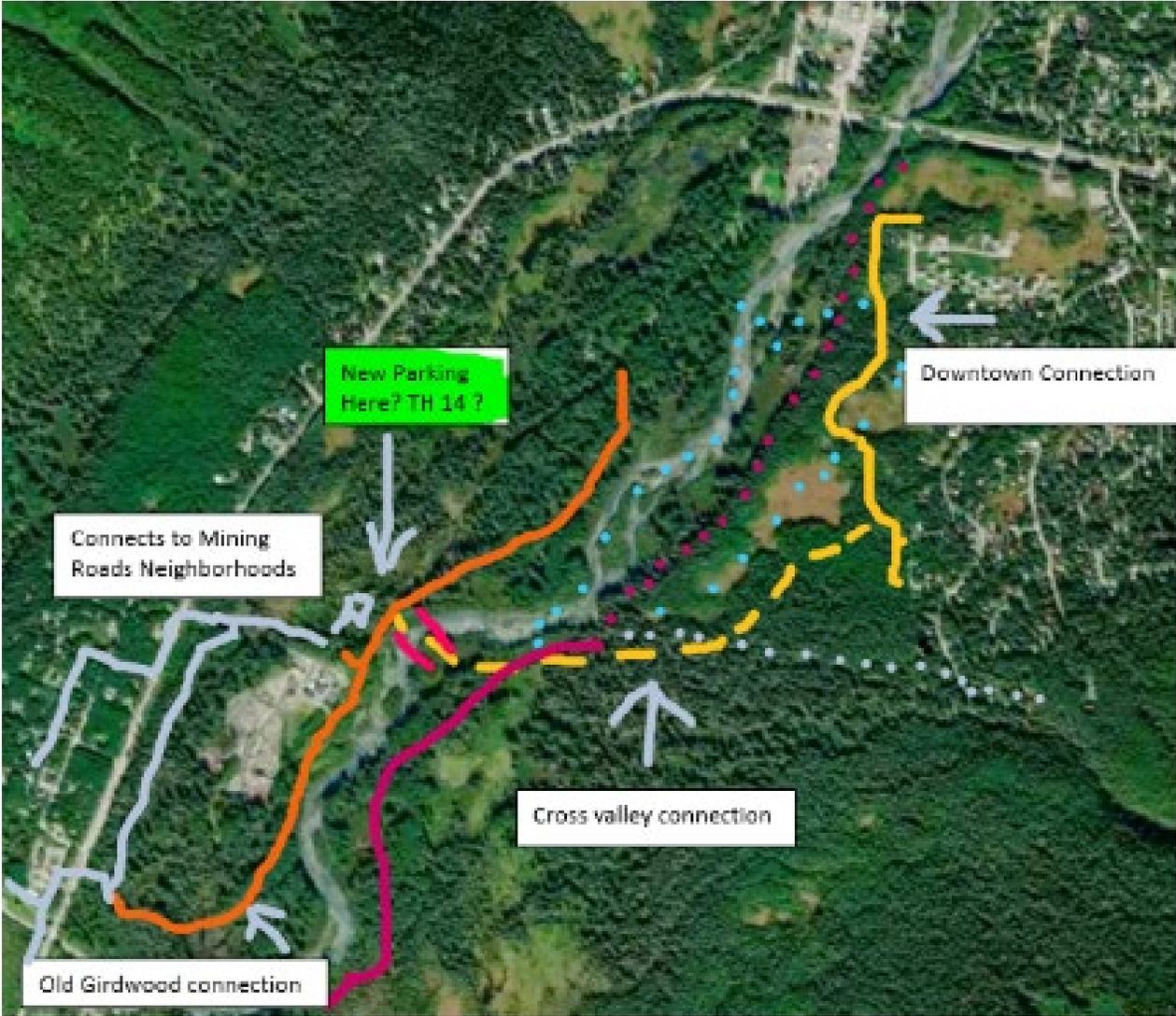
See map next page

Amendment #12 \*

(P Crews)

Proposed Motion: Add new trailhead parking #14 near the southern termination of the trail described in motion #1. (eg Amendment 11)

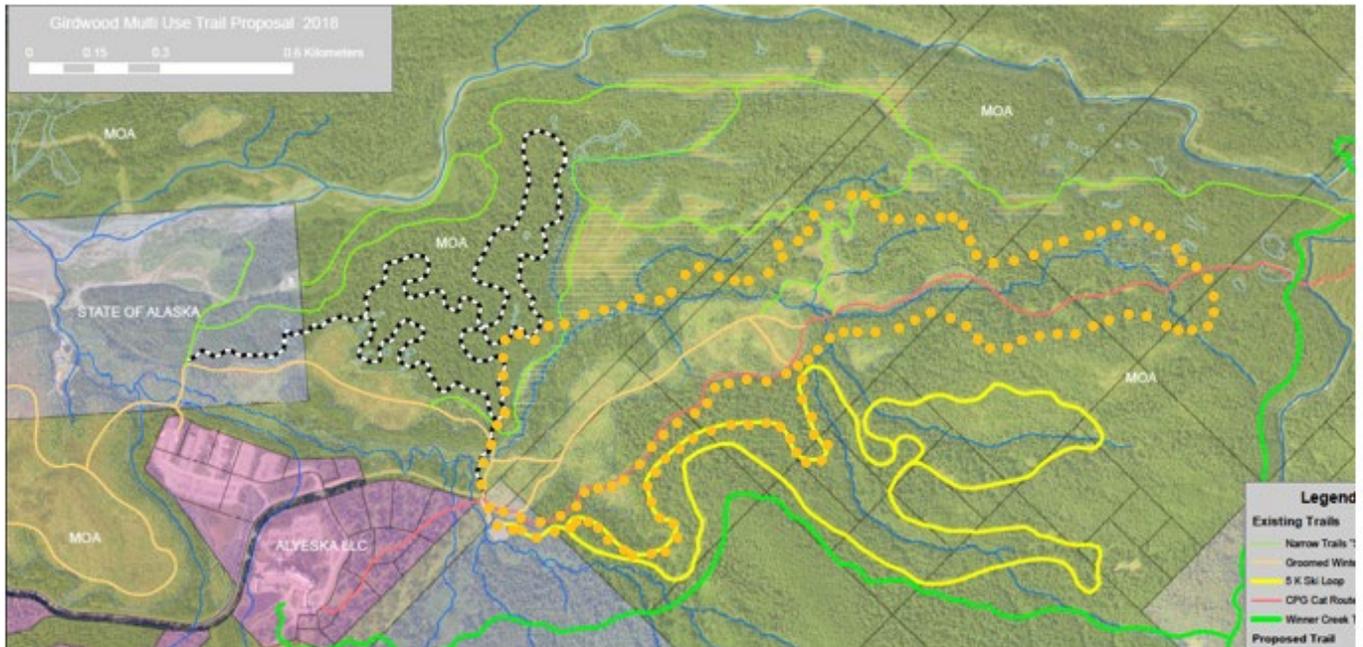
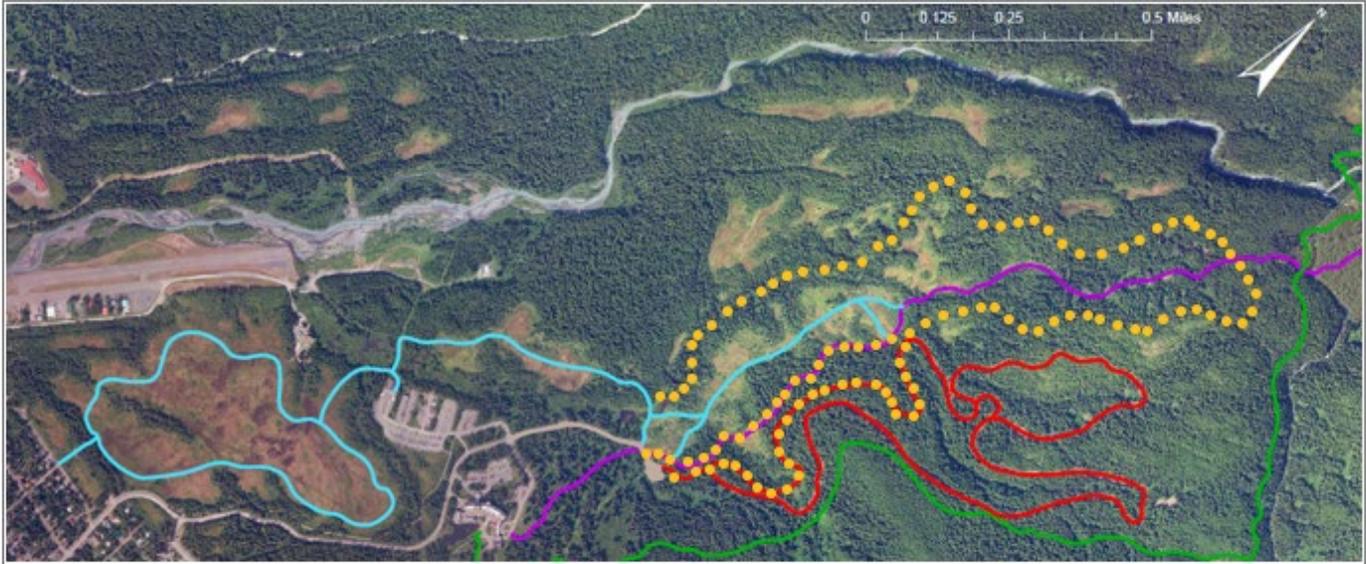
See map next page



**Amendment #13:**

(Essex)

Proposed Motion: add back an Upper Valley Connector from the Forest Loop to the CPG CAT Track near the CAT Track Bridge. (see maps below)



Amendment #14

(Essex)

Proposed Motion: delete the “Primitive Trail Experience” paragraph on page 24 of the Master Plan.

The remaining amendment proposals are from Barb Crews:

Amendment #15

**Amend 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.*

Amendment #16

**Amend 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.*

Amendment #17

**Amend 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.*~~

Amendment #18

**Amend 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.

Amendment #19

**Amend 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.*

Amendment #20

**Amend T9:**

Change the sentence from "...the trail...will be relocated..." to "...the trail...may need to be relocated ...".

Amendment #21

**Amend T11:**

Add trail class in this trail description.

Amendment #22

**Amend 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.*

Amendment #23

**Amend T13:**

Add a conceptual version of the previously approved Forest Loop Trail that addresses the changes needed based on Alyeska Village development.

Amendment #24

**Amend 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.

Amendment #25

**Amend 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).*

Amendment #26

**Add 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.*

Amendment #27

**Amend TH5 & TH6:** (this is a variation on TH5 and TH6)

Combine TH6 and TH5 (Kariolus) into a TH by the ballfields.

Amendment #28

**RE: 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.*

Amendment #29

**Amend 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.*

Amendment #30

**Amend TH11:**

Propose an additional 30 spots at a minimum.

Amendment #31

**Amend 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.*

Amendment #32

**Amend language in NS1**(Virgin Creek Area of Primitive Trails)

**(NS2 and NS3 also should adopt this amendment):**

*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.~~*

Amendment #33

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

Recommend adjusting the east boundary of NS1 to include the Wagon Trail.

Amendment #34:

**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.

Amendment #35

**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.

Amendment #36

**Amendment 4 to NS1:**

Bikes are allowed on the Lower Danich only during the winter.

Amendment #37

**Amend 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.~~*

Amendment #38

**Amend 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.*

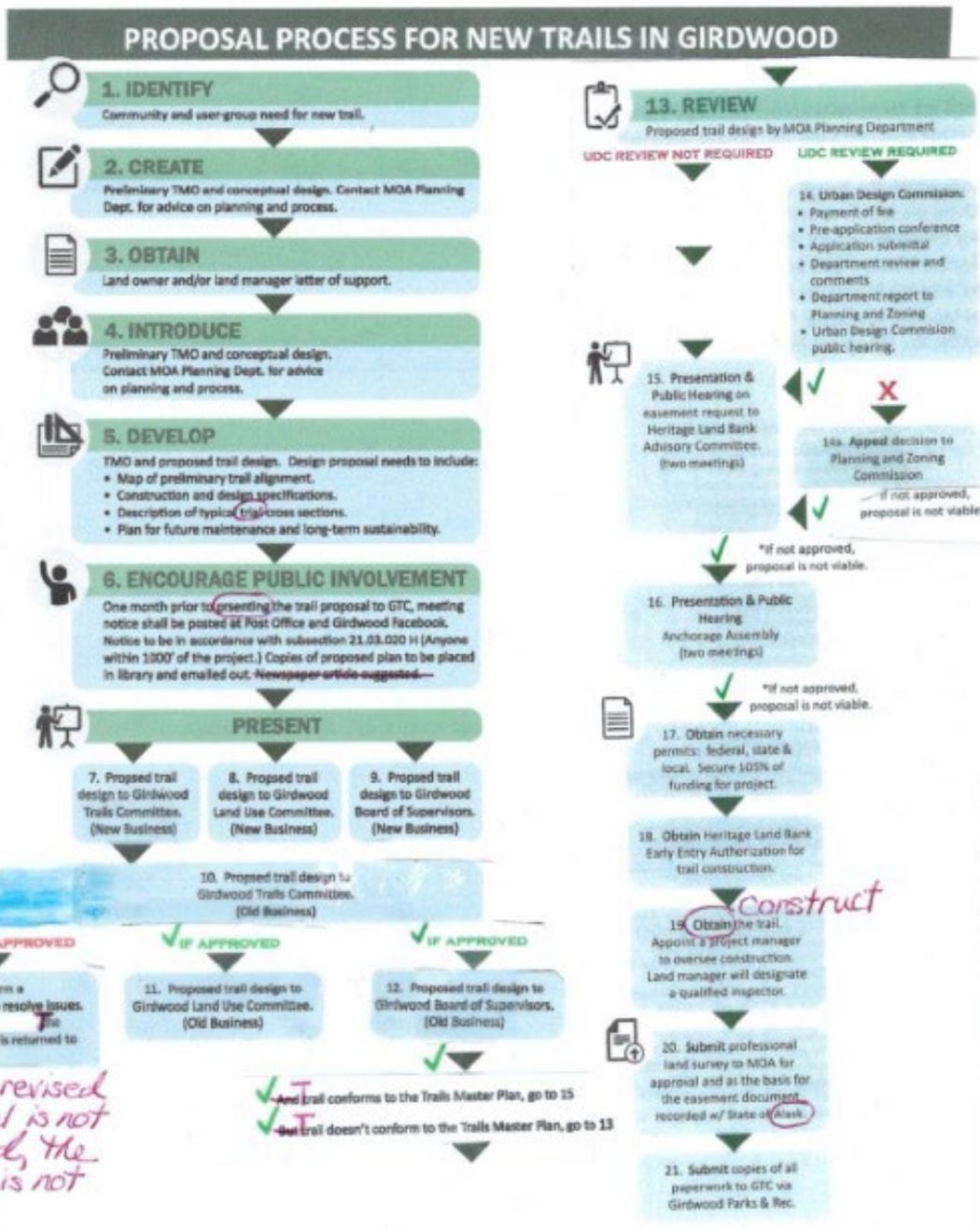
Amendment #39

**Amend Population description 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!*

Amendment #40  
 Amend p. 15 with revised chart



Amendment #41

Amend p. 16 to remove reference to the Hand Tram from the Existing Physical Conditions section.

Amendment #42

Amend p. 26 to remove references to the Hand Tram from the Connectivity section.

Amendment #43

Amend 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.*

Amendment #44

Amend p.35 as follows, under 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.***

Amendment #45

Amend p. 40 to allow biking on the Toe Slope Trail.

The edits proposed in the next pages are not new amendments but a combination of the previously proposed changes. The order of these changes may be different that the order presented in this document.

## **Virgin Creek Area:**

Combination of amendments by Paul and Barbara Crews and Deb Essex

### **Timberline to Downtown Access Trail**

Create a class 3 walking only commuter trail from Turin/Karolinus through the uplands to T6 (the new trail from Barren Ave to Alyeska Hwy). This trail is on a different alignment from the Upper Danich, and combined with the Timberline to Ruane Trail, would essentially replace the Upper Danich, which is more a route than a trail.

- Connects our neighborhoods; allows trail access to downtown without walking on city streets.
- This is to be an easy trail that all walkers can use.
- Moves trail users away from the river bluff and farther from wildlife zones.
- Provides Timberline residents convenient trail opportunities within walking distance of their homes, thereby reducing the number of parking spaces needed at our trailheads.

### **Virgin Creek Access Trail**

Extend the Timberline to Downtown Access Trail to Lower Virgin Creek Trail. This new Class 3 hiking trail would cross Virgin Creek at B3, continue up Virgin Creek on the southern bank, then cross Virgin Creek again to join up with the Virgin Creek Falls Trail.

- This would help alleviate Timberline traffic and over-crowding at Virgin Creek Falls trailhead.
- This trail loop could provide a safe connection to Hightower Town Square for the Virgin Creek area.

### **Timberline to Ruane Access Trail**

Create a Class 3 multi-use trail that connects Turin/Karolinus to Ruane Road. This trail would start at Turin and Karolinus, join up with Lower Virgin Creek Trail near its junction with Lower Danich Trail, then turn west and cross Glacier Creek on a new bridge near Ruane Road. This trail would only be built if the Ruane bridge is funded.

- Creates a new cross valley link and shortens the pedestrian travel distance between Turin Drive and Hottentot Road by half.
- Designating the trail and bridge as a pedestrian corridor may open funding opportunities.

### **Ruane Bridge Addition**

This bridge is a component of the Timberline to Ruane Access Trail. The bridge at Ruane would replace B1 down at the RR area.

- Creates an emergency access route in case of a catastrophic Alyeska Highway bridge failure.

### **New Mid Valley Trailhead at Ruane**

Add new trailhead parking near the Transfer Site at the southern end of the Timberline to Ruane Access Trail. This parking lot would only be built if the bridge at Ruane is funded.

- Parking adjacent to the Transfer Site would be easy to find and would attract our out-of-town users. It would reduce parking pressure at the Forest Service, Downtown, and Karolinus Trailheads as well as reducing traffic farther up valley.

### **Lower Valley Bridge Deletion**

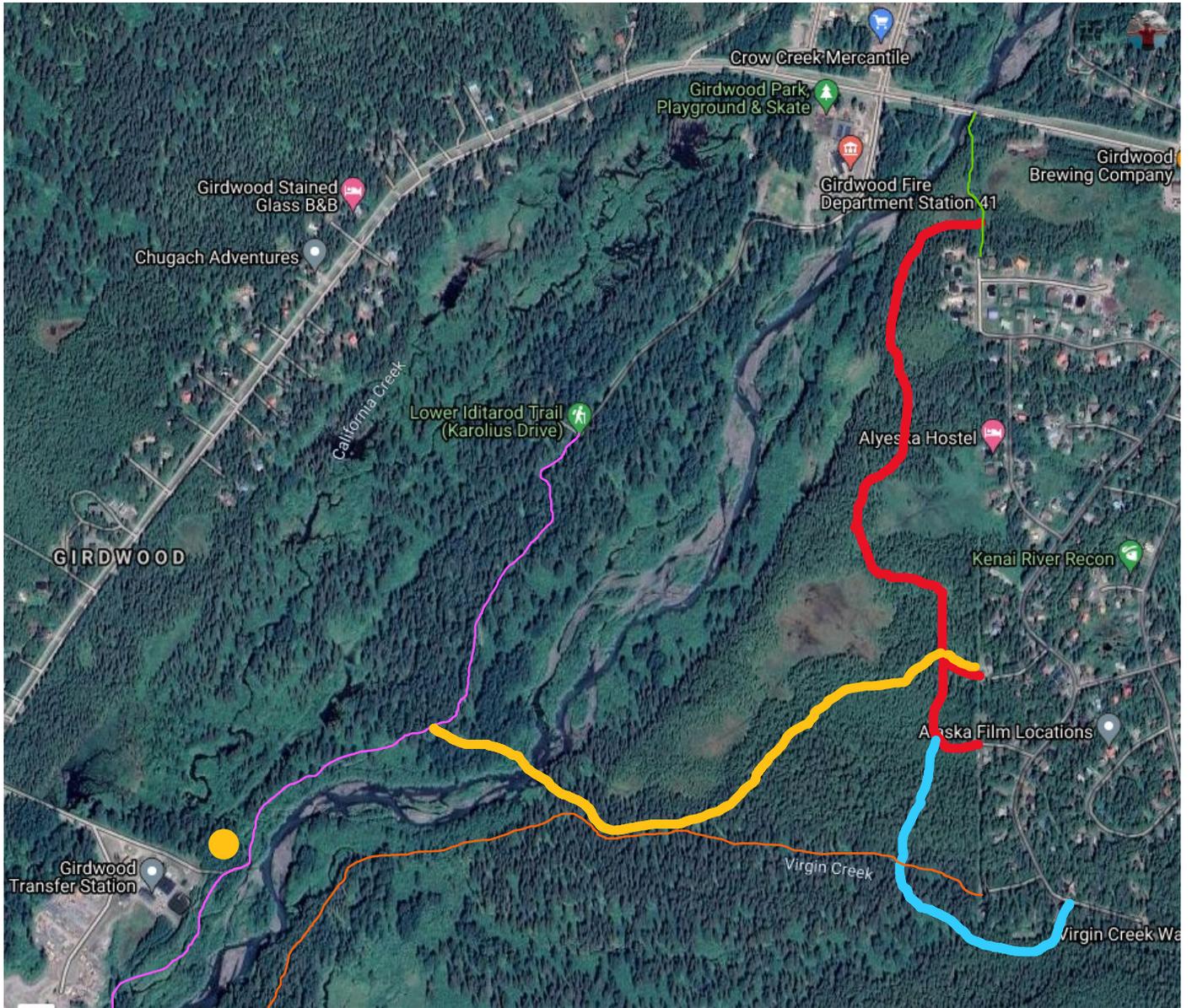
Delete B1 from the Draft Plan.

- With the Lower Danich Trail being Class 1 and the T2 connections to Wagon Trail being eliminated, funding for this bridge is not likely to be feasible. It would be better to direct our resources elsewhere.

### **PT1 Expansion to Wagon Trail**

Expand PT1 east to include Wagon Trail.

- Wagon Trail is a Class 1 trail and would be a good landmark to delineate the eastern boundary of PT1.



- Timberline to Downtown Access Trail (Class 3 hiking only)
- Virgin Creek Access Trail (Class 3 hiking only)
- Timberline to Ruane Access Trail (Class 3 multi-use)
- T5 Barren Avenue to Alyeska Highway (proposed in Trails Master Plan)
- Lower Virgin Creek/Lower Danich Trails (existing)
- Lower Iditarod Trail (existing)
- Ruane Road Trailhead Parking

## Barb Crews Trails Master Plan Edits

Yellow highlighting indicates where a change has been made to the text in the Master Plan.

Green text is Barbara Crews' edits.

Red text is the current red-line edits.

### Easy Edits that shouldn't require much discussion:

My hope is that we can vote on these in a block instead of having to go through them one by one.

#### T6: Barren Avenue to Alyeska Highway

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 Primitive Trail Area 1 (PT1) 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.

#### T7: Crow Creek Road to Beaver Pond Trail

This proposed trail is a Class 3 trail using bicycle design parameters. The purpose of this trail is to provide a separated "down-route" for bikers using MB1 mountain bike area 34. Beaver Pond Trail would be the up route. The intention is not to promote this trail with a trailhead at Crow Creek Road, but rather to direct bike traffic leaving MB1 mountain bike area 3 (MB3), separating user groups and mitigating user conflict by removing downhill bike traffic moving at a higher speed from other trail users on Beaver Pond Trail. There is an existing ROW easement in the neighborhood that should be utilized in the construction of the southernmost portion of this trail. The trail may cross the very southern tip of the Girdwood cemetery parcel. If the trail is constructed before parcel 6-010, zoned gR-3 is developed, the trail and associated easement may need to be relocated will be relocated when/if the HLB parcel is subdivided and developed. This trail is identified as the Village Intertie in the Crow Creek Neighborhood Land Use Study.

#### T9: Crow Creek Neighborhood Trails

This area on either side of Crow Creek Road between Beaver Pond Trailhead and Middle Iditarod Trailhead contains several Class 2 and 3 trails that are referenced in the Crow Creek Neighborhood Land Use Plan: [https://www.muni.org/Departments/hlb/Documents/CC\\_Land\\_Use\\_Plan\\_May\\_06\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.muni.org/Departments/hlb/Documents/CC_Land_Use_Plan_May_06_WEB.pdf) The trails referenced in the plan and included in this planning document are as follows:

- Crow Creek Byway – parallels the Crow Creek Road, provides pedestrian access along this corridor that will be diminished if the road becomes a higher speed, higher volume route. Ideally this route would be separated from the roadway, and built as part of the Crow Creek upgrade.
- Inter-meadow Trail – this route, also shown on several planning maps, connects through the Matrix unit to the Iditarod Trail to the north and the school to the south. This is a very picturesque area of timbered ridge tops, bedrock outcrops and open marshes, all with spectacular views of the upper Glacier Creek Valley. These same features create challenges for development in this area, so the trail may be limited to short trail connectors between residential streets.
- Tiny Creek and Hemlock Interties – these two interties would provide connections between the existing and proposed up-down valley routes. The Tiny Creek intertie takes advantage of a small stream corridor through big timber; the Hemlock intertie follows a low inter-marsh ridge with view sheds both up and down valley.
- The proposed trails are located on lands zoned GOS, gR-3, and gR-5. If the trails are constructed before HLB parcels 6-011, 6-016, and 6-017 are developed, the trails and associated easements may need to be relocated will be relocated when/if the HLB parcels are subdivided and developed.

### **T11: Arlberg Connection to Winner Creek Trail**

As the Arlberg Trailhead becomes a more central access point to the trail system it is necessary to build an official connection between this trailhead and the Winner Creek Trail. **This connector trail would be built to Class 4 standards to match the trail class of Winner Creek Trail where the two trails join.** There is a trailhead to Winner Creek on Alyeska Resort property, but access to Winner Creek should be provided from public land.

### **T13: Recommendation to Revert to Forest Loop Trail**

*The staff recommendation that GTC approved for T13 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, if we are to carry out the recommendation that was approved.*

### **T14: Snow Cat Road**

The snowcat trail was originally located and constructed not for sustainable trail use, but as a cut in vegetation for the snowcat to reach higher elevations in winter. Over time, the route has been used by trail users, not because the route is great, but because it is there. This project proposes identifying a sustainable route (both the tread surface and the grades) either within the snowcat cut or adjacent to it and hardening the tread. Improvements should be considered on both sides of Winner Creek Trail and built to Class 4 Bicycle Design Parameters. 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. This connection will separate faster and slower traffic minimizing user conflict. **This project should reconstruct/relocate the Snowcat Trail out of wetlands wherever possible.**

### **B3: Virgin Creek Bridge**

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).

### **TH8: Beaver Pond Trailhead**

**The Beaver Pond trailhead is often full.** Implementing **other simple trailhead improvements at other trailheads** (Town Square, **Anchorage School District**, Girdwood PreK-8 School **Parking Agreement**, **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: Girdwood PreK-8 School Parking – Parking Agreement**

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 Class 3 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: Arlberg Trailhead Expansion**

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

### **MB1: Beaver Pond**

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 **area for mountain bike development** 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 uptrack** 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, **TH3 Cemetery Trailhead**, or **TH9 Girdwood Pre-K-8 School Trailhead** ~~Four Valleys Community School.~~

## **MB2: Near the Nordic 5K**

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.**

## **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. **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 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. 16 Existing Physical Conditions**

The Girdwood Valley is surrounded by public land on three sides and Turnagain Arm of Cook Inlet on the fourth. The narrow valley is bisected by Glacier Creek, Virgin Creek, California Creek, and their tributaries. The base of the valley is splattered with various wetlands that have traditionally been too wet to develop or use, however, climate change is altering precipitation and vegetation patterns quickly and the long-term implications are unknown. Finally, human-built infrastructure, including the Alyeska Highway, Alaska Railroad, **and** the Airport, **and the Hand Tram** impact trail routes. In brief summary, the existing trail system in the Girdwood Valley has developed as a result of its natural and constructed characteristics. Girdwood has a variety of out-and-back trails that essentially “dead-end”, instead of creating loops or traverses.

## **p. 26**

- Remove references to the Hand Tram from the Connectivity section or put it in past tense.

The Hand Tram **could can** carry only a few people at one time and **could can** operate only in summer months. Although very scenic and a unique experience, the Hand Tram **could not cannot** accommodate the current volume of traffic on Winner Creek Trail which has increased since improvements to the trail have been completed. The hand tram mechanical operation **did has** not failed, however there have been accidents near the Hand Tram, including a fatality, and the MOA is exposed to liability. A year-round crossing to connect the two sides of the Winner Creek Trail is needed.

- Access section:

Parking for trail access is available **year-round** at the **Glacier USFS** Ranger District **Trailhead Office**, **Girdwood Depot Trailhead**, Beaver Pond **Trailhead**, **Arlberg Trailhead** and Moose Meadows **Trailhead 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.

## Moderate Edits that may require some discussion:

### T5: Beaver Pond to Alyeska Highway

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, creating a more connected network of trails across the lower valley. There is currently no east/west connection serving the lower valley west of the Alyeska Highway. This trail would serve as a critical link in the valley's trail system, serving both the lower valley neighborhoods as well as visitors to the valley. The trail would be constructed to Class 3 Biking design parameters. Boardwalk structures can be used to cross wetlands where necessary.\* The trail alignment should use the existing Juniper Drive easement. The proposed trail crosses HLB land zoned gR-3. 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 will be relocated when the HLB parcels are subdivided and developed. \*A bridge is required to cross California Creek (See B2). T5 should only be considered a priority for development if HLB parcels 6-010 and/or 6-040 are developed.

#### Reasoning:

- 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.

### T12: Glacier Canyon Rim Trail

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 is a primitive, non-mechanized trail constructed to Class 2 Hiking design parameters. 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.
- 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.

### 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?

**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.*

### **NS1: Virgin Creek Area of Primitive Trails**

Create an area for primitive trails 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.*

#### **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. Also, why is it Class 2 when both the Iditarod and Beaver Pond trails are Class 3?*

#### **p. 15**

**Revised Flow Chart (see next page)**

# PROPOSAL PROCESS FOR NEW TRAILS IN GIRDWOOD

**1. IDENTIFY**  
Community and user-group need for new trail.

**2. CREATE**  
Preliminary TMO and conceptual design. Contact MOA Planning Dept. for advice on planning and process.

**3. OBTAIN**  
Land owner and/or land manager letter of support.

**4. INTRODUCE**  
Preliminary TMO and conceptual design. Contact MOA Planning Dept. for advice on planning and process.

**5. DEVELOP**  
TMO and proposed trail design. Design proposal needs to include:  
 • Map of preliminary trail alignment.  
 • Construction and design specifications.  
 • Description of typical ~~trail~~ cross sections.  
 • Plan for future maintenance and long-term sustainability.

**6. ENCOURAGE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**  
One month prior to presenting the trail proposal to GTC, meeting notice shall be posted at Post Office and Girdwood Facebook. Notice to be in accordance with subsection 21.03.030 H (Anyone within 1500' of the project.) Copies of proposed plan to be placed in library and emailed out. *Newspaper article suggested.*

**PRESENT**

7. Proposed trail design to Girdwood Trails Committee. (New Business)

8. Proposed trail design to Girdwood Land Use Committee. (New Business)

9. Proposed trail design to Girdwood Board of Supervisors. (New Business)

10. Proposed trail design to Girdwood Trails Committee. (Old Business)

**X IF NOT APPROVED**  
10a. GTC may form a subcommittee to resolve issues. If revised proposal is returned to GTC for a vote.

**✓ IF APPROVED**  
11. Proposed trail design to Girdwood Land Use Committee. (Old Business)

**✓ IF APPROVED**  
12. Proposed trail design to Girdwood Board of Supervisors. (Old Business)

✓ **And** trail conforms to the Trails Master Plan, go to 15  
 ✓ **But** trail doesn't conform to the Trails Master Plan, go to 13

**13. REVIEW**  
Proposed trail design by MOA Planning Department

**UDC REVIEW NOT REQUIRED**

**UDC REVIEW REQUIRED**

14. Urban Design Commission:
- Payment of fee
  - Pre-application conference
  - Application submittal
  - Department review and comments
  - Department report to Planning and Zoning
  - Urban Design Commission public hearing.

15. Presentation & Public Hearing on easement request to Heritage Land Bank Advisory Committee. (two meetings)

14a. Appeal decision to Planning and Zoning Commission  
 — if not approved, proposal is not viable.

\*if not approved, proposal is not viable.

16. Presentation & Public Hearing Anchorage Assembly (two meetings)

\*if not approved, proposal is not viable.

17. Obtain necessary permits: federal, state & local. Secure 100% of funding for project.

18. Obtain Heritage Land Bank Early Entry Authorization for trail construction.

19. **Construct** Obtain the trail. Appoint a project manager to oversee construction. Land manager will designate a qualified inspector.

20. Submit professional land survey to MOA for approval and as the basis for the easement document recorded w/ State of **Alaska**.

21. Submit copies of all paperwork to GTC via Girdwood Parks & Rec.

*IF the revised proposal is not approved, the project is not viable.*



## March 2022 Report Girdwood Trails Committee

### Updates and other business:

- **Girdwood Trails Management Plan Subcommittee:** updated version is posted on the GBOS website. Management Plan meetings are on hold until Trails Master Plan is complete.
- **Girdwood Trails Master Plan** subcommittee has completed their work. Draft plan is in discussion at GTC.
- **Imagine! Girdwood** Imagine! Girdwood is focused on technical analysis and next steps. Funds are needed to continue the effort. Visit [imaginegirdwood.org](http://imaginegirdwood.org)
- Financial Report – March Report below

Girdwood Trails Committee Financial Report

As of February 23, 2022

Account with Girdwood Inc.

\$42,065.57

Last Report 12/31/2021

No transactions this account to date

Account Balance

February 23, 2022

\$42,065.57

No Amounts Reserved at this time

### Grants Status report:

KMTA 2022 Grant cycle: Grant application due March 11.

Anchorage Park Foundation: Grant application due March 17.

KMTA Stumpy's Winter Trail Interp sign: Received 1:1 matching grant requested from KMTA for Stumpy's signs.

RTP \$75,000 for INHT Phase 2 from Industrial Park to Karolius & interp signs: awarded with 90:10 match, started work in July. Reimbursement of \$3702.56 has been submitted and approved. Final reimbursement and closeout of project is pending.

KMTA Virgin Creek Falls Trail: \$7,300 awarded with 1:1 match, Section 106 review complete. Work is 95% complete through summer parks and rec crew in 2020 and 2021 as well as 3 member SCA crew. Pending is some gravel distribution at the top of the trail and fabrication and installation of Trailhead Interp sign (spring 2022). Reimbursement will be initiated shortly.

Other Girdwood Trail Partners Updates

**Kenai Mountains Turnagain Arm Heritage Area (KMTA):** 2022 Annual Haiku Contest complete. Congratulations Ray McDermott for his award winning poem! KMTA/GNSC XC Ski event held Feb 27.

**Girdwood Nordic Ski Club (GNSC):** No report.

**Bikewood:** No report

**Friends of Girdwood Trails:** No report.

Land Use and Girdwood Board of Supervisors: Review minutes on line at: [www.muni.org/gbos](http://www.muni.org/gbos).