



Minutes Final
Girdwood Trails Committee Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 2, 2021 7:00PM

Girdwood Trails Committee meetings are taking place on Teams thru March 2022.

GTC Voting members are defined as is any person eighteen (18) years of age or older who has attended one or more Trails Committee meetings in the last 12 months, and is:

- a) a current resident and/or property owner, business owner or designated representative of a non-profit association; and
- b) who has resided in, owned property in, owned a business located in, or operated as a non-profit association for the preceding ninety (90) days or longer in Girdwood Valley.

Attendance is verified through a sign-in sheet available at each meeting, or equivalent process.

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors, its committees, and subcommittees are subject to the Alaska Open Meetings Act as found in Alaska Statute 44.62.310 and Anchorage Municipal Code 1.25 - Public Meetings.

The Girdwood Trails Committee operates under the Girdwood Public Meetings Standards of Conduct.

Call to Order 7:02PM Carolyn Brodin, Chair

It is noted that over 80 people are attending this meeting. Chair reminds the attendees of the voting requirements.

Approval of November 2, 2021 agenda Kalie Harrison/Barb Crews
Approval of October 5 2021 minutes Kalie Harrison/Barb Crews

Announcements & Presentations: None

Introductions: All attending are asked to introduce themselves and note if they are residents/property owners in order to establish voting eligibility.

Public Comment (3 minutes each):

Matt Wedeking: Chugach State Park officials are aware of the two landslides on the Bird to Gird path at MP 91.5 and 93. Chugach Electric has been notified of down power line.

Kalie Harrison: reminds group of the voting requirements for Trails.

Old Business:

1. Discussion of draft Girdwood Trails Master Plan.

Review of progress in plan:

Draft Master Plan was presented to community in June and at an Open House in the Girdwood Community Room.

Comment period was June 18-July 26. Over 2000 comments were received and cataloged.

Comments were compiled and reviewed by contractor and GVSA manager.

October GTC meeting focused on suggested changes to the draft plan based on review of the comments.

A memo lists the recommendations by project type:

New Trail Projects (T1-T14)

Bridge Projects (B1-B6)

Trailhead Projects (TH1-7 plus Girdwood Cemetery)

Natural Space Projects (NS 1-3 plus language changes)

Mountain Bike Area Projects (MB 1-3 plus language changes).

A slide presentation with maps and additional description of the more complex recommendations was also provided at the October GTC meeting.

The memo and presentation items are included in the meeting packet for this meeting to provide additional context to the discussions.

Next Meeting: December 7, 2021

Girdwood Trails Committee Agendas and minutes are available on line: <http://www.muni.org/gbos>

Structure for review of draft Trails Master Plan:

It is expected that GTC will decide that amendments to the draft plan will be considered.

Chair recommends that the amendments proposed through public comment review will be addressed first, in the order they are provided in the Memo compilation in the meeting packet.

Additional recommendations are to be sent to GTC Admin: tylerms@muni.org to be included in the next meeting packet and addressed in the future. Recommendations should be provided in the same format as those in the memo: Classification (New Trail Project, Bridge Project, Trailhead Project, Natural Space Project, Mountain Bike Area Project); Statement of change recommended; paragraph of explanation.

Voting structure:

Honor system voting. Participants are reminded to vote if they meet the GTC Operating Rules voting requirements as discussed earlier.

Many of the votes are likely to be heavily weighted or uncontested. Items where votes are close will have roll call to confirm outcome. Voting is taking place using raise hand feature on Teams. Abstentions will also be noted in this way.

Motion:

Girdwood Trails Committee moves to accept the draft Trails Master Plan as presented.

Motion by Julie Raymond-Yakoubian. No second

Motion fails.

GTC moves forward with review of recommendations from the Memo.

Group considered approving all the No Substantive Change Recommended items under one motion, however opted to review individually.

T1: Separated Grade Crossing: Railroad Bridge at Alyeska Highway

NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED

Slight narrative change to urge the DOT to include this improvement as part of the Alyeska Highway/Seward Highway intersection project, but overall, no substantive change to intent.

Motion:

GTC moves to accept the recommendation as presented.

Motion by Kevin Desmond, 2nd by Deb Essex

No opposition and no abstentions

Motion passes unanimously

T2: Wagon Trail – Lower Joe Danich Connection

CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove this project from the plan.

Comments exhibited concerns about the environmental and financial feasibility of developing this connection through the wetlands of the lower valley. Two forks of the trail in the draft are redundant.

Motion:

GTC moves to accept the recommendation as presented.

Motion by Kevin Desmond, 2nd by Deb Essex

No opposition and no abstentions

Motion Passes unanimously

T3: Lower Valley Trail Loop Connection

CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove the upper portion of the trail from Ruane to residential area and develop the connection from Ruane, south to the Lower Iditarod.

Comments indicated that the upper portion of this trail was too impactful on the environment, the neighborhood, and redundant (already served by the Iditarod route). This change would also require the removal of B2. However, the lower loop would be a welcome addition for residents of the lower valley.

Motion:

GTC moves to accept the recommendation as presented.

Motion by Barb Crews, 2nd by Deb Essex

No opposition and no abstentions

Motion passes unanimously

T4: Ruane Road Trail Connection to Lower Iditarod

NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED

Motion:

GTC moves to accept the recommendation as presented.

Motion by Jonathan Lee 2nd by Kalie Harrison

No opposition and no abstentions

Motion passes unanimously

T5: Beaver Pond to Alyeska Highway

NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED

There were comments indicating this connection adjacent to residential property was not desired. Additionally, there were comments indicating a concern for safety if a trail user crossed the Alyeska Highway to connect to T3. T3 is recommended to be removed from the plan (see above). No substantive change is recommended because if housing is developed on Tract 18A and a roadway constructed on the Juniper Drive easement, it is prudent to ensure that pedestrian/trail connectivity is considered if future development proceeds. T5 should only be considered a priority for development if Tract 18A is developed. (Change the name of the project)

Motion:

GTC moves to accept the recommendation as presented.

Motion by Eryn Boone, 2nd by Kalie Harrison

No opposition and no abstentions

Motion passes unanimously

T6: Barren Avenue to Alyeska Highway

NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED

Motion:

GTC moves to accept the recommendation as presented.

Motion by Shannon O'Brien, 2nd by Kate Sandberg

No opposition and no abstentions

Motion passes unanimously

T7: Crow Creek Road to Beaver Pond Trail

CHANGE RECOMMENDED – DISCUSS IN CONCERT WITH MB1

Comments do not indicate consensus for MB1. Language should be added to the project description to indicate that this trail should only be constructed when/if MB1 is developed. T7 will provide better safety and reduce conflict by separating uses and providing a 'down-route' for bikes using MB1 if constructed. (editor fixed typo that caused some confusion in the meeting)

Related item:

MB1: Beaver Pond MB Area

CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove MB1 from the plan:

There is not consensus about this project. Needs more discussion – if included in the plan MB1 shall be developed in consultation with the Girdwood Trails Committee only after MB2 is complete. If MB1 is removed, user conflicts on Abe's and California Creek Trails still needs to be addressed.

These items are discussed for considerable time; topic is complex as it involves T7 and MB1.

Concerns involve:

Suitability of land for mountain bike trail in MB1

Potential trail user conflicts on adjacent non-bike trails.

Land Manager, HLB, does not necessarily support this but wants to hear from the community.

Difficult to consider this separately from discussion of Cemetery and proposals for development of Holtan Hills residential property, which is currently under negotiation with HLB and should be coming forward to community meetings for presentation soon.

Supporters discuss:

Retaining the option of new trails is the point of the master plan.

No plans for development of this area currently exist.

A completely different Mountain bike or trails group might develop this area.

User conflicts are a separate issue that is not solved by eliminating MB1 and trail to it from the plan.

Well-built trails for bike use will encourage bikers to use those trails instead of trails designated for hiking.

Girdwood Trails Management Plan should make clear determination what uses are allowed and those that are prohibited for each trail.

Procedural Motion:

GTC moves to extend topic for 20 minutes as required by GTC rules as this topic has been under discussion for 1 hour.

Motion by Kalie Harrison, 2nd by Eryn Boone

No objections, 1 abstention

Motion carries unanimously.

Various statements of the motion regarding T7 and MB1 are attempted and restated thru discussion.

Motion:

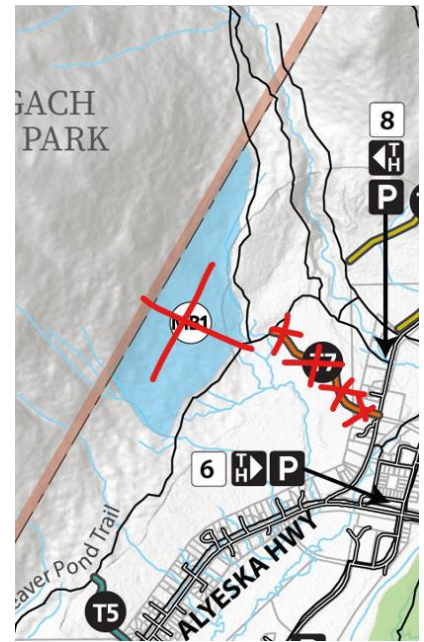
GTC moves to retain the original language in the Draft Girdwood Trails Master Plan and retain T7 and MB1.

Motion by Saraj Gottstein, 2nd by Ben Kohler

As this item is divided, roll call vote is held

53 in favor, 4 abstain, 2 opposed

Motion carries



Procedural motion:

GTC moves to extend the meeting for 1 hour as required by GTC rule for motion to extend meeting beyond 2 hours.

Motion by Barb Crews, 2nd by Eryn Boone.

Some discussion to extend by 30 minutes instead, overridden.

As this item is divided, roll call vote is held

47 in favor, 0 abstain, 5 opposed

Motion carries.

T8: Toe Slope Trail – California Creek to Iditarod Trail

NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED

Recommend adding a bridge over California Creek. Recommend adding as a new bridge project.

Motion:

GTC moves to accept the recommendation as presented.

Motion by Ryan Hutchins-Cabibi, 2nd by Deb Essex

No opposition and 1 abstention

Motion passes unanimously

Review of Trails Plan recommendations is concluded for this meeting. Next meeting will pick up at T9 and continue forward in the same manner as this meeting.

2. Girdwood Nordic Ski Club request for approval of Narrow Gauge Grooming for Winter 21-22.

Lower INHT, Beaver Pond Trail, outside loop of Moose Meadow, Upper valley trails

See meeting packet for map of the subject area of additional proposed grooming along the edge of upper valley trails. Feedback from narrow gauge grooming was very positive last year, including the addition of the outer loop at Moose Meadows. Girdwood Nordic Ski Club has acquired a 2nd snow dog to increase grooming capacity.

Motion:

GTC moves to approve narrow gauge grooming in upper meadows as well as areas groomed in 2020-21 season as presented.

Motion by Kate Sandberg, 2nd by Kalie Harrison

Concerns are expressed from users who prefer not to have a groomed surface and already ski or snowshoe along the edge of the meadows. Area is much more narrow than Moose Meadows, potential user conflict based on inability to get out of the way of bikers/skiers. Suggest that motion is separated into 2 motions; one for areas groomed last year and one for allowing grooming in new area.

Amended motion:

GTC moves to split the grooming approval vote into 2: reapproval of trails groomed by narrow gauge roomer last year and those to be initiated in 2021/22.

Motion by Deb Croghan, 2nd by Kalie Harrison

Vote on amendment:

As this item is divided, roll call vote is held

16 in favor, 0 abstain, 25 opposed

Amended motion fails

Return to original motion:

Motion:

GTC moves to approve narrow gauge grooming in upper meadows as well as areas groomed in 2020-21 season as presented.

Motion by Kate Sandberg, 2nd by Kalie Harrison

As this item is divided, roll call vote is held

50 in favor, 0 abstain, 3 opposed

Motion passes

Other ideas are expressed as well:

Consider approval of narrow gauge grooming in perpetuity

Consider approaching the USFS regarding grooming of Winner Creek Trail

Add smaller loop in Moose Meadows and set up as a winter pump track.

These ideas are outside of the request made and presented by petitioner.

New Business:

3 . RTP 2022 Grant: Grant is limited to motorized projects or Safety and Education projects. Applications are due Dec 31. Based on the scope of the grant, it is unlikely that staff and GTC will pursue an RTP grant for 2022.

4 . GTC Officer elections for the positions of Chair, 2 Vice-Chairs, and Treasurer will be held at the January 4 2022 GTC Regular meeting. Officer elections for all GBOS committees are held at their first meeting of the new year.

Other:

5. November LUC/GBOS Meeting Representatives

6. Written Reports to be included in meeting packet:

- Financial Report
- Grants Status report
- GBOS
- Other Girdwood Trail Partners Updates: GNSC; Bikewood; Girdwild; Friends of Girdwood Trails; KMTA; Imagine! Girdwood

Adjourn 9:38PM