



MINUTES FINAL
Girdwood Trails Committee
Regular Monthly Meeting – Tuesday, October 5, 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

Approval of October 5 2021 agenda Kalie Harrison/Barb Crews
Approval of Sept 7, 2021 minutes Barb Crews/Kalie Harrison

Announcements:

Introductions: All attending are asked to introduce themselves. New attendees are:

Alayna DuPont	Janeen Hutchins	Philip Peterson
Ben Napolitano	Jennifer Wingard	Rachel Steer
Duffy Daniels	Kathy Cronin	Tiffany Peterson
Haley Johnston	Kyle Gronley	
Heather Durtschi		

Presentations: None

Public Comment (3 minutes each): None

Old Business: No old business will be reviewed at this meeting in order to make time for full discussion of the Girdwood Trails Master plan.

New Business:

1. Review of Girdwood Trails Master Plan

Presentation provided by Holly Spoth-Torres (Huddle AK) and Kyle Kelley.

Kyle and Holly have reviewed the comments, compiled them and provided the information in a document made available on the Girdwood Trails Plan webpage. A couple of comments were missing from the original compilation, an update will be posted. Some comments were opinions, some included questions which have been responded to. Review of the comments prompted recommendations to update the draft Girdwood Trails Plan. No changes have been made to the draft plan originally presented.

Next Meeting: November 2, 2021

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

The ideas presented tonight are for GTC to consider as they work through public review of the plan. Originally the GTP Subcommittee was to review recommendation, however funding for this segment of Huddle contract was declined by GBOS. There is no obligation to accept the proposed recommendations. Recommendations have been discussed with HLB, Shelley Rowton.

Recommendations are included in the meeting packet in two formats, one is the presentation material, the other is in memo form. In the course of the presentation there were some errors found, those will be updated in the next version of the recommendation document.

Q: Question

A: Answer

C: Comment

Lower Valley Presentation comments:

Re: Recommendation to develop Joe Danich Trail to Class 3 mtn bike and move natural space over to include Wagon Trail. Neighborhood connector at Carlina and/Turin.

- Q: Is there a plan to add a hiking only trail to replace loss of hiking only on current Danich? (O'Brien)
A: No, trail will be multi-use and allow hiking.
- C: Concern for wildlife if Danich Trail is built to Class 3 and is more used. This creates trail on both sides of Glacier Creek, where this is significant bear and moose habitat. Is this safe and what is impact? (O'Brien)
- C: Upgrade to Danich to Class 3 trail needs to be paired with legal crossing of Glacier Creek in order to make a viable loop. (B Crews)
A: Yes, it is a good idea to incorporate the bridge into the text to prioritize development together so that there is flow for people to go.
- Re: T5, Beaver Pond to Alyeska Highway, specifically connector trail on existing Juniper St public right of way. Recommendation is to develop this only when the HLB Tract 18A is developed and creates greater need.
- C: Support for developing this access regardless of current traffic data as it is currently inaccessible due to undergrowth or by using private property. (D'Alessio)
- C: Like prioritization and would like to see more prioritization added. (Leeds)
- Q: Were there specific environmental concerns that have encouraged recommendation of removal of plan ideas (specifically related to GTP consideration of connector through Lower Valley T3 and B2). (Gottstein)
A: Yes, B2 includes wetland and braided creek. Also significant residential concerns and environment/wildlife impact unnecessary as this segment of trail is redundant with Lower INHT.
- C: Shift to east for NS1 makes a lot of sense. Increased use of Joe Danich Trail over recent years shows need and interest in trail use on this side of Glacier Creek. Wagon Trail is a more primitive trail. (Boone)
- Q: No connection to upper Timberline connection from Danich? (Thomas)
A: No, connection for Timberline and Danich is recommended at Turin or Carlina, Class 3
- Q: Request for recap of discussion so far. (DuPont)
A: All information is available on line and will be updated and shared. Please call Kyle or email him if you have questions as you review the plan, recommendations or memo materials.

Middle Valley Discussion:

MB1 removal is recommended in this presentation, as well as connector trail T7 (MTB down route):

- C: Reconsider removal of MB1. Having more than one mountain bike area in the valley would spread out use (Thomas)
- Q: What are points of contention encouraged recommended removal of MB1? (Gottstein)
A: Terrain is wet and difficult to access. Other users cite Abe's trail use by bikers as up or down route as negative impact to their use of Abe's Trail.
- Q: If MB1 area is removed from the plan, how would this be reversed, if desired, after plan adoption? (Wilson)
A: Clarification: MB1 is not removed from plan, it's just the recommendation. This should be discussed by GTC as part of plan review process.
- Q: What is the solution to user conflicts on Abe's Trail? This issue exists regardless of specific mountain bike area (Gottstein)
A: This is an item for GTC to address.
A: In addition to terrain and wetland concerns, there is an issue with capacity of local groups to build trails in this area in addition to working on other areas that are recommended for flow trail development (MB2).
- C: Lack of trail plan is the main impediment to building trails by Bikewood and other trail groups. Removing this from master plan limits options (Gottstein)

Upper Valley

RE: recommendation of realignment of T10 to connect to new bridge B5 over Glacier Creek, change to trail class consistent with connecting trails (class 3). Remove proposed T13 and add Forest Loop back into the plan. T12 is proposed Class 2. Original plan was to create a loop, but this is not desired, based on comments. Adjust boundary of NS2 east to the east to Snowcat Trail

- Q: What is the utility of the Natural Space areas (Leeds)
A: Preserve primitive trail experience (no greater than class 2)
- C: Trails that are primitive still see use and become braided and actually less natural over time (Leeds)
- C: if shift NS to east to move T12 out of the NS, this would allow the T12 trail to be developed to class 3 over time if needed (B Crews).
- C: Like realignment of T10, but maybe there's no need for it to be a separate trail from Stumpy's Summer trail at the beginning: ie one connector instead of two from proposed T10. (B Crews)
- C: Cat Trail is not year round trail and won't likely become year-round. Consider a year round class 4 trail with similar alignment as existing Cat Trail to provide non-wetland access to upper valley. Climate change will be a challenge for Cat Trail and for all user groups. (Peterson)
- Q: If T13 is removed, are there no Class 3 trails connecting past the hand tram? If so the only option from Hand tram to 5k is Winner Creek Trail. (Wilson)
A: Bikewood has discussed building a trail in MB2.
- Q: Are improvements to the Cat Road proposed in the draft plan removed in the recommendations? (P Crews).
A: No. However, a conversation about feasibility of proposed improvements should be had.

Discussion:

- Q: Does NS designation allow use of bikes, fat bikes? (Davis)
A: No, current designation of "non-mechanized" does not allow for bikes and designates that trails within NS are primitive designation of Class 1 and 2.
- Q: What signage is used for Class 1 and 2 trails? Concern for trail users to have wayfinding on primitive trails. (Wilson)

A: This is addressed in Girdwood Trails Management plan. Little/no signage on Class 1 trails; Class 2 might have a blaze and primitive sign; probably similar to most trails in Girdwood.

- Q: Explain decision making regarding Natural Spaces, it seems like NS received a lot of negative input in public comment. (Gottstein)
A: NS group were very proactive in participating and NS are integrated in plan's mission and values. In review of public comments on the plan, all users and groups were considered, in an effort to find balance in the plan.
- Q: How do Trail plan and recommendations presented address equitability and accessibility in Girdwood trails, especially those that are to remain primitive trails with limited signage. (Gottstein)
A: Trails Plan addresses this through making more multi-use and class 3 trails throughout the valley. Early discussions of vision, values, goals included discussion of equity and should continue as projects move forward.
- C: Encourage community members to review plan from various perspectives, user groups and accessibility capability outside of their own for comprehensive inclusive consideration (O'Brien)

In other recommendations, there are language changes to Mountain Bike Area and Natural Spaces to clarify that Mountain bike areas don't limit development of other recreational activities in the area and that Natural Spaces are areas for primitive trails. These changes are recommended to avoid conflict of the Trail Plan with the Area Plan and are consistent Trail Plan language.

- Q: Does this change remove Natural Spaces and Mountain Bike Areas (Leeds)
A: No, it just changes the way that they are discussed, as it relates to trails rather than land uses.
- Q: Would it be possible to remove these areas (Leeds)
A: That will be up to GTC in the process of trail plan review.
- Q: Possible to update maps in recommended to show trail class and type (O'Brien)
A: will try to make it more clear.
- C: Request written methodology for analysis of comments. Concern about hearing about "majorities" Intent of subcommittee and plan was to try to represent everyone who uses the valley for recreation. Good community planning is not about serving just the majority. (J Raymond-Yakoubian)
- C: Thank you for the work and there has been pressure to exclude some groups. Good balance of the various user groups, encourage others to have broad minded view and all deserve a chance to use the public land. (Lee)
- C: Thank you, Kyle and Holly. This is a great job addressing land use, primitive trails and all the user groups in a balanced way. (J Fox)
- C: Lucky to have you taking the 2000 comments and organizing into recommendations and setting up a way to move forward. Recognizing there is limited terrain that is conducive to trail building (due to: cost of development, wetlands, poor material, overburden, heavily forested, etc) in the valley and those areas that are not conducive to trail building should be left alone. (Burnett)
- C: Also echo great job finding equity, all users are important, none are more important than others. I think we can get this to work. (Brodin).
- Q: What happens if plan is not passed (Hutchins-Cabibi)
A: If not passed, the plan will sit as a draft. It could be taken up again.

- Q: What happens to future trail development if a Trails Master Plan is not adopted? (Hutchins-Cabibi)
A: Every trail project would need to go through all the steps separately.
Lack of an adopted plan could be detrimental to successful grant application.
- C: Concern that this should be pushed for a vote in November. (Sandberg)
A: There is no requirement that this be voted on in November.
GTC sets their own pace for review and vote on Trails Master Plan.
November is the earliest possible date that a vote could be taken.
- C: Interest in a pump track for kids, likely in Girdwood Park. Terrain at 5K and Beaver Pond is not suitable. (Teixmen)
A: Agreed. This is part of a different project, involving park facilities. Current thinking is for location either in Girdwood Park/Forest Fair Park or perhaps in redesign of the Alyeska Playing Field/soccer field area.

These recommendations are proposed by Holly and Kyle. However, GTC members should review the plan and the recommendations, come up with their own recommendations to discuss at future GTC meetings. Whatever is ultimately approved by GTC will move on through local and MOA process.

Updates/corrections to recommendations will be included in updated packet on the GTC meeting info. Missed public comments from comment period will be added to information on the GTP webpage. Link to this meeting will be added to the GBOS website and link will be provided with the minutes.

GTC will take up continued discussion of the Trails Master Plan starting in November. Comments received at this meeting will be included in the minutes. GTC will need to address them in future meetings.

Once approved by GTC, it will go to LUC, GBOS, HLBAC, Planning and Zoning Commission, Anchorage Assembly.

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

Ben Kohler presents that in addition to trails that were groomed last year, he proposed narrow gauge grooming on upper valley trails. General idea is presented on map. Consideration proposed currently is for trails under GTC management. Some express interest in grooming the Winner Creek trail, however that trail is USFS and would require their approval.

Other:

3. October LUC/GBOS Meeting Representatives
4. Written Reports to be included in meeting packet:
 - Financial Report
 - Grants Status report
 - GBOS
 - Other Girdwood Trail Partners Updates: GNCS; Bikewood; Girdwild; KMTA; Imagine! Girdwood (GAP)

Adjourn 8:50PM