



# GIRDWOOD TRAILS PLAN

PUBLIC MEETING

NOVEMBER 19, 2020

TECH CHECK

MEETING ETIQUETTE

WELCOME

# AGENDA

6:00 - 6:15 welcome - overview - meeting etiquette

- Goals for Public Meeting
- Technology/Process Overview
- Meeting Etiquette

6:15 - 6:45 Project Presentation

6:45 - 7:15 Exercise #1: Values, Vision, Goals

7:15 - 7:45 Exercise #2: Objectives

7:45 Mapping Application Tutorial

# GIRDWOOD TRAILS PLAN PURPOSE

Establish a 10-15-year plan to develop, protect, and promote Girdwood's trail network for current and future generations.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS



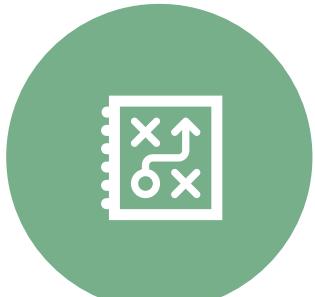
# PLANNING CONTEXT



**Girdwood Area Plan:** Adopted in 1995, recognized the role that trails play for residents and visitors alike in transportation and recreation within a community that is spread out and divided by natural features. GAP outlines 7 policies/guidelines that cover trail buffers, easements, pedestrian facilities along connector streets, multi-use trails, primitive trails, and a management plan for the Recreation Reserve. The Girdwood Area Plan is in the process of being updated.



**Girdwood Valley Trails Management Plan:** Provides guidance for the community to develop, manage, maintain, and assess the trail system. Inventory of existing trails and guidance for sustainable maintenance and construction. Focuses on process and construction of trails, does not cover connections, current/future plans, or community input.



**Chugach State Park Management Plan:** Catalogs existing management agreements. Facility Improvements recommended include a trailhead and parking lot at the South end of Bird to Gird and California Creek trailhead developed in partnership with GTC.



**Chugach State Park Access Plan:** Identifies trails that begin in Girdwood and offer access to Chugach State Park Lands. Access specific recommendations include: Bird to Gird Milepost 0 parking lot, California Creek parking, trailhead, trail easement in partnership with HLB, and coordination with GBOS and GTC to maintain and manage trails.

# PLANNING CONTEXT



**Chugach National Forest: Land Management Plan:** As far as Girdwood is concerned, this plan primarily focuses on the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) and Desired Trail Conditions. Listed as Trail Maintenance Priority Area #15 (in the nation), current work on the Southern Trek includes restoration of 120 miles of existing trail and development of new trail to connect the communities of Seward, Moose Pass, Whittier, and Girdwood.



**Girdwood South Townsite Master Plan:** Multimodal infrastructure. Improved sidewalks. Partnerships for development. The need for more civic and recreational facilities, including a high school, a community recreation center, community pool, expanded ski terrain, and more hiking or Nordic trails



**Girdwood Commercial Areas and Transportation Master Plan:** A well-developed trail system will support recreation-based tourism. At the same time, trails should support a growing volume of utilitarian travel, commuting to and from school/work or shopping by bike, skiing or walking.



**Alyeska Resort Master Plan:** The Alyeska Resort Master Plan devotes chapter 4 to conformance with Girdwood Planning Objectives. There is a desire to work closely with the MOA to address GAP strategies and acknowledgement that improved interior circulation and enhanced connections to surrounding recreation will serve locals.

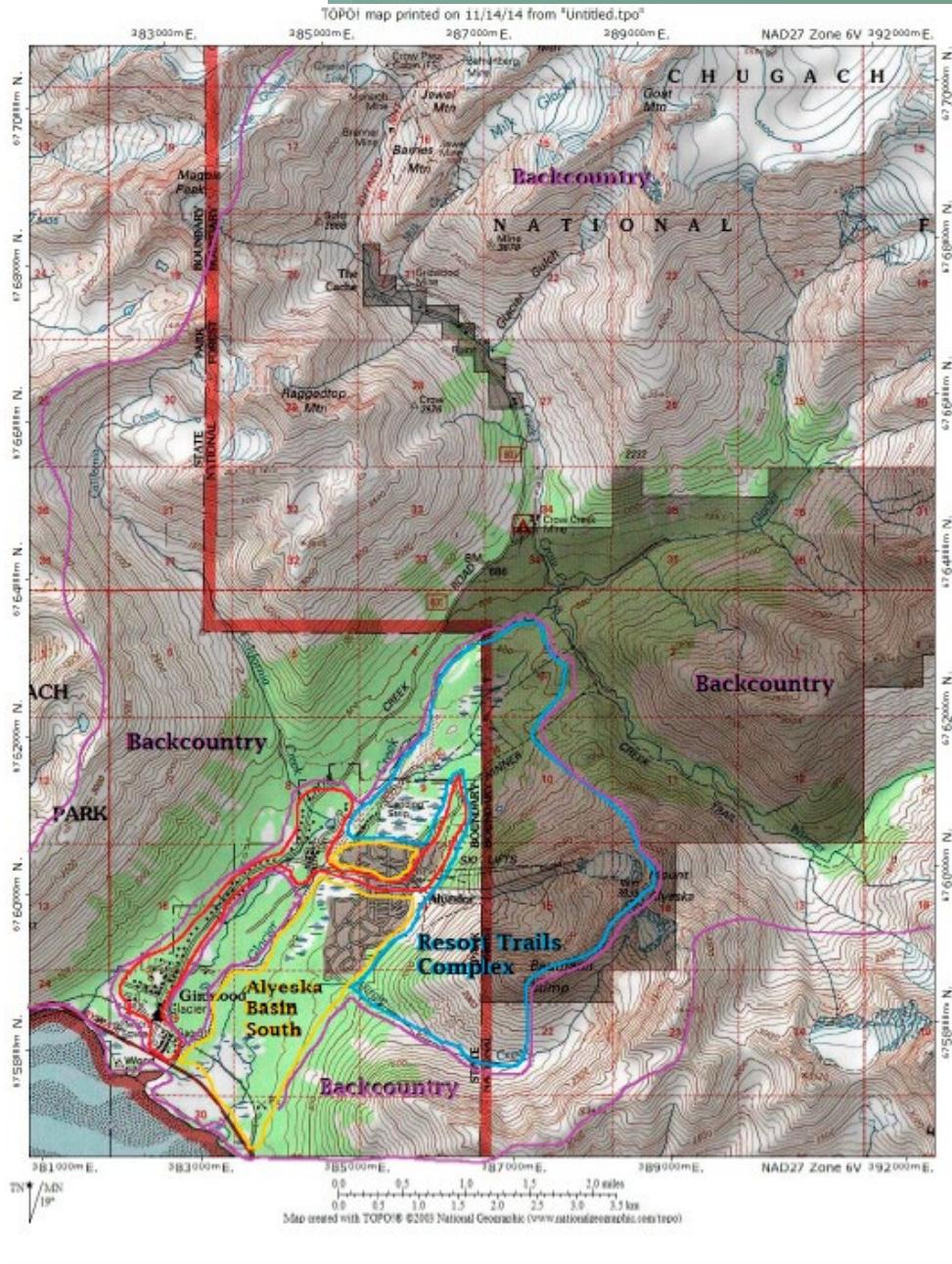
# PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

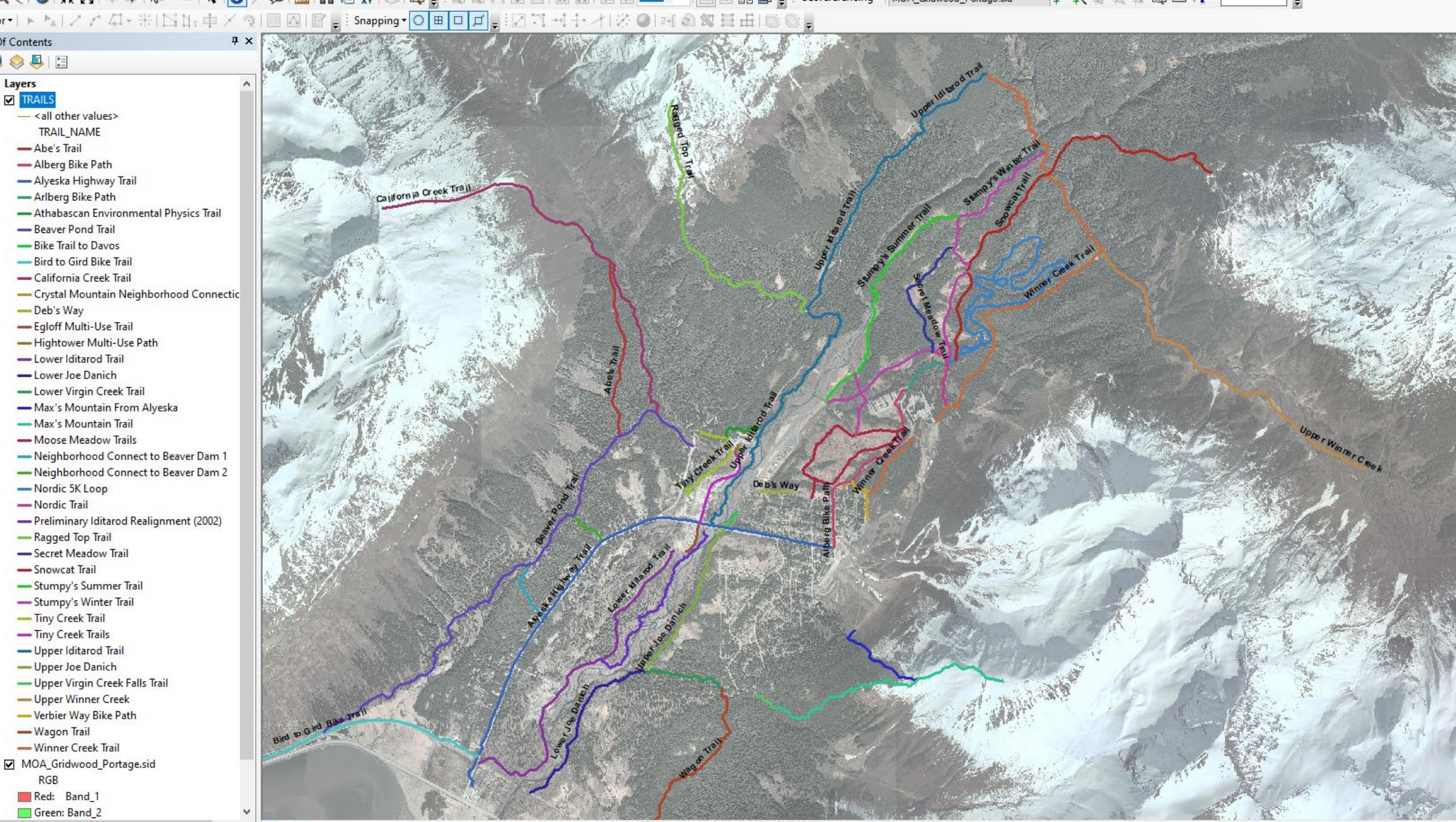
- There are over 30 individual trails within the Girdwood valley. The trails make up nearly 50 miles winding through the Girdwood Valley.
- Existing trails offer recreation opportunities for a variety of different uses with increasing demand for more trails and trail access.
- The Girdwood trail system has the structure, potential, and prime location of a world-class trail system with intentional planning, additional connections and signage, a more cohesive experience can be created.
- While natural beauty and opportunity for recreation are abundant in Girdwood, there are some physical constraints to consider for trails and natural spaces. Trail alignment, development and management must consider several factors that will impact construction and sustainability of trails. The soil, topography, climate and other environmental conditions and factors will impact the trail planning process and in the designation of open and natural spaces.



# EXISTING TRAILS: ZONES

- Alyeska Highway Corridor (AHC)
- Resort Trails Complex (RTC)
- Alyeska Basin & South Valley Trails (ABS)
- Backcountry (BC)





TOTALS	miles	Trail Length	Trail Classification	Designed Use	Managed Use
		Max's Mountain Trail	1.5	1	Hiking
		Ragged Top Trail	1.78	1	Hiking
		Snow Cat Trail (NEED MORE INFO)	2.5	1	Snow Cat
		Stumpy's Summer Trail (NEED MORE INFO)	2	1	
		Abe's Trail	1.01	2	Summer Hiking
		California Creek Trail	0.65	2	Hiking
Class 1	7.78	Joe Danich Trail - Lower	1.02	2	Bike
Class 2	11.89	Joe Danich Trail - Upper	1.05	2	Bike
Class 3	12.04	North Face Trail	2.25	2	Hiking
Class 4	9.57	Stumpy's Winter Trail	2.4	2	Cross Country Ski
Class 5	12.23	Virgin Creek Falls Upper Trail	0.25	2	Hiking
		Virgin Creek Falls Lower Trail	0.5	2	Hiking
		Winner Creek Trail Upper	2	2	Hiking
		Secret Meadow	0.76	2	
		Athabasca Environmental Physics Trail	0.25	3	Hiking
		Beaver Pond Trail	3.13	3	Mountain Bike
		Deb's Way	0.18	3	
		Iditarod - Upper Trail	3.6	3	Hike
		Shortcut from Bike Path to Davos	0.13	3	Hiking/Pedestrian
		Wagon Trail	1.35	3	TBD
		Nordic Trail	0.85	3	Winter Nordic Ski
		New GMBA Trails	0.85	3	Mountain Bike
		Iditarod - Lower Trail	2	4	Hike
		Moose Meadow Trails	1.82	4	Winter Multi-Use
					Winter Nordic Classic & Skate, Summer Multi-
		Nordic 5K Loop	3.4	4	Winter Nordic Ski
		Tiny Creek Trail	0.65	4	Bike
		Alberg Bike Path	2	5	Bike
		Verbier Way Bike Path	0.28	5	Bike/Pedestrian
		Alyeska Highway Trail	3.18	5	Bike
		Egloff Multi-Use Trail	0.17	5	Bike/Pedestrian
		Hightower Multi-Use Trail	0.6	5	Bike/Pedestrian
		Bird to Gird Bike Trail	6	5	
		Winner Creek Trail	3.4	4 & 3	Hiking
		Total	53.51		Hiking

# EXISTING TRAILS

# EXISTING TRAIL USE



HIKING/PEDESTRIAN



SKIING



BIKING



PRIMITIVE TRAIL  
EXPERIENCES

Multi-Use	Ski Only	Hike Only	Bike Only	Class 5 Paved	TBD			
Beaver Pond	3.13	Stumpy's (Winter)	2.5	Abe's Trail	1.01	NA	Arlberg Bike Path	2
Iditarod	9	Nordic 5k	3.4	California Creek	0.65		Verbier Way Bike Path	0.28
Joe Danich	2.5			Max's Mountain	1.5		Alyeska Highway	3.18
Moose Meadow	1.82			Ragged Top	2		Shortcut from Bike Path to Davos	0.13
				Athabascan Environmental Physics Trail	0.25		Deb's Way	0.5
Nordic 5k	3.4							
Snow Cat	4							
Tiny Creek	0.65							
Virgin Creek	0.75							
Winner Creek	3.4							
Egloff Multi-Use	0.17							
Hightower Multi-Use	0.6							
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.42</b>		<b>5.9</b>		<b>5.41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5.46</b>	<b>1.98</b>
								<b>48.17</b>

MILES OF EXISTING  
TRAILS BY USE

# FUTURE TRAIL USE

---

Inclusive Opportunities

---

Natural & Open Spaces

---

Mountain Biking



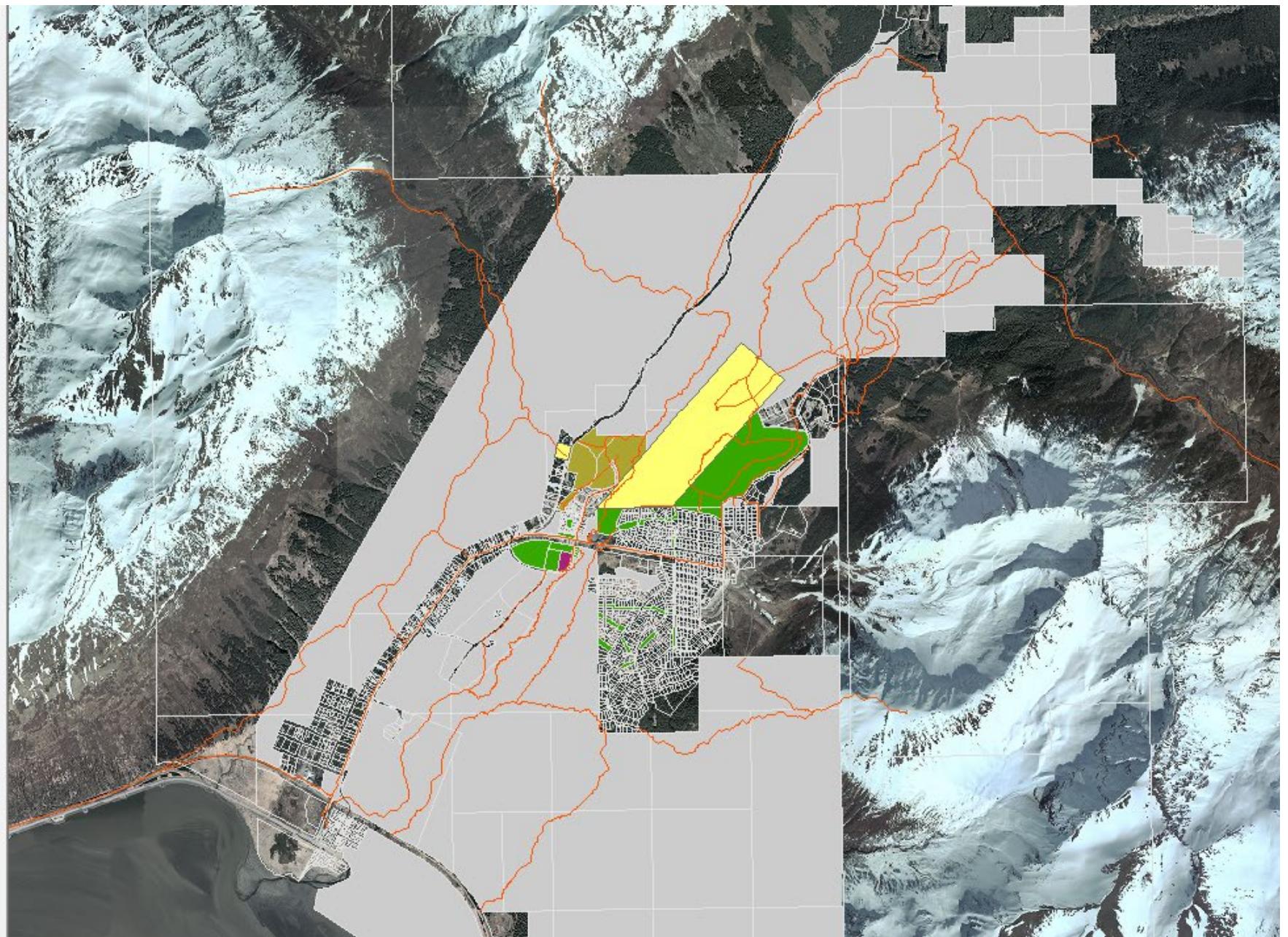
# LAND OWNERSHIP

- Land Ownership presents unique opportunities and challenges for the Girdwood trail system.
- The Girdwood trail system is a complicated network that traverses multiple landowners. Each individual or agency decision-making and project authorization process is different from another.
- The landownership situation requires a higher level of collaboration during trail planning and management that often feels arduous to the community.





- Layers
- TRAILS
    -
  - DOT
    -
  - parcels
    -
  - moa\_parks
    -
  - wetlands
    -
  - Avalanche\_Zones
    -
  - MOA\_Parcels
    - <all other values>
    - Department
      - AFD
      - ASD
      - HLB
      - MOA Real Estate
      - PR
  - st\_segments
  - MOA\_Gridwood\_Portage.sid
    - RGB
      - Red: Band\_1
      - Green: Band\_2
      - Blue: Band\_3





# ACCESS: TRAILHEAD & PARKING

- The Girdwood Trails Management Plan states that identifiable trailheads with adjacent sufficient parking should be provided for each trail.
- Parking and trailhead access within Girdwood have become more difficult with an increase in visitors who arrive by car.
- Winter snow storage further complicates providing adequate trailhead parking and amenities that are accessible year-round.
- See *Access Diagram for Additional Details*

# Girdwood Trails Plan

## Trail Access & Parking



# Girdwood Trails Plan

## Trail Access & Parking

### ALYESKA PARKING

While Alyeska Resort has a large parking lot with significant space available, it is not a long-term solution and this assessment will not assume that use will always be allowed.

### DEPOT



**Available Parking:** 20-30 cars between 2 lots. The lot can also accommodate RVs.

**Access:** Great parking for Bird to Gird and bicyclists.

**Amenities:** Trash can, portable toilet, bike racks. Portable toilet locked on weekend. Large kiosk.

### RANGER STATION



**Available Parking:** 16 spaces + 2 handicap

**Access:** Located on the Alyeska Highway, Bike Path & Lower Iditarod Trailhead

**Amenities:** Bulletin Board with trail maps and business directory. Trash cans and bear resistant food storage.

### BEAVER POND



**Available Parking:** About 16 unmarked spaces on road side.

**Access:** Access to Beaver Pond Trailhead.

**Amenities:** Trailhead marker. Kiosk. Emergency Information. Interpretive information and map.

### VIRGIN CREEK FALLS



**Available Parking:** 9-12 parking spaces on roadside. Residential area - driveways.

**Access:** Easy access to Scenic View for those who can't hike far.

**Amenities:** Trailhead marker, No Camping, and Backcountry warning for explosives.

### MOOSE MEADOW



**Available Parking:** About 6 spaces.

**Access:** Access to Moose Meadow, Playing Field, Bike Path, Nordic Trails. Moose Meadow trailhead is unmarked. Many locals access Moose Meadow on foot.

**Amenities:** Trashcans, ADA portable restroom, mutt mitt dispensers.

### NORDIC 5K



**Available Parking:** 20 striped spaces + 1 handicap

**Access:** Connection via bike path. Access to Nordic Trails, Lower Winner Creek, and Moose Meadow.

**Amenities:** Trash can, mutt mitt dispenser.

# SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING



- Different landowners and management at trailheads throughout the system
- Wayfinding is not consistent in appearance or information provided.
- Confusion for trail users and first responders.

# CONNECTIVITY



Due to Glacier Creek bisecting the valley and the hand tram providing the only crossing within the trail system, cross-valley connections are limited.



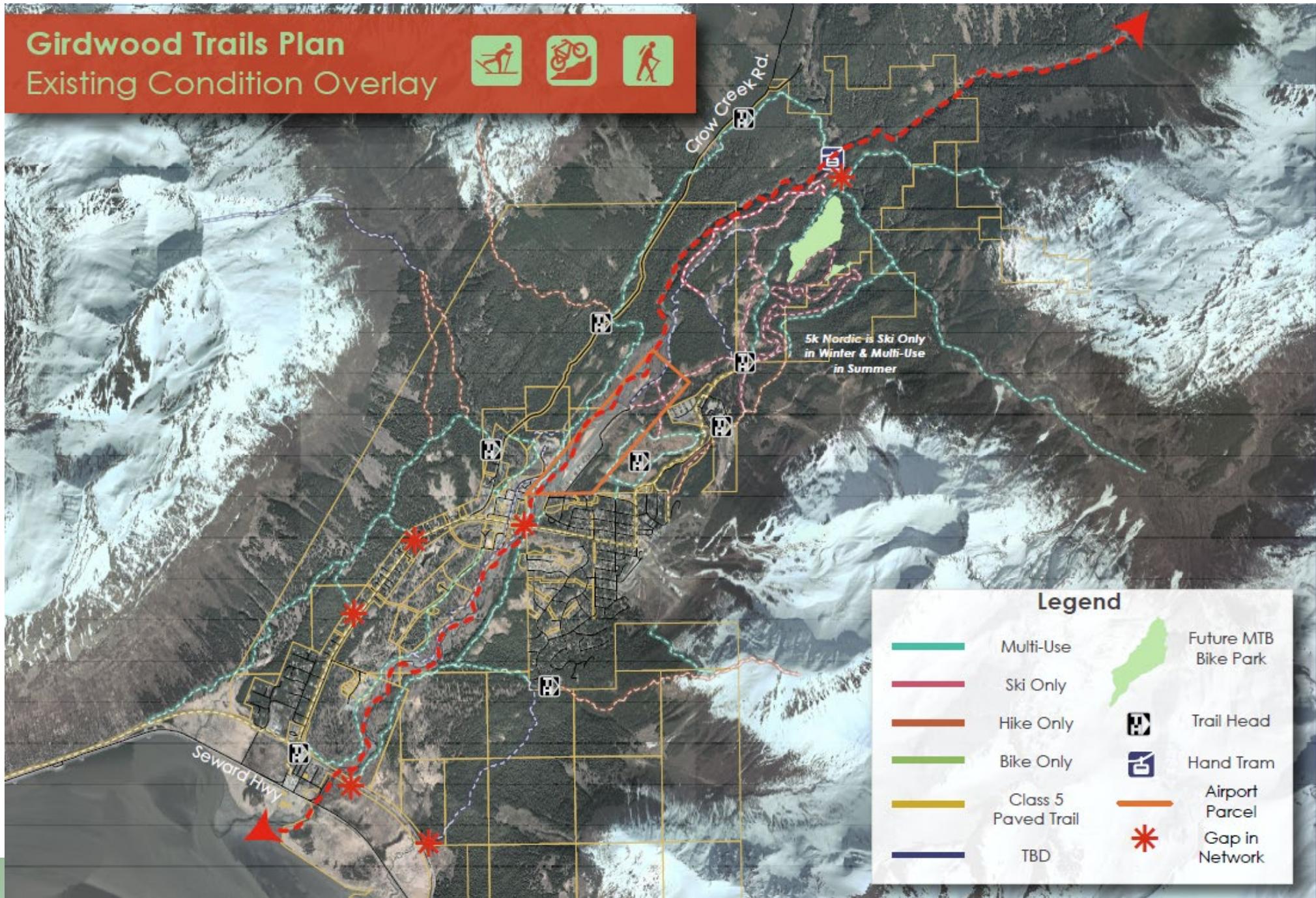
Businesses and community resources (school, library, post office, etc.) are not on or connected by the trail system.

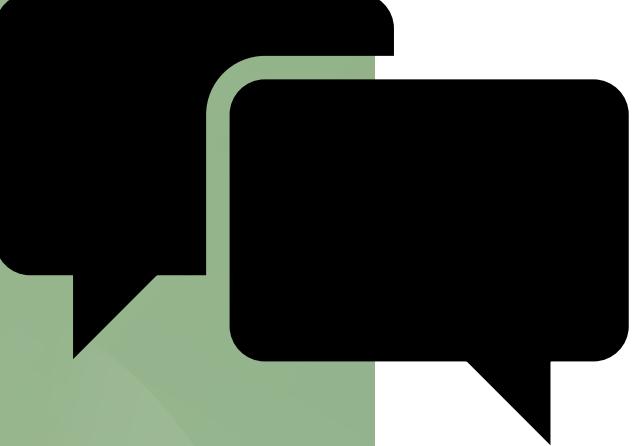


What connections would the community like to see?

# Girdwood Trails Plan

## Existing Condition Overlay





## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PROCESS

Stakeholder interviews were conducted over 60-minutes via online meeting platforms. The team conducted 10 interviews including government landowners, user groups, commercial entities, and individual trail-users.

The following set of questions was used to begin and guide each conversation:

- What is your general perception of the Girdwood trail system?
- What do you value most about the Girdwood trail system?
- What do you feel the Girdwood trail system does well? What is working? What are the strengths of the system?
- Where do you feel the Girdwood trail system could be improved? What is not working? What are the challenges within the system?
- As you look ahead to the next 15-20 years, what are the most significant challenges and opportunities for the Girdwood trail system?
- How balanced do you feel the trail system is in terms of types of trails, parks, and permitted uses on public lands?
- What are the key issues facing the trail system?
- Are there any 'missing connections' that you know of?
- What other thoughts would you like to share about the Girdwood trail system's future?
- Are there trail projects that you think need to be completed?
- What do you think about existing trail conditions and maintenance?
- What do you think about trail amenities (signs, parking, trailheads, etc.)

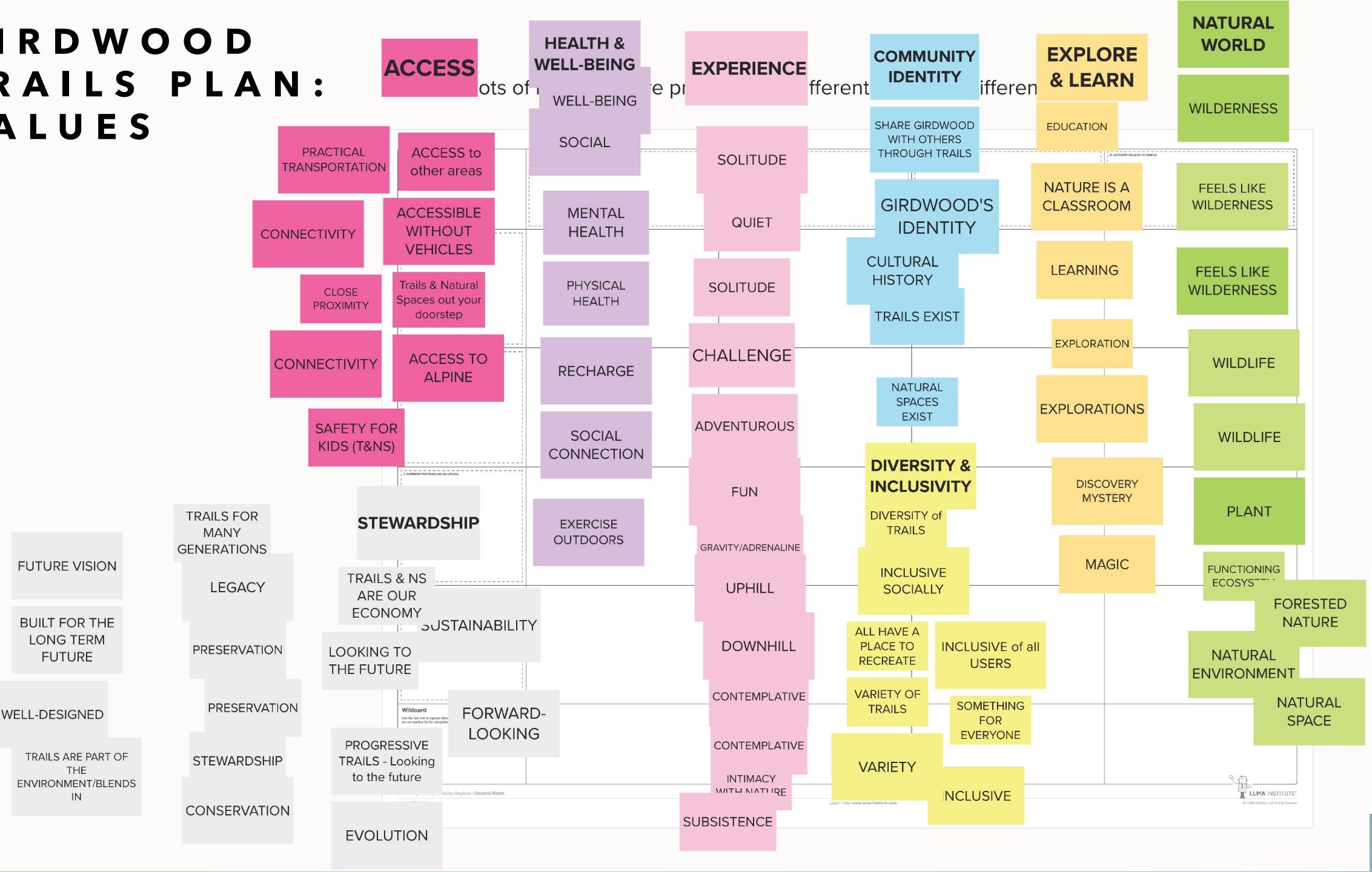
- Girdwood is a Trail Town and Residents Value Access to Trail-Based Recreation
- The Girdwood Trail System Should be Equitable and Balanced
- Trail Access
- Trail Maintenance
- Connectivity
- Project Approval Processes
- Priority Projects
  - Hand Tram
  - Virgin Creek Trailhead
  - Max's Mountain
  - Iditarod Trail
  - Winner Creek Improvements
  - Girdwood Mountain Bike Alliance Development
  - Dedicated Areas for No New Trail Development
  - Increased Connectivity between existing trails (Abe's Trail and California Creek)
  - Wagon Trail Access and Tread
  - Beaver Pond Maintenance and Improvements

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS: COMMON THEMES

# GIRDWOOD TRAILS PLAN: VALUES, VISION & GOALS



# GIRDWOOD TRAILS PLAN: VALUES



## VALUES

Access

Health & Well-Being

Experience

Community Identity

Explore & Learn

Natural World

Stewardship

Diversity & Inclusivity

### Exercise 1

#### INSERT INTERACTIVE POLL QUESTIONS ON VALUES

On a scale of 1-5, how well do these values align with your values for Girdwood Trails?

Are there values listed that you don't agree with? If so which value(s)?

Are there any values you feel are missing?

# **GIRDWOOD TRAILS PLAN: DRAFT VISION STATEMENT**

Trails and natural spaces are a cornerstone of life in Girdwood providing places for everyone of all ages and all abilities to recreate. Girdwood has something for everyone. Our driveways are our trailheads and our backyards are gateways to natural spaces.



Exercise 1 Continued

INSERT INTERACTIVE POLL QUESTIONS on VISION

On a scale of 1-5, how well does this vision statement align with your vision for Girdwood Trails?

Are there aspects of the draft vision statement that you don't agree with?

Is there anything you feel is missing?

# GIRDWOOD TRAILS PLAN: GOALS

1. Promote Girdwood's **COMMUNITY IDENTITY** through its natural spaces and trails.
2. Provide a variety of trails and natural spaces that allow a **DIVERSITY** of uses and are **INCLUSIVE** of all people and user groups
3. Provide fun, adventurous, and educational **EXPERIENCES** along our trails and in natural spaces that encourage quiet, solitude, and contemplation within the intimacy of nature.
4. Provide places to **EXPLORE** and **LEARN** and discover the mystery and magic of the local **NATURAL WORLD**.
5. Encourage excellent physical and mental **HEALTH** and **WELL-BEING** by providing opportunities for outdoor exercise and physical activity.
6. Create connections to safely **ACCESS** the community, surrounding natural spaces, alpine, and everyday destinations through a connected network of trails that are outside of everyone's doorstep. A car is not required to live in Girdwood.
7. Promote **STEWARDSHIP** of Girdwood's trails and natural spaces which are a legacy for future generations. Trails and natural spaces are an essential part of Girdwood's economy and sustainability.

## Exercise 1

INSERT INTERACTIVE POLL QUESTIONS on GOALS

On a scale of 1-5, how well does the goals align with your goals for Girdwood Trails?

Are there aspects of the goals that you don't agree with?

Is there anything you feel is missing?

## Exercise #2 OBJECTIVES

Interactive IDEA GENERATION exercise

# INTERACTIVE MAPPING TUTORIAL



A photograph of a wooden boardwalk bridge curving over a stream in a dense forest. The bridge is made of light-colored wood and is surrounded by lush green ferns and other forest undergrowth. In the foreground, a paved path leads towards the bridge. The background is filled with tall evergreen trees and more greenery.

THANK  
YOU