March 4, 2025

Barbara Crews
Chair, Girdwood Trails Committee
PO Box 649
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Dear Anchorage Assembly Members,

Girdwood was founded as a supply town for the gold fields up valley. When the gold fields played out, Girdwood's economy temporarily pivoted to being a supply post for the construction of the Seward Highway. Then in 1956, the Girdwood Community Club formed the *non-profit* Alyeska Ski Corporation, and so began Girdwood's current economy based on outdoor recreation and tourism.

Girdwood's residents and visitors alike value Girdwood's recreational opportunities involving both Alyeska Resort and Girdwood's trail system. To keep Girdwood's economy strong, we need both Alyeska and Girdwood's interconnected trail system.

I appreciate the efforts Alyeska Resort has made to respect the adopted Girdwood Trails Plan, which took 5 years to write and involved exhaustive public process. Alyeska has made efforts to move their Glacier Creek development away from Stumpy's Summer Trail and has included a massively edited version of the planned Forest Loop Trail in their site plan. However, I am concerned that their efforts do not go far enough to protect the trail system as envisioned in the Girdwood Trails Plan.

- Girdwood's trails are public trails and they need to be on public land or on perpetual easements, so that the community's investment in building trails is not in any way endangered in the future. Without a guarantee that the trails will be protected, there will be little interest in constructing new trails given the considerable time, effort, and money needed to build trails.
- Trails should be free to everyone who would like to use them. Girdwood does not want to become an exclusive community where people are blocked from accessing trails because they are on private land (which used to public land in this case). Alyeska Resort should be required to provide free access and free parking to trail users. Alyeska Resort's guests use the trail system, so the Resort benefits from the considerable investment the community puts into building and maintaining its trails.
- The Trails Plan includes a trail that would connect the Forest Loop Trail to the Middle Iditarod Trail by way of a proposed bridge (B5). Although this bridge is merely conceptual at this juncture, there needs to be an easement provided that protects access to this bridge so that it will be possible to construct it when funds become available.

The Trails Committee supports the community's public process and the S version of the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan without amendments. However, if the Assembly plans on overriding the community's voice and passing Amendment 2, please consider adding some amendments to Amendment 2 which would address the concerns I have outlined above.

Thank you for your consideration,
Barbara Crews