

## GIRDWOOD TRAILS PLAN

### Public Review Draft – Recommendations for Changes/Edits

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The Girdwood Trails Plan Public Review Draft was available for public review from June 18 – July 26, 2021. Over the course of the comment period, approximately 2000 written comments were received from over 120 people. The comments were organized into the following categories:

1. Comments from the comment cards
2. Project specific comments from the comment cards
3. Comments received by email during the comment period (not provided in the comment card format)

The comments were then reviewed. Following are recommended changes to the plan by project staff to address public comments.

### NEW TRAIL PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### **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.

**APPROVED**

#### **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.

**APPROVED**

#### **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.

**APPROVED**

#### **T4: Ruane Road Trail Connection to Lower Iditarod**

##### ***NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED***

**APPROVED**

#### **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)

APPROVED

**T6: Barren Avenue to Alyeska Highway**

*NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED*

APPROVED

**T7: Crow Creek Road to Beaver Bond 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.

ADD BACK INTO PLAN

**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.

APPROVED

**T9: Crow Creek Neighborhood Trails**

*NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED*

Although comments do not indicate consensus, it is recommended to leave these trails in the plan. This trail network is already included in an adopted plan, the Crow Creek Neighborhood Land Use Plan. Additionally, residential development is currently being considered for this area (Holtan Hills) – it will be important to require the development of trails within the neighborhood as well as connectivity out of the neighborhood to the Upper Iditarod and other important community connections.

APPROVED

**T10: Cross Valley Trail**

*CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Relocate this proposed trail and edit to Class 3 (Bicycle Design Parameter).*

The proposed location of this trail should be adjusted to better align with and connect to B5. In addition, the trail classification should be adjusted to Class 3 to better match the trails to which T10 is intended to connect including the Upper Iditarod (Class 3). This alignment also better aligns with the future Holtan Hills development.

APPROVED

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

*NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED*

APPROVED

**T12: Glacier Canyon Rim Trail**

*NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED*

APPROVED

**T13: Upper Valley Multi-Use Trail**

*CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove this trail and ADD the Forest Loop concept back into the plan.*

Public comments indicated that the area was crowded with trails and the route as indicated in the draft would be too damaging to wetlands. There was not consensus or support for T13. See NS2 for more recommendations.

APPROVED

**T14: Snowcat Trail Improvements**

*NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED*

Recommend adding language so support the relocation or reconstruction of this trail out of the wetlands wherever possible.

## BRIDGE PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

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**B1: Glacier Creek Trail Bridge – Lower Valley**

*NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED*

Overall, this project was recognized as a good crossing to connect lower valley trails. Recommend adding language to indicate that it would be beneficial to coordinate with the Alaska Railroad so that if/when the trestle is ever rebuilt over Glacier Creek maybe the future crossing can include a safe pedestrian connection – a future collocated bridge could also be part of the proposed southern extension of the Seward Highway Trail. Also recommend adding language that if this level of coordination is not successful, the most feasible location for a bridge in the lower valley should be identified.

**B2: California Creek Bridge**

*CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove this project from the plan. See project T3.*

**B3: Virgin Creek Bridge**

*NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED*

**B4: Improve Connectivity at Glacier Creek Bridge at Alyeska Highway**

*NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED*

**B5: Glacier Creek Trail Bridge – Middle Valley - North of Airport Land**

*NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED*

Add language to strengthen the concept that this bridge should connect directly to T10.

**B6: Glacier Creek Trail Bridge – Upper Valley Hand Tram**

***NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED***

**TRAILHEAD PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**TH 1, TH2, TH4, TH5, TH6, TH8, TH9, TH10, TH11, TH12, TH13**

***NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED***

**TH 3**

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove this trailhead from the plan.***

Comments indicated there was not public support for this trailhead.

**TH7**

***NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED***

Ensure that this trailhead is labeled correctly as Moose Meadows Trailhead.

**Girdwood Cemetery**

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – ADD a trailhead at the Girdwood Cemetery and a discussion about how the proposed cemetery trails and cemetery phasing plan align with the trail network.***

**NATURAL SPACE PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**Natural Spaces Description on Page 35**

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove Natural Spaces paragraph and replace with the following:***

**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 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.

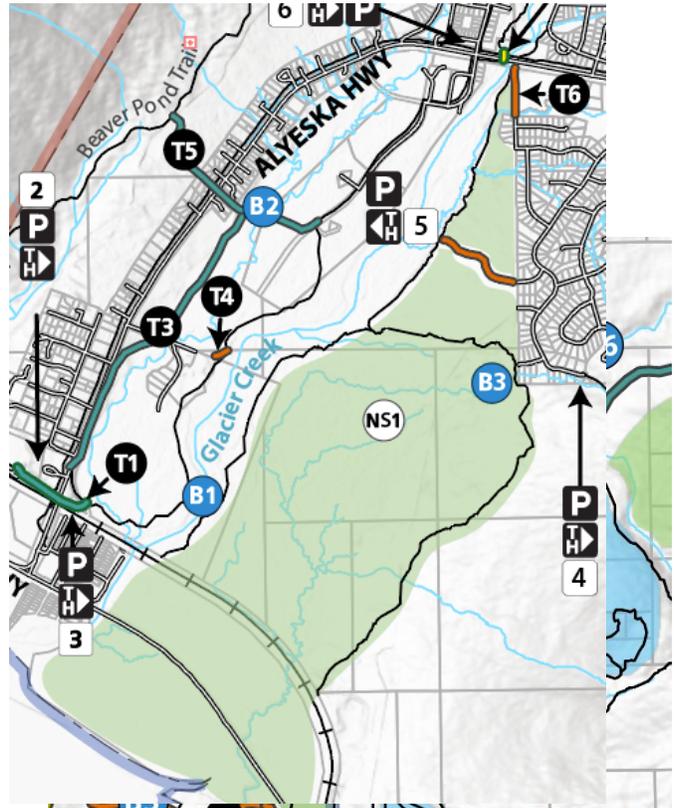
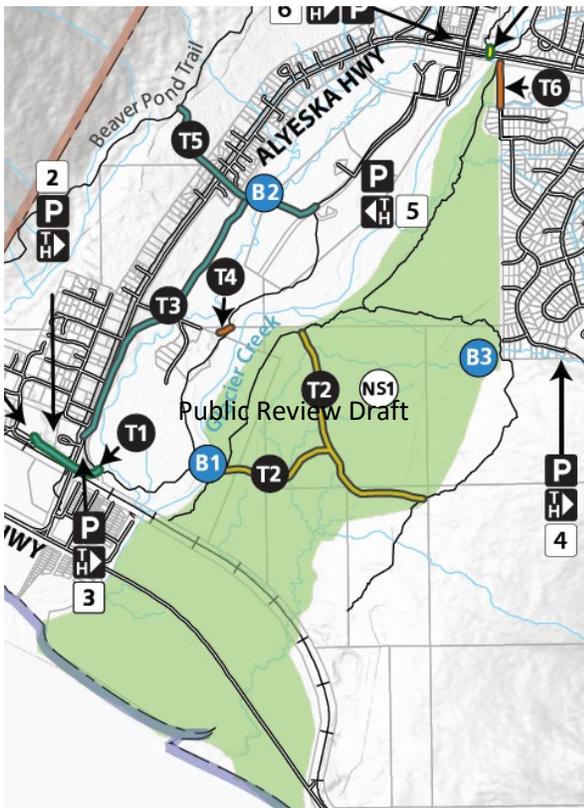
**Natural Space Network – Throughout the document**

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – REMOVE all references to Natural Space Network and adjust language to be consistent with the recommended language above.***

**NS1: Virgin Creek Natural Space**

**CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

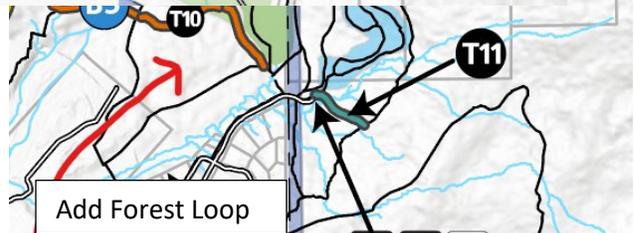
Recommend adjusting the boundary of NS1. The eastern boundary should extend and include the Wagon Trail. The western boundary should be adjusted to remove the Joe Danich Trail from NS1. ADD a trail project to the plan that brings the Joe Danich up to a Class 3 trail constructed to the bicycle design parameter and relocate out of wetlands to uplands. ADD trail project to the plan to construct neighborhood connector trail (Class 3, bicycle design parameters, constructed in uplands) from the Turin and/or Carlina Drive cul-de-sacs to connect to the Joe Danich trail. NS1, with the adjusted boundary, remains non-mechanized with trails that are no greater than Class 2. Comments indicate that residents want a multi-use alternative trail to connect from the lower valley to the upper valley without using the road system. A Class 3 designation provides a sustainable connection to neighborhoods. The eastern boundary shift better aligns with a primitive experience for the Wagon Trail.

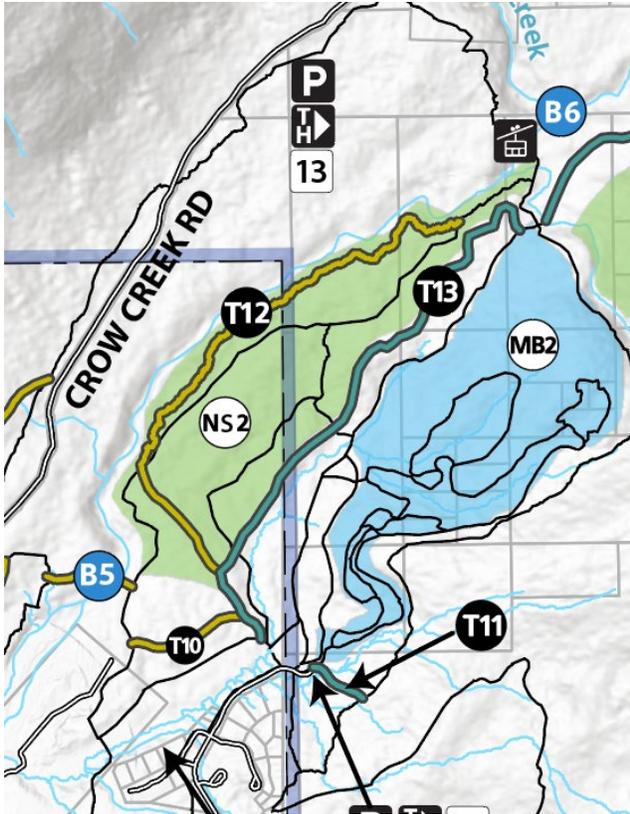


**NS2: Stumpy's Natural Space**

**CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

Recommend adjusting the boundary of NS2. Expand the boundary to the east to extend up to but not including the Snowcat Trail and the groomed section of Stumpy's winter trail. (T13-Upper Valley Multi-Use Trail recommended to be removed from the draft plan and add Forest Loop back).





**NS3: Winner Creek Natural Space**

***NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED***

**MOUNTAIN BIKE AREA PROJECT  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Mountain Bike Areas Description on Page 35

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove Mountain Biking Areas Title and replace with the following:***

Areas for Mountain Biking Trail Development: The areas identified for mountain biking trail development don't limit the development of other recreational activities in the area.

Mountain Bike Areas – Throughout the document

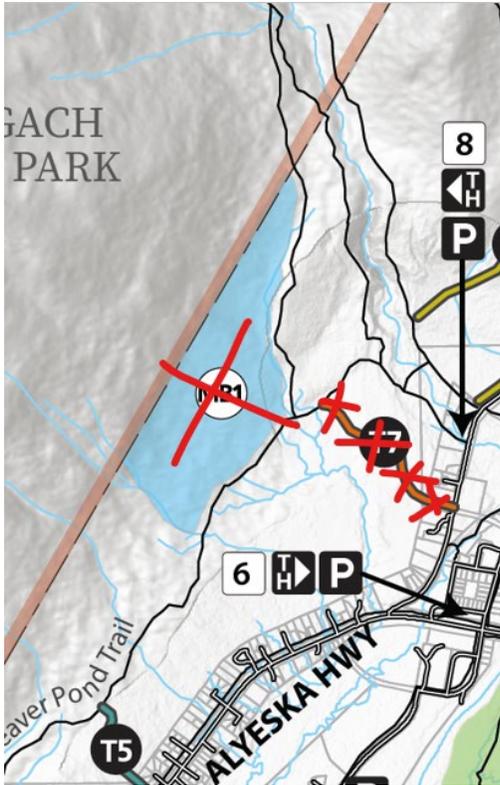
***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – REMOVE all references to Mountain Bike Areas and adjust language to be consistent with the recommended language above.***

**MB1: Beaver Pond MB Area**

Recommended Change

***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 need to be addressed.



KEEP MB1 in the PLAN

**MB2: Near the Nordic 5K**

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – ADD the following sentences:***

MB2 should be the first mountain bike area developed in the Girdwood Valley, prior to MB1 and MB3. All trails in MB2 should minimize impacts to the Winner Creek Trail viewshed. A variety of trails should be developed for a diversity of users' abilities so that bike pushing and e-bike assist is not necessary for the average rider.

**MB3: End of Snowcat Trail**

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – ADD the following sentence:***

Of the mountain bike areas identified in this plan, MB3 should be developed last.

# GIRDWOOD TRAILS PLAN



**GIRDWOOD TRAILS  
ALASKA**

**REVISED**

## Girdwood Trails Committee

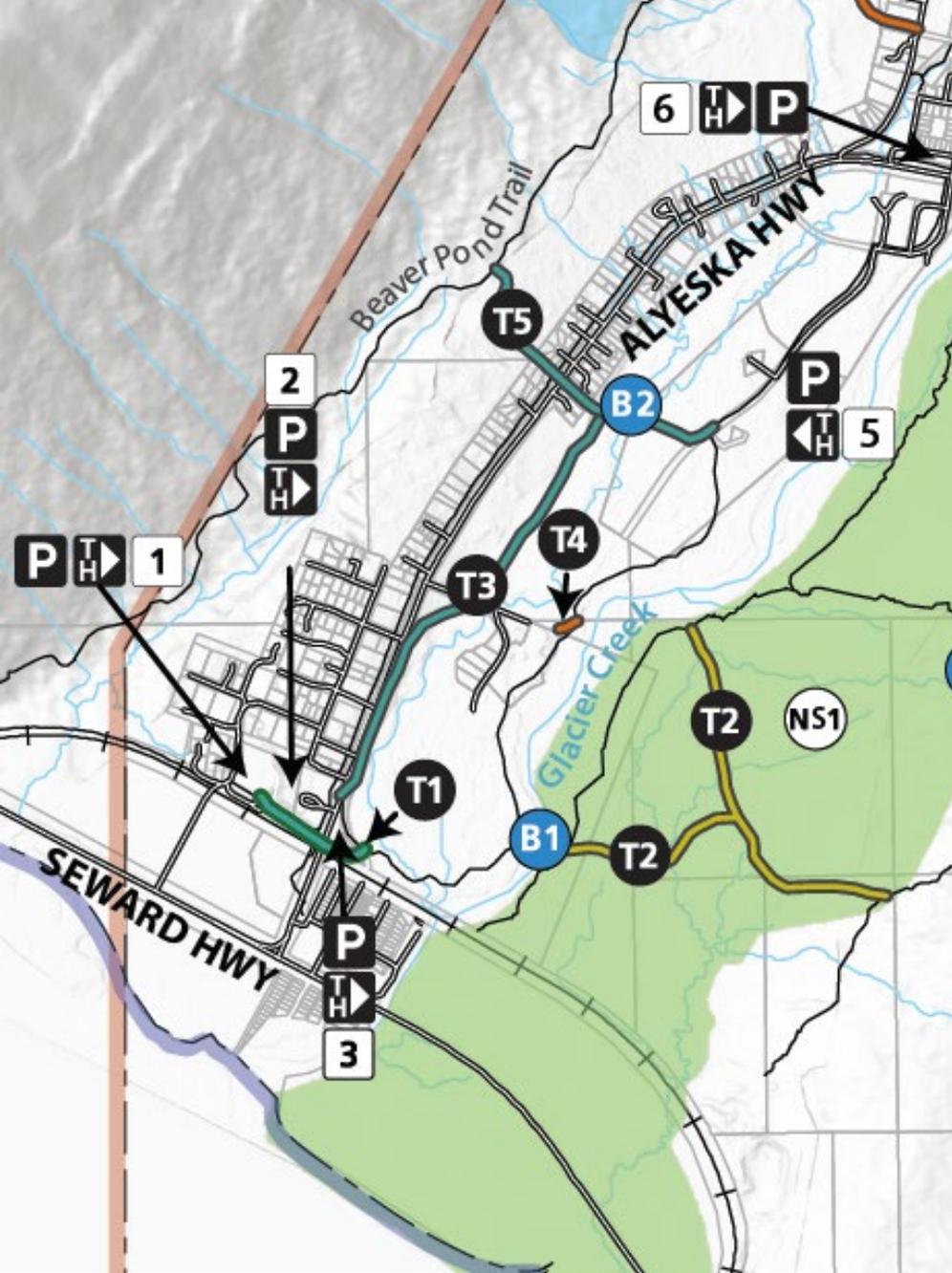
RE: GTP Public Review Draft

Recommended Changes

October 5, 2021



- Public Review Draft Comment Period: June 18 – July 26, 2021.
- 2000 written comments were received from over 120 people and reviewed by project staff.
- Following are recommended changes to the plan by project staff to address public comments.



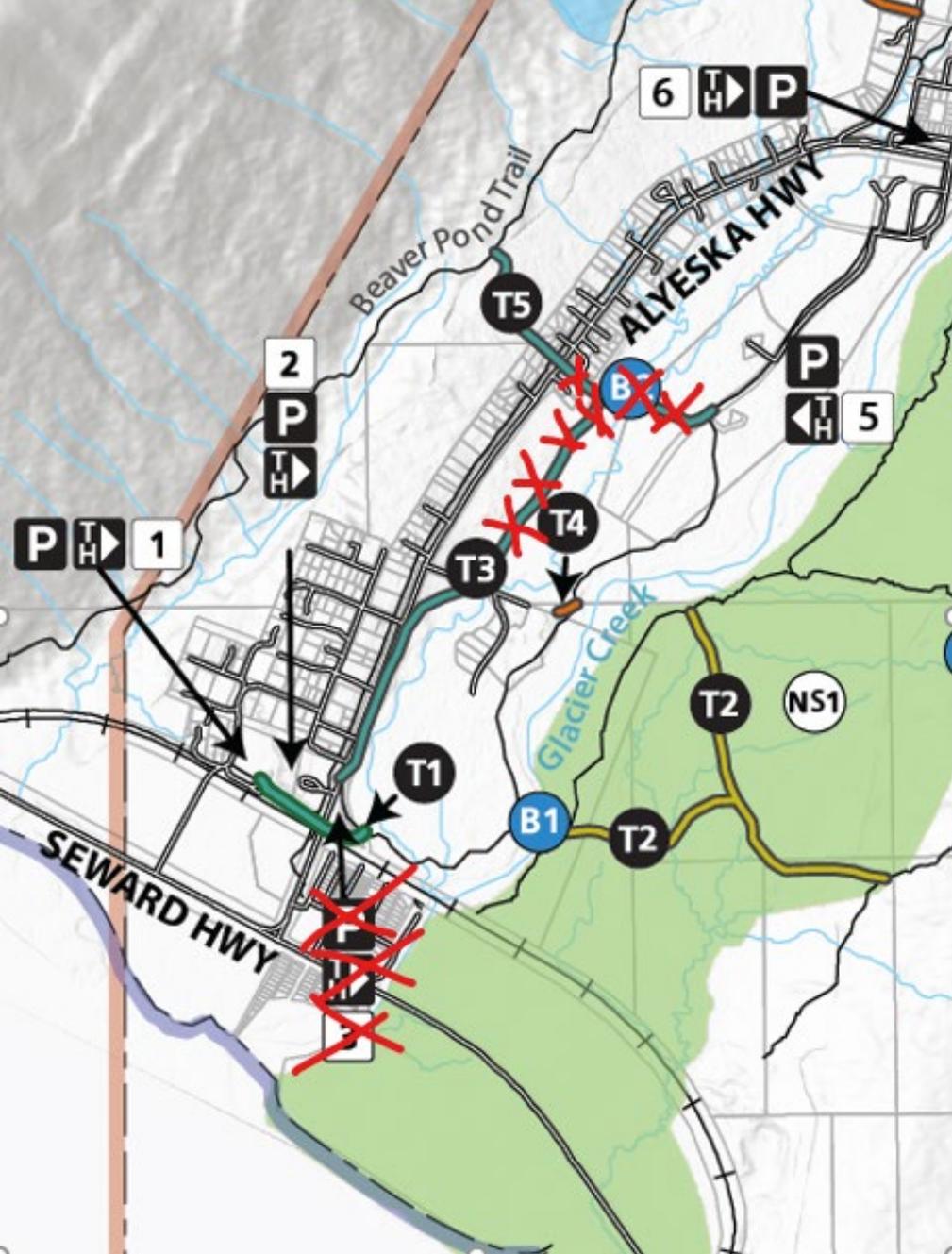
**T1: Separated Grade Crossing: Railroad Bridge at Alyeska Highway**  
***NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED***

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.

**B1: Glacier Creek Trail Bridge – Lower Valley**  
***NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED***

Recommend adding language to indicate that it would be beneficial to coordinate with the Alaska Railroad so that if/when the trestle is ever rebuilt over Glacier Creek maybe the future crossing can include a safe pedestrian connection – a future collocated bridge could also be part of the proposed southern extension of the Seward Highway Trail. Also recommend adding language that if this level of coordination is not successful, the most feasible location for a bridge in the lower valley should be identified.

**T4: Ruane Road Trail Connection to Lower Iditarod**  
***NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED***



### **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.

**WHY:** 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.

### **B2: California Creek Bridge**

**CHANGE RECOMMENDED** – Remove this project from the plan. See project T3. **WHY:** See above.

### **TH 3**

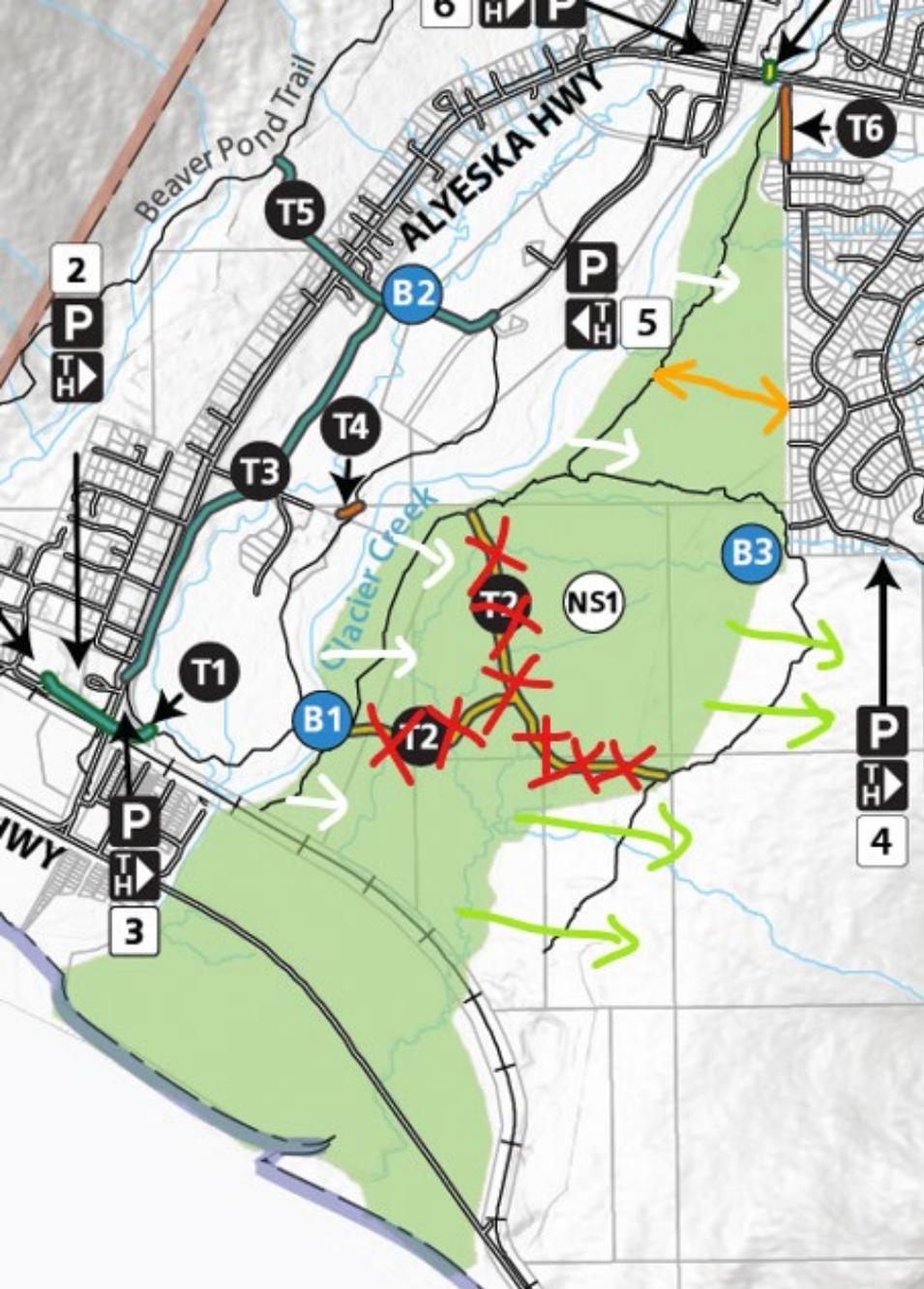
**CHANGE RECOMMENDED** – Remove this trailhead from the plan.

**WHY:** Comments indicated there was not public support for this trailhead.

### **T5: Beaver Pond to Alyeska Highway**

**NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

**WHY:** 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.



## T2: Wagon Trail – Lower Joe Danich Connection

**CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove this project from the plan.**

**WHY:** 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.

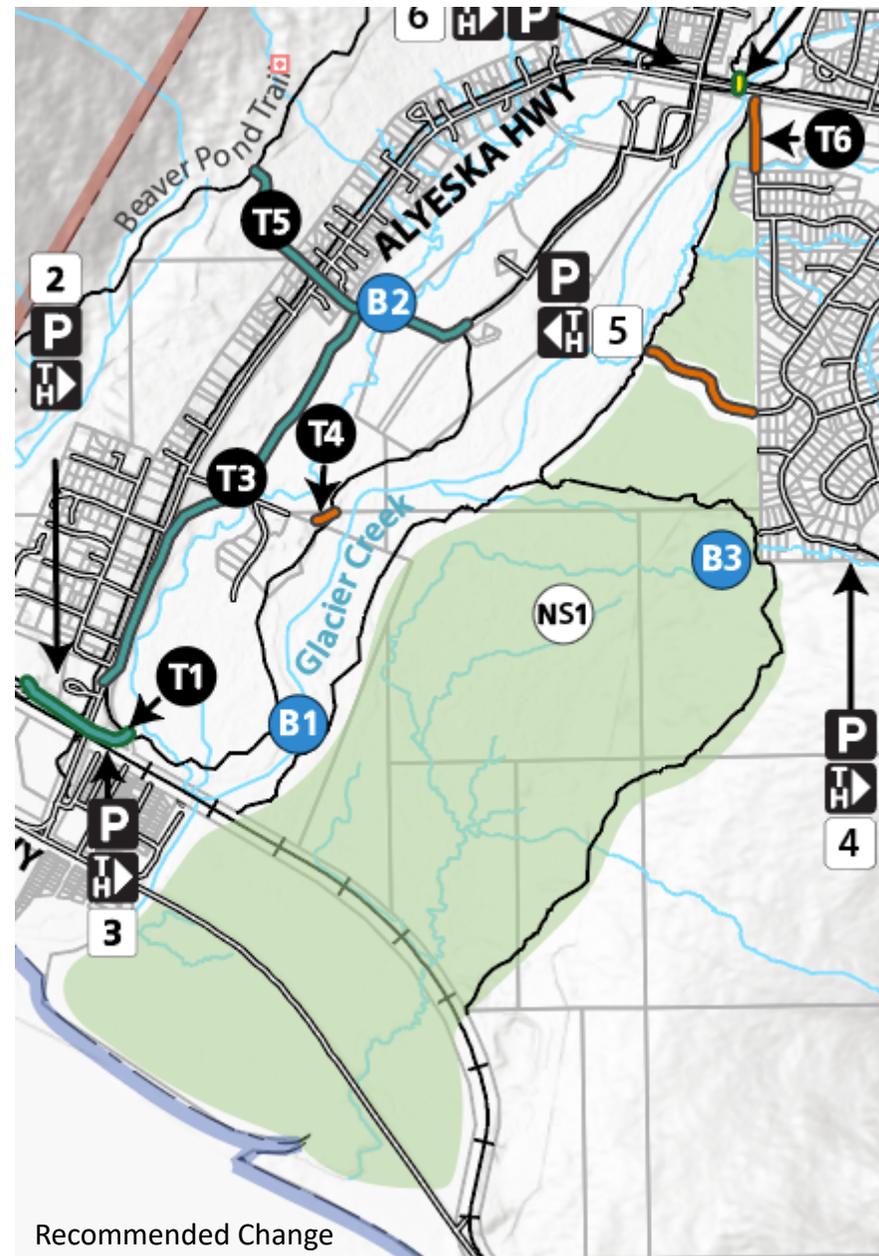
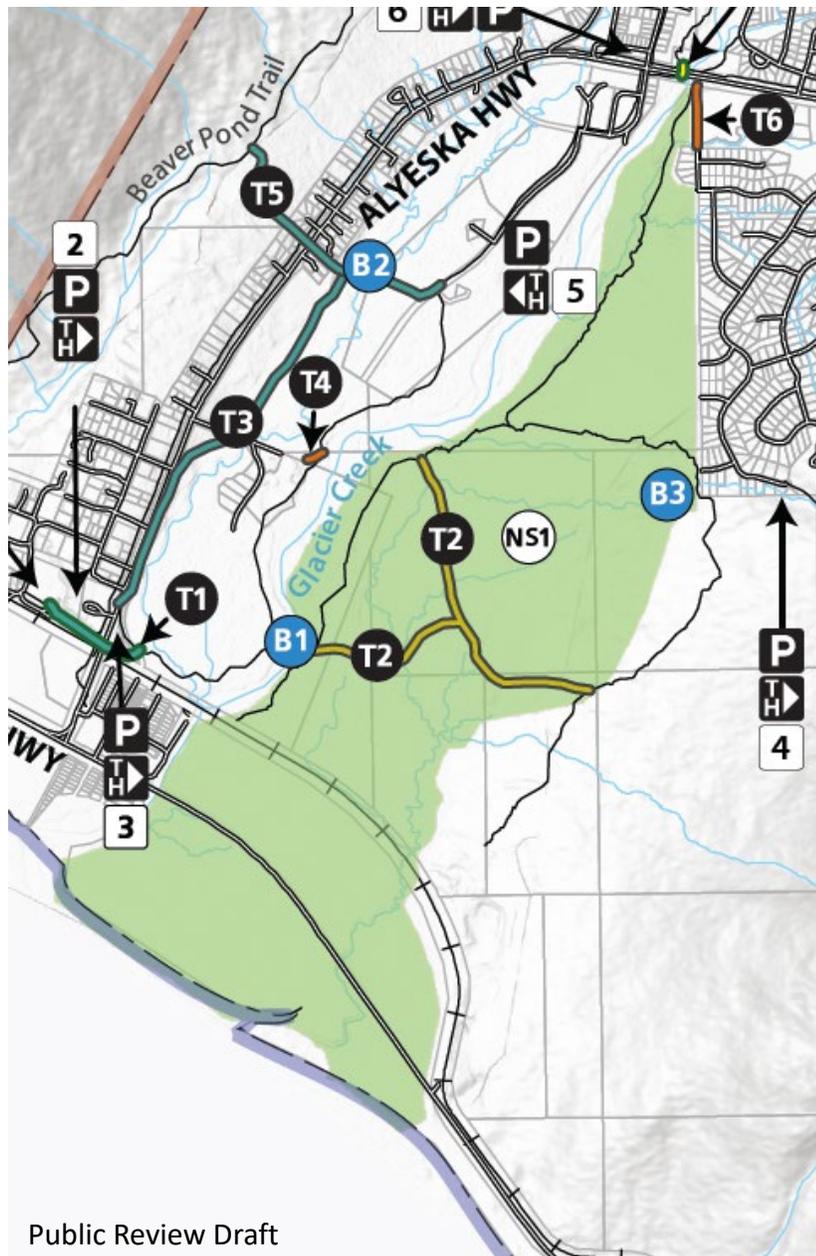
## B3: Virgin Creek Bridge

**NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

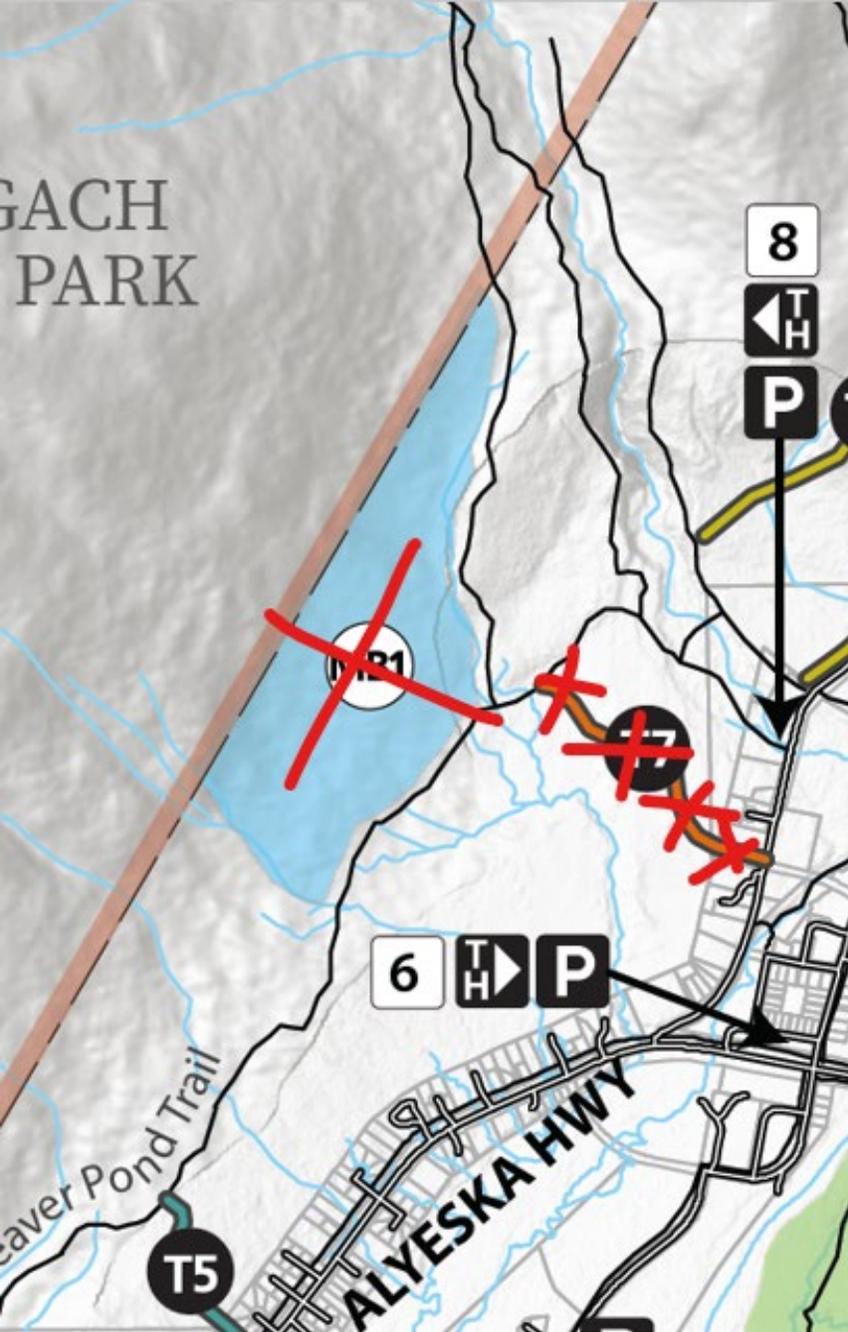
## NS1: Virgin Creek Natural Space

**CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

Recommend adjusting the boundary of NS1. The eastern boundary should extend and include the Wagon Trail. The western boundary should be adjusted to remove the Joe Danich Trail from NS1. ADD a trail project to the plan that brings the Joe Danich up to a Class 3 trail constructed to the bicycle design parameter and relocate out of wetlands to uplands. ADD trail project to the plan to construct neighborhood connector trail (Class 3, bicycle design parameters, constructed in uplands) from the Turin and/or Carlina Drive cul-de-sacs to connect to the Joe Danich trail. NS1, with the adjusted boundary, remains non-mechanized with trails that are no greater than Class 2. **WHY:** Comments indicate that residents want a multi-use alternative trail to connect from the lower valley to the upper valley without using the road system. A Class 3 designation provides a sustainable connection to neighborhoods. The eastern boundary shift better aligns with a primitive experience for the Wagon Trail.



Lower Valley Recommended Changes



### MB1: Beaver Pond MB Area

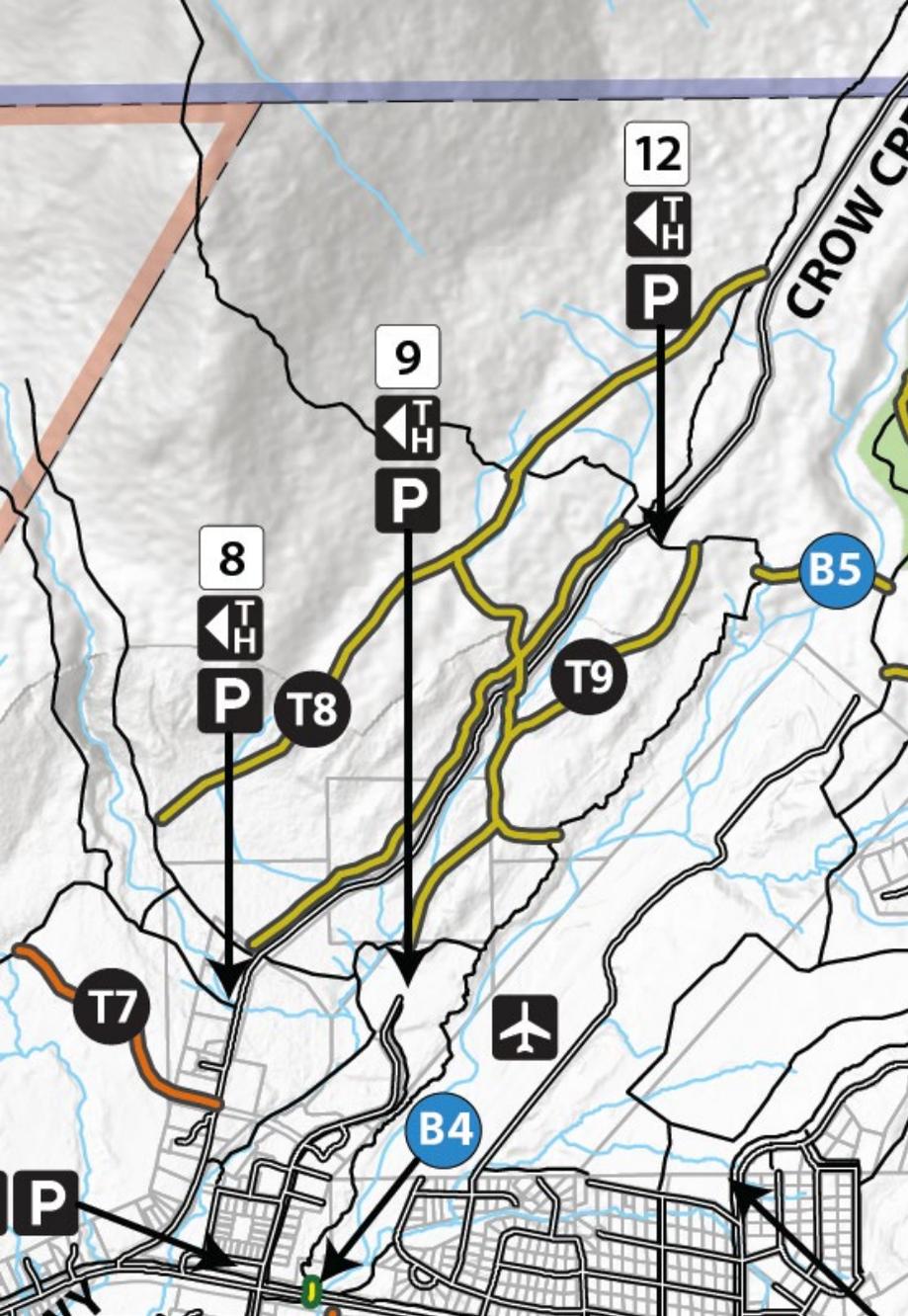
#### **CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

Recommend removing MB1 from the plan. **WHY:** 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.

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

#### **CHANGE RECOMMENDED – DISCUSS IN CONCERT WITH MB1**

**WHY:** Comments do not indicate consensus for MB1. If MB1 is removed from the plan, T7 should also be removed.



### Girdwood Cemetery

**CHANGE RECOMMENDED** – ADD a trailhead at the Girdwood Cemetery and a discussion about how the proposed cemetery trails and cemetery phasing plan align with the trail network.

**WHY:** It makes sense to coordinate between the trail system and the Cemetery project. The parking area can serve multiple uses and the Cemetery trails should connect to the larger trail system.

### T8: Toe Slope Trail – California Creek to Iditarod Trail

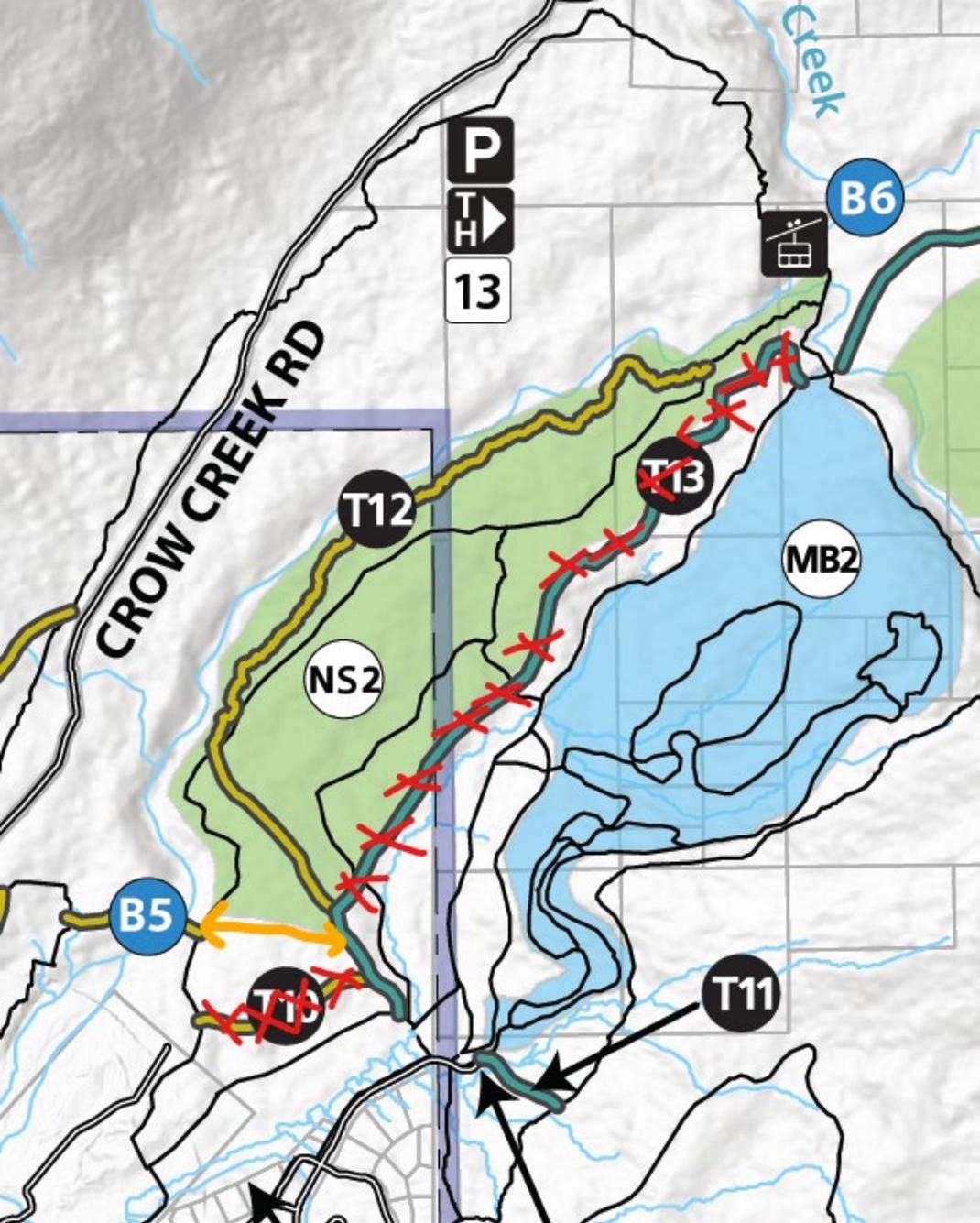
**NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

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

### T9: Crow Creek Neighborhood Trails

**NO CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

Although comments do not indicate consensus, it is recommended to leave these trails in the plan. **WHY:** This trail network is already included in an adopted plan, the Crow Creek Neighborhood Land Use Plan. Additionally, residential development is currently being considered for this area (Holtan Hills) – it will be important to require the development of trails within the neighborhood as well as connectivity out of the neighborhood to the Upper Iditarod and other important community connections.



### **T10: Cross Valley Trail**

**CHANGE RECOMMENDED** – Relocate this proposed trail and edit to Class 3 (Bicycle Design Parameter).

**WHY:** The proposed location of this trail should be adjusted to better align with and connect to B5. In addition, the trail classification should be adjusted to Class 3 to better match the trails to which T10 is intended to connect including the Upper Iditarod (Class 3). This alignment also better aligns with the future Holtan Hills development.

### **T13: Upper Valley Multi-Use Trail**

**CHANGE RECOMMENDED** – Remove this trail and ADD the Forest Loop concept back into the plan.

**WHY:** Public comments indicated that the area was crowded with trails and the route as indicated in the draft would be too damaging to wetlands. There was not consensus or support for T13. See NS2 for more recommendations.

### **NS2: Stumpy’s Natural Space**

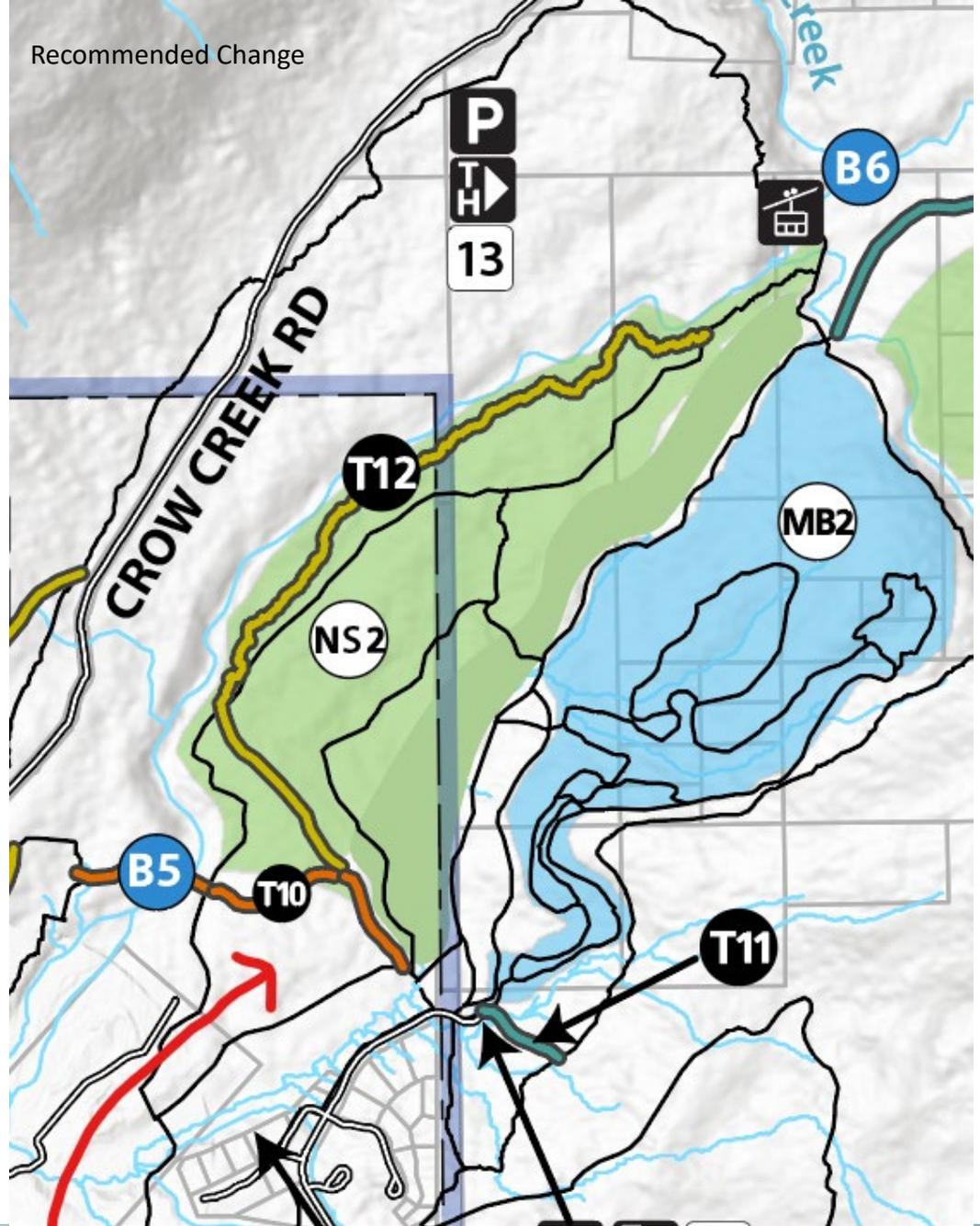
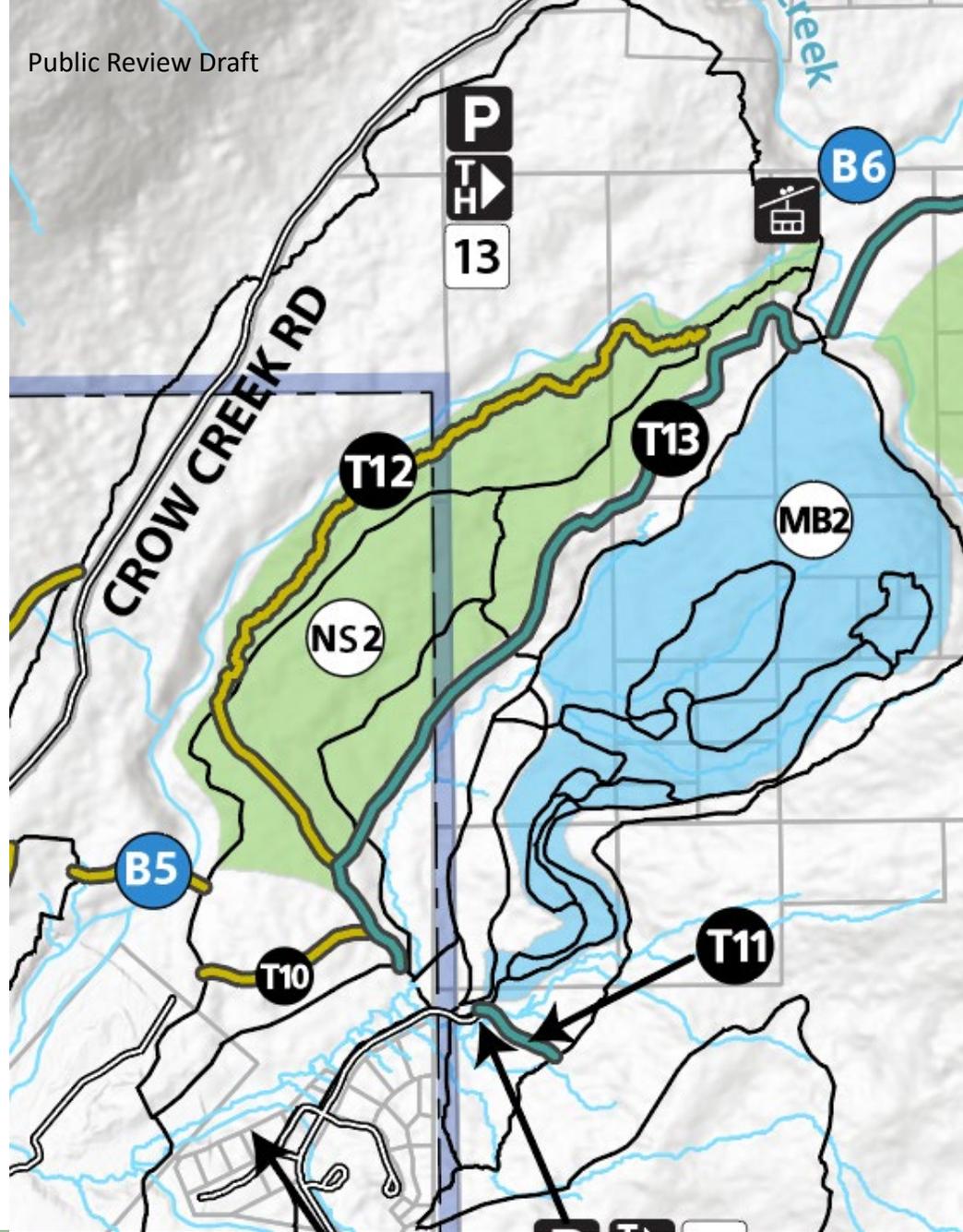
**CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

Recommend adjusting the boundary of NS2. Expand the boundary to the east to extend up to but not including the Snowcat Trail and the groomed section of Stumpy’s winter trail. **WHY:** There isn’t consensus for T13 and the wetlands are better suited for a more primitive experience.

### **B5: Glacier Creek Trail Bridge – North of Airport Land**

**NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RECOMMENDED**

Add language to strengthen the concept that this bridge should connect directly to T10.



ADD FOREST LOOP

## **Mountain Bike Areas Description on Page 35**

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove Mountain Biking Areas Title and replace with the following:***

### **Areas for Mountain Biking Trail Development**

The areas identified for mountain biking trail development don't limit the development of other recreational activities in the area.

## **Natural Spaces Description on Page 35**

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – Remove Natural Space paragraph and replace with the following:***

### **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 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.

## **Natural Space Network & Mountain Bike Areas – Throughout the document**

***CHANGE RECOMMENDED – REMOVE all references to Natural Space Network and Mountain Bike Areas and adjust language to be consistent with the recommendations above.***

**WHY:** Comments indicated that the use of the terms "mountain bike areas" and "natural space areas" gives the perception that the trail plan is making land use recommendations that will conflict with the Girdwood Area Plan, which is currently in development.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

- October 5 - November 2: GTC member review
- November 2 GTC Meeting: Committee member recommendations for changes.
- November: Project Team will incorporate changes
- Land Use Committee, GBOS, HLBAC, PZC

