



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

ANCHORAGE PARKS & RECREATION

632 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 630

P.O. Box 196650

Anchorage, AK 99519



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 10, 2026

To: Parks and Recreation Commission

Cc: Taylor Keegan, Superintendent

From: Jennifer Mayer, Land Administrative Coordinator

Subject: **PRC 26-17 Karen Bronga Northeast Connector Trail**

Introduction and Background

On Friday, July 24, Anchorage lost former Assembly Member and beloved community advocate Karen Bronga. Karen's legacy will be remembered through her lifelong dedication to making our city a better place for everyone, especially the residents of East Anchorage. In recognition of her extraordinary contributions to our community, the Parks and Recreation Department respectfully requests that the Municipality of Anchorage consider renaming the Northeast Connector Trail in Far North Bicentennial Park as the Karen Bronga Northeast Connector Trail.

Karen spent nearly ten years on the Scenic Foothills Community Council, serving as secretary, vice president, and eventually president. After two decades of teaching in the Anchorage School District, she brought that same dedication to public service by representing the area on the Anchorage Assembly from 2023 to 2025. Throughout her career, Karen consistently championed education, public safety, neighborhood improvements, and expanded access to parks and trails. As a retired elementary school teacher, she carried her commitment to Anchorage's families beyond the classroom, advocating for safer communities, improved trail access, and safe routes for children. She also helped secure funding for the Nunaka Valley Playground and obtained grants benefiting Scenic Park and Kasuun Elementary School. Karen viewed parks and trails as more than recreational spaces—they were places where neighbors connect, families gather, children explore, and residents can safely walk and bike through their community.

The Northeast Connector Trail was not just another trail to Karen. It was an extension of her backyard and a gateway to Far North Bicentennial Park, where she and her family spent countless hours exploring. She volunteered her time throughout the project, participating in walkthroughs with project teams, advocating for routes that would best serve current and future trail users, supporting funding efforts, securing grants, and celebrating the trail's completion.

Notably, in 2016, Karen and Tom Bronga secured a Community Challenge Grant and worked with the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) program to bring Phase One of the trail to life, creating a lasting community asset for all to enjoy. Following the project's success, Karen and Tom invited the entire YEP crew to their home for a "thank you" barbecue, expressing their appreciation to the youth whose hard work helped build the trail and strengthen connections throughout the community. Today, the Northeast Connector Trail continues to be a favorite of many in the Anchorage Community.

Karen was known as someone who showed up for her neighbors, her community, and the causes she believed in. Her Assembly successor, Yarrow Silvers, captured this commitment simply: Karen never stopped showing up for our East Anchorage community. She was also known for her willingness to speak honestly, never hesitating to share her perspective or advocate for what she believed was right. Former Assembly Chair Christopher Constant remembered Karen as someone who was not afraid to hold an independent view and speak her mind, a quality he described as laudable.

Renaming the Northeast Connector Trail in Karen Bronga's honor would create a lasting tribute that reflects her lifelong commitment to service, education, stewardship, and East Anchorage. Few memorials could better represent her dedication to community, stewardship, and public access than a trail she helped shape and bring to life. Every person who walks, runs, bikes, or enjoys this trail would be reminded of Karen's belief in building stronger, healthier, and more connected communities, ensuring that future generations recognize the extraordinary contributions she made to our city and the neighborhoods she loved.

Staff Recommendation

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends the approval of Resolution 2026-16, the proposed renaming of the Northeast Connector Trail to the Karen Bronga Northeast Connector Trail.