



Basher Trailhead Parking Lot

Survey Summary Report

January 2026

Project Overview

In April 2025, Anchorage voters approved Proposition 9, authorizing funding to complete the design of the Basher Trailhead Parking Lot improvements. This design work is funded through the Chugach State Park Service Area (CASA) bond, which allocated \$300,000 for the project.

Planned improvements include the development of a new, expanded trailhead parking lot on Municipal property near the existing lot, along with connections to the existing trail system. The Basher Trailhead Parking Lot project seeks to address these concerns by improving access, capacity, safety, and overall functionality for the community and park visitors.

Survey Summary

A public survey for trail users, residents, and other stakeholders was released on Wednesday, December 17th, 2025, to gather input on existing Basher Trailhead parking lot conditions and preferences for future design and amenities. The survey was conducted online via SurveyMonkey, remained open for 31 days, and closed on Friday, January 16th, 2026. A total of 408 responses were collected.

Survey Objective

The survey was designed to collect public input on the existing trailhead parking lot conditions and to gather recommendations to help inform future site design and amenities.

The survey included 18 total questions, consisting of multiple-choice questions, checkbox selections, and open-ended responses for detailed feedback.

Methodology

The survey was available on the project website and distributed on social media, through an e-newsletter, and on trailhead signs with a QR code.

General Impressions Summary

The overall impression of the Basher Trailhead Parking Lot project was positive regarding the upgrades and potential amenities at the new parking lot, with concerns raised about safety, access, trail connections, overuse, and maintenance. Complete survey results are included at the end of this summary report.

Demographics

Respondents represented a broad age range, from 18 to 65+, with 11% aged 25–34, 24% aged 35–44, 24% aged 45–54, 17% aged 55–64, and 22% aged 65 or older.

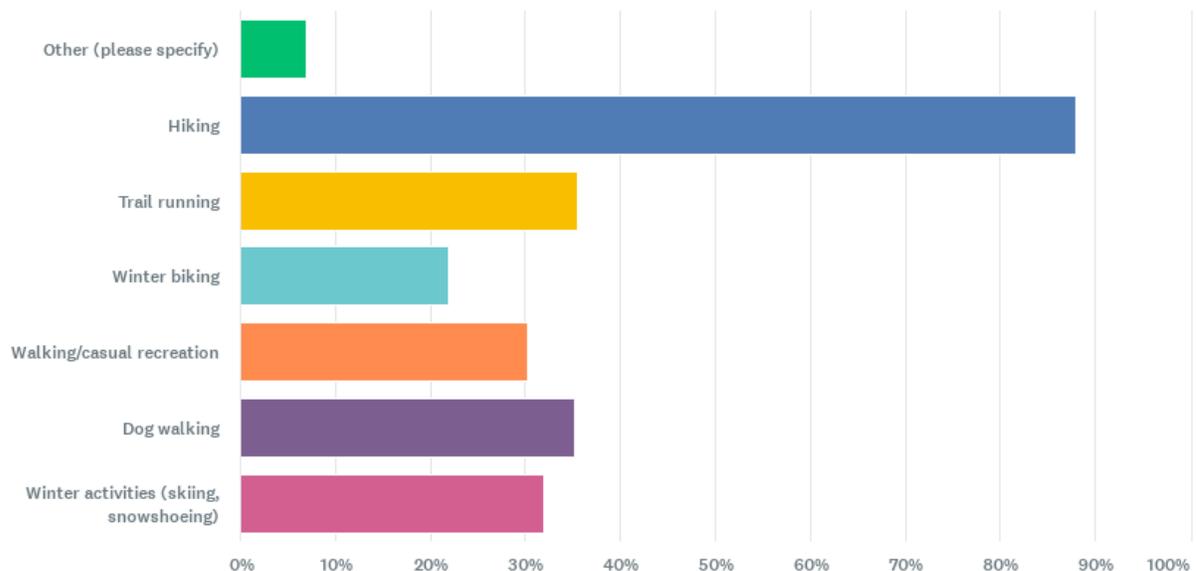
The majority of the survey respondents live in East Anchorage (39%) or elsewhere in Anchorage (43%), and 13% are Basher neighborhood residents.

Trailhead Use

Over half of the respondents, 53%, use the Trailhead a few times a year, with 24% of them using it 1–2 times per month. 70% of survey respondents use the Trailhead year-round, including winter. Most survey respondents visit the trailhead in the Afternoon (78%), with Morning (51%) and Evening (38%) following in visitation.

Most responders use the trailhead for Hiking (88%), along with Trail running (35%), Dog walking (35%), Winter activities (32%), and Walking/casual recreation (30%). Open-ended responses (7%) included summer & winter biking, aurora viewing, birding, and berry picking.

Q2 What activities do you typically use the Basher Trailhead for? (Select all that apply)

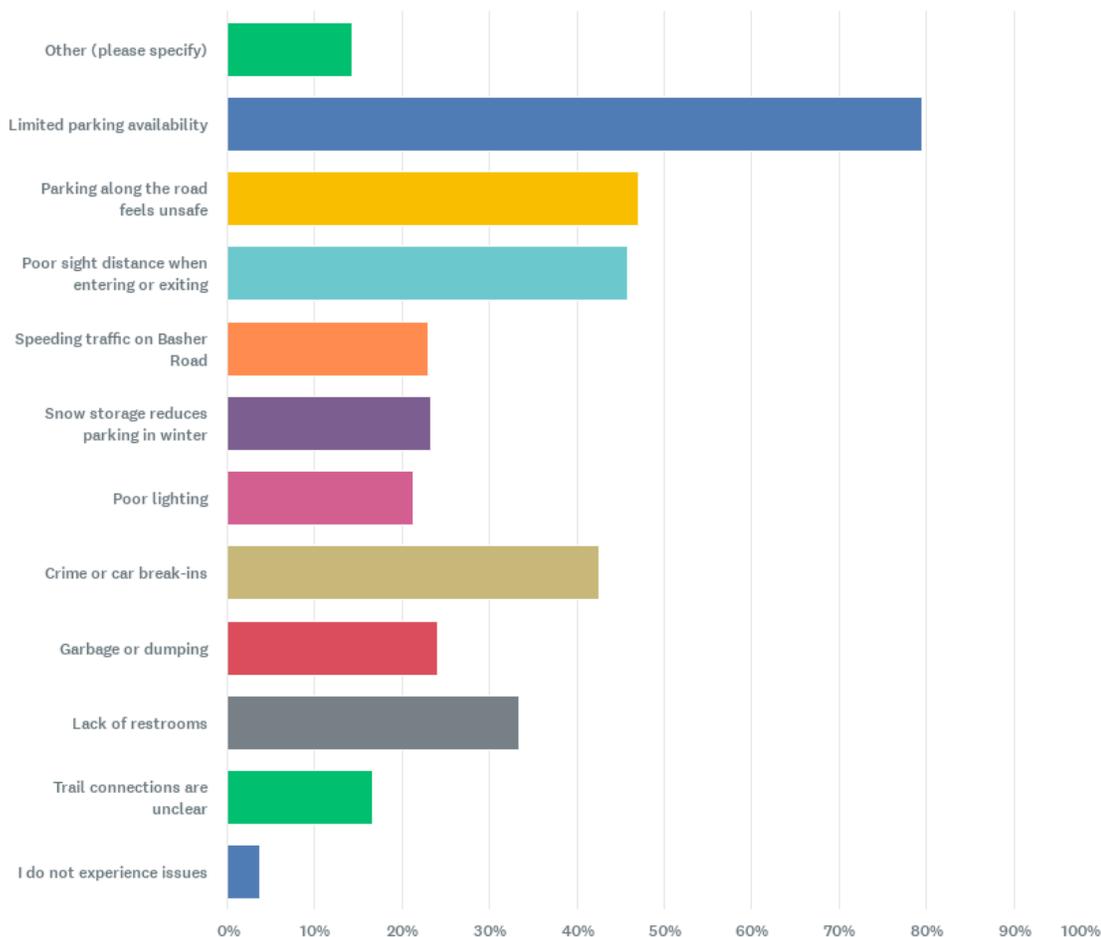


Current Challenges

When asked about challenges at the existing trailhead parking lot, respondents identified their key concerns as Limited parking availability (70%), Parking along the road feels unsafe (47%), Poor sight distance when entering or exiting (46%), and Crime or car break-ins (43%).

Other issues included Lack of restrooms (33%), Garbage or dumping (24%), Poor lighting (21%), Snow storage reducing winter capacity (23%), Speeding traffic on Basher Road (23%), Trail connections are unclear (17%), Other (15%). 4% of survey respondents stated they do not experience issues. Specific comments included concerns about potholes, winter conditions, road safety, crime concerns, and no trash cans.

Q4 When parking at the Basher Trailhead Parking Lot, what challenges do you experience? (Select all that apply)



When asked about parking along the road due to a lack of space in the lot:

- 30% said they sometimes park along the road
- 11% said they often park along the road
- 57% said they never or rarely park along the road

Perceived safety at the existing parking lot is mixed:

- 40% feel somewhat or very safe
- 32% feel neutral
- 28% feel somewhat or very unsafe

Parking Lot Capacity

Current opinions on parking capacity are mixed among respondents when asked about the number of vehicles parked in the area during peak times on weekends and evenings. 23% see 5-10 vehicles, 28% see 10-15, 15% see 15-20, 9% see More than 20, and 3% see Fewer than 5, and 23% are Not sure.

When asked about future parking lot capacity, the results were varied with 31% of respondents favoring 20-30 spaces, 28% favoring 30-40 spaces, 12% favoring 40-60 spaces, 7% favoring 60-80 spaces, and 22% are Not sure.

Design

When asked to identify the most important safety improvements for a new parking lot, respondents prioritized:

1. Safer entrance/exit with better sight distance (64%)
2. Reduced roadside parking (56%)
3. Clear signage and visibility from the road (48%)
4. Winter maintenance considerations (40%)
5. Lighting (29%)
6. One-way traffic flow (11%)

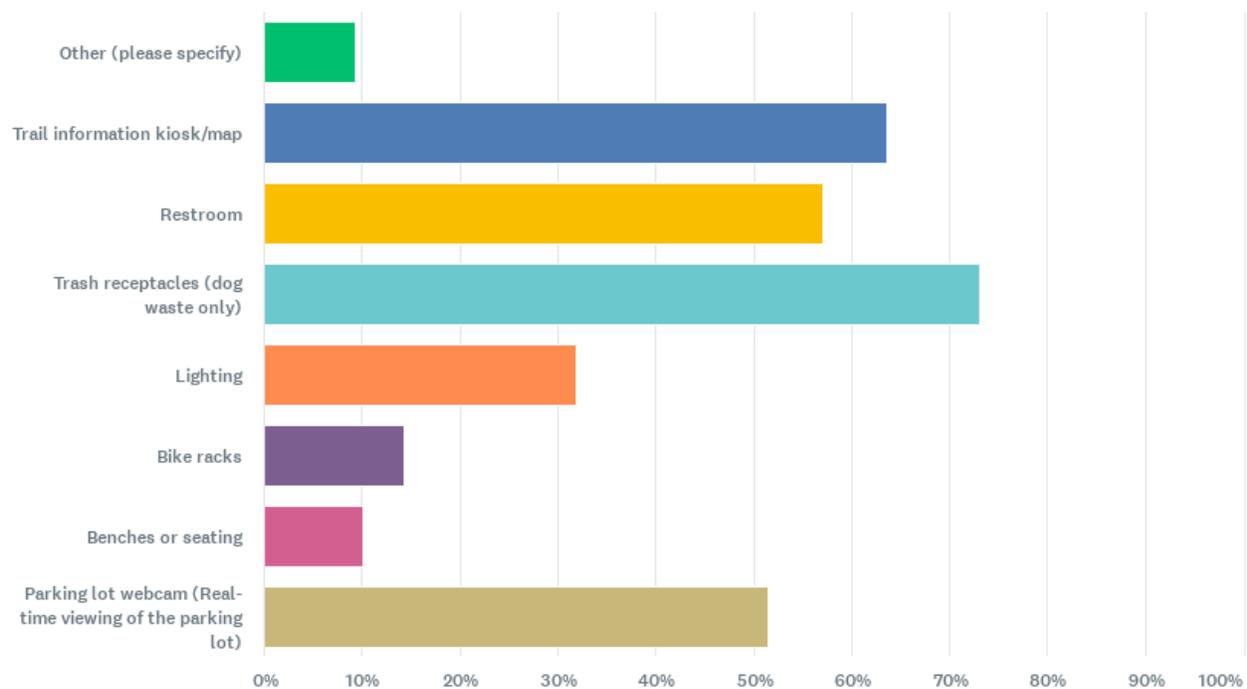
Visibility of the parking lot from the road was generally supported with 71% of respondents saying it is Very or Somewhat important, 20% saying it was Not at all important, and 9% being Not sure.

Amenities

Regarding the potential amenities at the new parking lot, the highest preferred ones included Trash receptacles (dog waste only) (73%), Trail information kiosk/map (64%), Restroom (57%), and Parking lot webcam (Real-time viewing of the parking lot) (51%).

Other amenities selected included Lighting (32%), Bike racks (14%), Benches of seating (10%), and Other (9%). Some of the specific comments mentioned a need for safety patrols and surveillance, transit services, trash receptacles, and no amenities.

Q11 Which amenities would you like to see at the new Basher Trailhead? (Select up to 5)



Lighting generated varied opinions, with 26% of respondents preferring No lighting at the new parking lot, 20% preferred Lighting focused only on parking and entry/exit areas, and 47% preferred 'Limited, low-impact/dark sky lighting'.

Many respondents emphasized the importance of preserving dark skies and northern lights viewing, noting that parking lot lighting could negatively affect both the natural environment and the character of the area.

Key Themes

134 respondents included additional concerns that the survey didn't address, and 115 respondents shared additional comments and suggestions for the parking lot. Common themes included:

- **Safety and security:** Strong concern about vehicle break-ins and requests for cameras, patrols, and prevention-based design solutions
- **Overdevelopment:** Concern towards a large or heavily developed parking lot that could increase crowds and degrade nearby trails
- **Trail access and maintenance:** Desire for improved trail connections, clearer signage, and coordination between parking capacity and trail sustainability
- **Alternative access:** Interest in transit, biking, and non-vehicle access to reduce reliance on parking expansion
- **Neighborhood and environmental impacts:** Concerns about traffic, wildlife, light pollution, and preservation of the area's natural character

Overall, the survey results indicate strong public support for improving the Basher Trailhead Parking Lot, particularly to address safety issues, limited capacity, and maintenance concerns while maintaining a scale and design that is sensitive to surrounding trails and the adjacent neighborhood.