

MOA PARKS + RECREATION NORTHWEST DISTRICT

“Destroying our parks is not cool!”

– Comment from a meeting attendee

I. Stories from our Parks

- Chester Creek trail in general
- Visitors value trail experience
- Westchester winter activities
- Going out to Pt. Woronzof, belugas, view with visitors
- Russian Jack springs (the springs)
- West high pool
- Fairbanks Park inebriate problem versus picnic to retake park
- Two view parks in Government Hill neighborhood
- Freeze event was awesome
- University Lake dog park is asset for dog owners
- Sound of Chester Creek at new project
- Westchester lagoon – skating, families (Norman Rockwell-esque)
- Walking trails: Goose Lake/APU, Sitka Park, Russian Jack sledding, ducks in creek
- Tuesday Night Races, family races (family ritual)
- Fairview Lions Park, Fairview recreation center – annual neighborhood picnic
- Like that parks are multi-use, year round
- Town Square Park ice
- Snowshoe baseball & beer on the Park Strip
- Children’s programs at University Lake

II. Issues

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- Concern about setbacks to lakes and creeks. (note: Title 21 ordinance will address this)
- Wildlife is both an attraction and attribute
- Dog Parks
 - Degradation due to over use- water quality issues
 - User groups should engage users
 - Wildlife impacts
 - Beach erosion problems
- Westchester shore is degraded
- More food leads to more wildlife

Playgrounds

- Safety an issue
 - Broken glass
 - Chronic public inebriates
 - Want clean and green

- Trail/bike path conflicts
- Connect with Anchorage School District more with parks and equipment
- Reduce dog usage on baseball/play grounds
- Address season-ability of equipment
- Lyn Ary Park
 - Safety audits
 - Broken branches
 - Homeless
- Balto Seppala and Lloyd Steele Parks
 - More amenities per master plans
 - Older kids play equipment
- Need more equipment at the park at Chester and 20th, there is nothing now
- Accessibility an issue at south anchorage SP? Park
- Dog parks

Recreation Programs Health

- More programs for aging population
- Need recreation and childcare close to home
- More money to fund summer programs

Safety

- Need bed for everyone before we can kick people out of parks (not just homeless)
- Bear habitat in sunset park, removed, safety is better in last 5 years (in Government Hill)
- Wildlife hazard markers done well and some not done very well
- Clearer more visible and open environment lead to less inebriate problems
- Addressing Inebriate problem is critical
- Youth problem in parks
- Underutilized parks and becoming problem areas
- Different issues in heavily used trail sections versus underused sections
- Multi-modal conflicts of high speed bike versus pedestrian traffic on trails
- Culverts are places of nuisance
- King Street Park provide only has one access
- Chester Creek green belt is well lit

Trails

- Bear Issues
 - How will number be affected by fish in Chester Creek?
 - Education? Hard to know if education is enough.
“Personally, find notion of bear hunting appalling. Need to first do everything else (bear resistant trash containers mandatory in bear areas, post warnings, common sense like staying away from parks in areas along water bring peak of salmon season, protect habitat – maybe some private land shouldn’t be put.)”
- Over use of trails/maintenance
- The cut-through at Westchester park
- Muddy routes
- Solutions? New trails?

- Unofficial routes become rutted and unattractive
 - Tuesday night runs go through wetlands, terrain that is being damaged by large numbers of runners
- Connectivity is big
 - Fairview: need links from Chester creek trail north into Fairview
 - Trail dead ends (east bound) at Lake Otis
 - Trail maintenance needed (especially in winter)
 - Trail connections are particularly important for kids and for people of lower incomes (e.g. route along Cordova)
- Cordova Street
 - Snow banks block safe use
 - Opportunity for partnerships (e.g. department of neighborhoods)
 - Fairview request through MOA to state was rejected
- Look at where folks are going not just for fun
 - Fairview to – grocery store, downtown, airport heights
- See trails as transportation
- Need wider trails due to conflict
- Links that are safe for kids to get to and from school
- Disc golf conflict with trails – e.g. “Don’t throw Frisbees at my head when I come out of the tunnel.”
- Threats to integrity of coastal trail
 - Airport
 - AWWU pump station
 - Residents eliminating trails
 - Asphalt repaving
 - City land not dedicated to trail use
 - Need a dedicated trail corridor (all Heritage Land Bank land); buffer for trail and habitat and viewshed
 - Needs a proactive approach to protecting a huge asset; well used, well loved,, big economic asset (promoted by ACVB)
- Safety – less of a problem on coastal trail than others

III. Goals/Themes

Playgrounds

- Keep it in good shape (maintenance, volunteers clean and consistent help)
- Parks should be fun and feel alive – watch children learn and grow

Recreation Programs Health

- Challenges – Big Themes
 - Outreach and communication, connection to residents and users
 - Funding, especially operations \$
 - Energy costs going up
 - Kids – keeping children active and healthy
 - Multiple ethnicities increasingly diverse population needs
 - Aging population

IV. Strategies

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- When a use is considered in a park with high habitat value address the possible impacts in advance
- University park is a great dog park – keep it but make appropriate rules/signs
- Rain gardens – water production deduction tool, expand Taku Lake is good example
- Place value on wildlife
- Thin very carefully in green belts especially find balance maintain habitat
- Wildflower garden in parks cooperate with youth groups, plant society
- Create view parks – protect views in existing ones and add additional native species to be used in parks don't plant not natives
- Parks plans – important natural areas measure progress, take action to implement plan goal, ID key high value open (natural) spaces to purchase

Playgrounds

- Hotline to call about damage

Recreation Programs Health

- Community Feedback
 - Go to churches – tell about programs and get input
 - Info out to schools in packets like we used to
 - Sponsor game boy challenges/competitions and guitar hero concerts in local rec centers use there events to talk with kids about recreation issues
 - Other ways to get feedback: governor's picnic, meetings in churches, more culturally appropriate spaces, news clip Channel 2/Channel 11, school newsletter, kids day, week of the young child
- Heath/Get Outdoors Anchorage
 - Think about park development (appropriate) plan
 - Conversation with Anchorage School District on ethnic diversity
 - Unstructured play places (e.g. Park and Play)
 - Education about existing programs/parks – get the word out
 - Identify partners
 - Program to borrow gear from MOA
 - Different cultural values for parks
 - Clean air (greenbelts contribute to)
 - Remember that “recreation new to some cultures”
 - Target adult population too, connect family outdoors
- Park and play – Youth Employment in Parks
- Winter uses/programs neighborhood parks
- Free/affordable programs - childcare assistance for recreation programs
- Licensed childcare for parks & recreation so can accept childcare asset money
- Transportation to parks for kids from childcare centers
- Fishing, hiking, skiing - outreach intro level (skis/snowshoes for kids)

- Westchester ice skating/hot chocolate
- Additional money when school not in session for kids recreation programs from Anchorage School District

Safety

- Education about animal encounters (moose primarily)
- Thin vegetation to reduce safety issues inebriates
- Appropriate location for training for road biking
- Dog users, more safety (enforcement of leash laws) animal control to check
- Homeless use park for shelter
- Trail watch
- Raising the sight line in parks
- Police and Parks & Recreation to work together on inebriate on A & 15th area
- More active presence - get to people instead of passing observation
- Identify a user group for use for under utilized parks
- Trail Watch: more emphasis on events and thinning brush than daily patrol
- Surveillance
- Surveillance for earthquake park parking lot

Trails

- Expanding ski usage – room for skate and classic, winter commute (if trails are maintained to allow it)

V. Action Items

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- Dog park maybe Spenard beach

Playgrounds

- Unstructured activity areas needed for soccer
- Neighborhood ball field
- Bi-lingual signage – make neighborhood specific
- Playgrounds more wholesome – no graffiti (Valley of the moon)
- Volunteers – playground/park passport would get kids and families to different communities/parks and taking care of them
- How do we get kids outside?
 - Park and play
 - Art in park
 - Kickball
 - Supervised activities

Recreation Programs Health

- Volunteers to run programs with grant for food/supplies/facility – Challenge grants for programs

- Kinder-gym in parks/Spenard Rec. Center

Safety

- Pedestrian connectivity needed East – West along Delaney

Trails

- Connections
 - Park strip to coastal trail
 - Fairview to downtown east west trails
 - Fish creek estuary trail (no one knows about it – no connections)
 - Elmendorf “fence trail”
 - Trails to parks (especially in SW Anchorage)
- Coffee shacks, snacks, bike rental, skate rentals, beer, fondue along trails
 - Valley of the moon e.g. ice cream shack
 - Great for families
 - Hut to hut hot chocolate
 - Wine tour – yurts
- Trail maintenance – crevasses, fish creek trail
- Campbell Creek bike path connection under Seward hwy
- Upgrade lighting on trails

MOA PARKS + RECREATION NORTHEAST DISTRICT

March 30, 2009

I. Stories from our Parks

- Trails
- Non-motorized transportation options
- Solstice bonfire in Centennial Park
- Connection to Chugach State Park
- Children’s laughter safe place to play
- Lyons Park in Mt. View celebrations
- Mayor’s Marathon
- Kid’s running or skiing programs
- Folker Park celebration for AK abilities
- Flowers – moose/bear
- Spending the day walking through quiet of Russian Jack, seeing wildlife “solace” “natural open space”
- Being able to ride a bike from east to west
- Pocket parks created by neighbors in area
- People with dogs, dog parks
- St. Patrick’s day events, summer programs at Russian Jack
- Looking at dean creeks
- Dog sleds
- Fall walk in Cheney Lake, wind, birds, falling leaves, zombies
- Variety of program treasure hunt, it was fun and cheap, staff friendly
- Watching people in community gardens
- Sledding and skiing
- Skate board, free style biking behind totem, no real place exists today
- Dog park at university lake
- Bike trail exploration with kids
- Campbell Creek salmon fishing at Lake Otis castle
- Appreciate natural trails (versus paved)
- Bicycling on new ship creek trail
- Meeting legal campers
- Connectivity “need more”
- Tuesday Night Races
- Safe bridges
- Ice skating at goose lake
- Safe place to sled, Sitka St. park
- Nice clean trails where you can run

II. Issues

Open Space/Habitat/Gardens

- Tuesday Night Races should be more environmental conscious
- 2020 Plan and Title 21 should comply not butt heads
 - NE region transit and access is key for marketing improvements
 - People Mover
 - Light transit trails
 - Low income ways to access park
- Title 21, high density should provide for green space, kinds to play, aesthetics, accessibility access to formal parks
- Easier access
- Clear interactive signage

Playground

- Replacing worn play equipment, pro-activity non-reactive
- Coordination (better or some) between Muni agencies...like they should
- Adequate parking

Public Participation

- Feeling is that parks and recreation comes in and tells us what they're going to do, they don't ask
- Inform people earlier about pending decisions
- Nice to have personal relationship with staff
- District managers working? Yes
- E-mail to the right person

Recreation

- Safety
 - Homeless camps in park by Folker and Tudor (rescue mission)
- No master plan for parks – for example hotel in dog park (University Lake), lot of waste, fast growth, multi-cultural
 - 110 parks – not all have master plans
- Make sure each age group has an activity in the park
- East side of NE districts short on trails
 - Programs good but cost is shocking
 - Need better advertising, e.g. flyers at community centers, library, schools
 - Community councils don't necessarily appeal to wide group, so not a great way to keep
 - Access is an issue – young kids can't get bus passes, many families don't have cars
 - Family oriented is current focus (response to feedback e.g. "Family frolic in the Park" –monthly

Safety

- University Lake dog – bike conflict on multi-use trail, finish master plan, finish(start) master plan for this park
- Boniface access needs to be shut off at trail so cars can't get on trails no cars to shelter
- Russian Jack west side from Pine St. allows car access to trails
- Inebriate problem north Muldoon, abundance of cash and carry liquor store
- Stop hiring people to clean up parks if they are part of the problem
- There is a homeless camp problem in our parks – repeat offenders
- Use problem people stay away

Trails

- Trails plan – did not address management (equestrian use)
- Multi-use conflicts. Figure out a way so most people are happy in using
- Parks is under represented in Title 21 pay attention to planning
- Trails coordinator should be in parks and rec. not in Planning Dept
- Address conflict between safety (visibility) with trail quality
- Trail aesthetics, ROW widths, aesthetic that is imposed by ROW

III. Goals/Themes

Open Space/Habitat/Gardens

- No net – loss for parks in development, protect natural areas – woods! Protect urban forest – better utilization of ball fields all hours (rather than more fields) and if new fields are needed, put them in already cleared areas – don't clear more areas
- Permanently set aside areas for natural space – long term

Playground

- Ensure every neighborhood has playground
- Maintain good and safe equipment and grounds

Trails

- Trail standards – apply city wide, get this done in strategic park period
- Connecting the trails

IV. Strategies

Open Space/Habitat/Gardens

- Push to acquire little Campbell Lake as park dedicated land
- Develop growth with parks and open space in mind
- Comply with 2020 Comprehensive Plan as it relates to natural open space and wildlife habitat
- Work with other agencies to increase natural park areas
- Beatification – enhance natural

Playground

- Teach kids how to play in programs for community garden, play equipment, etc.
- Playground for all ages to reduce vandalism
- Boy scouts, volunteer partnership
- Communication, to everyone always regardless of side
- New products be resistant to vandalism
- Graffiti and trash park specific crew (paid experts)
- Schools have equipment – use as resource
- Build awareness of parks – where are the playgrounds?

Public Participation

- Delay process to give community council large role
 - Make community councils active partners in planning process
 - Community council should be informed of all planned parks
 - Work with community councils from the beginning
 - Set up liaisons from each community council
 - “showing up with a completed community plan is a bad idea”
 - Find ways to be efficient (e.g. bring together multiple community council representatives)
 - Community councils are share holders
 - Progression – pick up litter, then others gather in, then people get involved
 - “A lot of bad history”
 - How to get people involved in areas like Tudor/U-Med district? – work with big land owners e.g. mediator – transient areas, need places for kids to go (not on their “too small” properties)
- How to reach out to less wealthy, transient populations?
 - Website?
 - Door hangers (like with transition projects) (community council members)
 - Need better connection points to contact at community council (2-3 people, not 1)
- What gets young people out the door?
 - Friends
 - Indoor group activities
 - Dances (Junior high after school)
 - Dance lessons, instruction – “so you think you can dance”
 - When would you prefer to be active? – after school, later in early evening
 - Summer programs – use schools (empty), sports camp
 - Great summer program, several years back, but funding was cut (APU)
 - Expectations not too high – with other kids, safe, active
 - Timing – so an 8-4 camp that doesn’t extend to end of adult working day (issue – level of quality vs. convenience) e.g. certified
- Ideal process / process issues
 - Go to community council and announce beginning of the project – “put community council in drivers seat”

- Distinct managers meet regularly with community council to understand what Community Council wants and Community Council would determine priorities
- Too often “cart before horse”, don’t spend money on architects and consultants
- Give Community Council a bigger role. “pay better attention to us” – love to hear “what do you think?”
- To set budgets – need 2 years advance planning. So set up schedule: Fall Year 1 – Community Council identifies ranked priorities; “nobody is listening to the public!”

Recreation

- Turn cemented areas into hop scotch and four square
- More partnerships – YMCA (help with programs and staffing)
- “Open” programs – gyms (utilize Anchorage School District) all ages, volleyball, basketball – e.g. \$1 per head
- Community councils involved (put together) most are plans for parks, volunteers drove changes in specific parks, administrative changes change focus, photos of pre & post what happened on website
- Community centers?
 - Use Federation of Community Councils annual flyer
 - The Dome gets the kids out
 - Free catalog in newspaper
 - E-mail of current events – information
- Best place for programs?
 - Visible, well known, easily found
 - On convenient bus routes (a lot more teens are riding the bus)
 - Nearby school fields and parks are essential, e.g. Muldoon elementary – very well used, some parks to minimal
 - Latouche and 36th – heavily used great park equipment
 - Places to walk dogs – really important
 - Ultimate park? (from your youth) sand box, skate park, water park, Dome (for rainy days), foam things on ground, fenced in

Safety

- Allow or enable “graffiti Parks”
- Require deposits for glass
- Mark beverage containers to id stores
- Police needs to get out of cars, bike police
- Stop selling glass bottles because they break and litter the park
- Harry Crawford bill – this may solve park problem

Trails

- Don’t build summer trails in bear habitat
- User groups will put in trail, need help in management, equestrian conflicts in far north
- Do not build trails adjacent to roads with row trails
- Use stimulus money to resurface trails
- Water ways as recreational facilities turn into park land

- Send the plans to Community Council for review
- Planning department needs to communicate with parks and rec.
- Reserve easements and rows for trails, more diligence for identifying the easement, easement along Chugach State Park

V. Action Items

Open Space/Habitat/Gardens

- Check out the inside of the loop of Muldoon Glenn Hwy. over pass. It has tunnel access and room for a fenced in dog park – noisy but doable
- Converting bog at Russian Jack Springs Park back to Lake area halfway between pine and Boniface S. of Debarr
- Continue to work with land trust (Great Land Trust, Anchorage Park Foundation) to acquire green belts, important habitat and open space

Playground

- Fenced in area along gas line, turn into garden
- Playground scavenger hunt
- Skateboard park in NE
- Climbing rocks, more centennial park (N Muldoon)
- Bike trail heading N into Russian Jack Springs Park, marsh area that use to be a lake, return it to lake status
- Lights on playgrounds
- Specific hotline for parks (graffiti, broken, equipment, vandalism)
- Trash cans, adequate location for servicing
- Removal of graffiti
- Provide temporary equipment to underserved areas – Totem fields – Turpin/Glenn Hwy new housing development
- Moa budget dept. – CIP lists for each community council
- Volunteer, waste facilities, private partnerships network for parks trash

Public Participation

- Central website

Recreation

- Climbing structure/web rope Chugach Foothills park for older kids – Pioneer Drive
- Trail – repair and linkage, new trails
- Skateboard park in Chugach Foothills park

Safety

- Greenhouse move needs early public participation, public bath next to power plant, using excess heat
- Centennial abandoned light poles remove unused light poles
- Provide better visibility for instruction to be obvious, good signage is important
- “Slow down when dogs are present sign”

- Folker Park is checking twice a day for trash, homeless, people loitering

Trails

- Bike trail plan-implement
- Manage trail use conflicts in far north
- Provide bike and pedestrian easement from neighborhoods to begin school
- North South easement at military civilian boundaries
- MOA trail crew specializing soft pass and hardened (gravel) trail

VI. CIP List

Trails

- Access to Davis Park from Pine St.
- Goose Lake fix existing to UAA
- Muldoon /Debarr park to military boundary trail
- Centennial to far north along boundary / gas line
- Baxter bog to Begich School
- Russian jack to Begich School
- South coastal extension
- Far north to Chugach State Park gas line or south side of Stuckagain
- Creek corridor – green belt from Abbot to Muldoon
- Chester Creek bike trail surfacing deteriorated

“The existing trail system is great and compares to outside facilities.”

– Comment from a meeting attendee

MOA PARKS + RECREATION SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

I. Stories from our Parks

- Funding question
- Free dog running experience
- Parks are everywhere
- RC committee great local
- Wildlife eagles’ nest, bears
- Considerate users
- Best bike trails system
- Lots of dog owners in room
- Extension of green belt for apt./condo residents
- RC racing
- Developed and Wildland parks both exist
- Partnering with non profits
- Community health in general
- Gates to Kincaid are open more, but not predictably perhaps
- Parks everywhere – access
- Fishing
- Parks are free
- Trail system
- Variety of terrain
- Kincaid park, Connors off-leash
- Groomed trails
- 500 motocross users using
- For most part, parks are clean, trash-free
- Kincaid – has improved greatly in last 1-2 years, partnership

II. Issues

Open Space/Habitat/Environment

- Realize that some parks or park areas need to remain open space areas with simple trails or areas with simple trails or areas without paved improvement or special use areas - Naturalism

Playground

- Need adoption/volunteer at two most used parks
- Need better understand money distribution process, need to work better with community councils what process is to get money (e.g. how to get picnic table at a park)
- Better communication! About designs, plans, funds
- Slide at Ocean View

- Nature walk/boardwalk at John's Park, below bluff
- CIP list not reflective of community council wants
- Mountain View, Fairview organized councils, get most of dollars (need help understanding how it works)
- Playgrounds need bathrooms/Identify where they are
- Playground at Gladys Wood School – what is the idea behind this? (volunteer system trails and improvements at Gladys Wood, leave alone as space)

Public Participation/Outreach/Participation

- Better connection to community councils

Recreation Program

- Equity between user groups of municipal facilities
- Hard to find stuff on website

Safety

- South anchorage sports park – increasing number of known vicious dogs off-leash
- People with more (4 or 5) dogs off leash than they are capable of controlling
- Anchorage Sports Park – inappropriate/unlawful use of parking lots
- Poor lighting/security
- Bears!

Special Interest Space

- Ideal RC space is 2 acres (access to water ideal)
- RC issues and actions- Menu of alternatives/locations, Choose permanent location
- Dog Parks- Does not have to be open field – trails and trees
- Current space is heavily utilized; we are losing it-turning into dog park (designated areas are underutilized – re-evaluate)
- Current space – what's going to happen? We want to see a map with future uses
- What's happening with area designated for paint ballers
- Baseball fields should be accessible to all users – should not be a proprietary issue
- Conners – is this DOT/Muni land – is there a chance we will loose this?
- Installation of fencing for safety purpose (roads, dumpsites, sewage) How to do this?
- Water access an issue – working with Municipality unleashed to engineer environmental friendly access to water

Trails

- More general information about trails is needed, closures, use, activities, location, identify multi-use trails, seasonal use
- User group conflicts need info to educate users about ongoing trail use
- General trail mannerisms
- Revisit the south coastal trail extension project, build sections that can be built
- Wildlife conflicts are occasional but hardly avoidable

III. Goals/Themes

Open Space/Habitat/Environment

- Let kids be kids – recreate socialized playing

Playground

- Kids building jumps is ok, to parks are for them

Recreation Program

- Provide diversity of programs (e.g. community schools)

Special Interest Space

- Maintaining/keeping space we have

IV. Strategies

Playground

- Need clean-up process, what is scope of what (how happening, what to do, evaluation/feedback)
- User driven design and volunteer fund raising for playgrounds - all users need to show up to design

Recreation Program

- Advertise!!! Promotion!!!
- Ask PTAs about what we need
- Ask Parks and Recreation staff about what we should do in next five years

Safety

- Trail Watch

V. Action Items

Open Space/Habitat/Environment

- Year round usage (Gladys Wood Park great model)

Playground

- Have playground and park clean-up day (get local schools involved)

Public Participation/Outreach/Participation

- Better advertising of existing programs.
 - Schools (PE teachers)
 - Through existing programs
 - Social events with Parks and Recreation department (picnic, free food)

- Bulletin boards and parks and kiosks
 - Partnering with ACS, other private entities
 - Email alert system thru community councils
 - Stakeholders groups/leads share info with members
 - News stories
 - Link to programs on interest group websites
 - Standardization of Parks and Recreation website (calendar/categorize programs)
 - Facebook/twitter
 - Targeted topics for planning processes
 - Online survey
 - Anchorage Daily News – community
 - The Press, cost distribution
- Recreation Program
 - Tuesday Night races great – expand to include skiing, ice skating, biking, running, walking, swimming, lake fishing
 - Recreation hotline and business sponsors
 - Year round multi-use programs
 - Fees (facility rental fees)
 - Family programs (expand from “kids” programs and “adult” programs and teen programs)
 - Better communication and utilization of existing facilities

Safety

- Webcams
- Enforce leash laws
- Work with volunteers
- Parking lot crime (Connors) break ins
- Lighting
- Animal control on bikes
- Barriers for safety (e.g. rosebush, fencing) approval for installation at dog parks
- Sign of rules of park
- Video surveillance monitored by APD @ high crime parks
- Clean up/removal homeless camps
- Increased use by RC group of less desirable parks
- Locking up parks at night

Special Interest Space

- Designate special interest parks
- Motorsports Parks
- Expansion of off-leash
- Sharing like interest spaces
- Create multi use areas for interest groups to mix (model – South Anchorage Sports Park)
- Fenced dog area – Valley of the Moon/Nunaka Valley users are good model

Trails

- Animal control is responsible for leash laws – be more visible
- Involve volunteers to maintain/upgrade trails
- Allow cooperative relationships in which volunteers can work on trails
- Mechanism to match volunteer groups with need that is identified for construction of trails or maintenance of trails
- Enforce leash laws to reduce user conflicts, safety considerations, wildlife conflicts

VI. CIP List

Playground

- Kaboom playground at Hamilton Park – Home Depot/Lowes, e.g. Willawaw Park, volunteers
- Community building

Recreation Program

- Fix the trails

Special Interest Space

- Area just for dog training – agility sports

Trails

- University Lake – Northern Lights Blvd trail connection to be completed

MOA PARKS + RECREATION CENTRAL/SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

April 1, 2009

I. Stories from our Parks

- Some neighborhoods have good connections to parks
- Parks plan and other plans talk about connections, public and private partnerships (ex since of Heritage Land Bank land designated as parks) “none of this is working”
- Park district managers - helpful with keeping everyone involved
- Parks still have wild places – places for discovery and adventure
- Tour of Anchorage trails work east/west do not work north/south
- Pavement and light is not always the experience that people look for being muddy and dirty is OK
- Taku Lake Park - people/activities , beavers to observe
- Connections to Chugach State Park is getting crowded with bears
- Lifetime sports are most important keeping children’s connection to outdoors
- Friends that would not be out with out parks programs – teaching lifetime sports
- Nordic walking – good for adults that are learning how to be active outside
- Good setting for biking – family experience

II. Issues

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- Potter Valley Land Use analysis adopted '99 sets out use for these lands
- Lack of education
- Developer non-interest in green space
- Easements that would help connectivity are being lost
- Parks and Recreation roles: right now fragmentation of policies and procedures
- Better communication and coordination of efforts
- Little Rabbit creek and Moen trail – LOST
- Parks and Recreation needs to play larger advocacy role in plotting process
- Parks and Recreation need to comment/respond on proposed issues
- Take active and aggressive role in managing and connection open spaces
- Open spaces – educating developers and land owners
- More trail planners from PM&E to Parks and Recreation
- Winter city with summer people - need to provide activities for people who are not necessarily skiers and skaters
- Fragmentation in implementation
- Lack of education of policies within department
- Trail planner has to be in parks department not in Public Works
- Better North-South pedestrian bike access

- Public Works only links in paved trails. Soft trails offer viable links for both transportation and recreation
- Don't use bike trail as a name for paved trails
- Heavily traveled corridors are not appropriate for bike trails
- Equestrian conflicts step up to the plate to educate users of single track trails – horse management is needed by parks

Playgrounds

- Accessibility of playground equipment
- Logical place is at schools with special needs programs
- Parks are safe to the point of boredom. Need to blend risk and safety (8-14 years age group)

Public Participation

- Need very different approaches to public participation to involve the “new majority” (ethnic minorities, less wealthy)
- Create new ways to reach ethnic minorities parks need that input
- Connections to community councils – some have recreation committees, some do not
- Better use district manager and district process – e.g. quarterly meetings
- Overdosed on meetings

Recreation Programs Health

- What facilities in the community make sense for programs?
 - Hilltop chalet (adults)
 - Abbott Loop Elementary School
 - Service pool (better use of pools, not everyone skies or snowshoes in the winter)
- Lack of programming for adults and kids due to community funding drying up
- Is there a cheaper way to manage programs at schools
- Are schools the natural location for activities
- Disk golf may be popular today, but wont stay that way crowd attracted is not desirable comparable with SE district

Trails

- PM&E doesn't enforce easements
- Need better north/south connections for pedestrians – better coordinate trails planners public works planners, soft surface managers need to connect to make sure trails link
- Playgrounds – dogs should not be allowed
- Not every trail segment needs to be mapped to acquire
- Bike lane should not go in ROW the busiest roads
- Need to be accurate and realistic about trails and uses for each. Examples, Potter Valley, Mt View 15% slope (poor), Overview neighborhood (good)
- Deal with horse issue in parks section, single track trails in Hillside

III. Goals/Themes

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- Address barriers to acquisition – parks saying will not take new property because of cost ongoing

Trails

- Connections that get us to/from our important places

IV. Strategies

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- Translate strategy: acquisition of missing pieces (2020 Plan, Parks Plan)
- Parks and Recreation need to work with planning, plotting entities to acquire easements (Policy 55113 are being ignored)
- Heritage Land Bank needs to play a larger role in acquisition
- Parks and planning dept needs to coordinate
- Park department needs to take part in implantation of policies

Public Participation

- Smaller scale one-on-one meetings, informal gathering where strong voices don't dominate
- Community Councils have park sub-groups quarterly interest group meeting
- Quality of life is why parks are important

Trails

- Sustainable design to reduce subsequent maintenance costs (Youth Employment in Parks crew – dedicated to trail maintenance)
- Engage in dialogue to be able to take on management issues/provide solutions

V. Action Items

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- Connect every school to green belts and open spaces
 - Apply trail model that every kid can leave their school and travel (some) distance to get to open space
- Heritage Land Bank needs to be a part of this dialogue – trails, creeks, green belts
- Other partnerships? Great Land Trust, other Land Trusts?
- Dedicate and transfer Heritage Land Bank land to park
- Heritage Land Bank should look at big picture of adding to community - intended for parks in Potter Plan
- Areawide Trails Plan – be at pre application meeting (pg. 10)
- Target ethnic groups to participate in par and recreation activities for winter sports
- Green belts acquisition should be priorities
- Potter Creek green belt to be included in strategies
- Dedicate Heritage Land Bank lands to parks

- Heritage Land Bank lands dedicated to parks by area plans need to go through the assembly to formally dedicate the park

Playgrounds

- Boundless playground
- Bike skill courses, pump parks need to schools requires small park spaces, unstructured play

Public Participation

- Go to high use areas Diamond Mall Free event – hot dogs
- Go to where active people are – Tour of Anchorage, Spring carnivals at schools
- Invite people who normally don't get out, show them
- Find ways for people not steeped in public policy to contribute
- Link to churches, social events
- General strategy: educate and go to them
- Survey Monkey
- Parks to go to Community Council meeting or established group meeting
- Progress update emails

Recreation/Programs/Health

- Establishing and maintaining partnerships with Anchorage School District
- Need evening classes
- Crime prevention money contribute to recreation
- Invite/encourage participation of ethnic groups
- Outreach program in native languages
- Anchorage School District and parks could healthy futures going
- Community school programs to be brought back
- Localize regional programs – Tuesday Night Runs is a family event
- Coordinate public transit with park access for recreation
- Huffman to Westchester bike connection along railroad
- Evening programs for adults and youth
- Crime prevention funding can be (should be) combined with Park and Recreation funding

Trails

- Increase acquisitions – necessary to make connections
- Bike commuter map
- Trails on railway, Huffman to Westchester
- Need eastside North-South trail
- Need to ID where horses can be – issues are shoes/waste