

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