



Ketchikan Gateway Borough

# Trails Master Plan



**DRAFT 2025-12-08**

December 2025

Ketchikan Gateway Borough

# Trails Master Plan

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Trail Master Plan was developed in a collaborative effort with the public, stakeholders, and the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Public Works Department. It would not have been possible without the time and dedication from the many individuals who demonstrated their commitment through their participation in public meetings, user group interviews, and community surveys. A special thanks to the Denali Commission for funding a portion of the project and to Morgan Barry, Director of Public Works, and Aaron Ostby, Deputy Director of Public Works, for their local insight and guidance.

## DOCUMENT DATE

<<Final Submittal Date>>

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Ketchikan’s Trail System .....	3
<b>COMMUNITY VISION</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Community-Wide Investment in Trails .....	6
Diversity of Destinations and Experiences .....	6
Connected Network of Trails .....	6
Collaborative Planning for a Regional Trail System.....	6
<b>GOALS &amp; OBJECTIVES</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>GENERAL GUIDELINES</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Trail Design Guidelines.....	19
Trailhead Guidelines .....	22
Signage Guidelines .....	23
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTIONS</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Coast Guard Beach Trail.....	27
D-1 – Whipple Creek Recreation Area .....	29
Carlanna Lake Trail .....	31
Rainbird Trail .....	33
City Center Viewpoint Trail .....	35
Schoenbar Trail.....	37
Whitman Lake Trail .....	39
Ketchikan Long Trail.....	41
Black Sands State Marine Park Access Trail .....	43
Bostwick Lake Trail .....	45
Gravina Island State Lands Recreation Access.....	47
<b>PARTNER PROFILES</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>FUNDING SOURCES</b> .....	<b>53</b>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b> .....	<b>57</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>69</b>

# INTRODUCTION

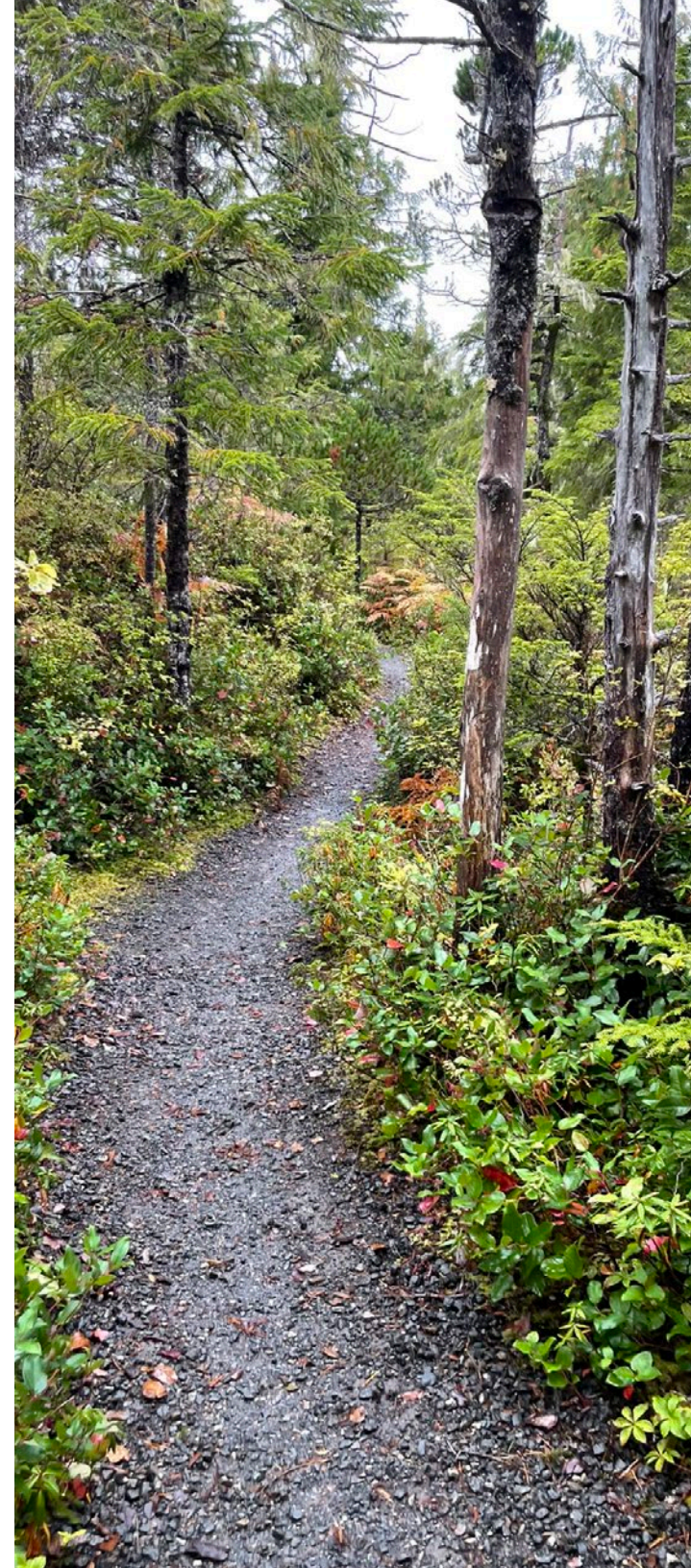
The Ketchikan Gateway Borough (Borough) Trails Master Plan highlights the community's vision for their trail system and identifies opportunities to create a diverse and connected trail system that is supported by the community and agency partners.

The Trails Master Plan identifies a comprehensive vision for Ketchikan's trail system, addressing current needs and future demands. The plan assesses desired recreational activities and the capacity of existing and potential new trails to support these activities with a focus on trail interconnectivity, wayfinding, and improvements to trailheads, routes, terminus conditions, and amenities on existing trails. Additionally, the Trails Master Plan will establish development policies to guide recreation in both motorized and non-motorized trail corridors.

Several factors necessitate the development of this plan. Changes in the community, the development of road-accessible Gravina Island, the expansion of bicycle paths outside the City of Ketchikan (City), and ongoing growth in the North and South Tongass areas all require a fresh perspective to guide future improvements.

The Trails Master Plan will address public needs and identify substandard conditions, evaluate the suitability of existing routes for new uses, potential public and private land acquisitions, and necessary easements and agreements. The project will also include capital programming, preliminary cost estimates based on assumed capital priorities identified in the trail surveys, and recommendations for grant and local funding sources, tailored to the location and type of project and informed by public input.

While site-specific recommendations outside Borough land is not within the scope of this project, the Borough's intent is to work collaboratively with other land agencies to develop and improve trail systems on non-Borough lands to plan for a cohesive Borough-wide trail system that benefits all users. The Trails Master Plan policies, planning items, and actions will consider and acknowledge potential improvements on trails located on adjacent lands owned by other entities.





## Identify Needs and Opportunities

Identify needs and opportunities to create a connected and accessible trail network that offers a diversity of destinations and experiences through Ketchikan's trail system.



## Articulate a Shared Vision

Document the community's values to articulate their shared vision and enable a Trails Master Plan that aligns with the community needs and serves the community.



## Enhance the User Experience

Analyze Ketchikan's trail system to improve user experiences and offer a variety of destinations and recreational opportunities for a diverse range of users.



## Align with Borough Management

Any identified capital improvements (and their anticipation of ongoing operations and maintenance) will be consistent with Borough policies and management.

# KETCHIKAN'S TRAIL SYSTEM

The following information was collected from the United States Forest Service (USFS) Ketchikan Area Trails Guide:

Ketchikan has 26 existing trails on the road network: 18 of these are designated as easy, four are designated as more difficult, and four are designated as most difficult. Additional trails in the Ketchikan area include nine non-wilderness remote trails and nine wilderness remote trails. Difficulty ratings are developed by the USFS and are based on length, elevation gain, and type of tread. Tread describes the surface of the trail and may be natural, gravel, boardwalk, or paved. The easy, more difficult, and most difficult ratings describe the conditions for each of the trails designations.

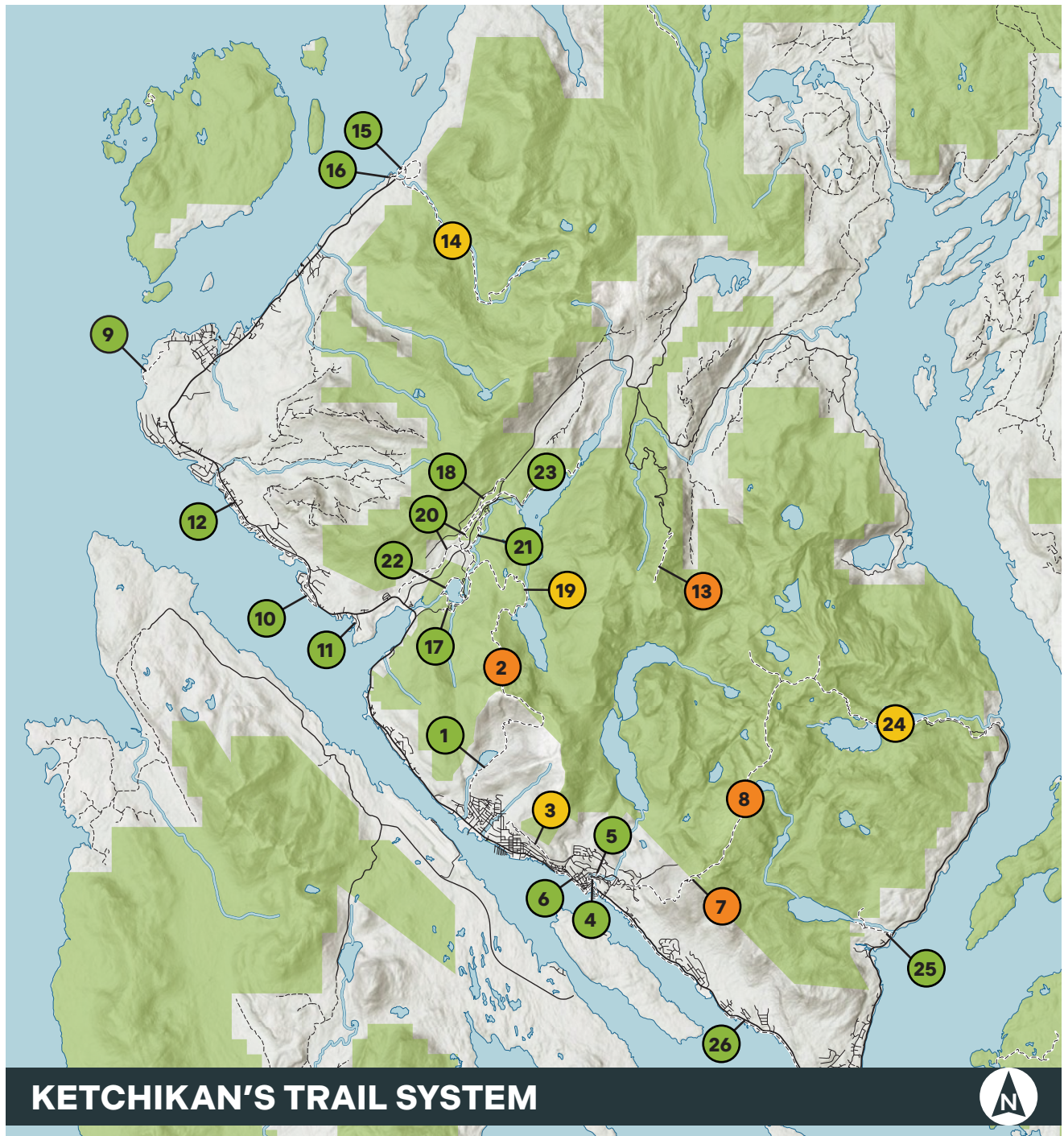
- **Easy Route:** the route is mostly level with short uphill/downhill sections. Tread surface is in excellent condition, and is usually gravel or boardwalk. No major navigational difficulties or hazards exist.
- **More Difficult Route:** the route may have some longer uphill/downhill sections. Tread is in good to fair condition, usually gravel or boardwalk with intermittent natural tread. Short sections may have navigational difficulties or hazards.
- **Most Difficult Route:** the route may be steep with extended uphill/downhill sections. Tread is poor to non-existent. Long sections involve navigational difficulties or hazards.

- 1 **Carlanna Lake Trail**  
Length: 1.8 miles (one way)
- 2 **Minerva Mountain Trail**  
Length: 8.5 miles (one way)
- 3 **Rainbird Trail**  
Length: 1.3 miles (one way)
- 4 **Married Man's Trail**  
Length: 0.2 miles (one way)
- 5 **Schoenbar Trail**  
Length: 0.25 miles (one way)
- 6 **Waterfront Promenade**  
Length: 1.3 miles (one way)
- 7 **Deer Mountain Trail**  
Length: 2.75 miles (one way)
- 8 **Deer Mountain To Silvis Lakes Traverse**  
Length: 13.75 miles (one way)
- 9 **Coast Guard Beach Trail**  
Length: 1.0 miles (one way)
- 10 **Totem Bight State Historical Park Trail**  
Length: 0.5 miles (one way)
- 11 **Refuge Cove Trail**  
Length: 0.25 miles (one way)
- 12 **North Tongass Roadside Trail**  
Length: 2.9 miles (one way)
- 13 **Dude Mountain Trail**  
Length: 1.6 miles (one way)



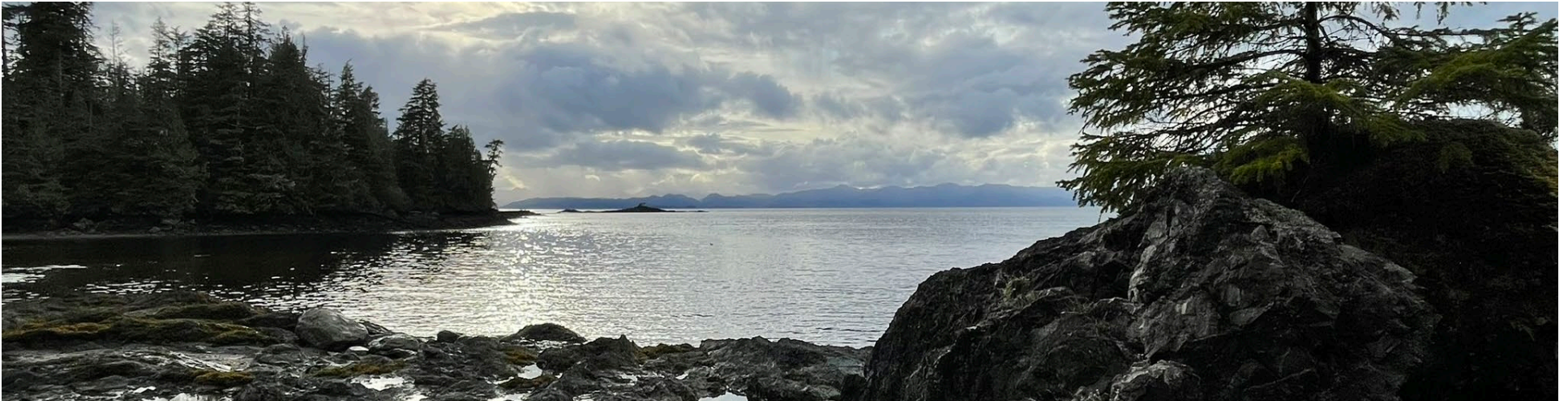
An inventory of trails and destinations accessible by road, boat, or float plane in the Ketchikan-Misty Fjords Ranger District.

- 14 Lunch Creek Trail**  
Length: 4.8 miles (one way)
- 15 Lunch Falls Trail**  
Length: 0.75 miles (one way)
- 16 Hollow Cedar Beach Access Trail**  
Length: 500 feet (one way)
- 17 Frog Pond Trail**  
Length: 0.3 miles (one way)
- 18 Salvage Trail**  
Length: 1.6 miles (one way)
- 19 Perseverance Trail**  
Length: 2.6 miles (one way)
- 20 Pipeline Trail**  
Length: 2.5 miles (one way)
- 21 Ward Creek Trail**  
Length: 1.5 miles (one way), 2.0 miles (one way including spurs)
- 22 Ward Lake Nature Trail**  
Length: 1.5 miles (one way)
- 23 Connell Lake Trail**  
Length: 2.1 miles (one way)
- 24 Silvis Lakes Trail**  
Length: 2.0 miles to Lower Silvis, 3.0 miles to Upper Silvis Lakes (one way)
- 25 Whitman Trail**  
Length: 0.8 miles (one way), Achilles Diversion is additional 0.5 miles (one way)
- 26 Joseph C. Williams, Sr. Coastal Trail**  
Length: 4.3 miles from Coast Guard Base to Mountain Point (one way)



# COMMUNITY VISION

To establish a comprehensive and interconnected trail system that enhances recreational opportunities and destinations, promotes healthy lifestyles, and preserves Ketchikan's natural beauty for generations to come.



The community vision acts as a compass for the Trails Master Plan, ensuring that future work to Ketchikan's trail system will align with the community's aspirations and values. By actively involving residents in the process, through surveys and open house meetings, the plan reflects their needs and priorities. The collaborative approach to developing the Trails Master Plan fosters a sense of ownership and promotes community support and long-term stewardship of the trails.

The community vision will provide an adaptable framework for decision-making that promotes the long-term stability of trails and ensures they are valued, utilized, and protected by the community. It demonstrates strong community support and alignment with local goals and can strengthen funding applications and increase the likelihood of securing resources for its implementation.

Ultimately, grounding this trails plan in a community vision will create a valuable asset that enhances the quality of life for all residents, meets the current and future needs of the community, and fosters a stronger, more connected community.

The community vision is broken down into vision elements that were discussed with or heard from the community. These vision elements outline a trail system that will foster **community-wide investment in trails**, offer a **diversity of destinations and experiences**, establish a **connected network of trails**, and encourage **collaborative planning for a regional trail system**.

1

## Community-Wide Investment in Trails

Ketchikan's trails are championed by the community and agency partners, and supported by a strong and stable volunteer base.

2

## Diversity of Destinations and Experiences

Ketchikan's trails and trailheads provide for a broad range of interests and abilities, encouraging use by a wide community cross-section.

3

## Connected Network of Trails

Ketchikan's trail network is expansive and well-connected, with a variety of route types and accessibility options.

4

## Collaborative Planning for a Regional Trail System

Ketchikan's trail network is a product of long-standing and well-fostered partnerships and relationships among Ketchikan's various land agencies.



# COMMUNITY SURVEY

## SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

The community survey was developed by the Borough and received 69 responses. Survey data reveals a significant disparity in perceived trail availability across the four regions within the Borough that were identified in the survey (North Tongass, City of Ketchikan (City), South Tongass, and Gravina Island). The North Tongass shows the closest vote, with a slight majority feeling there are enough trails. The City, South Tongass, and Gravina Island all show a strong majority of residents feeling that there are not enough trails. Gravina Island shows the most extreme dissatisfaction with trail availability.

Summary of user satisfaction across the Carlanna Lake Trail, Schoenbar Trail, Rainbird Trail, Whitman Creek Trail, and Coast Guard Beach Trail. Key areas of strength and weakness for each include:

- **Parking and Trailhead Features:** These are common concerns across most trails, frequently cited as areas of dissatisfaction.
- **Connectivity:** Connectivity to surrounding transportation networks is a significant concern for Whitman Creek and Coast Guard Beach Trails. Schoenbar Trail and Rainbird Trail are rated positively in this area.
- **Walking Path Conditions:** While Schoenbar and Whitman Creek Trails score well, Rainbird Trail is a notable area of dissatisfaction.
- **Trail Destination and Quality:** Carlanna Lake and Coast Guard Beach Trails are highly rated for their destinations, while Schoenbar Trail is rated poorly in this area.
- **Opportunity for Expansion:** Carlanna Lake and Whitman Creek Trails are rated well for expansion potential.

Top recreational activities identified through the survey include:

- Picnicking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, and backpacking are consistently popular activities in all regions.
- Subsistence harvesting is important in North Tongass, South Tongass, and Gravina Island, suggesting a need to support and maintain access for this activity.



**Better trail markers and maintenance**

Low priority recreational activities include:

- Responses in the survey ranked all-terrain vehicles (ATV) as a low priority for trail development; however, this may be due to a lack of engagement from the ATV community. ATV-related recreation is apparent throughout the Borough, with evidence that recreational areas are being maintained by users for access.
- Winter activities like sledding, cross-country skiing, and ice skating are generally less popular, likely due to a lack of suitable terrain or weather conditions.

Key takeaways from these survey results include:

- The Borough should prioritize developing and maintaining infrastructure and resources that support picnicking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, and backpacking.
- Consider the needs of subsistence harvesters.
- There is little demand for ATV-related activities, winter sports, and swimming. This should be considered when allocating resources and planning recreational development.



As many loop trails as possible

Sidewalk connections downtown

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

A public open house was hosted in Ketchikan on February 1, 2025, gathered resident feedback on local trails, revealing a strong desire for improved maintenance and expanded trail options. Participants reviewed current trails, offered suggestions, and mapped desired routes, while a comment collector gathered further input.

Key concerns centered on the **poor condition of existing trails**, the **lack of basic trailhead amenities** (restrooms, signage), and **overcrowding due to tour groups**. Residents strongly advocated for **loop trails**, **better connectivity between areas**, and **improved accessibility** for various activities like kayaking and mountain biking. A trail to Black Sands Beach was highly desired.

Concerns were also raised regarding the **environmental impact of increased trail use**, the need for **cooperation with private landowners**, and the importance of **public awareness and communication** regarding trail planning. **Safety and security issues**, including human waste, encampments, and vandalism, were also highlighted.

Overall, the public emphasized the need for **well-maintained, accessible, and connected trails with better amenities and less overcrowding**, along with **greater transparency and information sharing** about trail management.

Viewing platform on the south end of the Rainbird Trail



# GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goals, policies, and actions are fundamental to a successful trails plan. They provide a framework for the planning process and its implementation and will act as a basis for measuring the success of the trails plan. Clearly articulated goals and objectives can help build consensus among stakeholders, including community members, government agencies, and interest groups.

## GOAL 2.3

Enhance trails and facilities to support community and family gatherings, organized events, and workforce and economic development opportunities.

### POLICY

1. Ensure that trails and facilities support organized events. This may include wider trails, more diverse route types and route lengths, staging areas, or emergency vehicle access.
2. Enhance primary trailheads to act as community hubs. This may include facilities to encourage gathering such as picnic tables, benches, shelters, playgrounds, and restrooms.

### PLANNING

1. Partner with local community colleges, vocational schools, or workforce development organizations to offer training programs in trails construction and maintenance.

## GOAL 2.4

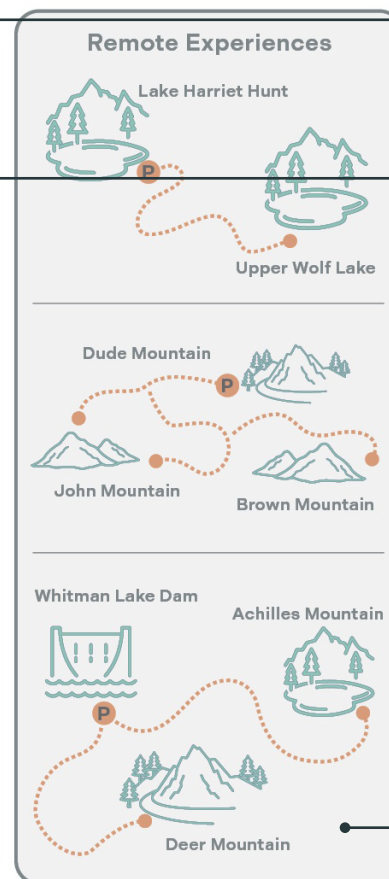
Expand trail facilities to offer a wide variety of remote experiences.

### PLANNING

1. Assess the feasibility of ridgeline connections to various mountain peaks, lakes, and existing destination points.
2. Evaluate a potential trail alignment from Bostwick Lake to Little Bostwick Lake and Bostwick Inlet.

### ACTIONS

1. Construct a trail connection to the south end of Bostwick Lake with a fishing pier/boat launch dock. *See recommended actions.*
2. Develop a trail from Gravina Island Road to access Black Sands Beach State Park and Blank Inlet. *See recommended actions.*
3. Advocate for recreation access to public land during public comment periods sponsored by other land agencies and where priorities are supported through public comment.



## Goals

Goals articulate the desired outcomes for Ketchikan's trail system. These summarize what the community would like to accomplish.

## Objectives

Objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) steps taken to achieve goals. Three types of objectives are discussed:

**Policy:** The Guiding Framework. Policies define the boundaries within which the plan must operate; guiding principles or a set of rules that direct decision-making and actions.

**Planning:** The Strategic Roadmap. Plans outline the specific steps needed to achieve the objective, while adhering to the established policies.

**Action:** The Execution of the Plan. Specific actions put plans into motion, ensuring that the objective is actively pursued within the defined policy framework.

## Sidebar

Additional information, examples, case studies, or ideas assist in communicating the goals.

# 1. COMMUNITY-WIDE INVESTMENT IN TRAILS

## GOAL 1.1

Support the development of a trail entity whose role is to bring people and financial resources together for trail planning, building, and maintenance.

### PLANNING

1. Assess the feasibility of whether an internally or externally led trail-focused entity best serves the Borough for ongoing trail maintenance and operations.

### ACTIONS

1. Allocate staff, financial, and material resources for trail planning, building, and maintenance.
2. Dedicate a staff member to coordinate volunteer efforts and direct volunteer events.

## GOAL 1.2

Foster community support and investment in maintaining and developing a dynamic trail system.

### POLICY

1. Support a volunteer program that outlines the goals, roles, and responsibilities of the program, clearly defines the positions and tasks required, and has an established system for recruiting, training, and recognizing volunteers.
2. Collaborate with local organizations, environmental groups, schools, and businesses to tap into their networks and resources and provide access to volunteers, funding, and expertise.
3. Emphasize the positive aspects of volunteering to foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie among volunteers and show volunteers how their contributions directly impact the community and the environment.

### Community Trails Group

The Ketchikan Outdoor Recreation and Trails Coalition (KORTC) was a non-profit group created in the late 1990s to facilitate volunteer efforts. After a period of inactivity, the group disbanded in June 17, 2024.

Having a community group to partner for the long-term development and maintenance is imperative for the success of Ketchikan's trail system. A community trails group could assist the Borough with:

#### Trail Planning and Development

- Conduct and maintain an annual inventory of trails and conditions.
- Support the Borough in the development of Trail Management Objectives (TMO).
- Facilitate community reporting on hazardous trail conditions.
- Coordinate volunteers to perform trail maintenance.

#### Funding and Partnerships

- Act as a convener and facilitator for trail planning efforts.
- Assist in the application for grant funds.
- Track volunteer hours for use as local match for grant applications.

#### Routine and Deferred Maintenance

- Provide training, coordination, and tools for volunteers to perform trail maintenance.
- Reduce Borough costs and burden for trail maintenance, creating a more sustainable trail system.

## 2. DIVERSITY OF DESTINATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

### GOAL 2.1

Supply a variety of trail types to create a trail system that will suit the needs of the entire community, including shared-use pathways, paved paths for walking, unpaved trails for hiking, and dedicated bike lanes.

#### POLICY

1. Adequate trail facilities are available to ensure that community members of all abilities have access to and use of trails freely and safely.
2. Ensure each trail experience or destination type has an accessible version (overlook, viewpoint, loop trail, etc.). Not all trails and destinations can be accessible, but there are ideally other options that can provide similar experiences.
3. Provide trailheads with adequate parking, facilities, and signage, including information on trail opportunities and condition expectation.

#### PLANNING

1. Update the **1984 Comprehensive Pedestrian and Bikeways Plan** and address an increasing demand for alternative bikeable networks.
2. Plan for shorter, easier trail loops suitable for families with young children, seniors, or people with mobility limitations, that are located near trailheads or within parks.
3. Identify potential trail corridors to improve access to recreation in urban areas and provide high quality visitor experiences in proximity to Downtown Ketchikan.
4. Engage the community to conduct planning efforts in areas of emergent recreation or that contain high value recreation, such as the Dog Park, Ward Creek, Salvage Trail, or Ward Lake areas in the near term or George Inlet and Shelter Cove Road in the long term.

#### ACTION

1. Explore options to develop a shared-use pathway in Southern Ketchikan connected to various neighborhoods and public facilities to serve as an alternative transportation corridor to the Tongass Highway shared-use pathway. See recommended actions.

### Sitka Cross Trail

Sitka's Cross Trail started as a hiking trail built by displaced loggers in 1998 when the Sawmill Cove sawmill was shut down. Since 2006, Sitka Trail Works and the City and Borough of Sitka have worked to convert this trail into an eight foot wide multi-modal pathway that links to other trail and provides alternative access points to local neighborhoods, visitor destinations, schools, and the downtown core.



The trail is up to 8 miles long with the intention to expand it from end to end of the road system. Benches are placed at regular intervals and scenic spots and features a variety of different ecosystems throughout the eight mile route.

Source: Information provided by Sitka Trail Works (<https://sitkatrailworks.org/sitkas-cross-trail/>).



## GOAL 2.3

Enhance trails and facilities to support community and family gatherings, organized events, and workforce and economic development opportunities.

### POLICY

1. Ensure that trails and facilities support organized events. This may include wider trails, more diverse route types and route lengths, staging areas, or emergency vehicle access.
2. Enhance primary trailheads to act as community hubs. This may include facilities to encourage gathering such as picnic tables, benches, shelters, playgrounds, and restrooms.

### PLANNING

1. Partner with local community colleges, vocational schools, or workforce development organizations to offer training programs in trails construction and maintenance.

## GOAL 2.4

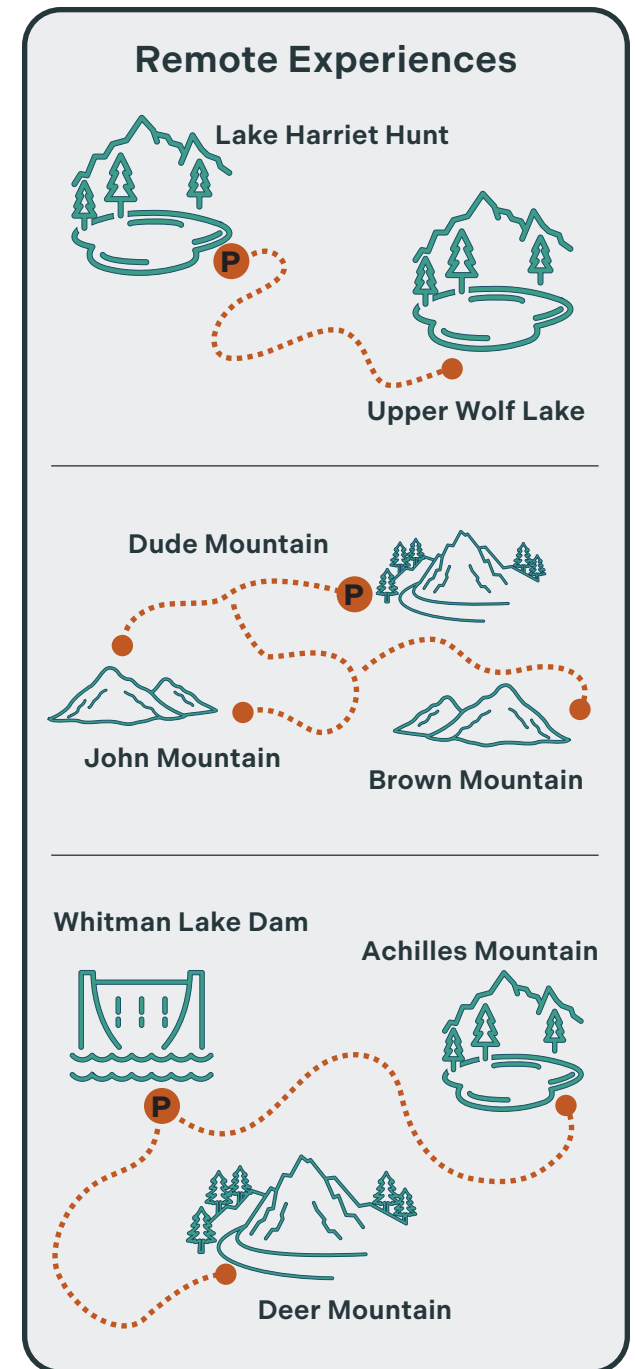
Expand trail facilities to offer a wide variety of remote experiences.

### PLANNING

1. Assess the feasibility of ridgeline connections to various mountain peaks, lakes, and existing destination points.
2. Evaluate a potential trail alignment from Bostwick Lake to Little Bostwick Lake and Bostwick Inlet.

### ACTIONS

1. **Construct a trail connection to the south end of Bostwick Lake with a fishing pier/boat launch dock.** See recommended actions.
2. **Develop a trail from Gravina Island Road to access Black Sands Beach State Park and Blank Inlet.** See recommended actions.
3. Advocate for recreation access to public land during public comment periods sponsored by other land agencies and where priorities are supported through public comment.





## 3. CONNECTED NETWORK OF TRAILS

### GOAL 3.1

Provide a variety of route types, lengths, and configurations.

#### POLICY

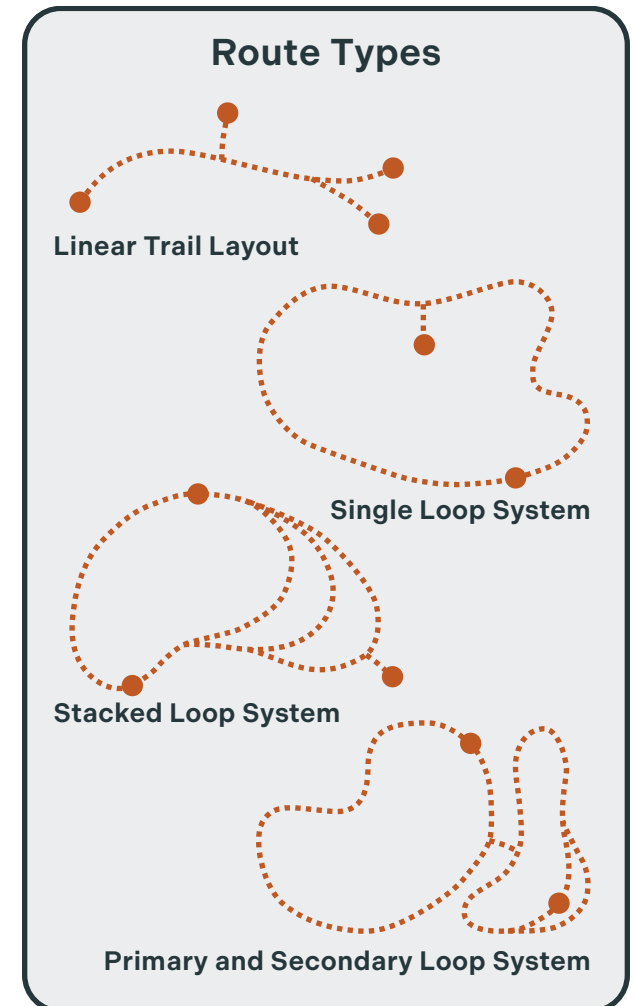
1. Prioritize the development of trails and trail extensions that improve connections within and between existing trails.

#### PLANNING

1. Assess the feasibility of a trail loop from the Copper Ridge neighborhood to Minerva Mountain and connecting to Carlanna Lake.
2. Evaluate potential routes to connect the Rainbird Trail to the Carlanna Lake Trail and the Copper Ridge Neighborhood. *See recommended actions.*

#### ACTION

1. Extend the Carlanna Lake Trail around the west side of Carlanna Lake to create a single loop trail route. *See recommended actions.*
2. Extend the Coast Guard Beach trail to connect with South Point Higgins Road to create a point-to-point or out-and-back trail route. *See recommended actions.*
3. Connect existing forestry roads in the D-1 – Whipple Creek area to create a large trail system of looped trails. *See recommended actions.*



## GOAL 3.2

Connect neighborhoods to trails, parks, schools, and other destinations. Provide access to safe transportation alternatives to promote physical activity and health for Ketchikan's residents.

### POLICY

1. Require neighborhood planning to develop neighborhood greenway connections when within 500 feet of an existing trail network, or to include platted public access routes when within 500 feet of an identified future trail.
2. Connect trails to existing or planned community facilities, including parks, libraries, community centers, and schools to create a network of gathering places and to improve neighborhood access to these amenities. *See Transportation; Strategy 5.b. in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan Core Plan.*
3. Improve urban trail connections and offer a variety of accessible trail options and destinations within a mile of the City Center.
4. Coordinate transit stops and trails to establish connecting pedestrian corridors.
5. Establish design standards for neighborhood roads to ensure presence of pedestrian amenities connecting transit, neighborhood facilities, and trail egress.

### PLANNING

1. Coordinate with Department Of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) the completion of a continuous highway pedestrian pathway, extending the walkway to connect non-contiguous segments during highway upgrade projects, located along the waterfront where possible, of a width sufficient to accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians. Extant segments consist of the Herring Cove Bridge; Joseph C. Williams Sr. Coastal Trail (Mountain Point to Surf St., South Saxman to City Limits); North Tongass Roadside Trail (Refuge Cove to Whipple Creek); and North Point Higgins Road.
2. Identify access improvements from existing neighborhoods to the trail system or community facilities, reducing barriers to safe transportation and recreation amenities in Ketchikan.
3. Partner with the City, transit departments, school district, property owners, business associations, civic or neighborhood groups, or community citizens to improve pedestrian routes and connections.

### Plan for Connected Neighborhoods



### Enhancing Pedestrian Connectivity

Reinforce Ketchikan's sense of place and beautify key entry points and travel routes.



Prioritize pedestrian use and highlight significant areas with interpretive signs or public art.

Ensure ample pedestrian lighting, street furniture, and open spaces to further contribute to a welcoming and vibrant environment.





## 4. COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR A REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM

### GOAL 4.1

Promote and foster long-standing relationships with other land agencies and community partners.

#### POLICY

1. Foster inter-agency and public-to-agency communication for the development and maintenance of Ketchikan's trail system.

#### PLANNING

1. Prior to any trail expansion or development, coordinate with agency partners to determine who will be responsible for maintenance, how maintenance will be performed, anticipated maintenance costs, and possible funding sources for maintenance.

#### ACTION

1. Develop Cooperative Management Agreements (CMA) when a project spans two or more land agencies or when working with other cooperators, including other state or federal agencies, trail user groups, or private groups.
2. Secure all necessary authorizations to perform work on areas within the Borough's responsibility.
3. Establish annual public/agency meetings regarding Ketchikan's trail system and maintain detailed documents of processes and meetings.

### Cooperative Management Agreement

CMA's are formal partnerships between diverse entities, including governmental agencies (federal, state, municipal) and private landowners, including Alaska Native organizations. Their core purpose is to collaboratively manage shared resources or land.

Recreational CMA's optimize public access, ensure facility maintenance, and promote sustainable use of natural resources. By fostering these partnerships, CMAs enhance and sustain recreational opportunities across Alaska's varied landscapes and ownerships. They are essential for effective management of public lands and facilities, achieved by:

- **Shared Management:** Enabling joint operation, maintenance, and oversight of recreational sites and facilities.
- **Enhanced Opportunities & Access:** Leading to improved services, coordinated land use, and the critical bridging of staffing and funding gaps.
- **Integrated Planning:** Facilitating collaborative decision-making processes that result in more consistent and seamless experiences for recreational users.

## GOAL 4.2

Coordinate with agency partners to standardize public recreational access to popular destinations, water access points, and trail corridors.

### POLICY

1. Coordinate with agency partners for access management and resource protection through land acquisition, conservation easements, public land dedication, leases and licenses, or access agreements.
2. Coordinate with agency partners to develop clear and consistent policies to provide sustainable forest recreation opportunities including trails and recreational use of forest roads in conjunction with strategies outlined in the *2020 Alaska Forest Action Plan* and *Alaska's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*.

### PLANNING

1. Audit existing trail signs used in Ketchikan to develop a strategy to replace or adopt signage standards to ensure there is consistent signage used across the Borough.
2. Engage the community to build off the Gravina Island Planning Series and Coastal Zone Management Plan to revise routes as necessary and develop a Gravina Island Recreation Study that identifies potential recreational resources and opportunities on Gravina Island.

## GOAL 4.3

Involve community groups, land trusts, or conservation organizations to maintain, enhance, and promote public access to recreation lands.

### POLICY

1. Partner with Land Trusts and Conservation Organizations to acquire and manage land for recreational purposes. Priority areas include Coast Guard Beach and Grant Cove.
2. Seek grants and donations from foundations, corporations, and individuals to support access projects.
3. Partner with organizations like trail groups, outdoor clubs, or conservation organizations to manage access and maintain trails.

### Case Study

#### Rosie Creek Forestry Road System Enhancements – A Model for Collaborative Recreation and Forestry

In 2021, recreational upgrades were completed for the Rosie Creek forestry road system in the Tanana Valley State Forest. This project illustrates a partnership between working forests and recreational use, demonstrating how the needs of both can provide mutual benefits.

#### Project Implementation

A \$100,000 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant through Alaska State Parks and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) was secured, with an additional \$20,000 match from the Department of Forestry (DOF), with additional benefit from cooperation with the Interior Alaska Trails and Parks Foundation.

The combined funding facilitated crucial improvements, including brush clearing, regrading, and resurfacing of roads; construction of trailhead parking; installation of an informational kiosk with maps and land management details; wayfinding signs; and GPS-enabled map.

#### Outcomes and Benefits

The roads continue to support forest management activities, with the recent upgrades supporting and encouraging popular activities such as hiking, trail running, mountain biking, ATV riding, skiing, snowshoeing, e-biking, horseback riding, and snowmachining.

#### Conclusion

The Rosie Creek project demonstrates the positive synergy achievable between recreation and forestry through collaboration, delivering long-term benefits and improved access to the Tanana Valley State Forest for both resource management and public enjoyment.

*Source: Information provided by the State of Alaska press release, October 1, 2021.*

## GOAL 4.4

Pursue a policy related to commercial recreation to properly manage and mitigate impacts of increasing tourism-based activities on Borough-managed lands.

### POLICY

1. Consider the development of commercial use recreation permits and fees for Borough public open space and trails used by tour operators and their clients.
2. Work in partnership with the cruise ship industry and pursue funding from cruise ship passenger vessel fees for parks, playgrounds, and trails used by cruise ship visitors.

### PLANNING

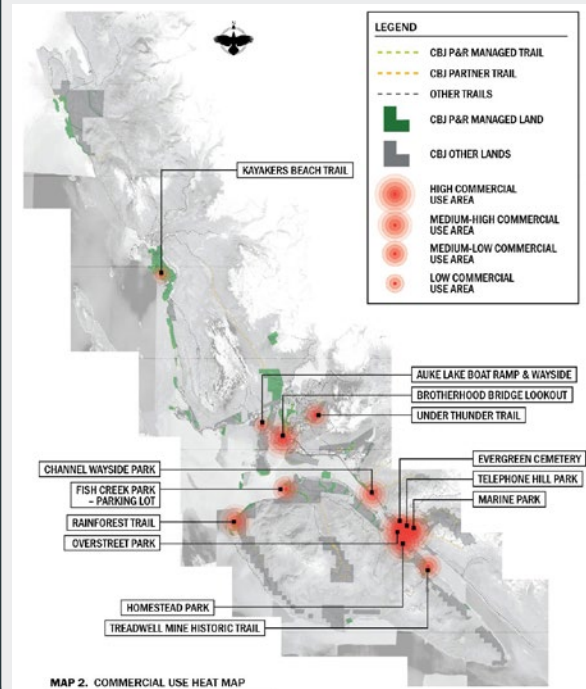
1. Conduct a Commercial Recreation Use Study to manage commercial use on Borough-managed parks and trails, establish priority trails for promoting commercial use, generate potential income through commercial use permits and fees, and manage conflicts between commercial and non-commercial uses. *See Strategy 1.4.6 in Ketchikan's Tourism Strategy and Economic Development; Strategy 2 in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan Core Plan.*
2. Collaborate with other land agencies on best practices for commercial recreation to protect the environment, ensure user safety, and manage ethical conduct. Clearly define jurisdictional boundaries and standardize reporting requirements.

### ACTION

1. Establish requirements for other land agencies to obtain a permit or enter into a formal agreement with the Borough before conducting commercial recreation operations on Borough lands.

## Juneau Commercial Recreation Use Study

In 2024, the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) conducted a Commercial Recreation Use Analysis to update permit guidelines for commercial use on CBJ lands managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. An inventory of CBJ-managed parks and trails was conducted, historical data and local surveys were analyzed, and the local community and tour operators were engaged throughout the process. The analysis dedicated certain parks and trails for commercial use and identified group sizes and daily group limits, site capacities, restricted days, operating hours, intensities of use, and any additional restrictions on parks and trails open to commercial use.



# GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following section makes recommendations on trail development, trailhead, and signage standards and outlines best management practices for trail design and maintenance.

## TRAIL DESIGN GUIDELINES

### TRAIL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

It is recommended that the Borough follow the trail classification system developed by the State of Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) and detailed in the *Alaska State Parks Trail Management Handbook* (Handbook). It is adapted from the National Trail Classification System adopted by the USFS. The improvements identified in the section use these standards to outline the desired class that the trail will be developed to or updated and maintained to.

The trail classification system in the Handbook identifies five trail classes that range from least developed to highly developed and three standard trail types (terra trail, snow trail, and water trail). Examples of these trails can be found in the handbook.

- Trail Class 1: Minimal / Undeveloped Trail
- Trail Class 2: Simple / Minor Development Trail
- Trail Class 3: Developed / Improved Trail
- Trail Class 4: Highly Developed Trail
- Trail Class 5: Fully Developed Trail

### PRELIMINARY ROUTE ANALYSIS

A preliminary route analysis might be considered for new, complicated trail routes that cross multiple land boundaries and have various desired connection points to neighborhoods, community facilities, or the existing trail networks. A preliminary route analysis will define positive or negative control points, address land ownership, and identify agency partners prior to conducting a Design Narrative.

### DESIGN NARRATIVE

The USFS uses Design Narratives in their planning and design process to communicate the design intent and to justify the proposed design decisions. It is a critical tool for thoughtful and well-reasoned development of recreation sites and facilities that balance user needs with resource protection and align with the agency's mission and values.

The focus of a Design Narrative is the overarching vision, goals, and justification of a proposed trail or significant re-design of an existing trail. It explains the 'why' behind the trail's existence, its intended user experience, and how it fits into the broader landscape and management objectives. A Design Narrative has a broad scope, encompassing the trail's purpose, intended users, desired experience, connection to other features, environmental considerations, aesthetic goals, and sometimes even preliminary ideas about alignment and design elements.

It includes the trail’s objectives, target user groups, desired experience, connections to other trails or features, ecological considerations, cultural resource sensitivity, preliminary ideas about trail character, and how it contributes to the overall site area or area vision. A Design Narrative will occur early in the planning process, before detailed route assessments are completed.

It is recommended that the Borough utilize Design Narrative’s for popular recreation areas or newly proposed trail routes, such as the Rainbird Trail or the planned Ketchikan Long Trail. This will ensure any future work in these areas meet community needs and are managed sustainably. This process will:

- Identify public needs related to safety, access, and maintenance;
- Establish clear design criteria;
- Explore and evaluate alternative trail routes;
- Develop detailed trail design guidelines;
- Determine necessary trail features and amenities;
- Outline a comprehensive management plan, including administrative considerations; and
- Provide detailed construction cost estimates.

Examples of successful Design Narratives, such as those for the Gavan Trail in Sitka, the Sunnahae Trail on Prince of Wales Island, and the Portage Curve Multi-modal Connector in Southcentral Alaska, demonstrate the value of this approach in guiding trail development and management.

## ROUTE ASSESSMENT

A Route Assessment is the evaluation of a specific potential or existing trail alignment to analyze physical characteristic of the land along a proposed route or the current condition of an existing trail. It’s purpose is to gather detailed information about the physical characteristics of a potential or existing trail corridor to inform route selection, design details, construction methods, maintenance needs, and potential environmental impacts.

A Route Assessment includes detailed information about topography, soils, vegetation, hydrology, potential hazards, existing infrastructure, access points, potential environmental impacts, cultural resources along the route, and feasibility of construction and maintenance. For new trails, a Route Assessment typically occurs after the initial concept and narrative have been developed, to inform the detailed design and construction phases. It can also be done for existing trails to assess their condition and maintenance needs.

## COMPARISON TABLE

FEATURE	PRELIMINARY ROUTE ANALYSIS	DESIGN NARRATIVE	ROUTE ASSESSMENT
Primary Goal	Initial assessment for complicated trail routes	Explain the trail’s concept and justification	Evaluate the physical characteristics of the trail alignment
Scope	Broad (feasibility of potential trail route)	Broad (purpose, users, experience, context)	Narrow (physical attributes of a specific route)
Focus	Feasibility of trail route and who to involve in the process	Why the trail is being proposed/ redesigned	What the land is like along a potential/ existing route
Timing	Prior to planning phase on complicated routes	Early planning stages	After the initial concept, to inform detailed design
Output	Agency partners, control points, and land ownership	Conceptual document outlining goals and principles	Detailed report on route characteristics and feasibility

## TRAIL MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

TMOs are essential for effective trail stewardship, defining the purpose, use, and maintenance of both planned and existing trails. They guide development, management, condition assessments, and reporting. A comprehensive TMO specifies intended user types, anticipated usage levels, and required maintenance. For existing trails, TMOs serve as a benchmark for evaluating management effectiveness and adherence to standards. To ensure consistent and thorough management, it is recommended that the Borough adopt the Handbook's TMO development process and complete TMOs for all popular Borough-maintained trails.

## SUSTAINABLE TRAIL DESIGN

Sustainable trail design is crucial for creating trails that withstand Southeast Alaska's harsh environment, minimize maintenance, and protect natural resources. The Borough should prioritize sustainable design principles during new trail construction, rerouting, and maintenance to ensure durability, reduce long-term costs, and preserve the environment. These principles include aligning trails with natural contours, accommodating anticipated use without excessive erosion, and providing safe and enjoyable experiences for all users. Essential components of sustainable trail design in Ketchikan include:

- **Water Management:** Given the region's high rainfall, managing water flow is paramount. Trails should incorporate grade reversals, outcrops, and gentle curves to facilitate natural drainage and prevent erosion. Fall line trails should be avoided.
- **Trail Slope:** Trail grades should ideally not exceed half the slope of the surrounding hillside, with an overall grade generally at or below 15%. Steeper sections, when unavoidable, should be short and reinforced with erosion control measures.
- **Durable Trail Surfaces:** Ketchikan's soft, wet soils necessitate durable trail surfaces. Gravel, boardwalks, or geocell materials should be used where appropriate to ensure trail longevity and year-round usability.

The Handbook's Section 4: Sustainable Trail Design Framework, provides detailed guidelines for sustainable trail development. The Borough can use this information as a resource for developing and maintaining trails in Ketchikan, adapting its recommendations to the specific conditions of Southeast Alaska.

## TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Trail maintenance directly impacts user safety, protects the natural environment by preventing erosion, ensures a positive visitor experience, and extends the lifespan of the trail by addressing damage and maintaining proper drainage, ultimately making the trail more accessible and enjoyable for all users. Public feedback identified a general desire to see Ketchikan's trail system maintained before any expansion occurs.

It is essential that the Borough work with agency and community partners to conduct a full inventory of borough-managed and borough-partnered trails to develop a priority list of deferred maintenance items and identify responsible agencies for conducting maintenance.

### Best Management Practices



#### Inventory Asset Tracking

Develop trail inventory asset tracking that allows extraction of ongoing maintenance costs and maintenance staff needs, and accumulative deferred maintenance.

#### Inspection Checklist

Create an inspections checklist of all the trail elements and identified maintenance actions needed to keep facilities safe and functional and conduct regular inspections to identify ongoing maintenance priorities.



#### User Reporting

Develop a mechanism that allows for user reporting on observed defects or hazards on the trail.

#### Request Tracking

Track requests made through routine inspections or user reporting and manage through a maintenance management system to better prioritize, schedule, and track the status of maintenance items.



#### Volunteer Coordination

Coordinate with volunteers to assist with maintenance. Track volunteer hours spent to maintain trails to document for use as part of local 'match' for grant applications.

# TRAILHEAD GUIDELINES

## TRAILHEAD STANDARDS

Trailheads are essential public access points for trails, requiring early and effective planning that considers user needs, land ownership, development limits, and funding. Good design enhances user experience and can showcase local culture through interpretive elements. Key design considerations include access management to ensure safe transitions and deterring prohibited uses while allowing maintenance and emergency vehicle access. Clear and comprehensive signage, including trail names, wayfinding, maps, and rules, is paramount for user orientation and safety. Implementing a standardized three-tiered system of primary, secondary, and tertiary trailheads is recommended for consistency and effective management across the trail network.

### Primary Trailhead

These are main entry points, acting as community hubs with parking (min. 8 vehicles), washrooms, wayfinding, garbage, dog bags, seating, picnic tables (optional), and landscaping. They also feature trail info and optional bike racks and pop-up retail.

- **Required Trailhead Features:** Trail information kiosk or board; wayfinding and interpretive signage; parking to accommodate a minimum (8) vehicles; washrooms; garbage receptacles; dog bag dispenser; park furnishings, features, or amenities; naturalization or landscape enhancements.
- **Optional Trailhead Features:** Bike racks; picnic areas; commercial or retail pop-up locations or facilities.

### Secondary Trailhead

These mark trail entries and provide essential information like wayfinding, regulations, and conditions. They have limited parking (min. 2 vehicles), garbage, and optional dog bags, seating, educational signs, and washrooms/ bike racks.

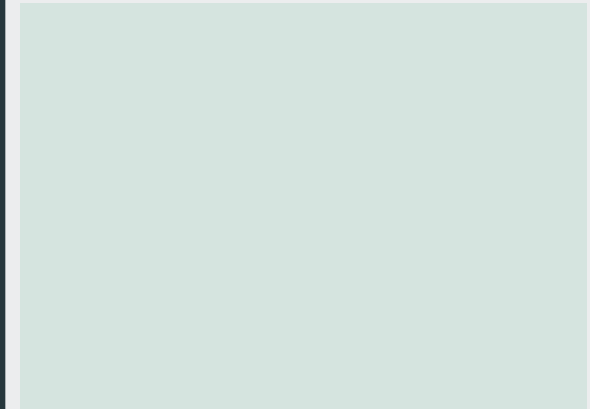
- **Required Trailhead Features:** Trail information kiosk or board; wayfinding signage; parking to accommodate a minimum (2) vehicles; garbage receptacles.
- **Optional Trailhead Features:** Washrooms; dog bag dispenser; park furnishings, features, and amenities; education or interpretive signage; bike racks.

### Tertiary Trailhead

These simply indicate a trail entry point, often with just a marker. They may optionally include limited parking, wayfinding, and basic amenities like a small washroom, garbage, and dog bags.

- **Required Trailhead Features:** Trail identification marker
- **Optional Trailhead Features:** Wayfinding signage; parking; washrooms; garbage receptacles; dog bag dispenser.

## Trailhead Examples



Example of a Primary Trailhead



Example of a Secondary Trailhead



Example of a Tertiary Trailhead

# SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

## EXISTING SIGNAGE

Current Borough facility signs include a park or trail identification sign or an information kiosk. Borough standards for these two sign types are as follows.

### Trail Identification Board

- Mounted on 4X4" or 6X6" treated posts.
- Made from red or yellow cedar 2x boards.
- Include facility name and 'Ketchikan Gateway Borough' at a minimum. Lettering shall be routed with sign machine. Lettering for facility name to be 4" block lettering, 'Ketchikan Gateway Borough' to be 2" block lettering. Lettering shall be painted with black exterior grade paint.
- Sign to be sanded and finished with exterior grade clear polyurethane finish, marine epoxy or equivalent.
- Sign boards to be attached to posts with galvanized carriage bolts, two per end, counter sunk.

### Trail Information Kiosk

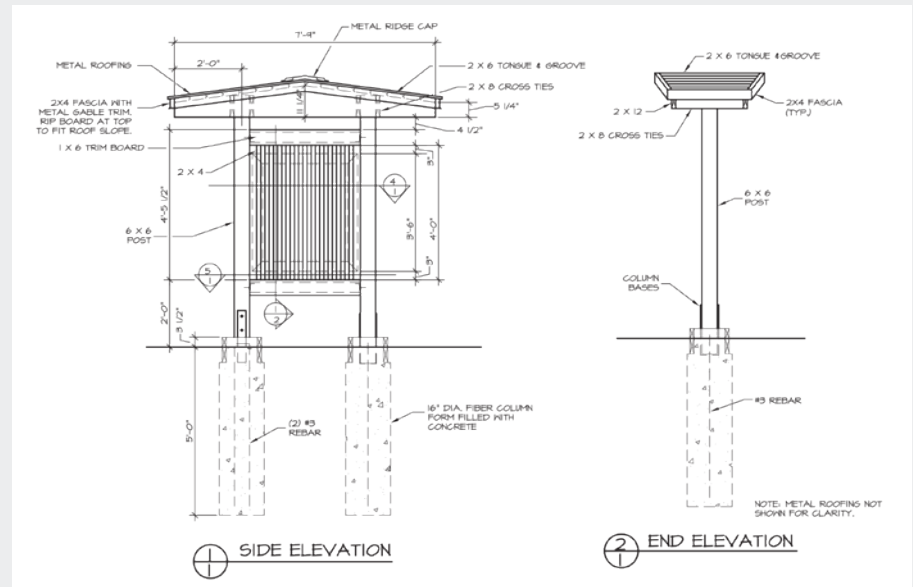
Trail information kiosks are located where historic or cultural information is displayed or where wayfinding is needed. These should be standard for all Borough facilities to create visual continuity.

- Alaska State Parks Type A kiosk as the standard for Borough kiosks.
- Mounted on 6X6" pressure treated posts.
- All wood should be red or yellow cedar or pressure treated.
- Kiosk roof constructed of wood framing and metal roofing.

## Existing Borough Signage Standards



Example of a trail information board with a trail identification sign



Detailed drawings of an Alaska State Parks kiosk

# PROPOSED SIGNAGE FAMILY

It is recommended that the Borough establish a standard signage system for the Borough's parks and trails to ensure that the Borough's parks and trails are safer, more enjoyable, and better managed for the benefit of both residents and visitors.

## Safety

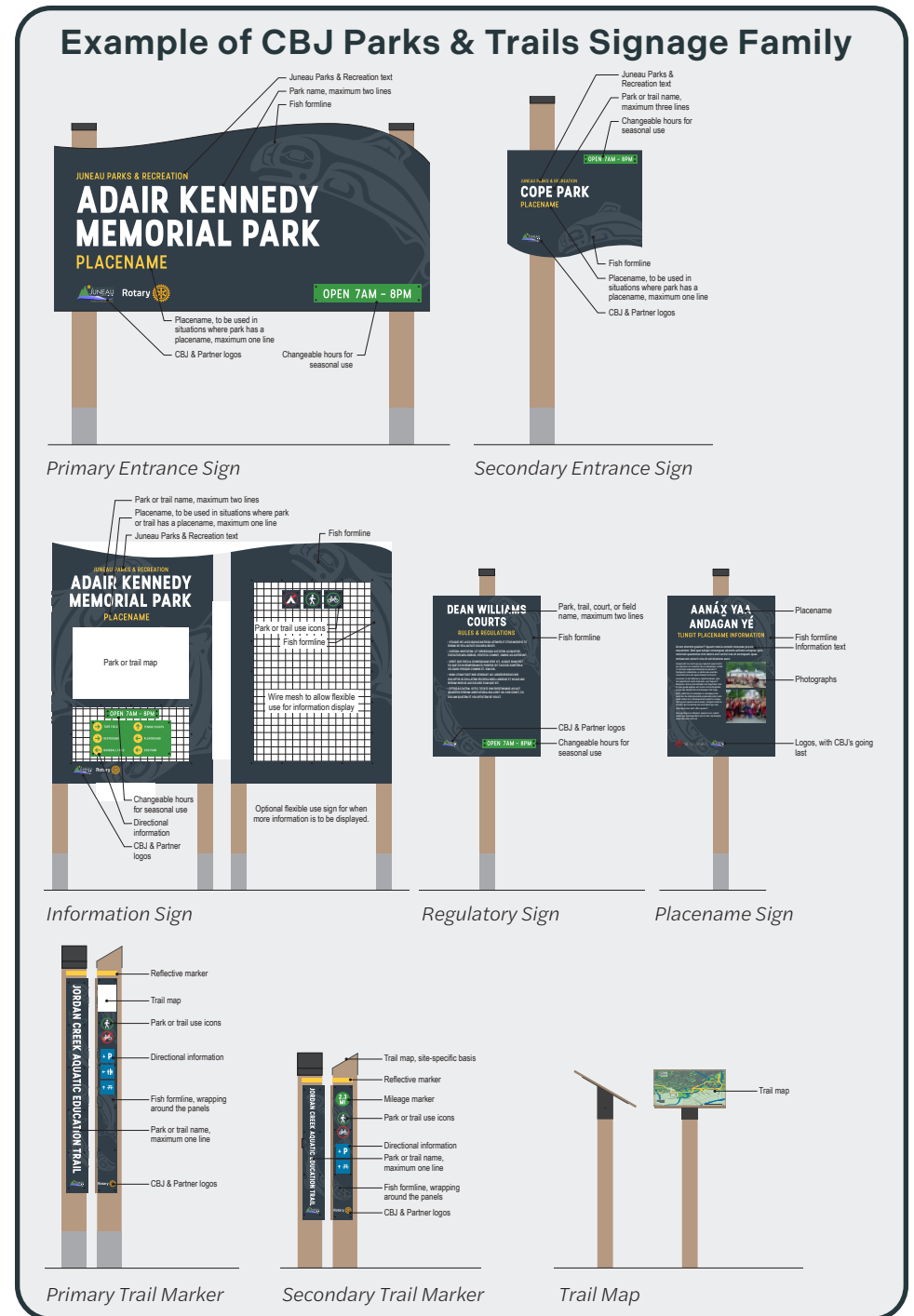
- **Wayfinding:** Clearly marked trails and consistent signage help users stay on designated paths.
- **Hazard Warnings or Emergency Information:** Standard signs can effectively communicate potential dangers such or can include location markers or directions to emergency exits or contact points.
- **Traffic Control:** For shared-use paths, consistent signs help manage different types of users (pedestrians, cyclists), promoting safer interactions.

## Enhanced User Experience:

- **Clarity and Confidence:** Consistent design and placement of signs creates a more enjoyable and less stressful user experience.
- **Ease of Navigation:** Standardized symbols, fonts, and colors allow users to quickly understand directions and information.
- **Accessibility:** Well-designed signage considers users of all abilities, including those with visual impairments or mobility challenges.
- **Encouraging Exploration:** Clear signage can encourage users to explore different trails and areas within the park, knowing they can easily find their way.

## Park Management and Maintenance:

- **Clear Communication of Rules and Regulations:** Standard signs effectively convey park rules, helping to ensure compliance and minimize conflicts.
- **Efficient Maintenance:** Standardized signs are easier and more cost-effective to replace and maintain, as materials and designs are consistent across the system.
- **Data Collection and Planning:** Standardized location markers on signs can aid in data collection for trail usage, maintenance needs, and emergency response planning.



# RECOMMENDED ACTIONS






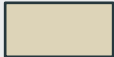
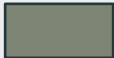
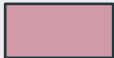



The following section provides a roadmap for key projects to realize the community's vision for the Trails Master Plan. It identifies key actions, responsibilities, timelines, and potential funding sources to guide the development, maintenance, and long-term sustainability of the trails.

The Trails Master Plan proposes eleven actionable recommendations developed through Borough input and community feedback. Successful implementation of this plan will require collaboration with federal, state, and local land management partners, trail user groups, or other private groups such as tourism businesses.




This plan outlines conceptual trail layouts and alignments that will require further refining through a route analysis, design narrative, or route assessments as outlined. These conceptual recommendations should be used to inform decisions about next steps and fundraising, while giving the community of Ketchikan a rallying point and shared vision for the future of trails in their area.

The following actions aim to safeguard popular recreation areas like Coast Guard Beach; enhance destinations such as Carlanna Lake; improve access to remote locations like Black Sands Beach and Bostwick Lake; and expand recreational opportunities in underserved regions, including new trails in the City Center and South Ketchikan.














### LAND OWNERSHIP

	United States Forest Service
	State of Alaska – Department of Natural Resources
	Ketchikan Gateway Borough
	University of Alaska
	Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
	Cape Fox Corporation
	Bureau of Land Management
	City of Ketchikan
	City of Saxman
	United States Coast Guard
	Ketchikan Indian Community

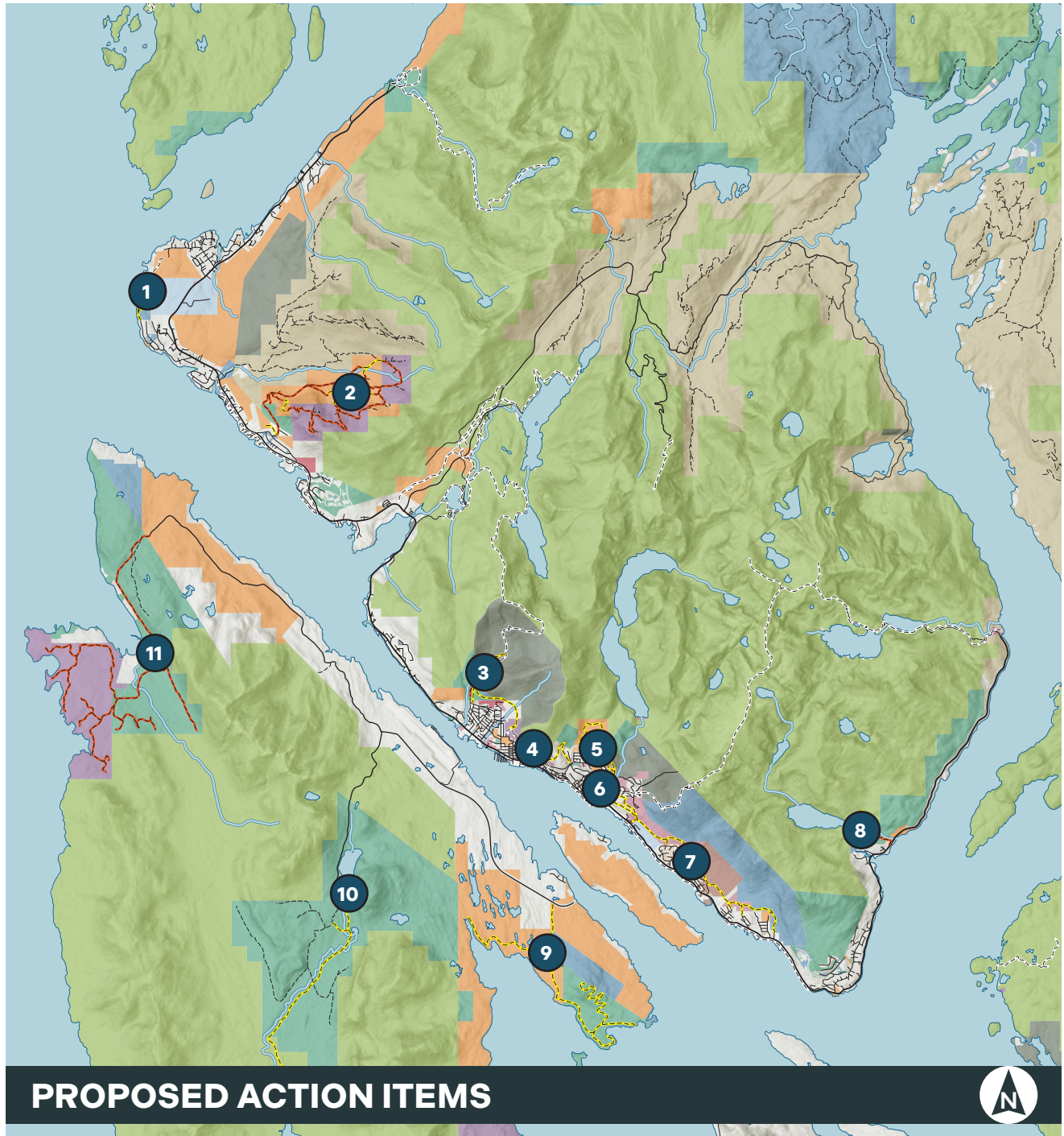
### TRAIL LEGEND

	Existing Trail
	Proposed Trail
	Access Road / Trail

### ICON LEGEND

	Existing Trailhead		Point of Interest
	Primary Trailhead		Picnic Shelter
	Secondary Trailhead		Sleeping Shelter
	Tertiary Trailhead		Campground or Tent Platform
	Overlook		Restroom
	Proposed Overlook		
	Fishing Platform		
	Proposed Fishing Platform		

- 1 Coast Guard Beach**  
Existing Trail Length: 1.0 miles (one way)  
Proposed Trail Extension: 0.85 miles (one way)
- 2 D-1 – Whipple Creek Recreation Area**  
Existing Road Length: 16.0 miles (one way)  
Proposed Road Extension: 2.0 miles (one way)
- 3 Carlanna Lake Trail**  
Existing Trail Length: 1.8 miles (one way)  
Proposed Trail Extension: 1.35 miles (one way)
- 4 Rainbird Trail**  
Existing Trail Length: 1.3 miles (one way)  
Proposed Trail Extension: N/A
- 5 City Center Viewpoint Trail**  
Existing Trail Length: N/A  
Proposed Trail Extension: +/- 2.0 miles (one way)
- 6 Schoenbar Trail**  
Existing Trail Length: 0.25 miles (one way)  
Proposed Trail Extension: N/A
- 7 Whitman Lake Trail**  
Existing Trail Length: 0.8/0.5 miles (one way)  
Proposed Trail Extension: N/A
- 8 Ketchikan Long Trail**  
Existing Trail Length: N/A  
Proposed Trail Extension: +/- 6.0 miles (one way)
- 9 Black Sands State Marine Park Access Trail**  
Existing Trail Length: N/A  
Proposed Trail Extension: +/- 6.0 miles (one way)
- 10 Bostwick Lake Trail**  
Existing Trail Length: N/A  
Proposed Trail Extension: +/- 0.5 miles (one way)
- 11 Gravina Island State Lands Recreation Access**  
Existing Road Length: 21.0 miles (one way)  
Proposed Road Extension: N/A



# 1 COAST GUARD BEACH TRAIL

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Coast Guard Beach trail crosses Borough and Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) land. It offers a diverse recreational experience, featuring secluded campsites nestled in a lush forest and scenic views of Cleveland Peninsula, with glimpses of Prince of Wales Island. Visitors enjoy abundant wildlife viewing and beachcombing.

While low tide allows beach access to South Point Higgins Road, a formal trail connection is currently lacking. Public feedback has highlighted the need for trail maintenance, a designated trail from Coast Guard Beach to South Point Higgins Road, a defined trailhead, and interpretive signage to enhance the visitor experience.

## PUBLIC INPUT

### **Overall Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction:**

Users generally enjoy the quality of the trail destinations, parking availability, and the natural features of the route. Dissatisfaction arises with poor connectivity to other transportation options and inadequate trailhead features, particularly trash management.

**Desired Improvements:** The public desires enhanced trailhead amenities and signage. There's a call for further development at the trail's end near the beach. Better waste management is a priority, with requests for more trash bins. Heavy usage has led to trail degradation, necessitating trail maintenance, including widening the trail, improved drainage, and consideration of gravel surfacing. Connection to South Point Higgins Road is a priority. Specific maintenance items, like broken handrails and downed trees, need to be addressed.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

**Attractive Beach Destination:** Offers a desirable endpoint.  
**Accessible Initial Section:** Welcomes a wider range of users.  
**Rich Natural Resources:** Supports wildlife viewing and subsistence activities  
**Convenient Location:** Situated near residential areas.

### Weaknesses

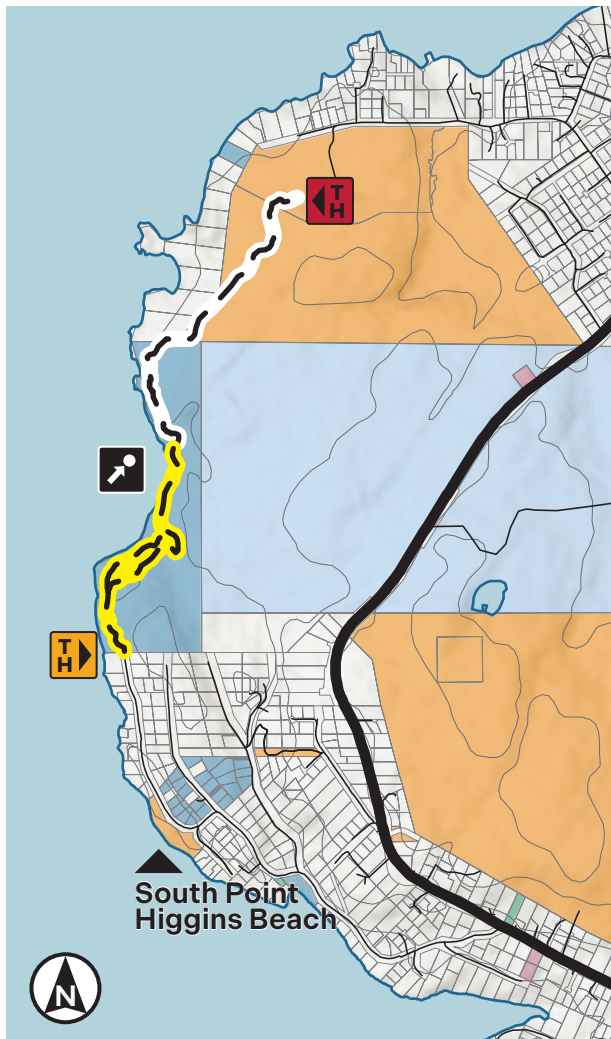
**Steep Descent to Beach:** Limits accessibility beyond the muskeg.  
**Trail Maintenance Deficiencies:** Requires upkeep due to heavy use.  
**Lack of Trailhead and Information:** Causes user confusion.  
**Limited Access from South Point Higgins:** Tidal restrictions and undeveloped access.  
**Erosion at South Point Higgins Access:** Steep access causing embankment damage.

### Opportunities

**Wetland Expansion Potential:** Enhances the trail experience.  
**Potential for Interpretive Signage:** Providing educational value.  
**Trail Extension to South Point Higgins:** Improves connectivity and creates a loop.  
**Trailhead Development:** Space available for trailhead development and a community picnicking area.  
**Collaboration with AMHTA:** Develop an agreement to support protecting it as a public recreation area.

### Threats

**AMHTA Land Ownership and Uncertainty:** No agreement in place to protect public access to Coast Guard Beach.  
**Easement Limitations:** May restrict future trail development.  
**Potential for Conflicting AMHTA Goals:** Protection of the land short of outright purchase is not consistent with AMHTA programmatic goals.



0 1.0 2.0 miles

Existing Trail Length: 1.0 mile  
 Proposed Trail Extension: 0.85 mile  
 Trail Classification: Class 3  
 Trail Surface: natural

## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Secure and Protect Access

Partner with the Southeast Alaska Land Trust (SEALT) to protect and maintain recreational use of Coast Guard Beach and secure long-term access through the existing Coast Guard Beach Trail and proposed South Point Higgins Road access. Three options are presented to achieve this action:

- **Option 1 - Conservation Easement:** Designate a boundary for proposed recreational use of Coast Guard Beach that will be protected from development and negotiate a conservation easement or agreement with AMHTA.
- **Option 2 - Subdivide & Parcel Purchase:** Subdivide a section of land for recreational use and purchase this parcel at fair market price or through a land swap agreement.
- **Option 3 - Outright Land Purchase:** Purchase full parcel of land at fair market price or through a land swap agreement.

### Planning, Design & Administration

- **Route Assessment:** Conduct a Route Assessment on the existing trail to identify deferred maintenance items with the intent of improving to a trail class 3. Develop a TMO and outline a maintenance plan.
- **Design Narrative:** Develop a Design Narrative for the new trail route from South Point Higgins Road to Coast Guard Beach, highlight scenic viewpoints and construct trail extension within intended transportation corridors.
- **Commercial Use Agreement:** Work with the AMHTA to develop an agreement for conducting commercial recreation operations on Borough lands.

### Trailhead Improvements - Pedestrian

- **Existing Trailhead:** Upgrade to a primary trailhead with a minimum of a trail identification sign and information board, bench(s), bike rack(s), garbage receptacle, and dog bag dispenser.
- **South Point Higgins Road Trailhead:** Plan for a tertiary trailhead with a minimum of a trail identification marker, garbage receptacle, and dog bag dispensers.

### Trail Route Improvements

- **Interpretive Node:** Develop an interpretive node within the wetlands.
- **Interpretive Plan:** Develop an interpretive plan for the Coast Guard Beach Trail to communicate the trail's purpose, significance, and stories to locals and visitor's who use the trail.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- AMHTA

### Partner Land Agency

- Borough

### Non-Profit Organizations

- SEALT



*The Auke Lake Trail in Juneau provides a unique educational experience with interpretive signs located throughout the forest along the trail.*

## 2 D-1 – WHIPPLE CREEK RECREATION AREA

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This area was logged in the 1990s-2000s with a matrix of logging roads spanning across Borough land and University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) lands with connections to roads on Cape Fox Corporation (Cape Fox) lands. Recreational access is apparent, evidenced by vegetation removal within the current road alignments. It is anticipated that maintenance is being conducted by those using the corridor for ATV use.

The D-1 – Whipple Creek area has the potential to act as a larger recreational area within the Borough. Strategic vegetation removal could promote recreational access and

create a looped trail network. Depending on community interest, this could provide an opportunity for the development of a mountain biking network. Further connectivity could be possible through a partnership with Cape Fox.

A trailhead is possible on adjacent Borough-owned land with an access easement across a private parcel that connects to the trail network.

### SWOT ANALYSIS

#### Strengths

**Existing Infrastructure:** Roads require minimal maintenance for trail use.

**Active Volunteer Maintenance:** User groups maintain trails, indicating strong interest.

**Established Recreational Use:** Area already used for recreation, independent of government.

#### Weaknesses

**Complex Land Ownership:** Inter-governmental properties create management challenges.

**Lack of Loop System:** Current system has dead end roads with minimal looped connections.

**No Trailhead or Parking:** Limits accessibility and organization.

**Drainage and Maintenance Issues:** Requires ongoing upkeep.

**Decommissioned Potential Loops:** Limits expansion options.

#### Opportunities

**Co-Management Partnerships:** Improving the recreation area.

**Inter-agency Collaboration:** Fosters coordinated development.

**Strategic Loop Expansion:** Creates a more comprehensive network.

**Future Trail Expansion:** Allows for increased recreational opportunities.

**Wayfinding Signage:** To establish a dedicated recreation network.

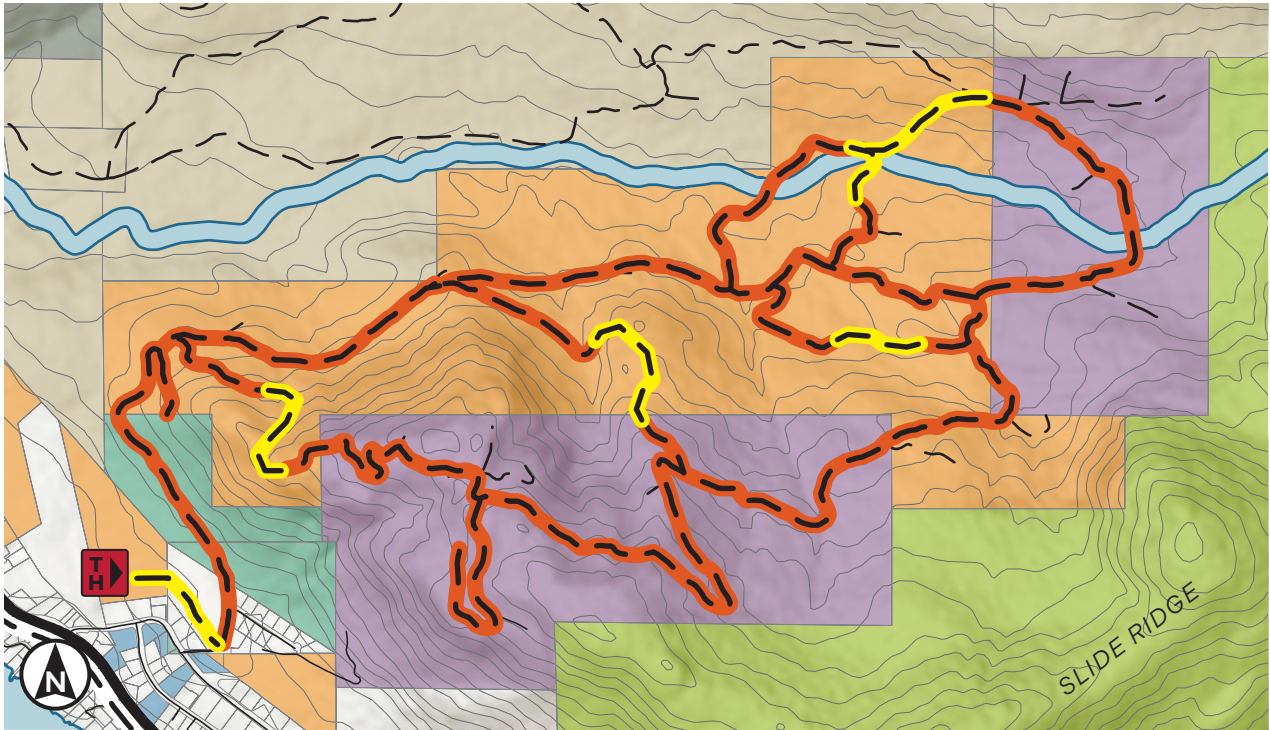
**Land Available for Trailhead Development:** Enhancing access.

#### Threats

**Easement Requirement:** Trailhead access depends on securing private land easements.

**Ongoing Erosion:** Roadway deterioration threatens trail integrity.

**Potential Closure:** Increased awareness of recreation in this area could lead to agency restrictions for recreational use.



Existing Road Length: 16.0 mile  
 Proposed Road Extension: 2.0 mile  
 Trail Classification: Class 3  
 Road Surface: natural

## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Secure and Protect Access

- **Access Easement:** Secure access through easement, land authorization, or land acquisition through State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands that intervene Borough and White Rock Road.
- **Improve Awareness:** Acknowledge as a recreation resource and increase public perception regarding its use for recreational purposes. This can be accomplished by developing a trailhead, installing wayfinding signage, and encouraging public use by facilitating events with the Ketchikan Running Club (KRC) or other recreational clubs in Ketchikan.

### Planning, Design & Administration

- **Road Access Assessment:** Procure services to conduct a road access and restoration assessment.
- **Route Assessment:** Conduct a route assessment to explore connections between existing dead-end roads to create a looped trail system.

### Trailhead Improvements - Vehicular

- **Parking:** Develop a parking lot adequate to serve the recreation area for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. The parking should include an OHV staging area and be commensurate to the proposed level of recreational use (see appendix for reference).

### Trailhead Improvements - Pedestrian

- **New Trailhead:** Plan for a primary trailhead with a minimum of a trail identification sign and information kiosk, garbage receptacle, washroom, and dog bag dispensers.

### Trail Route Improvements

- **Route Connectivity & Wayfinding:** Conduct vegetation removal to facilitate access and concentrate public use on these routes. Install wayfinding signage throughout the trail network.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- Managing land agency to be identified

### Partner Land Agency

- Borough, DNR, UAS, private

### Community Organizations

- Scouting America, mountain biking clubs, OHV clubs, KRC

# 3 CARLANNA LAKE TRAIL

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Carlanna Lake, a popular recreation area in Ketchikan, features a gravel trail along its southeast side, extending to Minerva Ridge. Access is via a steep service road with inadequate trailhead parking and facilities.

Community feedback indicates a strong desire to extend the trail, creating a loop around the lake's western side and connecting back to the dam. The current trailhead and parking area are perceived as unsafe and offer a poor initial experience. To enhance the site, a more welcoming trailhead with enhanced wayfinding is needed. Interpretive signage, site furnishings, waste receptacles,

and restroom facilities would also benefit the site. Additionally, exploring connections to surrounding neighborhoods would improve both the trailhead experience and overall community connectivity.

## PUBLIC INPUT

**Overall Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction:** Overall, users are satisfied with the trail's destination and quality, as well as the potential for expansion. However, they are dissatisfied with the trailhead's current state. Comments indicate the trailhead is unsafe with limited sightlines from the surrounding neighborhood. The trailhead and beginning of the trail do not

offer a high-value experience, which is further exacerbated by homeless encampments on DNR land.

**Desired Improvements:** The public desires better waste management and basic amenities like benches, picnic tables, and restrooms. Parking is inadequate, unsafe, and poorly maintained. The trail itself requires maintenance to address rough conditions, overgrowth, and difficult sections, while conflicts with unauthorized ATV use needs resolution. Further improvements include signage, a loop trail, and upgraded fishing infrastructure. Users also desire trail expansion and enhanced connections to Minerva Ridge.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Attractive Trail Destination:** Desirable endpoint for users.
- Accessible Trail:** Well-maintained gravel trail on the eastern shoreline.
- Expansion Potential:** Opportunities for future trail development.
- Connection to Minnerva Ridge:** Links to other recreational areas.
- Diverse Recreational Opportunities:** Supports a range of activities.
- Existing Maintenance and Management Agreement:** Existing agreement is in place for trail upkeep and management.

### Weaknesses

- Inaccessible Trail Start:** Steep road at the beginning limits accessibility.
- Insufficient Parking:** Unable to accommodate peak usage.
- Lack of Trailhead Features:** No official trailhead, signage, or wayfinding.
- No Restrooms:** Limits user comfort and convenience.
- Brush Overgrowth:** Requires increased maintenance.
- Fishing Piers in Poor Condition:** Need repair or replacement.
- Diverse Ownership and Maintenance Responsibilities:** Long project timelines to secure authorizations.

### Opportunities

- Picnic Area Development:** Large flat area to create a recreational space at the dam.
- Loop Trail Creation:** Expand the trail around the lake.
- Fishing Pier Improvements:** Repair or replace existing piers.
- Trailhead Enhancement:** Develop trailhead with signage and information.
- Alternate Trail Access:** Improve trail start via Fairview Road..

### Threats

- Perceived Safety Issues:** Lack of visibility creates safety concerns and has created a perception of dubious safety at the beginning of the trail.
- Limited Borough Responsibility:** Borough only manages the access point, not the trail itself.



0 0.5 1 Miles

Existing Trail Length: 1.8 miles  
 Proposed Trail Extension: 1.35 miles  
 Trail Classification: Class 3  
 Trail Surface: gravel

## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Planning, Design & Administration

- **Authorizations:** Secure the necessary authorizations with agency partners to maintain the trailhead parking lot, service road, and dam.
- **Route Assessment:** Conduct a Route Assessment for the existing trail to identify deferred maintenance items with the intent of maintaining to a trail class 4. Develop a TMO and outline a maintenance plan. Identify responsible agencies.
- **Design Narrative:** Develop a Design Narrative for a new loop trail on the west side of the lake to meet the same trail classifications as the existing trail. Identify alternative neighborhood access points, such as Fairview Avenue via the prior active water main route.

### Trailhead Improvements - Vehicular

- **Parking:** Upgrade trailhead to have sufficient parking for the local and commercial trail users (approximately double the existing size). The parking lot is currently inadequate under residential conditions.

### Trailhead Improvements - Pedestrian

- **Trailhead Existing:** Upgrade the existing trailhead to a primary trailhead with a minimum of a trail identification sign and information kiosk, bench, bike racks, garbage receptacle, dog bag dispenser, and pre-manufactured vault toilet.

### Trail Route Improvements

- **Trail Access Improvements:** Grade roadway to eliminate loose, course aggregate.
- **Trail Amenities:** Install site furnishings at the dam including benches, picnic tables, and a bear proof garbage receptacle.
- **Interpretation Improvements:** Install educational and interpretive signage at the trailhead, dam, and along the trail route.
- **Existing Fishing Platforms:** Rebuild or replace the existing fishing platforms.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- Primary authority is DNR. City of Ketchikan and USFS have some management authority.

### Partner Land Agency

- Borough, City d/b/a Ketchikan Public Utilities (KPU) Water Division, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), DNR

### Non-Profit Organizations

- Trout Unlimited

### Community Organizations

- Rotary Club of Ketchikan

# 4 RAINBIRD TRAIL

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Rainbird Trail in Ketchikan offers a convenient and immersive rainforest experience, starting just a 20-minute walk from the city center and cruise ship docks. With three access points, it's a popular recreational route. However, a recent landslide near the middle trailhead has caused the closure of the trail. In response, plans are in place to conduct maintenance and improvements from the middle trailhead towards the UAS terminus with a interpretive node at the intersection of the existing trail and landslide.

Looking ahead, there's potential to extend the Rainbird Trail further, creating

valuable connections to the Copper Ridge neighborhood or Carlanna Lake Trail, improving access to the City Center and key public amenities like the library and recreation center, ultimately enhancing connectivity for residents and visitors alike.

## PUBLIC INPUT

**Overall Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction:** Users are satisfied with the parking and connectivity of the trail, but dissatisfied with the walking path conditions, lack of amenities, and trailhead cleanliness.

**Desired Improvements:** Public feedback emphasizes the urgent need for improved maintenance within the existing trail footprint,

addressing issues like washouts, damaged infrastructure, and overgrown vegetation, with some suggesting potential re-routing.

Safety is a primary concern, particularly for seniors and tourists, prompting calls for fencing, better trail delineation, and enhanced communication about trail conditions. Improved signage and clearing overgrown vegetation to restore views are also desired.

Beyond immediate repairs, there's a strong interest in expanding the trail network to connect with Carlanna Lake, Minerva Ridge Trail, and the library, alongside suggestions for an interpretive trail and increased amenities such as waste receptacles and benches.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Downtown Access:** Easy access from Ketchikan's city center.
- Scenic Views:** Offers views of Ketchikan and Tongass Narrows.
- Rainforest Experience:** Provides a beautiful rainforest setting.
- Wildlife Viewing:** Opportunities for observing wildlife.

### Weaknesses

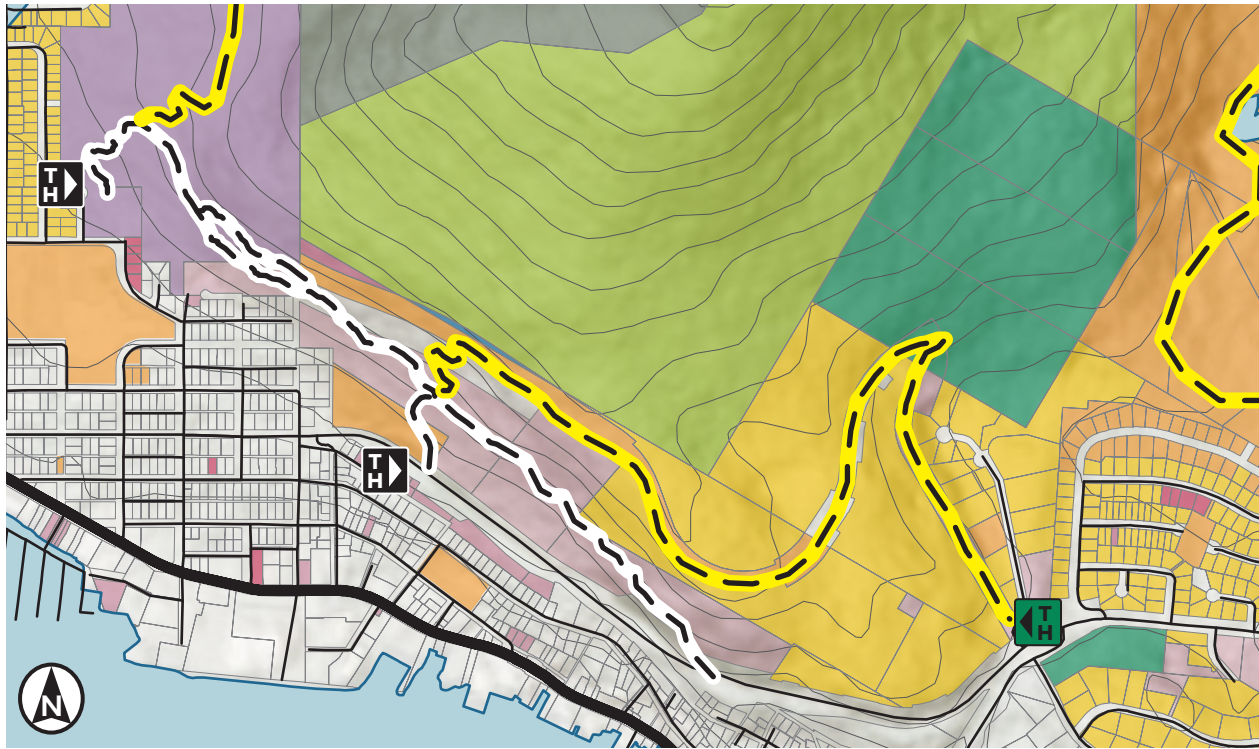
- Unsafe Conditions:** Steep terrain and erosion create hazards.
- Trail Braiding:** Northwest section has wayfinding challenges.
- Lack of Condition Information:** No consistent communication about trail conditions.
- High Maintenance Needs:** Requires frequent upkeep.
- Overgrown Viewpoints:** Views are obscured.
- Limited Northwest Views:** Northwest section lacks viewsheds.

### Opportunities

- Carlanna Lake Trail Connection:** Potential for trail expansion.
- Copper Ridge Connection:** Connect via public and private lands above the bypass and Copper Ridge Lane.
- Interpretive Experience:** Develop interpretive/educational signage.

### Threats

- Landslide Risk:** Unstable slope with potential for landslides, falling trees, and boulders.
- Continuous Erosion:** Trail degradation and width reduction due to unsustainable trail conditions.
- Degrading Safety Fencing:** Fencing is losing its structural integrity.



Existing Trail Length: 1.3 miles  
 Proposed Trail Extension: N/A  
 Trail Classification: Class 3  
 Trail Surface: natural

## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Planning, Design & Administration

- **Route Assessment:** Conduct a Route Assessment on the existing Rainbird Trail to identify deferred maintenance items with the intent of maintain to a trail class 3. Develop a TMO and outline a maintenance plan.
- **Design Narrative:** Develop a Design Narrative to explore connections from the Rainbird Trail to the following prioritized areas: 1. Copper Ridge Neighborhood and 2. Carlanna Lake.

### Trail Route Improvements

- **Interpretive Plan:** Develop an interpretive plan for the Rainbird Trail to communicate the trail's purpose, significance, and stories to locals and visitor's who use the trail.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- Borough

### Land Agencies

- Borough, UAS, City, Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC), BLM, AMHTA, DNR, USFS, private

# 5 CITY CENTER VIEWPOINT TRAIL

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Through engagement, an option to develop a City Center viewpoint trail with access to the Gateway Recreation Center and Norman Walker Field was discussed. A small ridge is located just north of these facilities that offers the potential to develop a short 2 mile looped trail through City, DNR, and Borough lands with a trailhead at Norman Walker Field and potential connection to North Yorktown Drive to provide an access point near the Gateway Recreation Center. A viewpoint at the top of the ridge would offer a high-value destination and trail loop within a mile of the City Center.

Additionally, a connection could be explored to extend the loop into the wetlands and large Borough-owned property north of the Bear Valley neighborhood. Neighborhood access from Bear Valley could be explored off of Brown Deer Road.

## PUBLIC INPUT

This proposed trail network would provide needed recreational opportunities in South Ketchikan, which has been identified by through the public survey as an underserved area in Ketchikan, benefiting residents and visitors alike, and provide a wider and more accessible trail option with varying distance options for users.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

**Strong Connectivity:** Links to residential areas, Downtown Ketchikan, Ketchikan Park District, Norman Walker Field, and the Rainbird Trail

**Valuable Wetland:** Interesting topography and ecological value.

**High-Value Destination and Experience:** Provides a quick loop trail and desired destination viewpoint within close proximity to Downtown Ketchikan and the cruise ship docks.

### Weaknesses

**Steep Terrain:** Surrounding terrain presents construction difficulties.

**Unclear Access Points:** Requires potential easements from private or public landowners.

**Surface Water Issues:** High water presence poses trail development challenges.

### Opportunities

**Expanded Urban Trail Network:** Connection opportunities to the Ketchikan Public Library, Gateway Recreation Center, and Norman Walker Field.

**Ridgeline Overlook:** Create a viewpoint at the top of the ridgeline.

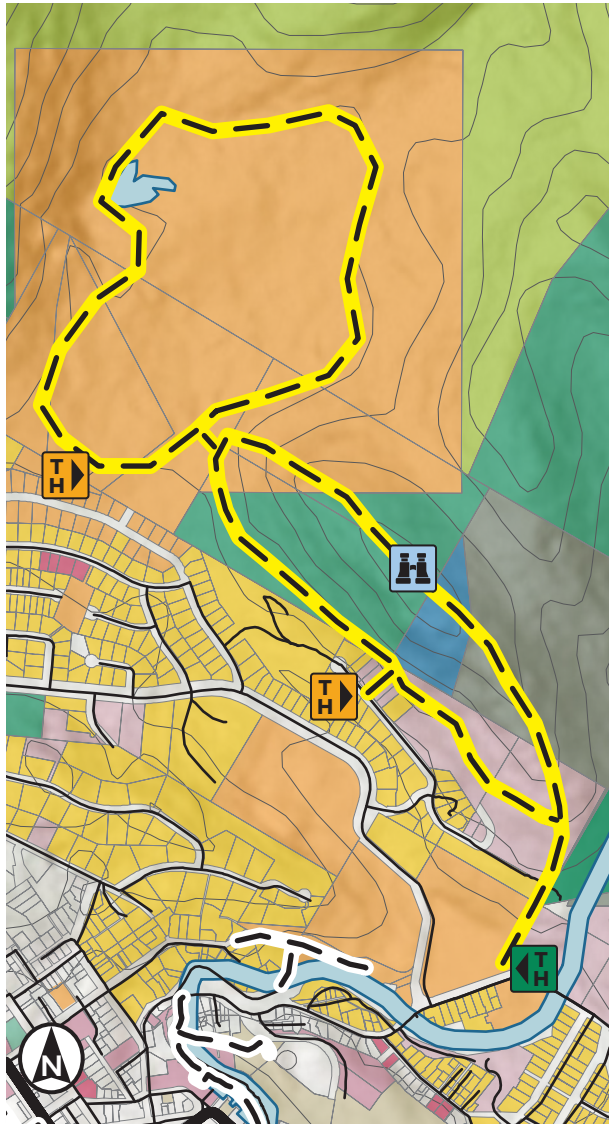
**Trail Loops and Spur Extensions:** Opportunity to explore trail loops in the substantial uplands managed by the Borough and the City, which likely have low value for residential development due to wetlands, hydrology, or topography.

### Threats

**Landslide Risk:** Comparable topography to the Copper Ridge landslide area.

**Floodplain Location:** Vulnerability to flooding.

**Inter-agency Collaboration:** Requires cooperation between multiple agencies.



Proposed Trail Length: +/-2.0 miles  
 Proposed Trail Classification: Class 3  
 Proposed Trail Surface: Natural

## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Planning, Design & Administration

- **Design Narrative:** Develop a Design Narrative for a new loop trail on a low ridge northeast of the Gateway Recreation Center. Explore the potential for a viewpoint or picnic area at the top of the ridge. There is an opportunity to include the Bear Valley wetlands for an additional interpretive trail, highlighting the wetland environment and creating a multi-loop system. Access points should be considered at the Norman Walker Field, North Yorktown Drive, and Brown Deer Road.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- Managing land agency to be identified

### Partner Land Agency

- City, BLM, AMHTA, DNR, private

### Community Partners

- Rotary Club of Ketchikan

# 6 SCHOENBAR TRAIL

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Schoenbar Trail is a paved trail that acts as a transportation corridor between the Harris Street and Grant Street neighborhoods. It is also a part of the Salmon Walk and lies within the Ketchikan Park District between downtown and the recreation destinations at City Park and Totem Heritage Center. Interpretive signage was installed in 2023 and an artistic structure, the Kichxaan Heeni Canoe project, intended to be an elevated metal sculpture with dynamic lighting will be installed at the crossroads of the trail in 2025.

The Schoenbar Trail offers an opportunity to access Ketchikan Creek, improving the experience of this trail and promoting use and access to the trail. A trail spur and viewing platform would provide an opportunity to enhance the salmon walk and create a salmon viewing or sport fishing experience.

## PUBLIC INPUT

**Overall Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction:** Users are satisfied with the trail’s connectivity and walking path conditions, but dissatisfied with the lack of amenities, parking, expansion opportunities, and the overall trail destination quality.

**Desired Improvements:** Public input reveals a desire for improvements within the existing trail framework, focusing on enhanced amenities like seating, improved signage and waste management, and increased safety through better lighting. Users also wish to maintain accessibility and develop the area into a more park-like space, particularly for winter recreation. However, there are significant concerns about safety, with requests to extend the trail met with strong feelings of unease. Negative perceptions stemming from litter,

inadequate maintenance, and concerns about unsavory activities and encampments further compound these issues, necessitating clear management strategies to address safety and waste. While restroom facilities are outside the current scope, the overwhelming message is a need for immediate action to improve the trail’s safety, cleanliness, and overall user experience.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Creek Proximity:** Close to Ketchikan Creek, offering natural appeal.
- Good Walking Path:** Well-maintained trail conditions.
- Downtown Connectivity:** Links to downtown Ketchikan.
- Interpretive Signage:** Features Salmon Walk information.
- Sledding Destination:** Popular sledding spot near Grant Street.

### Weaknesses

- Lack of Trailhead:** No official trailhead or signage and a lack of wayfinding.
- No Clear Destination:** Lacks a defined destination.
- Vehicle Encroachment:** Parking issues on Grant and Harris Streets encroaching into the trail corridor.
- No Creek Access:** No designated access or recognition of the creek.

### Opportunities

- Creek Viewing Platform:** Enhance fishing and wildlife viewing over Ketchikan Creek.
- Sport Fishing Access:** Improve access for anglers.
- Neighborhood Connectivity:** Expand trail connections to neighborhoods.
- Increased Trail Usage:** Improve conditions and promote use.

### Threats

- Safety Concerns:** Community survey results overwhelmingly found that this trail is considered unsafe.
- Unsheltered Living Space:** Frequent use for people experiencing homelessness, impacting the trails usability for all residents.



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Existing Trail Length: 0.25 mile  
 Proposed Trail Extension: N/A  
 Trail Classification: Class 5  
 Trail Surface: Paved

## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Secure Lands for Park Development

- Consider the purchase of Lot 8A of Ketchikan Creek Parcels, Subdivision of Lot 3 Replat (835 Harris Street) for the development of open space/parkland that would support the larger Downtown Park District planning effort as well as the Schoenbar Trail and access to the creek. The Schoenbar Trail and surrounding Borough lands should be included in the greater master planning effort for the Downtown Park District.

### Planning, Design & Administration

- **Route Assessment:** Conduct a Route Assessment for the existing trail to identify deferred maintenance items with the intent of maintaining to a trail class 5. Develop a TMO and outline a maintenance plan.

### Trailhead Improvements - Pedestrian

- **Schoenbar Road Trailhead:** Upgrade to a secondary trailhead with a minimum of a trail identification sign and information board, garbage receptacle, and dog bag dispenser.
- **Harris Street Trailhead:** Upgrade to a tertiary trailhead with a minimum of a trail identification marker.
- **Grant Street Trailhead:** Upgrade to a tertiary trailhead with a minimum of a trail identification marker.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- Borough

### Partner Land Agency

- City d/b/a KPU Water Division, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)

### Non-Profit Organizations

- Trout Unlimited

### Community Organizations

- Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council, Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District

# 7 WHITMAN LAKE TRAIL

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Whitman Lake Trail, a gated service road, provides access to the Whitman Lake and Achilles Creek Diversion Dams, featuring a picnic area with panoramic mountain views. While the trail currently ends at the dams, an informal path leads to a picturesque waterfall overlook on Achilles Creek. Interpretive signs are provided on the gate and at both dams. There is no access permitted past Whitman Lake Dam. Currently, the City d/b/a KPU Water Division maintains the existing road and facilities.

This project aims to improve the visitor experience with a waterfall path and overlook, creating an attractive destination. Restrooms, while desired, are not within the Borough's ability to maintain and are not recommended.

## PUBLIC INPUT

### **Overall Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction:**

Users are satisfied with the trail's walking path conditions, expansion potential, and amenities, but dissatisfied with trailhead features and connectivity to the transportation network.

**Desired Improvements:** Public input for the Whitman Lake Trail highlights several key areas for improvement. Within the current operational footprint, users seek enhanced waste management through dog bag dispensers and additional trash bins, along with a more satisfying trail terminus, such as a vista point. Limited parking and the lack of basic trailhead facilities, including restrooms,

are also significant concerns. For future expansion, there's a strong desire to develop a larger trail network, incorporating spurs off the access road or around the lake. Dog waste is a notable negative perception, requiring potential signage or other solutions, while the existing interpretive signs are positively received.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

**Well-Maintained Road:** Provides good walking conditions.  
**Achilles Mountain Access:** Potential trail link to access Achilles Mountain.  
**Fawn Mountain Access:** Potential to access Fawn Mountain with a ridgeline trail that connects with Deer Mountain.

### Weaknesses

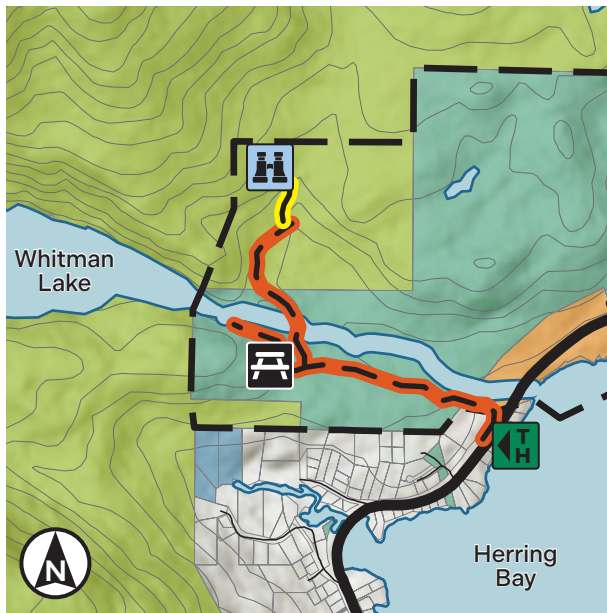
**Limited Parking:** Small parking area with limited room for expansion.  
**Unsafe Highway Transition:** Dangerous configuration between parking and access to the highway.  
**Undesirable Destination:** Lacks a compelling endpoint.  
**No Trailhead Amenities:** No official trailhead or facilities.  
**Unclear Agency Interest:** KPU, USFS, DNR, and Borough are responsible for the existence of the road with unclear interest in recreational development.

### Opportunities

**Expanded Recreation Network:** Developing trail spurs off the service road.  
**Mountain Trail Connections:** Link to Achilles and Fawn Mountains.  
**Improved Picnic Area:** Enhance existing recreational space.  
**Waterfall Trail Spur:** Create a trail to Achilles Creek waterfall.  
**Viewpoint Development:** Add scenic viewpoints along the route.

### Threats

**Water Intake Restrictions:** Potential drinking water regulations may restrict recreational access.  
**Road Closure Risk:** Forestry activities or agency decisions could close the road.  
**Lack of Borough Control:** Area is not under Borough management.



Existing Trail Length: 0.8 and 0.5 miles  
 Proposed Trail Extension: N/A  
 Proposed Trail Classification: Class 3  
 Proposed Trail Surface: Natural

## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Planning, Design & Administration

- **Formal Agreements:** Formalize maintenance, development, and route agreements with land ownership and management agencies.
- **Parking Assessment:** Conduct a parking assessment to improve the safety of the existing parking area or identify an alternate trailhead and parking location.
- **Route Assessment:** Conduct a Route Assessment on the existing informal trail at the Achilles Creek Diversion Dam to a small waterfall overlook with the intent of maintaining to a trail class 3. Coordinate trail development with utility owners to ensure no conflicts with hydro project, hatchery, or water system operations or dam safety. Develop a TMO and outline a maintenance plan.
- **Design Narrative:** Develop a Design Narrative to explore a connection from the terminus of the trail at the Achilles Creek Diversion Dam to Rainbow Falls on the South Tongass Highway.
- **Management Plan:** Prior to expanding recreation in the Whitman Lake area, develop and implement a comprehensive Water Quality Protection and Recreational Management Plan for the Whitman Creek and Achilles Creek Watersheds.

### Trailhead Improvements - Pedestrian

- **Existing Trailhead:** Upgrade to a secondary trailhead with a minimum of a trail identification sign and information board, garbage receptacle, and dog bag dispenser.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- City d/b/a KPU Electric Division, Borough

### Partner Land Agency

- Borough, DNR

### Best Practices for Watersheds and Recreation

To sustainably develop recreation while protecting vital watershed resources, the management plan should incorporate these best practices:

**Proactive Planning:** Develop a management plan to strategically plan the location, timing, and nature of permitted recreation, employing best practices in trail design, trailhead management, and construction to mitigate impacts in sensitive areas and ensure sustainable access.

**Public Consultation:** Integrate community values and ideas into the watershed management plan to understand the importance of recreation relative to other community priorities.

**Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborate with land management agencies and other experts to leverage their knowledge and ensure seamless integration with adjacent recreational amenities.

**Public Education:** Utilize watershed access as a platform for public education, fostering stewardship and a sense of ownership.

**Continuous Monitoring:** Establish clear goals and metrics within the management plan to monitor the long-term effects of management practices on water quality.

*Source: Headwaters Economics, Best Practices for Watersheds and Recreation, July 11, 2018.*

# 8 KETCHIKAN LONG TRAIL

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Currently, Ketchikan has sections of a shared-use pathway built along the south and north sections of the Tongass Highway. However, the shared-use pathway is fragmented and unsafe, with significant barriers to further connect these pieces. Additionally, the southern community is underserved for trails and recreational opportunities.

There is an opportunity to explore the potential for a vital recreational link with a primary trailhead at Esther Shea Field and connecting to the South Tongass Highway via the Bayview Cemetery. This initiative would

establish the foundation for an expanded trail network, offering a safe alternative pedestrian route between neighborhoods and schools, providing additional accessible trail experiences for the community and much-needed recreational opportunities in South Tongass.

Further expansion could explore a loop trail connecting to Deer Mountain Crescent and Deermount Street, offering a unique nature trail experience near the city center with scenic views, though challenging terrain and private land ownership present obstacles.

## PUBLIC INPUT

This proposed trail network would provide needed recreational opportunities in South Tongass, which has been identified through the public survey as an underserved area in Ketchikan, benefiting residents and visitors alike, and provide a wider and more accessible trail option with varying distance options for users.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

**Expanded Recreation:** Increases limited recreational options in South Ketchikan.

**Neighborhood Connections:** Links from surrounding neighborhoods to Esther Shae Field.

**Highway Alternative:** Provides an alternative route from Tongass Highway shared-use pathways.

**Transit Connectivity:** Potential for trailhead connections to coincide with transit stops.

**Natural Features:** Desirable connections to creeks and wetlands.

### Weaknesses

**Challenging Connectivity with Neighborhoods:** Creek crossing and steep slopes create challenging connections to adjacent neighborhoods.

**Terrain at North End:** Difficult terrain at the northern boundary to connect back to the Tongass Highway.

**Creek and Wetland Challenges:** Substantial running water and wetland areas within the proposed alignment that will need to be navigated.

### Opportunities

**Interpretive Trail Spurs:** Potential for trail spurs at Esther Shae Field and Fawn Mountain Elementary.

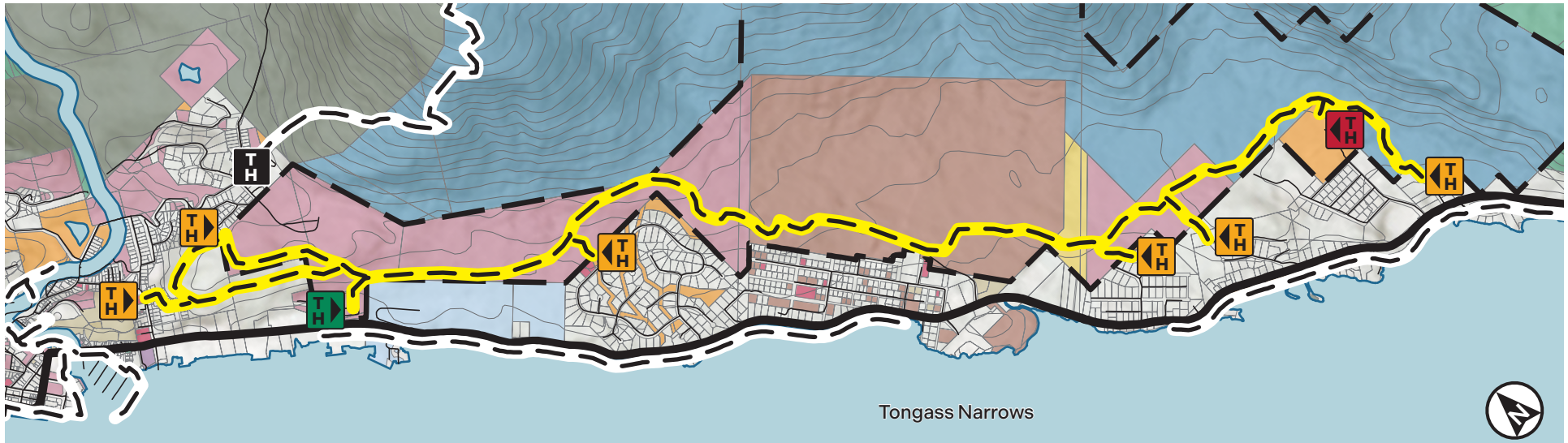
**Ketchikan-Wide Expansion:** Potential connections to the Tongass Highway shared-use pathway and City Center.

**City of Saxman Partnership:** Develop a destination point in Saxman and integrate trail system with trails proposed in the Saxman Cultural Plan.

**Saxman to Downtown Ketchikan Link:** Connect the City of Saxman to the Ketchikan Park District.

### Threats

**Inter-agency Collaboration:** Requires cooperation between multiple agencies.



## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Route Improvements

- **Preliminary Route Analysis:** Conduct a preliminary trail route analysis to explore a conceptual route that defines any positive or negative control points associated with the route layout. Address land ownership along the conceptual route and identify agency partners.
- **Design Narrative:** Develop a Design Narrative for a new trail route starting near Esther Shae Field and connecting to South Tongass Highway via Bayview Cemetery. Explore connections to Deer Mountain Crescent and Deermount Street to provide a new recreational opportunity near the City Center with scenic views of Tongass Narrows and beyond.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- Managing land agency to be identified

### Partner Land Agency

- Borough, City of Saxman, Sealaska Corporation (Sealaska), City, United States Coast Guard (USCG), private



Proposed Trail Length: 7.0 miles  
 Proposed Trail Classification: Class 4  
 Proposed Trail Surface: Gravel

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Black Sands State Marine Park, a historically and recreationally significant area encompassing the Blank Islands and Gravina Island, currently lacks accessible land-based trail access, limiting its use to boat, plane, or informal muskeg routes.

Responding to strong community desire, this project prioritizes developing a trail from

Gravina Island Road to Black Sands Beach. The proposed route, traversing a mix of freshwater wetlands, will require careful environmental consideration. To enhance the visitor experience, the trail design will highlight key environmental features, and the feasibility of a spur trail to the head of Blank Inlet or to the top of Judy Hill will be explored.

## PUBLIC INPUT

Though the Borough's survey didn't include direct questions on Gravina Island or Black Sands State Marine Park, 80.5% of respondents identified Gravina Island as underserved, and open comments strongly requested land access to Black Sands Beach. This, along with significant community interest at the Public Open House, solidified Black Sands Beach as a priority for the Trails Master Plan.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

**Established Destination:** there is a developed recreation area and state park.

**Desired Amenity:** Popular community recreational area with a variety of destination opportunities.

**Diverse Features:** Varied vistas, environments, and terrain provides an alternative experience to Revillagigedo Island.

### Weaknesses

**Wetland Terrain:** Mixture of freshwater emergent wetlands and freshwater forested/shrub wetlands pose development challenges.

**Multiple Land Agencies:** Trail corridor crosses various agency lands.

### Opportunities

**Blank Inlet Connector:** Develop a connecting trail.

**Black Sand Beach Access:** Provide overland access to Black Sand State Marine Park.

**Borough Land Available for Development:** Borough land available for trailhead development.

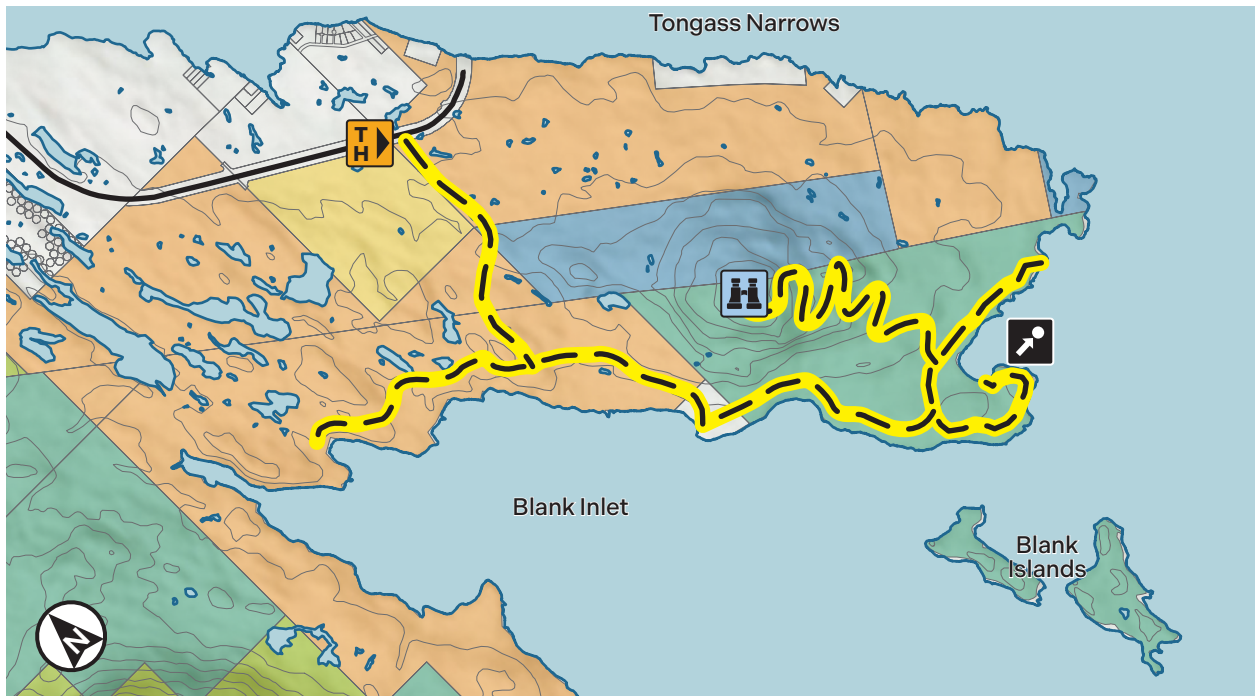
**Trail Expansion:** Potential to expand the trail network on Borough lands.

**Judy Hill Access:** Future expansion to Judy Hill.

**Priority Access:** Alaska State Parks priority to provide access to Black Sands Beach.

### Threats

Unknown Plans for Adjacent Land Development: Development plans for adjacent AMHTA lands is unknown.



0 1.5 3 Miles

Proposed Trail Length: +/-15.0 miles  
 Proposed Trail Classification: Class 2  
 Proposed Trail Surface: Natural/step & run boardwalk

## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Planning, Design & Administration

- **Design Narrative:** Develop a Design Narrative to explore a trail route from Gravina Island Road to Black Sands Beach, highlighting the natural rock ridgelines. Additional trail connections should be explored to access Judy Hill and Blank Inlet. Future opportunities can include expanding the access to Black Sands Beach into a loop trail to connect back to the Gravina Island Road. Coordinate trail routes to complement future subdivisions conducted by AMHTA.

### Trailhead Improvements - Vehicular

- **Parking:** Provide parking for two vehicles at the identified access point for the Black Sands Beach Access Trail.

### Trailhead Improvements - Pedestrian

- **New Trailhead:** Plan for a tertiary trailhead with a trail identification marker.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- Managing land agency to be identified

### Partner Land Agency

- Borough, AMHTA, DNR, private

# 10 BOSTWICK LAKE TRAIL

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Bostwick Lake and Little Bostwick Lake, located in Gravina Island’s interior, are currently accessible via user-created, informal access points from a logging road or by boat/floatplane and hiking along Bostwick Creek. These lakes support diverse fish species, including sockeye, pink, silver salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and Dolly Varden, making them valued destinations for recreational anglers. User-created trails exist; however, formal trail development will necessitate substantial improvements to the forestry access road.

## PUBLIC INPUT

Similar to Black Sands Beach, the Borough’s survey didn’t include direct questions on Gravina Island or Bostwick Lake and Little Bostwick Lake access. However, open comments through the survey and the Public Open House strongly indicated desire for formal access to Bostwick Lake and improvement of the recreational facilities here.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

**Popular Recreation Area:** Well-liked area for recreating.  
**Alternative Opportunities:** Offers diverse recreational options.  
**Great Destination:** Considered a desirable location.

### Weaknesses

**Steep Terrain:** Challenging topography to access the lake.  
**Wetland Areas:** Extensive freshwater forested/shrub wetlands pose obstacles for trail development.  
**Poor Road Access:** Road is in bad condition and overgrown.  
**Ownership:** The Borough does not own or have management authority of this area.  
**Timber Sales:** Safety concerns may limit or prevent access during future timber sales work.

### Opportunities

**Expanded Network:** Potential connections to Little Bostwick Lake, Nipple Mountain, and Bostwick Inlet.  
**Fishing Access:** Provides desired access for fishing opportunities at Bostwick Lake, Little Bostwick Lake, and Bostwick Inlet.  
**Water-Based Recreation:** Provides a desired opportunity for water-based activities.  
**Established Access Point:** User-created trail is located at the south end of the lake that provides a relatively level access route.  
**Infrastructure and timelines of timber sales:** Timber sales may build or improve remote access. Long periods between timber harvests allows for extended recreational usage.



Proposed Trail Length: +/-5.0 miles  
 Proposed Trail Classification: Class 2  
 Proposed Trail Surface: natural/step & run boardwalk



**PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS**

**Planning, Design & Administration**

- **Route Assessment:** Conduct a route assessment to improve the existing informal trail at the south end of Bostwick Lake with the intent of maintaining to a trail class 2. Develop a TMO and outline a maintenance plan. Identify responsible agencies.
- **Design Services:** Procure design services for a fishing platform and/or boat launch access where the informal trail meets Bostwick Lake.
- **Design Narrative:** Develop a Design Narrative to explore the opportunity to extend the trail to Little Bostwick Lake and Bostwick Inlet. Additional opportunities include access to Nipple Mountain.

**Trailhead Improvements**

- **New Trailhead:** Plan for a tertiary trailhead with a trail identification marker.

**AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS**

**Managing Land Agency**

- Managing land agency to be identified

**Partner Land Agency**

- Borough, BLM, USFS

**Community Groups**

- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

# 11 GRAVINA ISLAND STATE LANDS RECREATION ACCESS

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

DNR and UAS are actively logging lands on northern Gravina Island, resulting in the construction of several logging roads. This project proposes to maintain and enhance these existing logging roads to provide motorized recreational opportunities and improved access for subsistence hunting and harvesting, in alignment with the **2020 Alaska Forest Action Plan's** goal of recreational access to working forests.

Additionally, Grant Cove, a scenic sand beach with high recreational value, is located within UAS lands and accessible via these logging roads. A unique opportunity is presented to establish public access to Grant Cove and protect it as a valuable recreation area from future timber extraction. Both aspects of this project aim to balance responsible natural resource management with improved recreational access and ecological considerations within the actively managed landscapes of Gravina Island.

## PUBLIC INPUT

During the Public Open House, the community identified access to logging roads on Gravina Island and within the greater Ketchikan community as a desired outcome for OHV-use and access for subsistence harvesting.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

**Grant Cove Access:** Provides access to a desirable location and natural sand beach.

**Existing Forestry Roads:** Existing road corridors can easily transition to trail networks or be upgraded for improved vehicular access

**Alternative Recreation:** Offers a diversity of recreational experiences.

### Weaknesses

**Multiple Land Agencies:** Managed by various entities.

**Active Timber Sales:** Ongoing timber activities.

**No Public Access:** Public access is restricted.

**Timber Extraction:** Surrounding forest has been logged directly to the shoreline, detracting from the natural beauty of the cove

### Opportunities

**Access to Private Lands:** Provides an opportunity for off-road motorized access and recreational cabin access to private lands.

**Subsistence Harvesting:** Opportunities for local harvesting.

**Access to Forest Service Lands:** Potential for access to a large part of Gravina Island that is managed by the USFS.

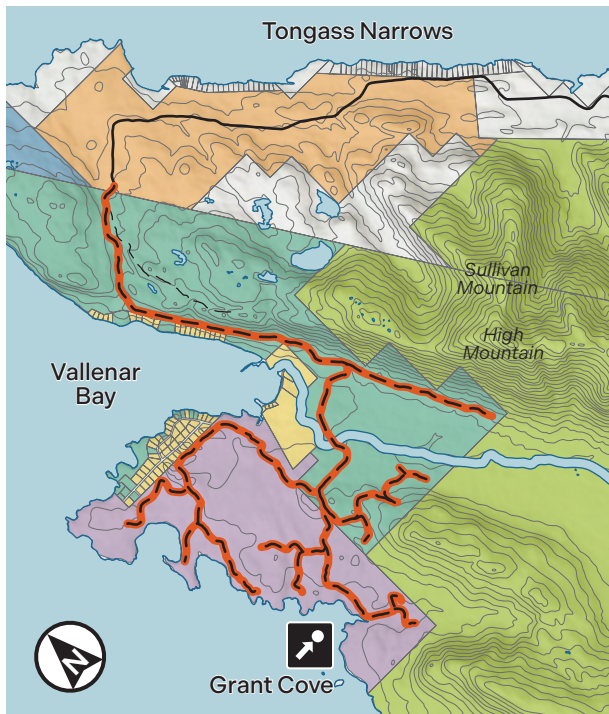
**Grant Cove Protection and Access:** Protect the natural beach from development and future timber sales and secure a public access corridor from UAS land along existing forestry roads.

### Threats

**Lack of Borough Control:** Access to the area is through Borough lands, but the network of forestry roads is not under Borough management or authority.

**Timber Sale Completion:** Road closure by regulatory land agencies could eliminate access upon completion of forestry activities.

**Land Sale:** Potential land sale upon completion of timber sales.



0 2.5 5.0 miles

Road Length: 21.0 miles  
 Road Extension: N/A  
 Road Surface: gravel

## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

### Recreational Access to Forest Roads

Partner with DNR and UAS to maintain the existing forestry roads for recreational access and subsistence use. Two options are presented to achieve this action:

- **Option 1 – Recreational Access**  
**Agreement:** DNR and UAS agree to maintain access to the existing forestry roads for recreational access.
- **Option 2 – Recreation Management**  
**Agreement:** The Borough enters a CMA agreement to grant the Borough rights and management authority on DNR and UAS lands. The Borough would be responsible for management and maintenance of the forestry roads open for recreational access.

### Public Access to Grant Cove

Advocate for public access to Grant Cove and protect this area from further resource extraction and to be maintained for public use. Two options are presented to achieve this action:

- **Option 1 – Conservation Easement:**  
 Designate a boundary for proposed recreational use of Grant Cove that will be protected from development or resource extraction and negotiate a conservation easement or agreement with DNR and UAS.
- **Option 2 – Subdivide & Parcel Purchase:**  
 Subdivide a section of land for recreational use and purchase this parcel of land at fair market price or through a land swap agreement.

## AGENCIES & PARTNERSHIPS

### Managing Land Agency

- Managing land agency to be identified

### Partner Land Agency

- Borough, DNR, UAS

### Non-Profit Organizations

- SEALT

### Community Groups

- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

# PARTNER PROFILES

Ketchikan’s trail system spans multiple jurisdictions, requiring coordination among federal, state, municipal, tribal, and private entities. Each agency has unique capacities, constraints, and land management priorities. By working together, these partners can leverage funding, volunteer labor, and expertise to maintain and expand Ketchikan’s trails

## LAND AGENCIES

### University of Alaska Southeast - Ketchikan Campus

**Mission:** UAS is a student centered university that provides instruction in liberal arts, professional, and technical fields. On the homelands of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples, we serve the coastal environments, cultures, economies, and communities of Alaska, through interdisciplinary education, workforce development, and scholarship, research and creative activity.

UAS plays a vital role in education and workforce training, offering programs in maritime studies, fisheries, and environmental science. These fields naturally align with conservation and trail stewardship efforts.

Future recreational development will need to be planned in accordance with UAS’s land management objectives. While UAS prioritizes education and land revenue, there is a strong opportunity for collaboration in student-led research, conservation initiatives, and workforce training programs that support sustainable trail management.

### United States Forest Service - Ketchikan Ranger District

**Mission:** To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

The USFS manages the Tongass National Forest, home to many of Ketchikan’s most well-loved trails. The agency oversees recreation infrastructure, maintains trails, and administers funding opportunities such as the Great American Outdoors Act. USFS provides opportunities for collaboration through Challenge Cost Share agreements, which can help fund trail maintenance and improvements. Volunteer stewardship programs further enhance public engagement in trail conservation. While the agency balances recreational access with conservation mandates, partnerships can support sustainable trail use while protecting natural resources.

### Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

**Mission:** To generate revenue from its land and resources to support mental health programs in Alaska.

The Trust is responsible for managing land in the Ketchikan area, with a primary goal of generating revenue for mental health services. While recreational access is not the main focus, there are opportunities to explore public access agreements that align with both revenue goals and outdoor recreation needs. Careful planning and discussion can lead to beneficial arrangements that balance land-use priorities with community trail interests.

## State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources

### Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation

**Mission:** To provide outdoor recreation opportunities and conserves and interprets natural, cultural, and historic resources for the use, enjoyment, and welfare of the people.

The DPOR oversees an extensive system of over 120 state parks and manages campgrounds, trails, public-use cabins, boat launches, and picnic areas, providing diverse recreational opportunities across the state. The department actively works on developing and improving park facilities to enhance accessibility and the quality of recreational experiences, including the design, construction, and maintenance of infrastructure and facilities. The DPOR also manages grant programs like the RTP to support trail development and maintenance statewide.

### Division of Forestry

**Mission:** To develop, conserve, and enhance Alaska's forests to provide a sustainable supply of forest resources for Alaskans.

The DOF manages over two million acres of dedicated State Forests, such as the Tanana Valley State Forest and the Southeast State Forest, under the principle of 'multiple use and sustained yield'. This includes allowing and often facilitating various recreational activities, such as hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, and off-highway vehicle use, alongside other uses like timber management. The DOF may also develop and maintain access roads that, while sometimes subject to restrictions, can enhance opportunities within public lands.

### Division of Mining, Land, and Water

**Mission:** To provide for the appropriate use and management of Alaska's state owned land and water, aiming toward maximum use consistent with the public interest.

The Division of Mining, Land, and Water (DMLW) supports recreation by managing vast state lands often open for activities like hiking and hunting, and specifically manages millions of acres in Public Use and Recreational River Systems. They authorize recreational uses through permits and leases, ensure public access to waterways by determining navigability, and consider recreational values in land use planning.

## City of Ketchikan

**Mayor's Message:** Dedicated to fostering a safe, inclusive, and prosperous community for all. We are committed to providing excellent services, keeping a beautiful community, and supporting local businesses to ensure a high quality of life for everyone.

The City manages parks, public lands, and trails that contribute to a vibrant community and visitor experience. The city invests in recreation projects and provides essential municipal funding. However, balancing these investments with other infrastructure priorities requires strategic planning. By working with state and federal agencies, the city can expand trail development, improve connectivity, and ensure ongoing maintenance support for a high-quality outdoor experience.

### Ketchikan Indian Community

**Mission:** It is the mission of KIC to enhance and protect the interests of the Tribe and its Tribal citizens, to assist our Tribal members in becoming economically self-sufficient through the provision of socioeconomic services, to enrich and uphold our cultural heritage and traditional way of life.

KIC is dedicated to preserving Indigenous cultural heritage and promoting environmental stewardship. The organization actively supports trail projects that integrate traditional knowledge and values. Programs like Alaska Youth Stewards (AYS) provide valuable workforce development opportunities, allowing youth to gain experience in conservation and land stewardship. Ensuring that trail initiatives respect cultural significance and align with tribal priorities is key to fostering successful partnerships.

### Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

**Mission:** To keep Alaska moving through service and infrastructure.

DOT&PF oversees critical infrastructure, including pedestrian and bicycle pathways that intersect with trail systems. The department offers funding through programs like the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which can support trail connectivity and access improvements. Working alongside DOT&PF can help integrate trails into broader transportation planning efforts, ensuring safer and more accessible routes for all users.

### **Cape Fox Corporation**

Cape Fox manages land and business operations in the Ketchikan area with a focus on economic development and tourism. This presents a strong opportunity for trail partnerships that highlight Indigenous culture and the natural beauty of the region. Public access agreements can be structured to support both recreational use and corporate business goals. Trails that align with eco-tourism initiatives, guided experiences, and outdoor education programs can enhance opportunities for both visitors and local communities.

### **Sealaska Corporation**

**Mission:** to strengthen people, culture, and homelands in Southeast Alaska.

Sealaska aims to create lasting impact for the people and communities of Southeast Alaska and beyond, leading with cultural values and business acumen. Sealaska are important partners in recreational development and could provide support to trail projects through funding, land access agreements, or shared expertise. Sealaska's philanthropic efforts and their support for landless legislation, which could benefit Ketchikan directly, present additional avenues for contributing to the development and maintenance of recreational opportunities in the region, aligning with their commitment to balanced land management and community well-being.

## **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Several non-profit organizations were included in early focus group meetings at the onset of the project. Non-profit organizations often act as strong community advocates. Non-profits can effectively fundraise through grants, donations, and events, supplementing limited public resources. They can bring specialized expertise in trail design, environmental stewardship, watershed or sensitive environment management, and advocacy for access to public lands. Furthermore, these organizations can foster partnerships between diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, private landowners, and other community groups, which is crucial for successful and sustainable trail development.

### **Ketchikan Outdoor Recreation & Trails Coalition (KORTC) - Defunct**

**Past Role & Contributions:** KORTC was instrumental in advocating for trails, securing grants, and organizing community engagement in outdoor recreation. The coalition played a key role in expanding trail opportunities through volunteer efforts and inter-agency coordination. However, long-term funding and administrative challenges eventually led to the organization's dissolution.

**Lessons for Future Partnerships:** A sustainable funding model, well-defined leadership, and strong collaboration among agencies and organizations are essential for long-term success. Future coalitions can build upon the lessons of KORTC by establishing clear roles and fostering partnerships with local governments, nonprofits, and businesses to ensure ongoing viability and support for trail development.

### **Southeast Alaska Land Trust**

**Mission:** To collaborate with communities, individuals, and organizations throughout Southeast Alaska to help ensure that highly valued habitat, recreation, open space, and cultural and historic areas continue to thrive for the well-being of each generation.

SEALT is a non-profit organization dedicated to permanently conserving vital lands like wetlands, recreation areas, and wildlife habitats across Southeast Alaska, having already protected over 3,600 acres. Their work encompasses land conservation for ecological and community benefits, long-term stewardship of these protected properties, and active community engagement to promote conservation and the enjoyment of the region's natural assets. Through various projects and their Acquisition Fund, SEALT strives to secure open spaces for recreation, wildlife, and the future well-being of Southeast Alaska's communities.

## Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition

**Mission:** We foster partnerships and inspire Southeast Alaskans to steward our watersheds and support communities through participatory projects, research, and learning

SAWC supports recreation and trails in Ketchikan by protecting and restoring healthy watersheds, which ensures clean water and healthy habitats for activities like fishing, boating, and wildlife viewing. They promote water quality through monitoring and outreach, and facilitate partnerships between various stakeholders to support conservation and recreational projects. SAWC also provides technical expertise for environmentally sound trail development and engages in community education to foster stewardship and responsible recreation, ultimately contributing to the long-term health and enjoyment of Ketchikan's natural areas and trails.

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

Community groups play a vital role in supporting local trails and recreation by engaging in activities like volunteering for maintenance, organizing events, advocating for funding, and promoting awareness, ultimately fostering a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant community.

- **Volunteering and Maintenance:** Many organizations can dedicate time and resources to trail maintenance, including clearing brush, repairing paths, and removing litter.
- **Event Planning and Promotion:** Community groups can organize events like trail runs, bike rides, and guided hikes, attracting more people to use trails and promoting benefits of outdoor recreation.
- **Advocacy and Funding:** Community groups can advocate for increased funding for trails and recreation programs, working with local governments and other stakeholders to secure resources for trail development and improvement.
- **Engagement and Education:** They actively engage with residents, gathering input on trail needs and preferences, and educating the public about responsible trail use and environmental stewardship.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Organizations often collaborate with local businesses, land managers, and other groups to leverage resources and expertise, creating a more cohesive and effective approach to trail development and maintenance.



# FUNDING SOURCES

Trail development and maintenance require capital investment, secured through diverse funding sources like city, state, and federal allocations, as well as donations and grants. The following section discusses funding sources available to provide additional resources for the planning, construction, and maintenance of trails.

## BOROUGH FUNDING

### Capital Improvement Program

A capital improvement program (CIP), or capital investment plan, is a plan for capital expenditures of a government to be incurred each year over a fixed period of future years. While policy guidelines vary, capital projects are generally expenditures for infrastructure, buildings and facilities, equipment, and land that are generally expensive (over a certain dollar amount), non-recurring, and have a useful life expectancy of more than one year. Large projects like park acquisition, trail construction, and other recreation projects that require borrowing of funds can often be included in the Borough's CIP. Local government capital funds may be used as a match to apply for federal or state grants.

### Recreation Capital Improvement Projects Fund

The Borough collects a 0.5 percent sales tax for the Recreation Capital Improvement Projects Fund. The fund is for capital costs associated with all Borough recreation programs. 20% of the bona fide expenses of the fund may be used for recreation operations and maintenance, with the remainder allocated for capital expenses.

The fund balance is required to maintain a \$1-million major maintenance reserve, and Bond Reserves equivalent to two years of debt service. Bonded indebtedness remaining consists of the Gateway Aquatic Center and the \$6.6-million bond for the athletic fields from FY2022. A Bond for the Gateway Recreation Center will be considered in the future, further encumbering this fund.

### General Fund

The General Fund finances basic maintenance and operations and is not a consideration for funding major park or trail projects. It is a consideration for funding staffing increases that may be needed if some new parks or trails are built or expanded as outlined in the plan or if an expansion of services are desired.

### Commercial Passenger Vessel Fund

Commercial Passenger Vessel (CPV) funding flows from the State of Alaska tax of the same name, and may only be used for purposes linked to impacts from commercial passenger vessels and the passengers subject to the tax. Eligible uses include trail development or improvements near the cruise ship berths; and trail assets regularly visited and used by passengers. Revenues increase commensurate to the annual passenger counts, and are likely to continue growing.

### Bonds

Local governments can finance large capital recreation projects by seeking approval from citizens to approve debt financing through a bond referendum or vote. Bonds are most useful for long-term debt for large capital projects; however, bond repayment burdens the Recreational CIP over a long period of time. Recreation projects that benefit the community have been funded before. In 1994 Ketchikan voters approved a \$7.5 million General Obligation Bond for constructing and equipping an indoor recreation center. In 2009, voters approved another general obligation bond not to exceed \$23.5 million for constructing and equipping a new aquatic center. The bond for the aquatic center was passed with the understanding it would be paid for by the local recreation sales tax.

The Borough collects a 0.5 percent sales tax for the educational facilities capital fund (School Bond CIP fund). This fund is intended for debt service on voter approved school construction bonds and for other capital expenditures which would be bond eligible. This fund would only be usable for projects associated with schools per the State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Insofar as this fund may be available for trails, it would only be through specific verification with DEED as to the educational value to the District afforded by the expenditure.

## GRANT FUNDING

### Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI), National Park Service (NPS) and consists of two parts: the federal and the state side. For state and local grant funding, the LWCF provides matching grants to states for planning, acquiring lands and waters, and developing facilities for outdoor recreation. Under the provisions, boroughs, municipalities, and other local government entities must protect LWCF-assisted parklands or parks infrastructure in perpetuity. Eligible project types are identified and prioritized in the SCORP. More than \$40 million in LWCF grants has been invested in over 350 projects in Alaska since inception of the LWCF program in 1965.

**Funding type and range:** LWCF funds are provided on a matching basis for up to 50% of the total project-related costs. Non-profit partners can collaborate with states and municipalities to identify community needs, develop a strong grant application, and secure matching funds from a variety of public and private sources.

The LWCF grant application for Alaska in 2024 states that the maximum grant request is \$125,000 and the minimum is \$25,000.

**Eligibility:** State, regional or local governments, and federally recognized tribal governments, with the legal authority to provide park and recreation services on public lands are eligible to apply for LWCF assistance.

The Borough has received past funding for Esther Shea Grandstand Cover, High School Tennis Courts, Alder Park Construction, Dudley Field Concessions Stand, and Lund Street and Alder Park Playground are currently in progress.

### Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) has been transferred from the Department of Natural Resources to DOT&PF to strengthen coordination and investment in Alaska's trail network. Currently, DOT&PF is working to develop a new structure for the RTP.

### Federal Lands Access Program

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) funding is administered by the FHWA for transportation projects that improve access to federal lands, including trails in Alaska. FLAP supports trail construction, maintenance, and planning efforts that enhance connectivity, safety, and sustainability while ensuring year-round access for recreation and essential travel. FLAP supplements state and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators. Approximately \$69.5 million in FLAP funds have been obligated in Alaska.

Projects demonstrate how they improve public access to federal lands and align with environmental and cultural protections. FLAP funding also supports planning and feasibility studies that help agencies and stakeholders identify transportation needs, assess environmental and cultural impacts, and develop project designs before implementation.

**Funding type and range:** Grants require a minimum 20% match. This percentage can be higher (sliding scale), depending on the amount of publicly owned Federal land in the state. Grant amounts vary by grant cycle. In FY 2020 the program had a budget of \$270 million. The next request for proposals for the Alaska FLAP is scheduled for the spring of 2025.

**Eligibility:** State, local, and tribal governments or regional organizations with the legal authority to manage transportation facilities including trails and other corridors.

### Examples of FLAP Funded Projects in Alaska

- Portage Curve Multi-modal Connector
- Bonnie Brae Access Trail
- Settlers Cove SRS Access Improvements

## Transportation Alternatives Program

DOT&PF is responsible for administering TAP grants, which is a federal initiative that funds projects aimed at enhancing non-motorized transportation infrastructure, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, trails, and other improvements that promote active transportation and recreational opportunities. TAP supports the design and construction of projects that improve connectivity, safety, and environmental sustainability while expanding active transportation options for local communities. Eligible applicants include state and local governments, tribal entities, and regional organizations. Projects must align with community transportation goals and comply with environmental and cultural resource regulations.

**Funding type and range:** TAP projects are limited to two project submittals per community with a not-to-exceed federal share amount of \$5,000,000 based on the 2022 TAP Award Amounts. Grant agreements are conducted through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) on a four-year program. The next cycle will begin in 2028.

**Eligibility:** Local government entities include any unit of local government below a State government agency, except for a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) representing an urbanized area with a population over 200,000. Examples include city, town, township, village, borough, parish, or county agencies.

### Examples of TAP Funded Projects in Southeast Alaska

- Montana Creek Bridge Replacement

## Pittman-Robertson Act (Hunter Access Defense Program)

The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act is funded from an excise tax on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment to fund wildlife conservation, hunter access and education programs. The Act allocates funds to state wildlife agencies for projects that develop and enhance access to wildlife resources for hunting, trapping, and other recreation. These projects are diverse and include building, improving, and repairing public use trails, roads, parking lots, campgrounds, boat launches, bridges, and more. Projects provide additional or improved opportunity and access to Alaska's lands for hunters and other recreational users.

ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation administers these funds through the Hunter Access Program, which aims to enhance public access to hunting areas and improve related infrastructure.

**Funding type and range:** Pittman-Robertson funds cover up to 75% of the cost of an eligible project and requires a 25% non-federal match. Proposals with a federal budget exceeding \$30,000 are preferred, though those with smaller budgets may still be considered for funding on a case-by-case basis. The maximum allowable federal budget is dictated by the total amount of Pittman-Robertson funding allocated to the Hunter Access Grant Program for each given year.

**Eligibility:** Must be a public or non-profit organization, have successfully executed a previous federal award or have been previously directly funded by a federal agency, and be able to provide the required non-federal fund match.

### Example of a Pittman-Robertson-Funded Trail Project

- Treadwell Ditch Trail Renovation

## Dingell-Johnson Act (Sport Fish Restoration Program)

The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act is funded through an excise tax on fishing equipment, motorboat fuel, and other related items to fund fisheries conservation and recreation access projects. In Alaska, the funds are administered by ADF&G to enhance angler access, improve fish habitats, and maintain recreational fishing infrastructure ([adfg.alaska.gov](http://adfg.alaska.gov)).

**Funding type and range:** The Dingell-Johnson Act funds cover up to 75% of the cost of an eligible project and requires a 25% non-federal match.

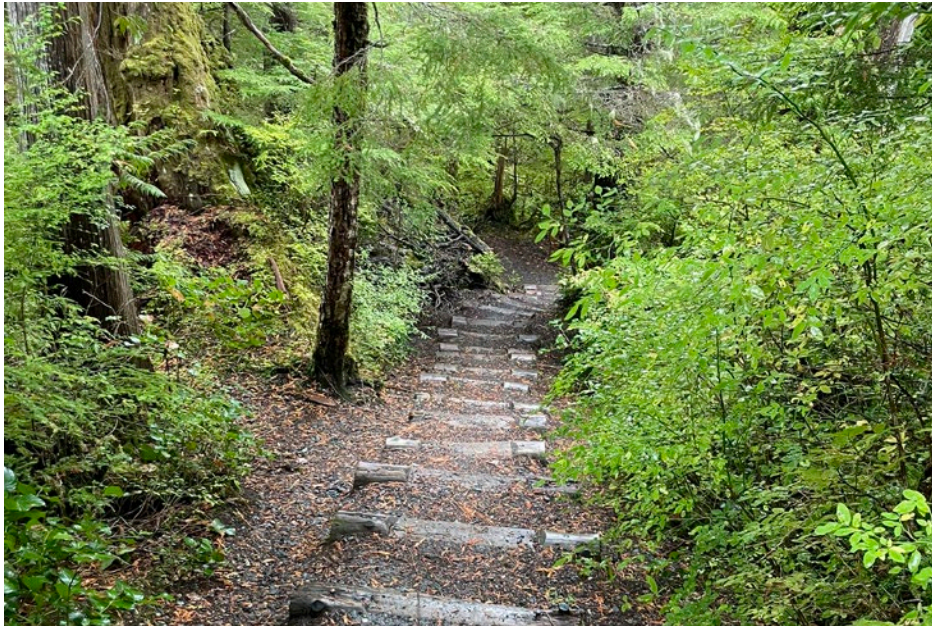
**Eligibility:** Available for projects that benefit recreational boating and sport fishing. These funds cannot be used for projects that support subsistence, personal use, or commercial fishing groups.

## Corporate Grants or Sponsorships

Corporate grants and sponsorship can support trail development and maintenance through direct financial contributions, in-kind contributions, and valuable expertise.

- **Direct Funding:** Corporations can fund grants for building new trails, local companies could sponsor ongoing upkeep or popular recreation areas, companies could donate or fund the purchase of necessary equipment, grants are available to support projects aimed at making trails more accessible, and businesses or corporations can fund initiatives focused on environmental sustainability of trails.
- **In-Kind Support:** Through employee volunteer programs such as volunteer days for trail maintenance, donations of materials for trail construction or maintenance, and pro-bono professional services, such as design, engineering, surveying, or marketing and communication support for trail-related projects.

Potential corporate partners in Ketchikan include the forestry, fishing, tourism, construction, and healthcare industries. Additionally, grants and sponsorships could be found through outdoor gear suppliers and local businesses.



## OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS

### Local Businesses and Organizations

Local businesses and community service organizations have long supported parks and recreation in Ketchikan. Recent local funding includes the Rotary Club and several businesses who have provided and sponsored sports equipment. Local service clubs have successfully funded and provided labor for the repair and installation of new playgrounds and park improvements throughout Alaska. Volunteer groups that include local groups (Boy Scouts, labor unions, and others) as well as the many cruise ship operators often provide volunteer hours by their crew (and sometimes funding) to the port of calls for community projects.

### Park Foundation

The creation of a local Park Foundation non-profit as a 501(c)(3) would allow residents to advocate for and raise funds for recreational improvements in the community. Park Foundations have been established in Juneau and Anchorage, with other communities in the process or about to receive their non-profit status from the IRS.

The CBJ Parks & Recreation Department partners with the Juneau Park Foundation to improve local parks, playgrounds, trails, and public spaces. They are dedicated to supporting and preserving local parks and green spaces. Through community engagement and fundraising efforts, the foundation works to enhance the natural beauty and recreational opportunities available in the Juneau area.

### Commercial Use Permit

Several cruise ship ports in Alaska have a local commercial use permit that allows a business (tour operator) to conduct a commercial enterprise on locally managed parklands that includes parks, trails, and recreation facilities. In addition to collecting fees that typically go towards the operation and maintenance of the facilities, the permit sets rules and regulations to preserve and maintain the public assets for all users, preserve the recreational experience, consider impacts upon other users and neighboring property, and ensure public safety on parklands and trails.