

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD**

James Jones - Chair – At Large 1
Ruth Wood – Vice Chair – District 7
Ky Friedman – District 1
Steve Menard – At Large 2

John Spaulding – District 3
Vacant – District 4
Michael Rovito – District 2
Harry Hillman – At Large 4

Vacant – District 5
Maksim Revutskiy – District 6
Cachet Garrett – At Large 3



AGENDA

Lower-Level Conference Room and Teams

Meeting ID:258 440 394 545 55 Passcode: eb3AH9aG
350 EAST DAHLIA AVE, PALMER

REGULAR MEETING

6:00 PM

JUNE 22, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

A. April 27, 2026

VI. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Andy Mergens – Parks, Recreation & Libraries Division Manager
- B. Hugh Leslie – Operational Branch Manager – Outdoor Recreation
- C. Adam Madson – Operational Branch Manager – Recreation Facilities

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – (3 Minutes Per Person)

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Electric Motorbikes

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Resolution of support for Denali Nordic Ski Club for proposed G-Loop Nordic ski trail at Talkeetna Lakes Park.
- B. GPRA Draft Management Plan - [MSB - 2026 Government Peak Recreation Area Plan Update](#)

X. VOLUNTEER NOMINATIONS

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

XII. MEMBER COMMENTS

XIII. NEXT MEETING

- A. July 27, 2026

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD**

James Jones - Chair – At Large 1
Ruth Wood – Vice Chair – District 7
Ky Friedman – District 1
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John Spaulding – District 3
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Harry Hillman – At Large 4

Vacant – District 5
Maksim Revutskiy – District 6
Cachet Garrett – At Large 3



MEETING MINUTES

Lower-Level Conference Room and Teams

Meeting ID:258 440 394 545 55 Passcode: eb3AH9aG
350 EAST DAHLIA AVE, PALMER

REGULAR MEETING

6:00 PM

April 27, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Called to order at 6:06 pm.

II. ROLL CALL

A. Present: James Jones, Ruth Wood, Ky Friedman, Steve Menard, John Spaulding, Cachet Garrett & Maksim Revutskiy @ 6:19 pm.

B. Absent: Michael Rovito & Harry Hillman.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

A. Mr. Menard motioned to approve, unanimous consent.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

A. March 23, 2026 – Ms. Garrett made a correction to the minutes. Ms. Wood motioned to approve the amended minutes, unanimous consent.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

A. Andy Mergens – Parks, Recreation & Libraries Division Manager

1. Updated the board on grant applications for Mat River Park and Big Lake Lions Rec Center. Also the Trails Passport book that will be coming out by Memorial Day.

- B. Hugh Leslie – Operational Branch Manager – Outdoor Recreation
 - 1. Updated the board on campgrounds and staff onboarding. Jim Creek Cleanup is May 9, lake gates will be opened May 15, Wildwood Playground is closed for EWF replacement and all the signs at Borough Trails & Parks are being updated this summer.
- C. Adam Madson – Operational Branch Manager – Recreation Facilities
 - 1. Updated the board on pool and rink operations. The Brett will be closed May 3 – 31 for floor replacements.

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – (3 Minutes Per Person)

- A. Michelle Huen – Spoke about Matanuska Peak Trail.
- B. John Miller – Spoke about Wolf Lake Park.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Electric Motorbikes
 - 1. No update
- B. Possible letter of support for Denali Nordic Ski Club for proposed G-Loop Nordic ski trail at Talkeetna Lakes Park.
 - 1. Denali Nordic Ski Club gave a presentation about the proposed G-Loop ski trail. Ms. Wood motioned to support the Denali Nordic Ski Club’s proposal with a resolution, Mr. Jones seconded. Unanimous consent.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. None

X. VOLUNTEER NOMINATIONS

- A. None

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

- A. None

XII. MEMBER COMMENTS

- A. James Jones – Be aware of bears and get outside.
- B. Ruth Wood – Invited everyone to come enjoy Talkeetna trails.
- C. Ky Freidman – Butte traffic is increasing, be mindful of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- D. Steve Menard – Thanked staff, remarked on Cottonwood and Wasilla Lake.
- E. Maksim Revutskiy – Apologized for being late.
- F. Cachet Garrett – Excited about the passport and getting outside.
- G. John Spaulding – Introduced himself as the new board member for District 3. Enjoyed his first meeting.

XIII. NEXT MEETING

- A. May 18, 2026

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Adjourned at 7:20 pm

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 26-01**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD IN SUPPORT OF DENALI NORDIC SKI CLUB'S "G" LOOP TRAIL PROPOSAL IN TALKEETNA LAKES PARK.

WHEREAS, Talkeetna Lakes Park is a much-desired destination for Nordic Skiing in the northern Matanuska Susitna Borough, drawing both local ski enthusiasts as well visitors from around the world; and

WHEREAS, the Nordic Skiing community has recognized a need for additional Nordic Ski trails to support with the increased usage in recent years; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Ski Club has also recognized the need for more trails to diversify and expand skiing opportunities for Nordic Ski enthusiasts; and

WHEREAS, additional Nordic Ski trails would support more Nordic Ski competitions but require a minimum of 15km and Talkeetna Lakes Park currently only has 6 km available; and

WHEREAS, the Talkeetna Lakes Master Plan identifies adding an additional 9 km of trail notated as the "G" Loop; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Nordic Ski Club wishes to pursue grant funding opportunities to expand the existing Nordic Ski trails known as the 9 km "G" Loop to support increased opportunities for both recreational and competitive skiers; and

WHEREAS, additional ski competitions and recreational use will generate revenue income to the area businesses and Borough.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board supports the design and construction of the "G" Loop Trail in Talkeetna Lakes Park.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board this - day of -, 2026.

James Jones, Chair

ATTEST:

Sarah Thomas - Staff Support



GOVERNMENT PEAK RECREATION AREA

Management Plan | April 2026

Matanuska-Susitna Borough





TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Introduction
4	Existing Conditions
9	GPRA Development Goals
11	Strategy for Future Development
21	Process for Selecting Future Projects
24	Public Engagement Summary
28	Funding Opportunities
A1	Appendix A - Conceptual Renderings & Current Projects
B1	Appendix B - Survey Results
C1	Appendix C - Public Comments





INTRODUCTION

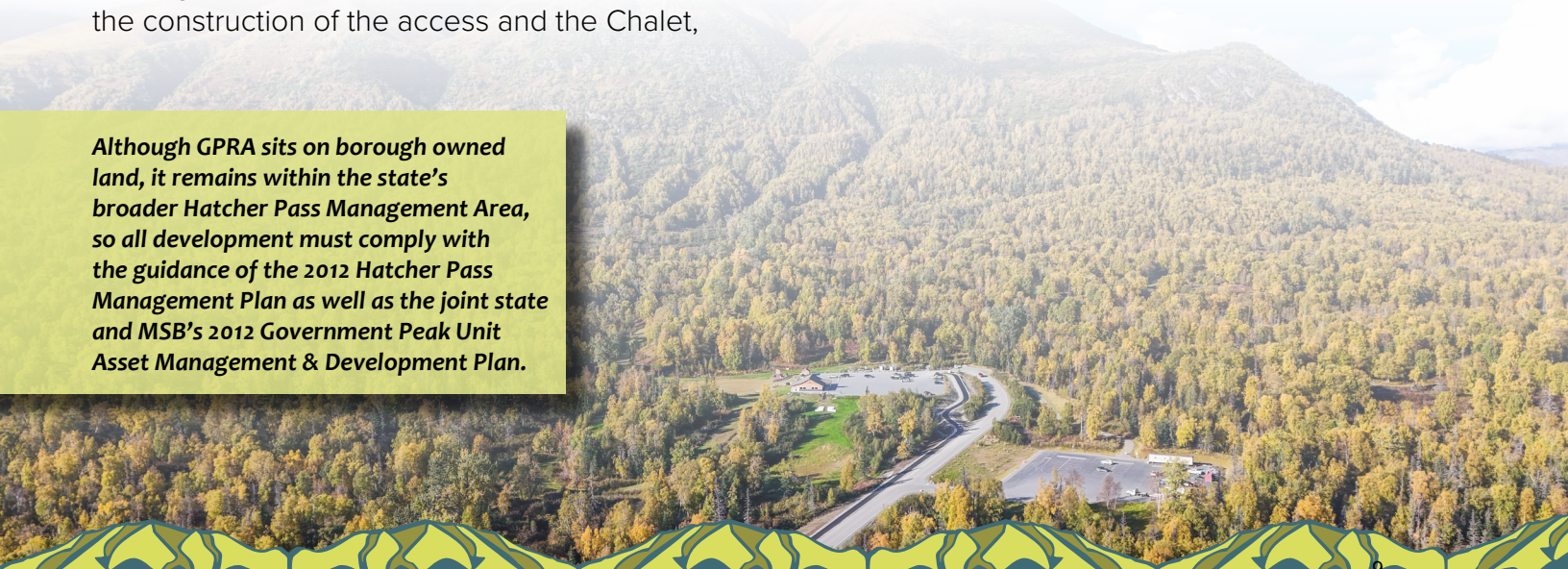
The Government Peak Recreation Area (GPRA) is a year-round community recreation hub in the rapidly growing Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB). Tucked against the base of Government Peak, the recreation area was officially established in 2012 and has steadily gained popularity since.

Before becoming GPRA, the land was managed by the State of Alaska's Department of Natural Resources. Situated within the Southern Sub-Unit of the Government Peak Unit of the Hatcher Pass Management Area, the land remained largely undeveloped for many years despite periodic efforts at development.

A major shift came in 2010 when portions of the Government Peak Unit, including the 1,420 acres that are now known as GPRA, were approved for conveyance to MSB under the State of Alaska's municipal entitlement program. This approval granted MSB management authority over the land while the conveyance process was underway. Building on this momentum from the year prior, MSB and Alaska's late Congressman Don Young secured \$6 million in Federal Transit Administration funding for the area. Those funds went to support the construction of the access and the Chalet,

which opened in 2012. Following the transfer of management authority, volunteers played a crucial role in establishing GPRA's Nordic ski trails. This strong volunteer effort has continued ever since, and the success of the area is due largely in part to a robust community of volunteers. As the trail system continued to develop, and expanded into other modes like biking and hiking, the number of visitors continued to rise. In March 2025, the State of Alaska issued a patent for the land, formally conveying ownership of the lands to MSB.

In 2017, the MSB published a two-page management plan outlining goals and ideas for the future of the area. **Today, this 2026 GPRA Management Plan builds on that foundation and replaces the 2017 plan. This Management Plan establishes a strategic framework for future capital improvements and management decisions. Detailed design, engineering, and cost analysis will occur during project-specific implementation phases.**



Although GPRA sits on borough owned land, it remains within the state's broader Hatcher Pass Management Area, so all development must comply with the guidance of the 2012 Hatcher Pass Management Plan as well as the joint state and MSB's 2012 Government Peak Unit Asset Management & Development Plan.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A 1,420-acre four-season recreation area, GPRA attracts approximately 80,000 users per year and is owned and managed by the MSB. The area features rolling, hilly terrain with mixed spruce, birch, and poplar forests. Several small streams cross the property, requiring wooden footbridges along some trail segments. Snowpack typically persists from October through April, though seasonal conditions vary. As a borough-owned facility, users are required to pay for parking. Borough rates and fees are set by the assembly every year. Currently, a single use day fee is \$5, or parking is covered by the MSB annual trailhead parking pass available for \$40.

GPRA hosts a wide variety of biking, hiking, running, and skiing events each year, ranging from recreational outings to Olympic qualifying races. Clubs, user groups, and tour operators are key planners and organizers of these events. These same clubs and community organizations such as the Backcountry Horsemen, Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers, and the Mat-Su Ski Club not only have members that frequently use the area, but have dedicated volunteers who help plan, construct, and maintain trails.

As a requirement of the Federal Transit Administration for grant funds obtained in 2009, the MSB must provide transit service to GPRA until 2064. In 2026, a free shuttle service ran from both Palmer and Wasilla to GPRA on Saturdays from early January to late March.

An approximately 4,000 square foot heated and plumbed Chalet facility can accommodate up to 324 people (per fire code), but may comfortably fit fewer depending on how the venue is set up. At the writing of this plan, the Chalet is

being operated by a third-party concessionaire and is available for rent at rates set by the concessionaire. The Chalet does not currently have standard operating hours for use by the public. Groups like the Fishhook Community Council, Mat-Su Ski Club, and other users will occasionally rent out the space for meetings, and it is also a popular wedding and event venue. **MSB will start operating and managing the Chalet in January 2027** at the conclusion of the contract with the current concessionaire.

GPRA At-A-Glance



~80,000 annual visitors



Over 10 miles (16 kilometers) of nordic ski trails (3.73 lighted miles)



Over 8 miles of bike trails



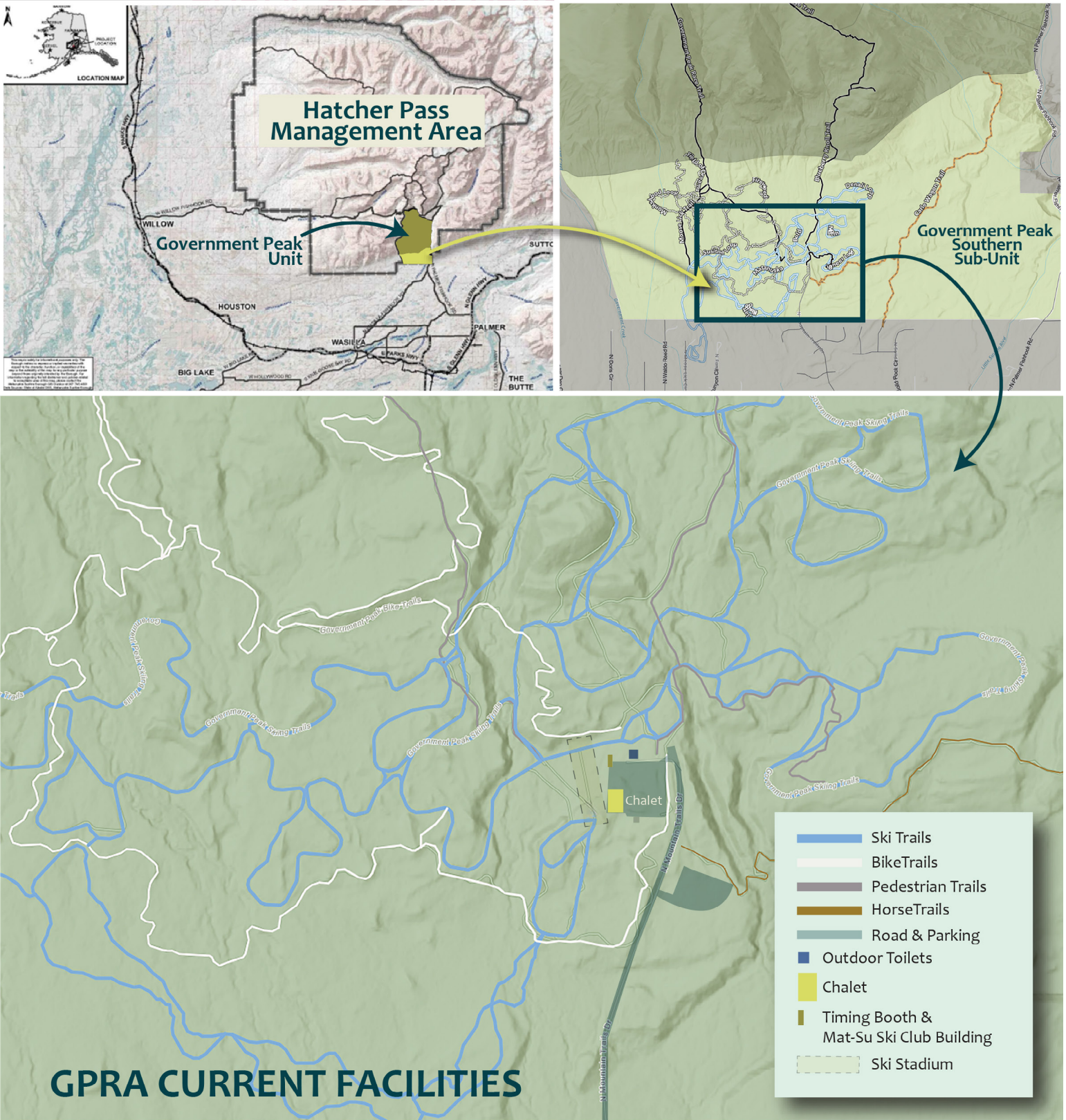
Over 6 miles of hiking trails



2 miles of pack and saddle horseback trails

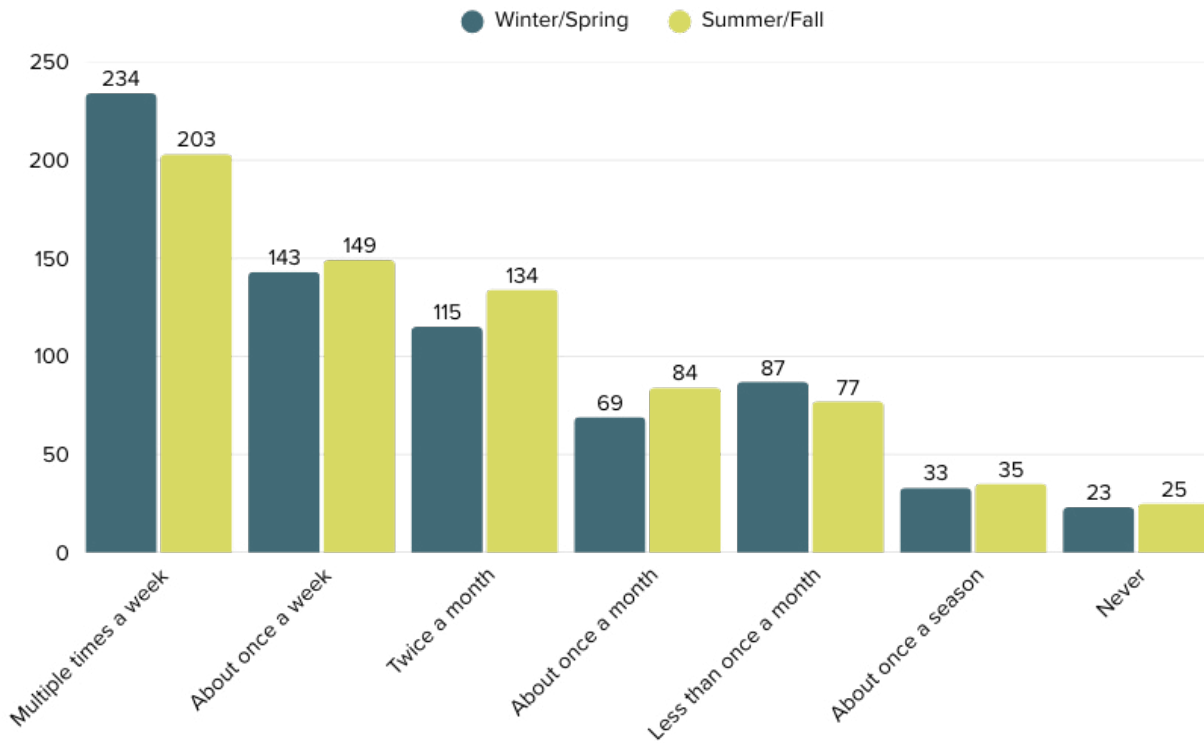
OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING:

- One ~4,000 square-foot Chalet
- Two outside vault-toilets
- Ski timing tower, ski club building, and viewing stadium
- Two parking lots
- Picnic tables



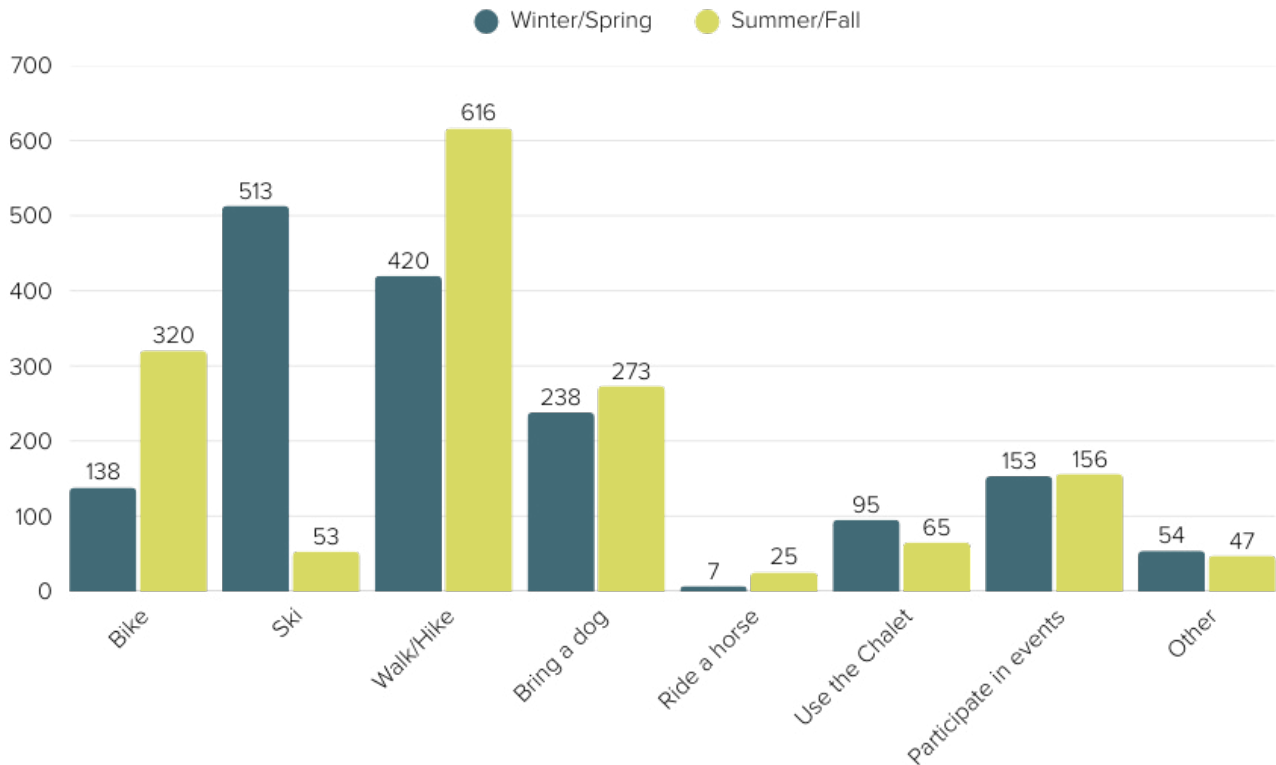
For a detailed map of the trails in the area visit trails.matsu.gov and click on the [interactive trails map](#).

How Often Do You Visit GPRA?



Fall 2025 survey user results for frequency of visitation. 709 total responses.

What Do You Do At GPRA?



Fall 2025 survey user results illustrating common user activities. 709 total responses.



Existing Conditions Review By Users

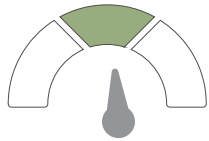
As part of a GPRA user survey released during this planning process, users ranked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the current state of GPRA. Full survey results are in Appendix B - Survey Results.

From a total of 709 responses, more than 65% of respondents reported feeling “satisfied” or “very satisfied” about the following:



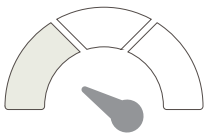
- » Summer/fall trail system maintenance (85%)
- » Winter/spring trail system maintenance (84%)
- » Amount of parking (84%)
- » Cleanliness of facilities (78%)
- » Amount of groomed ski trails (69%)
- » Wayfinding and signs (70%)
- » Amount of groomed walking trails (67%)

About half of all respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with:



- » The amount of biking trails (50%)
- » The amount of multi-use trails (49%)
- » Recreational programs and opportunities for adults (45%)
- » Recreational programs and opportunities for children and teens (44%)

Lower levels of satisfaction, either “not satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied,” were reported for:



- » Connectedness to nearby trail systems (39.2%)
- » Availability and opportunity to use the Chalet (29%)

Some aspects of the area left most people with no opinion, with 65% of respondents saying they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the recreational programs and opportunities for seniors and 81% with no opinion on the number of equestrian trails.

While it’s important to look at the feelings of the group as a whole, it is also important to filter results by sub-user groups. This allows for a closer look at how specific sub-groups feel. For example, only about 50% of the 709 respondents reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of biking trails. At face value this could make it seem like users aren’t overwhelmingly satisfied with the biking trails. However, not everyone who answered the survey rides a bike; 35% of all respondents had no opinion on the amount of biking trails. Looking only at the 322 people who reported biking at GPRA, about 69% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of biking trails, with 24% feeling somewhat satisfied, and only about 7% not feeling satisfied, **showing relatively high levels of satisfaction amongst the biking community.**

Conversely, a lot of people who report having no opinion on conditions can obscure dissatisfaction in a certain sub-group. For example, 81% of people had no opinion on the number of equestrian trails, so only about 4% of all users reported being not satisfied. However, for the 25 people who reported riding horses at GPRA, only one person (4%) was very satisfied with the number of trails, 9 (36%) were somewhat satisfied, and the remaining 15 (60%) were dissatisfied, showing the equestrians are overwhelmingly dissatisfied.



GPRA Upper Parking Lot
September 2025



Payment Kiosk
Near Chalet



Outside Vault-Toilets



Mat-Su Ski Club Timing Tower



Mat-Su Ski Club Building

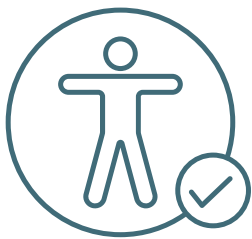
GPRA DEVELOPMENT GOALS

These goals are based on the goals listed in the 2017 development plan and have been updated based on community feedback gathered during the in-person open house and virtual workshop.



Compliance Goal

Comply with adopted plans including the borough-wide Comprehensive Plan, Fishhook Community Comprehensive Plan, the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, the state's 2012 Hatcher Pass Management Plan and the joint state/ borough's 2012 Hatcher Pass - Government Peak Unit Asset Management & Development Plan.



Accessibility Goal

Create recreation opportunities that make the area accessible and welcoming for users of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Balance the needs of various interests and user groups.



Growth Goal

Strive to meet the evolving recreational interests of a growing region, providing a diverse range of healthy, non-motorized outdoor recreation activities.



Balance Goal

Maintain a strong sense of the site's natural setting but lean toward giving more people the chance for healthy active outdoor activity.



Sustainability Goal

Invest in sustainable trails, buildings and other facilities. Minimize future maintenance and management costs through high quality, up-front design and construction.



Partnership Goal

Continue to improve facilities through active partnerships with user groups and other volunteers while maintaining strong borough oversight, involvement, and approval during the process.



Maintenance Goal

Link approval of user group projects to responsibilities for ongoing maintenance. Clear the backlog of deferred maintenance and strive for consistent routine maintenance.



STRATEGY FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Community feedback and the GPRA development goals were considered while developing the strategies in this section. Each community-driven strategy aligns with borough priorities and ties back to at least one of the GPRA development goals. Each strategy has actionable steps that can be taken to achieve success.

Need to Know: Public Input Related to Future Development

Through the GPRA user survey, community members were able to rank ideas on how the MSB could prioritize future development of GPRA.

The top three ways people wanted to prioritize development in GPRA were to:

- 1 Build new trails to connect to other recreation areas (like Skeetawk)
- 2 Improve and maintain existing trails and infrastructure
- 3 Build new trails within the recreation area

The top three facilities that people said would make their experience more enjoyable included:

- 1 Restrooms
- 2 Warming Huts
- 3 Trail Lighting

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

The user survey released during this planning process asked respondents to think about the biggest unmet needs at GPRA and what the MSB could do to make the area more accessible to all users. **The themes listed below commonly arose in the survey, through conversations at the in-person open house, and via feedback at the virtual workshop:**

- » A need for beginner, family-friendly, and accessible trails
- » Strong desire for regular access to the Chalet
- » Confusion over current trail rules and a need for clear trail etiquette to be taught/enforced
- » A need for more multi-use, dog-friendly trails, especially in winter
- » More facilities and amenities, including things like picnic areas, playgrounds, pump tracks, etc.
- » Balance support for user groups while not favoring one over the other

These ideas were used to develop the following strategies and actions to achieve the development goals listed in this plan.

Overall, I'd love to see more multi-use trails and a trail that connects to Skeetawk. Also, I've hiked the equestrian trail in summer and it's completely overgrown through the swampy areas--probably a hard place to fix, but maybe boardwalks or matting could be added?

**[Re: challenges]
Littering on trails.
Lack of directional signs on trails.**

Indoor space that is routinely available, especially during skiing and running events.

Somehow helping people understand and be more familiar with the trails and where they lead/connect/ and what you can do on them would be nice.

Kiosk of organizations that support ongoing maintenance [and info on] how to volunteer

Flat trails to ski on for those who are learning. More access to the chalet on cold days to use the restroom.

I love GPRA! I do wish more could be done to encourage seniors to use and enjoy. I also would like to see efforts to expand outreach to people with disabilities, families, and other segments of the community. I also wish the Chalet facilities were better utilized and more accessible. GPRA is such a great resource for all of our community!

Warming huts, more hiking trails of varying difficulty, better signage (existing signage can be confusing, not done well), picnic shelters

Here's what some people had to say...

Strategy A: Data-Driven Development and Condition Monitoring

Intent: Conduct on-site surveys to ground-truth usage statistics, trail conditions, and user behaviors. Use this information to help inform future development. This survey will establish a baseline for trail usage and conditions.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports all GPRA development goals.

- » Action: Continue and identify new methods to collect usage and condition data, including but not limited to in-person trail counts, condition surveys, trail cameras/counters, and on-site user interviews.
- » Action: Collect summer and winter trail usage and condition data across multiple trail use types. Leverage relationships with volunteer groups for extra support collecting data if needed.
- » Action: Work with the MSB geographic information system (GIS) team to publish data on the GPRA website.
- » Action: Establish a schedule for continued monitoring and trail condition inventory.
- » Action: Document data collection methods for tracking the number of annual users to the area.



Strategy B: Avoid Future Deferred Maintenance and Clear Current Backlog

Intent: Prioritize maintenance and improvement of existing trails and facilities prior to advancing new infrastructure, and establish a method for avoiding maintenance backlogs in the future.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the maintenance goal.

- » Action: Use data gathered from trail condition surveys, user input, and feedback from user groups to create a prioritized list of trails that need maintenance.
- » Action: Continue to support partner organizations' efforts to improve the efficiency of trail and facility maintenance operations, including the development of a shared maintenance building in the lower parking lot and an emergency route to improve access to outlying mountain bike trail areas. (See Appendix A for conceptual drawings of the maintenance building)
- » Action: Prioritize trail maintenance over new trail construction until the highest priority maintenance has been completed, and a maintenance plan has been put in place to address remaining high-investment needs.
- » Action: Explore funding opportunities to support maintenance needs, including requesting regular funding in the borough budget. (See section on funding opportunities)
- » Action: Work with the MSB GIS staff to augment the existing [MSB Problem Reporter](#) so it can be used by the public to report needed maintenance on borough-owned trails.



Strategy C: Improve Visitor Experience Through Enhanced Signage, Wayfinding, Information Access, and Aesthetic Upgrades

Intent: Reduce user confusion and conflicts by enhancing wayfinding signs, providing education on trail etiquette and available services, and set users up for success by providing necessary information and resources about the area.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the accessibility goal, growth goal, and partnership goal.



Standardized signs could help all users

- » **Action:** Develop a central trailhead to serve as the main entrance to GPRA trails from the existing parking lot.
- » **Action:** Include trail etiquette information on the central trailhead sign.
- » **Action:** Add trail information, area history, and a community events board to the Chalet entryway.
- » **Action:** Identify critical points on the trails where installing dog owner stations may be appropriate, including dog waste bags and information on leash rules.
- » **Action:** Work collaboratively with partner organizations and the MSB GIS team to standardize signs along the trails and install directional signs at all decision points. Phase out non-standard signs.
- » **Action:** Update the GPRA website to provide clear background information, trail rules, maps, access to this development plan, and more. Include links to the [interactive MSB trails map](#), and [winter grooming map](#).
- » **Action:** Add information about the free shuttle service to the website and on signs at GPRA.
- » **Action:** Create an events calendar that is hosted on the GPRA website that lists upcoming races, practices, and other events.
- » **Action:** Host seasonal “Welcome to GPRA” events, providing an opportunity for the borough and user groups to interact with all users, with a focus on orienting new users to the area.
- » **Action:** Work with the MSB Public Works department to remove and explore alternatives to the concrete barriers at the current terminus of North Mountain Trails Drive.
- » **Action:** Research grants and potential funding opportunities to install interpretive signs along the trails. Topics could include the cultural history of the area, information on local plants and animals, and more.
- » **Action:** Explore new partnerships with local museums, tribes, or other groups to bring permanent visual displays and information to the area or temporary installations to the Chalet.



Strategy D: Strengthen Public Safety by Prohibiting Trapping and Hunting

Intent: Promote a safe recreation area by formally prohibiting trapping within GPRA (Government Peak Southern Sub-Unit). Discharge of firearms is already prohibited under [11 AAC 96.014\(b\)\(3\)\(E\)](#); however, additional restrictions are necessary to address other forms of hunting, including archery, within this heavily used recreation area.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the balance goal, partnership goal, and accessibility goal.

- » **Action:** Draft and introduce an amendment to [MSB Code 2.85.020](#) (Closures and Restrictions) adding GPRA to the list of MSB lands where trapping is prohibited for MSB Assembly consideration and approval.
- » **Action:** Seek MSB Assembly adoption of this Management Plan to establish policy direction that hunting activities, including bow hunting, is not an allowed activity within GPRA due to public safety concerns and incompatibility with a high-use recreation setting.
- » **Action:** Engage with interested parties, partner groups, and members of the public to present the proposed trapping and hunting restriction, gather feedback, and request a formal letter of support.
- » **Action:** Upon adoption, update all public-facing information, including on-site signage, website content, maps, and user materials to clearly communicate trapping restrictions.
- » **Action:** Coordinate with MSB Code Compliance and enforcement partners to ensure they are fully informed of the codified restriction and prepared to respond appropriately to reported violations.

Strategy E: Improve Availability of Inside Space

Intent: Assume and maintain control of the Chalet facility.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the accessibility goal, growth goal, balance goal, and sustainability goal.

- » Action: At the expiration of the current contract MSB starts operating the Chalet.
- » Action: Open the Chalet for free public access at set times and during major events and races.
- » Action: Explore maintaining public access to the Chalet restrooms when building is not otherwise open to the public.
- » Action: Maintain access to private rentals at affordable rates.
- » Action: Invest funds collected from private rentals in GPRA facility maintenance.
- » Action: Maintain an online booking system for private rentals of the Chalet and make it available on the GPRA website.



The MSB will operate the Chalet.



All ages and abilities should be able to enjoy GPRA

Strategy F: Identify suitable areas for developing Entry-Level, Family-Friendly, and Inclusive Trails

Intent: Make GPRA trails more welcoming for first-time visitors, less advanced users, people with limited mobility, and families by creating a system of shorter, gentler, multi-use trails close to parking.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the accessibility goal, growth goal, balance goal, and sustainability goal.

- » Action: Seek funding to support construction of new entry-level, family-friendly, accessible trails.
- » Action: Work with advocacy groups and users to identify suitable locations and trail features that meet the needs of target user groups including families and those with mobility challenges and other disabilities.
- » Action: Explore feasibility of designing and constructing the trails in-house while leveraging support from volunteer groups or outside contractors as needed.
- » Action: Prioritize constructing one new trail of this style before constructing new advanced trails.

Strategy G: Strengthen Volunteer Relationships

Intent: Bolster relationships with current volunteer groups to continue leveraging their knowledge, support, and dedication to the area while ensuring they have adequate support from the MSB to be successful in their efforts.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the partnership goal and growth goal.

- » Action: Review trail management agreements with each volunteer group and update as necessary.
- » Action: Create a working group with representatives from all active volunteer groups. Meet at least two times per year to discuss the borough’s vision for the area, trail planning, and maintenance needs.
- » Action: Make yearly capital budget requests in the borough budget for allocations to support volunteer groups’ work toward GPRA development and maintenance.
- » Action: As budget and staffing allow, borough staff participate in user-group planned activities at GPRA, for example events like the ski club’s Tree Tour.
- » Action: Support user groups in their applications for funding GPRA projects including offering technical support, signing as a co-applicant, or offering a portion of matching funds when feasible.



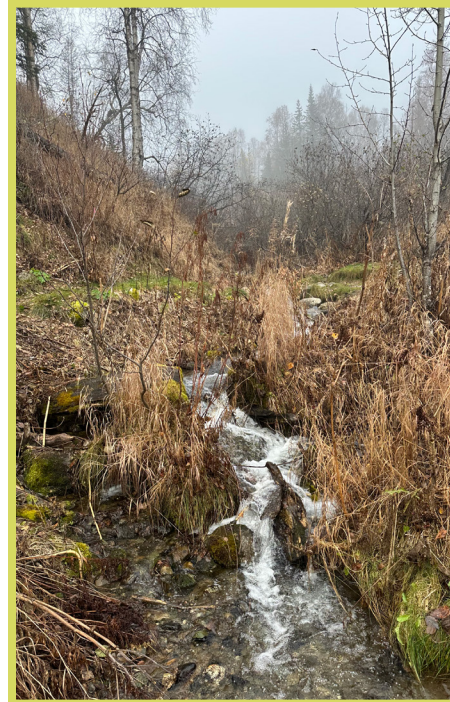
Want to add your volunteer group to this line-up? Talk to MSB staff!

Strategy H: Expand and Improve Trail System and Facilities Within GPRA

Intent: Pursue projects that benefit a wide range of users while recognizing that the area has limited space and avoid overdevelopment.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the growth goal, sustainability goal, and balance goal.

- » Action: Install lighting in the Chalet parking lot.
- » Action: Plan, design, and build more multi-use trails while maintaining a strong sense of the site's natural setting
- » Action: Identify suitable or continue exploring locations for potential construction of a bridge or culvert over the boggy section to the east of the main parking lot to enhance access to existing trails and open recreational opportunities in the eastern portion of GPRA.
- » Action: Evaluate the need to permanently open the lower overflow parking lot.
- » Action: Coordinate installation of lighting, fee payment kiosks, and restrooms with the potential permanent opening of the lower parking lot once other projects are developed and increased use is anticipated.
- » Action: Explore the need, public support, and feasibility of constructing facilities that serve users year-round such as picnic shelters or a playground.



Strategy I: Connect GPRA to Nearby Areas

Intent: Expand opportunities to access GPRA by identifying and planning for future trail connections and access points that respond to evolving recreational demand, land use, and community needs

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the growth goal, sustainability goal, and balance goal.

- » Action: Continue pursuing the feasibility of a trail through the eastern portion of GPRA to connect to Skeetawk and Hatcher Pass State Recreation Area including procuring services for site survey, design, and construction.
- » Action: Evaluate whether improvements to existing legal access points to the GPRA trail system are appropriate, including potential trailhead facilities, parking, and signage, while considering feasibility, infrastructure needs, potential impacts, and public input.



Strategy J: Streamline Project Application and Event Scheduling Process

Intent: Standardize the way that volunteer groups submit project ideas. Make information for event permitting requests easily available on the GPRA website.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the compliance goal, accessibility goal, growth goal, and partnership goal.

- » Action: Add a link on the GPRA website to the MSB's Recreation Services & Library Division for obtaining an [Outdoor Recreation Facility Use Permit](#).
- » Action: Implement the project selection process outlined in this plan.
- » Action: At least once a year check in with the volunteer working group established in Strategy G to discuss the effectiveness of the process. Revise as necessary.



PROCESS FOR SELECTING FUTURE PROJECTS

MSB has trail management agreements with volunteer groups for building, maintaining, and grooming GPRA trails. Current agreements are in place with the Backcountry Horsemen, Mat-Su Ski Club, and Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers. Other groups, such as the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation, also help organize programs and activities at GPRA, including events like the Winter Discovery Days, but don't have trail care agreements. **The expertise, input, and labor from these organizations is invaluable for maintaining and developing GPRA.**

In addition to continuing these partnerships, the MSB looks forward to taking a more active role in planning, constructing, and maintaining borough facilities at GPRA. To that end, the MSB

is standardizing the process for groups to submit project proposals for MSB review and approval.

Groups who want to develop projects at GPRA must complete the Phase 1 Preliminary Application process as outlined below prior to starting work. Project applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. MSB commits to reviewing Phase 1 applications, issuing a go/no go decision, and/or following up with additional questions within one month of receiving a Phase 1 application.

Prior to launching this new application process, MSB will create a survey form or interactive website that allows applicants to compile and submit materials and link information on the GPRA website.



Project Application Process



1. Applicants Submit Phase 1 Preliminary Online Application

- » Through an online form, applicants will address the following:
 - How does the proposed project support the goals and strategies listed in this plan?
 - Does this project meet the design criteria listed in the Hatcher Pass Government Peak Unit Asset Management Plan?
 - Is there potential future development that could be in conflict with this project?
 - Is coordination with other agencies needed? Are permits needed (like Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans, Fish Habitat Permits, or Wetland Fill Permits)?
 - Has funding been secured for the proposed project? If not, what are potential funding sources?
 - What is the expected timeline for design, permitting, and construction?
 - What are the long-term maintenance plans for this project?
 - How does this project benefit the community and overall GPRA experience?
- » To the extent feasible, applicants are encouraged to submit the following:
 - Preliminary cost estimates
 - Conceptual designs
 - *Note: These supplemental materials are optional and are not meant to burden the applicant or cause the applicant to incur substantial costs related to developing these materials.*

2. MSB Issues Go/No Go Decision

- » MSB Land & Resource Management staff will review the Phase 1 application.
- » MSB will document all decisions in a decision rubric.
- » If more information is needed prior to issuing a decision, MSB staff will reach out to the applicant for more information.
- » If MSB staff issue a “go” decision, staff will send the applicants a link to the Phase 2 application. MSB will also provide any letters of support or approval letters that applicants might need to pursue further grant funding to develop and design the project.
- » If MSB staff issue a “no go” decision, staff will respond to the applicant with a completed decision rubric.

3. Applicants Submit Phase 2 Final Application

- » Applicants should submit the Phase 2 application within one year of receiving Phase 1 approval. If more than one year lapses, applicants will need to re-submit the Phase 1 application.
- » Applicants are required to submit the following materials:
 - A refined project description, including updated cost estimates and design information to describe the proposed improvements. Final design and engineering are not required at this stage.
 - A financial plan that includes funding sources, an anticipated schedule for receiving and spending funds, volunteer efforts and in-kind contributions.
 - An operations and maintenance plan that outlines anticipated maintenance needs and general cost considerations over time (for example, annual electric demand or periodic repainting).
 - Information on approach to construction management explaining whether the work will be competitively bid through the MSB purchasing department or privately through a non-profit. If bidding privately, provide applicant's qualifications and experience with procuring construction contracts. Detail who will oversee construction and explain the proposed process for how MSB will be integrated to provide a final determination that work is satisfactorily complete and safe for public use.

4. MSB Reviews Phase 2 Materials

- » If any clarification is needed on Phase 2 materials, MSB staff will reach out directly to the applicant.

5. Application Is Routed for Inter-Departmental Review

- » The MSB division responsible for collecting the applications, currently the Land & Resource Management Division, will forward the project application package to other departments and their respective divisions as necessary.
- » The purpose of this review is not for the divisions to make a decision on the project, but rather for their awareness and involvement in its implementation. For example, if the proposed project needs more engineering expertise, it will be routed to the borough's Public Works Department (which includes the Pre-Design & Engineering Division, Project Management Division, etc.).

6. MSB Gives Final Approval for Construction

- » MSB will draft a new agreement or amend an existing agreement to address construction responsibilities and long-term maintenance agreements.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Over the course of the GPRA Management Plan update, the project team implemented a multi-channel, accessible, and community-focused public engagement strategy with an emphasis on reaching diverse user groups, lowering barriers to participation, and maintaining consistent communication across in-person, digital, and media platforms. The review of this plan also included a 30-day public comment period. All comments received during plan development and the comment period can be found in Appendix C – Public Comments. Tactics that the team used to engage the public included:

- A project website
- Two focus groups with highly impacted users
- A user survey
- One in-person open house
- One virtual workshop
- A booth at the Mat-Su Ski Club Tree Tour
- Social media and news notifications
- Flyers
- Email notifications

Website

An MSB-hosted website was created specifically for this project and contained information about project scope, schedule, and listed opportunities to get involved in the planning process. It was available at all public engagement opportunities, linked in all emails, and used as a central resource for project information. Contact information for the project manager was provided, as well as a sign-up form for the project listserv. The website was periodically updated to include relevant information such as a link to the virtual workshop when it became available

Public Survey

The GPRA user survey was launched in early November 2025 at the beginning of the planning process. The purpose of the survey was to learn how people were currently using GPRA, what they envisioned the future of the area to be, and any concerns they had about the area. The survey was linked on the website, advertised on social media, was available for people to complete via hard copy at the in-person public open house, focus groups, and Mat-Su Ski Club Tree Tour, was advertised via paid ads in the *Frontiersman*, and was available via QR code on flyers posted at local establishments. Community members were

incentivized to complete the survey by being able to enter their email for a chance to win an MSB trailhead parking pass. Users were also able to enter their email address to be added to the project listserv. **The survey received 709 responses before closing on January 9.** Survey results can be found in Appendix B – Survey Results.



Example advertisement for the GPRA User Survey



Photo Credit: Blind Eagle Creative

Booth Holiday Tree Tour

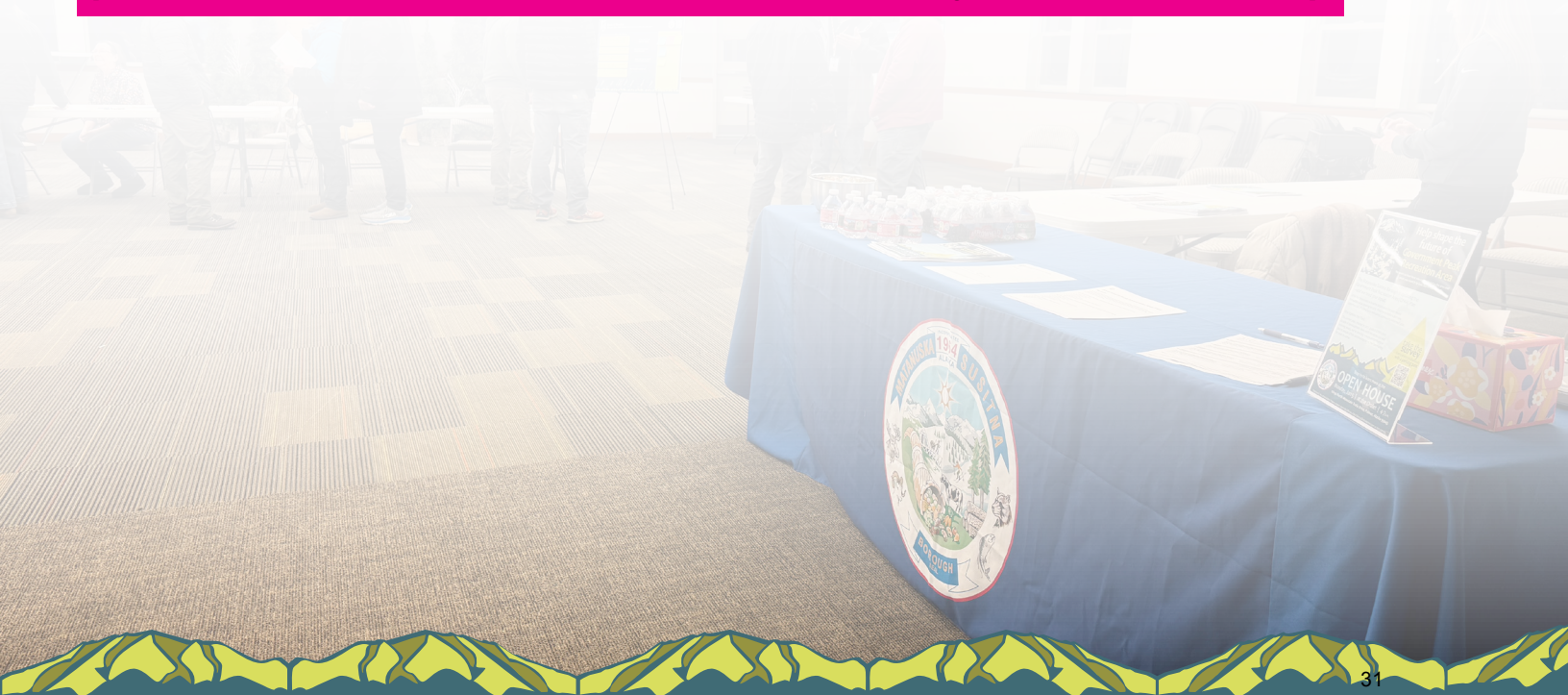
The Mat-Su Ski Club’s Holiday Tree Tour hosted at GPRA on December 13 from 4 to 8 p.m. presented an opportunity to engage with people that the team may not have otherwise had the opportunity to connect with. The Mat-Su Ski Club graciously donated a booth at the event for the team’s use. The Tree Tour had lower attendance than in years past due to high winds and a rescheduled date, but that didn’t stop the team from making meaningful contact with people. **Approximately 30 groups of people stopped by the booth**, of whom about 25% had not previously heard about the project. Each Tree Tour participant was warmly greeted by a project staff member, provided information on the user survey, and was told how they could stay involved with the project.

Focus Groups

The team conducted targeted outreach to organized user groups to open a two-way channel of communication and gather valuable feedback from these groups who not only use the area but help build and maintain trails and plan community events. On December 2, 2025, the team met with representatives from the **Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers, Mat-Su Ski Club, Skeetawk, Revel Treks and Tours, and Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundations**. Attendees discussed what they value most about the current area, what needs they see as being unmet if the area wants to be inclusive of multiple user groups, and provided insight into how their groups currently work with the Mat-Su Borough. Representatives from the Backcountry Horsemen were unable to attend this focus group meeting, but MSB staff met with them separately to have a similar conversation.

A follow-up focus group invitation will be extended during the public comment period of this plan.

[Blocked for space for more information to be added once focus group has been conducted]

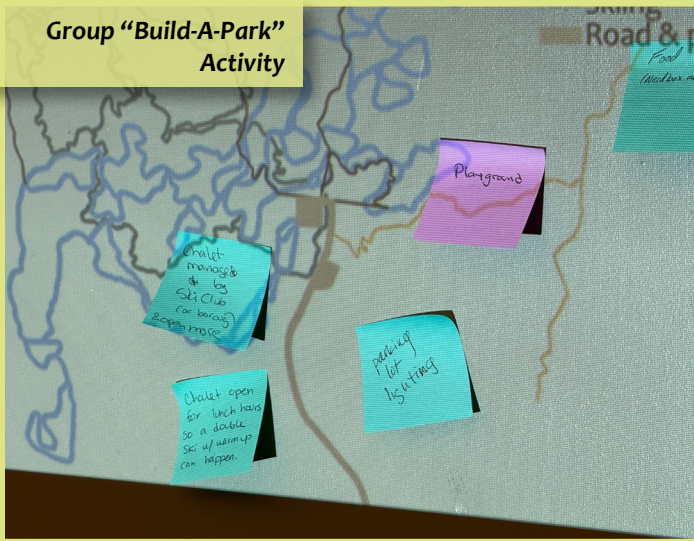


Open House

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the planning process, gather information on how people currently use GPRA, solicit feedback about what people think the future of GPRA should look like, and share the rest of the project schedule. The meeting was held on-site at the Chalet and followed an open house format with multiple topic-based stations, including a welcome area where attendees signed in, a background and history of the GPRA, a station to workshop the goals of the plan, and a station for an interactive “build a park” activity. This activity allowed attendees to “build a park” by adding sticky notes with project ideas to a map of the current area. Attendees were also able to create personal “build-a-park” maps by adding their ideas to 8.5x11 coloring sheets of the area. This hands-on activity provided another avenue for participation for people who may have been less inclined to verbally voice their feedback.

The open house was originally scheduled for December 10 but had to be rescheduled to January 5 due to a power outage caused by a windstorm. The original meeting was advertised on flyers, digital ads in the *Frontiersman*, via the MSB’s social media accounts, through direct emails to user groups, on the email listserv, media pitch to news agencies, and by direct email to user groups. The rescheduled meeting was advertised using the same methods except for *Frontiersman* digital ads. A strong turn out of about 35 attendees participated in the open house. **Meeting attendees included representatives from key user groups, nearby residents, members of the broader community, and some people who just happened to be recreating at GPRA at the time of the open house.**

Group “Build-A-Park” Activity

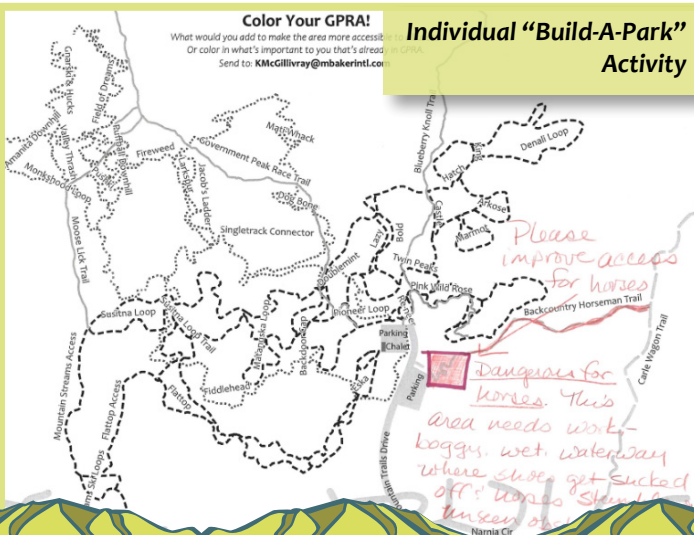


Open House Attendees Spoke with MSB Staff

Color Your GPRA!

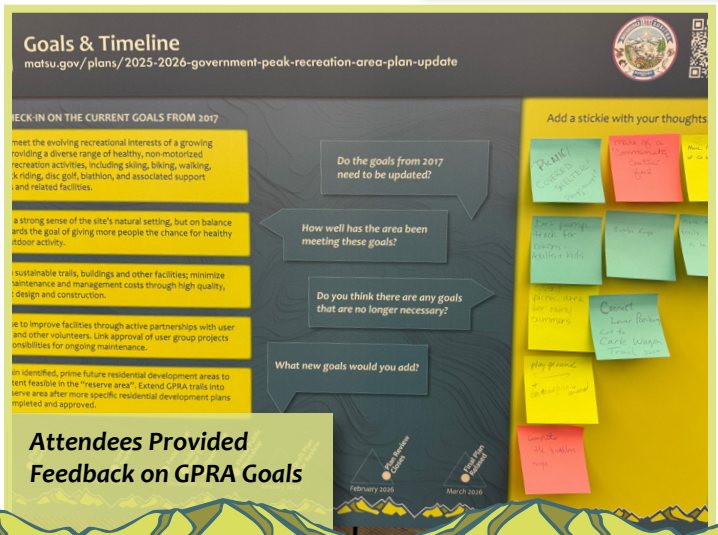
What would you add to make the area more accessible? Or color in what's important to you that's already there. Send to: KMCGillivray@mbakerintl.com

Individual “Build-A-Park” Activity



Goals & Timeline

mats.gov/plans/2025-2026-government-peak-recreation-area-plan-update



Attendees Provided Feedback on GPRA Goals

Virtual Workshop

On December 22, 2025 an [interactive online workshop](#) was released through a public StoryMap. This workshop provided the same content as the open house and allowed users to review materials and submit comments at their convenience. It was promoted on the borough website, emailed to the project email distribution list, emailed directly to highly impacted user groups, and posted to social media. **To date it has been viewed over 900 times.** Users could view a live dashboard of the user survey results, click on a link to take the survey if they hadn't already, submit feedback on goals, participate in a virtual "build-a-park" activity, and sign up for the email list.



The virtual workshop let people interact on their own schedule

Presentation to MSB Committees

Blocked for space to add information about presentations during draft comment period

GovDelivery Email Announcements

Throughout the planning process, project information was repeatedly released through the MSB's govDelivery email service. Users were able to sign up to receive emails by entering their information on the project website, at the end of the user survey, via the virtual and in-person open houses, or by emailing project staff to be added. **By the end of the project nearly 400 people were included in the email list.** Emails on the following topics were sent:

- **November 26, 2025:** Introduction to the planning process and initial in-person open house invitation (sent to 269 people)
- **December 9, 2025:** Reminder invitation for in-person open house (sent to 324 people)
- **December 10, 2025:** Notice of in-person open house postponement due to weather (sent to 326)
- **December 22, 2025:** Advertising new date for in-person open house and releasing virtual workshop (sent to 363)
- **January 2, 2026:** Follow-up invitation to in-person open house and reminder that virtual workshop is available (sent to 386)
- **January 6, 2026:** Notice that user survey would be closing soon, reminder about virtual workshop (sent to 398)
- **April:** Notification of draft plan release *[this bullet will be updated once the email is sent]*



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

This resource can help identify and compare funding opportunities for projects across GPR. It is designed for borough departments and partner organizations to quickly assess basic eligibility, typical match requirements, and next steps. Because program terms change, staff should verify deadlines, amounts, and requirements with the current program notice before initiating an application.

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides funding for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation spaces. Through LWCF grants, communities can protect public lands, create parks, and improve recreational facilities to expand access to outdoor recreation, preserve natural landscapes, and ensure that these resources are available for future generations.	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.	1:1 match requirement. Minimum award is \$25,000, max \$125,000
Multi-Use Trails Program (Now under Alaska Dept. of Transportatin and Public Facilities (DO&PF), formerly under Alaska DNR)	Multi-Use Trails funding may be used for trail maintenance and restoration, trailhead and facility improvements, equipment purchases, environmental protection, safety and education programs, and other eligible trail-related activities.	Nonprofits, educational institutions, and state/local/tribal governments (and in some rounds Federal land managers) are eligible applicants.	Competitive, reimbursable grants (traditionally 90% Federal / 10% match in Alaska)

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation Grants	New trails and parks, physical improvements or development of trails and trailheads, parks, and recreation sites. Trail, park and playground amenities, equipment and signage. Planning and surveying.	Non-profits, tribes, government entities	Various matching guidelines dependent on grant size, ranging from no match to 2:1 match.
Tier 1 Grants Rasmuson Foundation	Tier 1 grants are intended to assist with capital needs and one-time investments. These are typically things that you can build, buy, fix, or create. Rasmuson Foundation generally does not fund projects associated with core government functions such as roads, utilities and public safety, K-12 education, deficits or debt reduction, endowments, scholarships, fundraising events, sponsorships, and reimbursement for items already purchased.	Organizations must be actively working in Alaska. Eligible organizations will either be an established 501(c)(3) (and classified as “not a private foundation”), or a local or Tribal government.	No deadline to apply, rolling grant. Most awards range from \$5,000 to \$20,000.
Community Support Grants Rasmuson Foundation	Community Support grants are for capital and non-capital projects with broad community impact. Some examples of eligible projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction, renovation, and furnishings • Equipment, tools, and technology upgrades • Historic preservation projects • Playgrounds, parks, and trail improvements • Pilot projects or program expansion • Some types of match funding • Some pre-development 	Community Support grants are typically for organizations that have received a past award or grant from the Foundation. First-time applicants are encouraged to start with a Tier 1 proposal .	No fixed match percentage is required for Rasmuson Foundation Community Support Grants.



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Legacy Grants Rasmuson Foundation	<p>Legacy grants support capital projects, programs of strategic importance, and innovative solutions to issues of community or statewide significance. Examples of projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction, renovation, and furnishings • Large-scale creative works • Buildings, equipment, and vehicles • Historic preservation • Pilot projects or program expansion • Some types of match funding <p>Rasmuson Foundation generally does not fund projects associated with core government functions such as roads, utilities, and public safety, K-12 education, deficits or debt reduction, endowments or scholarships, fundraising events or sponsorships, and reimbursement for items already purchased.</p>	<p>Organizations must be actively working in Alaska. Eligible organizations will either be an established 501(c)(3) (and classified as “not a private foundation”), or a local or Tribal government.</p> <p>An organization may have one active Legacy or Community Support grant at the same time as a Tier 1 grant, provided they are for different projects.</p>	<p>Applications are reviewed twice a year.</p> <p>Awards are more than \$250,000 (often \$500k+ depending on project).</p>
Mat-Su Health Foundation Healthy Impact Grant	<p>Healthy Impact Grants fund program and service costs that improve health and social drivers of health; nonprofit financial sustainability and operating support; capacity building and technical assistance for organizational and leadership development; capital projects, improvements, and equipment; and policy change efforts.</p>	<p>Prospective grantees must provide services or benefits to Mat-Su residents and be a tax-exempt organization in good standing, faith-based, governmental, educational, community council, or tribal entities.</p>	<p>Healthy Impact Grants: over \$25K</p> <p>Target Wellness Grants: less than \$25K</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Mat-Su Borough Capital Improvement Program (CIP)	Community infrastructure that benefits residents and visitors (bike/pedestrian paths, trail and trailhead improvements, park facilities, restrooms)	Any MSB department or member of the public can nominate a project.	Projects must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fall within areawide Borough powers, • not be considered routine maintenance nor equipment replacement, • have minimum cost of \$20,000, and not to exceed \$1,000,000, • have a lifespan of >5 years, • Align with a plan adopted by the MSB Assembly



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Mat-Su Borough Winter Trail Care and Grooming Grant	<p>Supports winter trail grooming and maintenance for dog mushers, Nordic skiers, snowmachiners, and other winter recreation groups.</p> <p>Note: link availability may change, but applicants can always contact the Borough's Land and Resource Management Division office at lmb@matsugov.us or (907) 861-7869 for updated information</p>	<p>501(c)(3) nonprofits, or businesses able to demonstrate capacity for winter trail grooming and maintenance</p> <p>Eligible expenses include fuel, oil, equipment maintenance, trailhead plowing, grooming labor, and pre-season work (e.g., brush hog rental).</p>	<p>Project must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall within areawide Borough powers, or trail systems connected to trail systems within the Borough • Grant cycle opens mid-July • Grant requires documented 50% match, which can include in-kind volunteer hours, value of snow machine rental, cost of maintenance items, etc. • Requires Commercial General Liability insurance and Auto Liability insurance (if applicable). The specific requirement is included on the grant website.
Alaska Community Foundation (ACF)	<p>Competitive grants from ACF Affiliates (e.g., Palmer Community Foundation and Jessica Stevens Community Foundation) for hyper-local community projects, often including parks, trails, signage, amenities, and small capital items.</p>	<p>501(c)(3) nonprofits, schools, tribes, and (in some cases) local governments via fiscal sponsor; cycles and amounts vary by affiliate.</p>	<p>Recent Mat-Su affiliate grants have supported picnic tables at GPR, trail signage/education, and other hyper-local amenities.</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)	<p>Funds transportation projects that cut traffic related air pollution and congestion—e.g., transit upgrades, bike/pedestrian facilities, diesel engine replacements/retrofits, EV charging, shared micromobility, and other clean transport technologies. It can also support projects that improve safety and apply new technologies.</p> <p>Projects must demonstrate emissions reductions; routine maintenance is ineligible.</p>	<p>State DOTs, local governments, transit agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and other public entities with projects located in or benefiting designated nonattainment/maintenance areas.</p> <p>Note: As of February 2026 the MSB is not in a nonattainment or maintenance area.</p>	<p>Alaska’s sliding-scale 9.03% match may be required.</p>
Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)	<p>Funds projects that reduce on-road transportation CO₂—examples include active transportation networks, transit enhancements, traffic-flow improvements, LED streetlighting, and EV infrastructure—aligned to the State’s Carbon Reduction Strategy (2024–2028).</p>	<p>Standard Federal-aid entities (State DOT, local governments, tribes, MPOs, transit agencies).</p>	<p>Alaska’s sliding-scale 9.03% match may be required.</p>
Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)	<p>Broad, flexible surface-transportation funding—including some bicycle/pedestrian and recreational-trail connections (when they function as transportation), safety, and resiliency projects.</p>	<p>State DOT and eligible local/tribal governments (per state program rules). Projects must be in, or advanced to, the STIP. Coordinate with DOT&PF area planners to scope, schedule, and estimate (SSE).</p>	<p>Alaska’s sliding-scale 9.03% match may be required.</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	Funds for bicycle/pedestrian facilities, recreational trails, Safe Routes to School, viewing areas, and community improvements—wayfinding/signage and amenities are eligible when tied to the transportation network or trails.	Local governments, regional transportation authority, transit agency, natural resource or public land agency, school district, local education agency, or school, tribal government, MPO, non-profit, other local/regional governmental entity, state DOT	Alaska’s sliding-scale 9.03% match may be required, federal share ceiling of \$5 million.
AARP Community Challenge	Quick-action micro/flagship grants to make tangible livability improvements.	IRS-recognized nonprofits 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), 501(c)(6); government entities.	Microgrants: \$2.5k Flagship awards: \$10k–\$15k
Community Change Grants - America Walks	Grassroots projects that advance walkability.	IRS-recognized nonprofits 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), 501(c)(6); government entities.	Awards \$2,000–\$2,200
Alaska Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance	No funding distribution, but planning and community design help for trails, signage systems, and park connectivity. This program can help package a corridor plan and sign family that strengthens later applications.	Eligible applicants include local governments, along with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and other agencies.	Annual Alaska application: traditionally due around March 1
Trail Accelerator Grants - International Mountain Bicycling Association	Awards planning, design or education services.	Eligible applicants include local governments, along with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and other agencies.	Requires 1:1 match (cash/services). \$10k–\$30k equivalent for planning or design. \$3k–\$10.8k for training, fundraising, or strategic planning.
KABOOM!	Covers a substantial portion of equipment, materials and provides project management for inclusive playgrounds, multi-sport courts, or nature play via community-builds.	Nonprofits and municipal agencies.	1:1 match and volunteers.



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation — Quality of Life Grants	Funds accessibility and inclusion projects, including accessible play features, surfacing, adaptive equipment, trail accessibility upgrades, and wayfinding for people with disabilities.	501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, municipal and state governments, school districts, recognized tribal entities, and other institutions such as community or veterans' hospitals	Direct effect grants up to \$24,999; larger tiers available for expansions.
Parks and Recreation Grants & Fundraising Resources	Monitor for park/play equity, nature play, and inclusion opportunities that can complement capital funds.	Often private philanthropic partnerships administered by NRPA	Funding match varies by program and by year.
USDA Rural Development — Community Facilities (CF) Loans/Grants	Loans and some grants for essential facilities in rural areas. Recreation-only facilities are generally ineligible, but eligible items can include restrooms at community facilities (ADA), site utilities, equipment, community gardens, and multi-use community spaces.	Public entities, community-based nonprofits, and federally recognized Tribes that serve rural areas with populations ≤ 20,000.	Grant support is need-based and tied to population and median household income of the service area. Typical maximums range from 15% to 75% of eligible project costs.





APPENDIX A - CONCEPTUAL RENDERINGS & CURRENT PROJECTS

These renderings were created independently from this planning effort, but support the strategies and ideas presented in this document.



WINTER VIEW

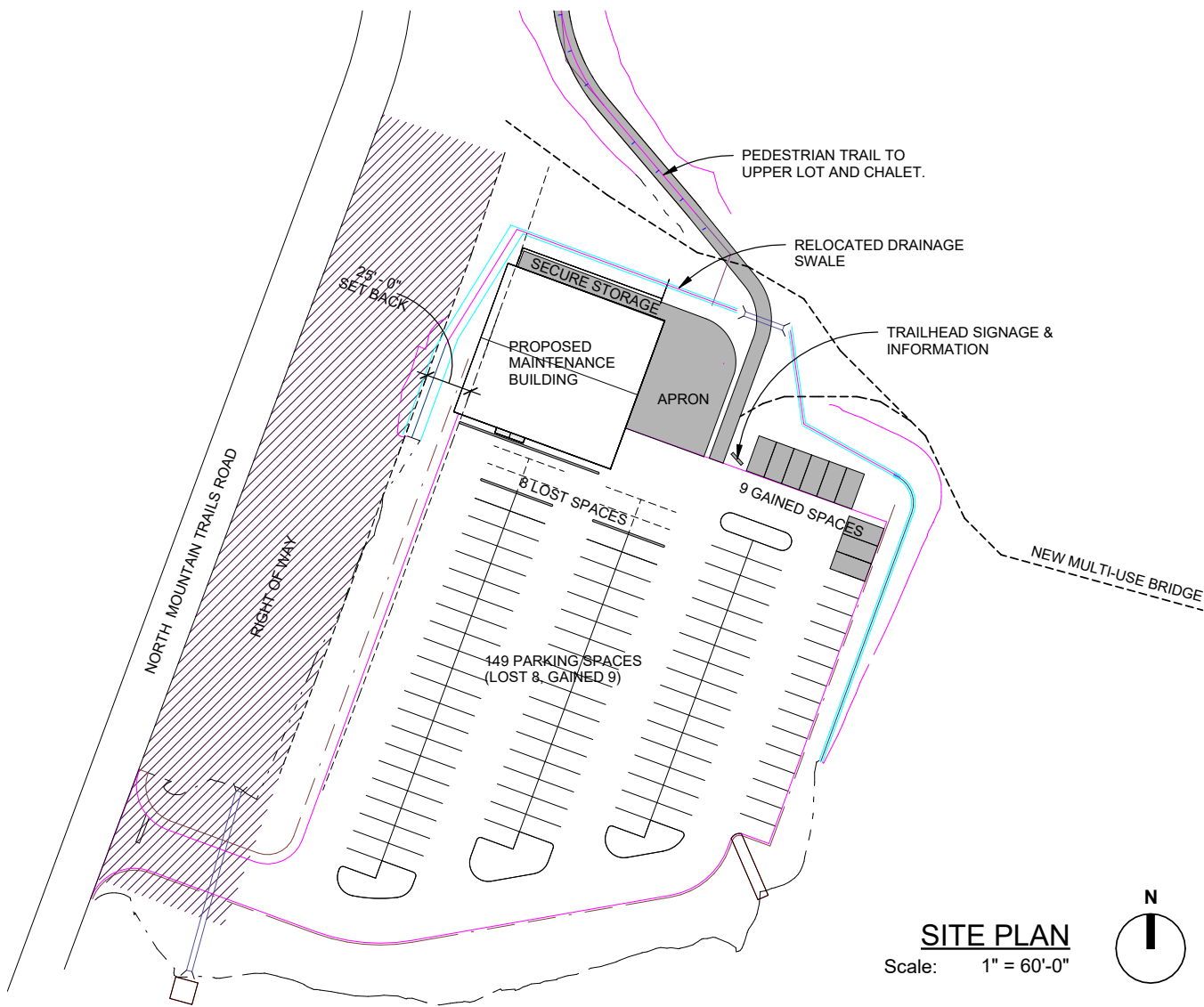


GPR MAINTENANCE FACILITY CONCEPT

MAT-SU SKI CLUB

JAN 16, 2026

W O L F
ARCHITECTURE

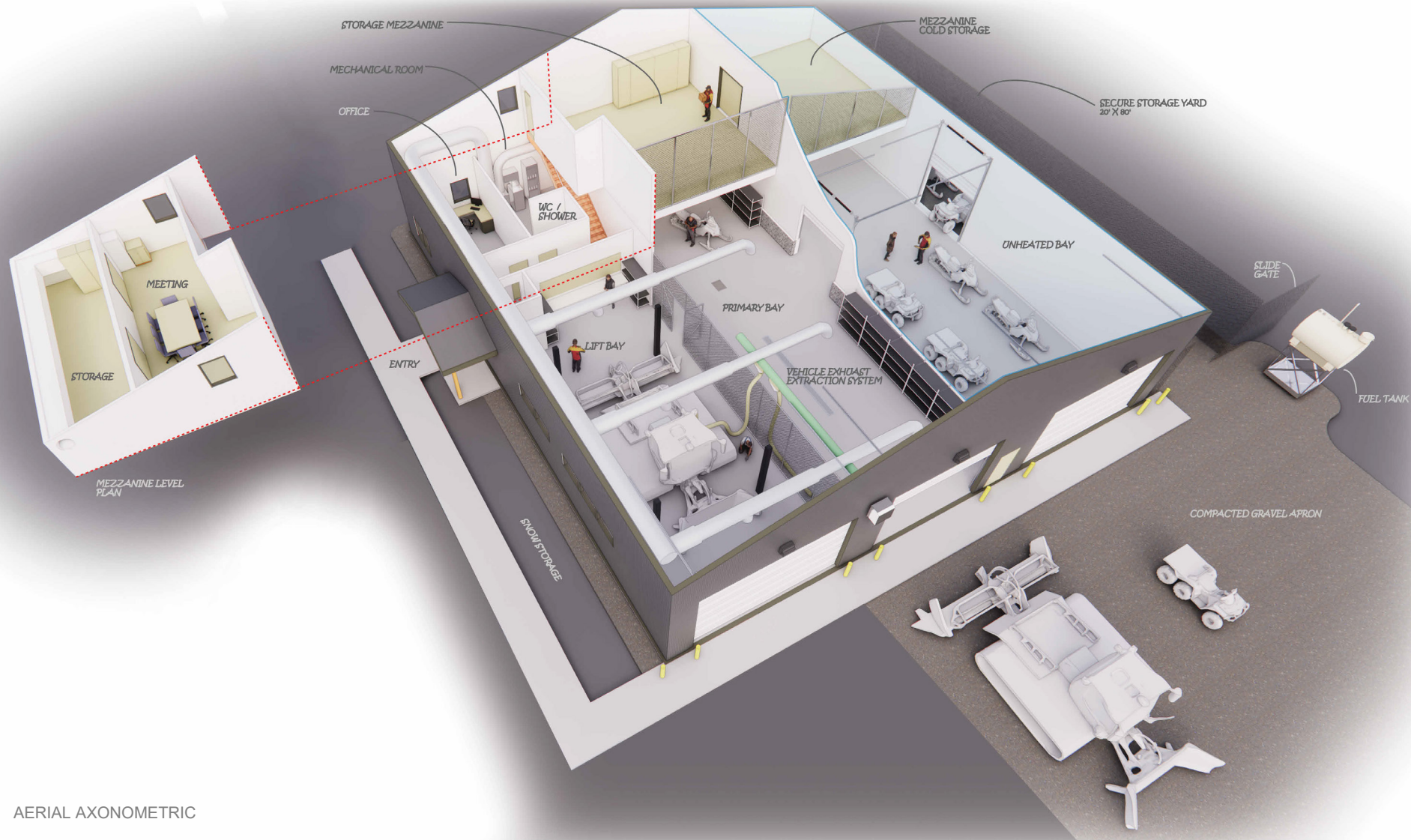


GPRA MAINTENANCE FACILITY CONCEPT

MATANUSKA SUSITNA SKI CLUB

JAN 09, 2026

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GPRA MAINTENANCE FACILITY CONCEPT

MAT-SU SKI CLUB

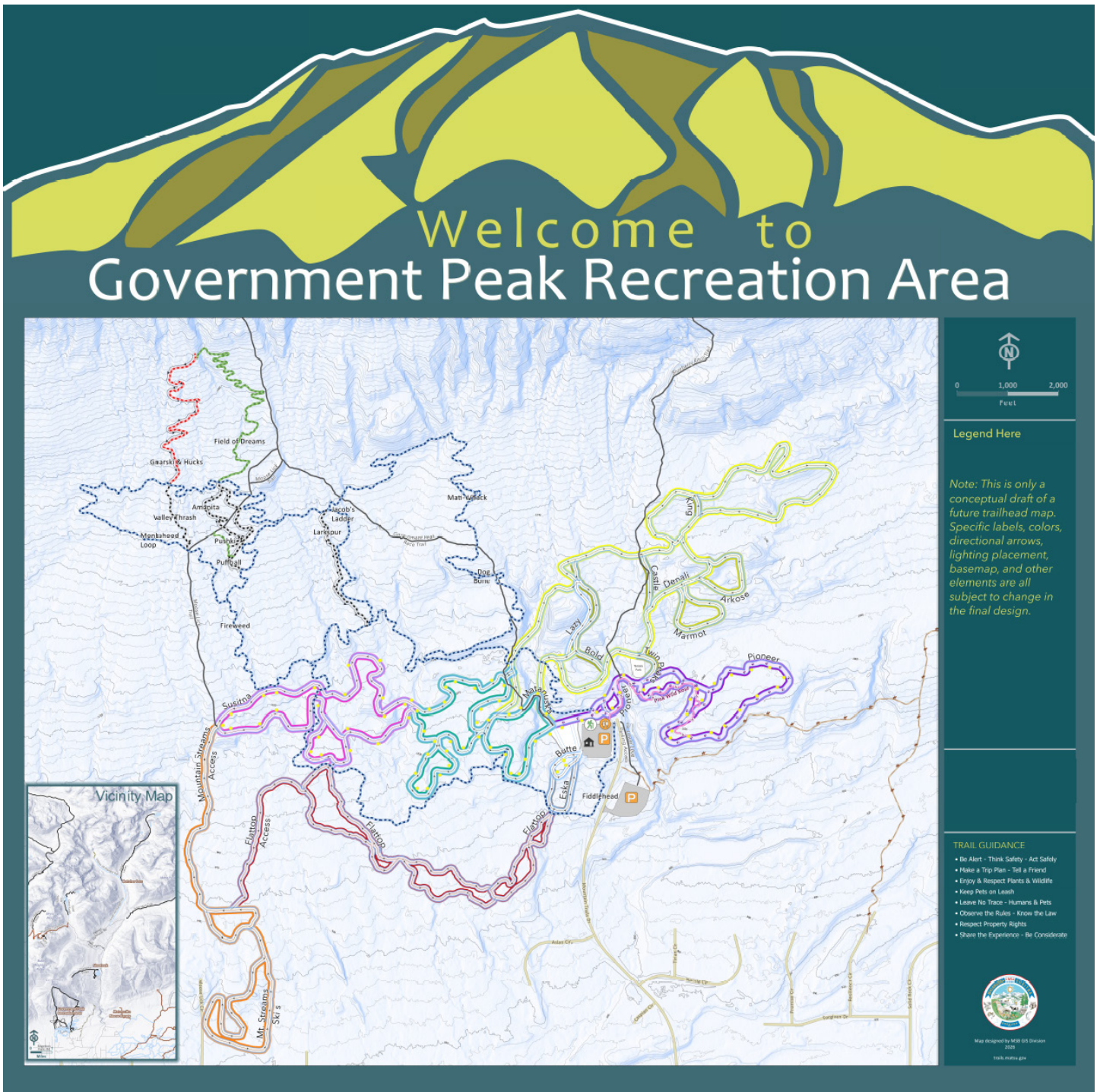
JAN. 16, 2026

W O L F
ARCHITECTURE

Conceptual Navigation Signs



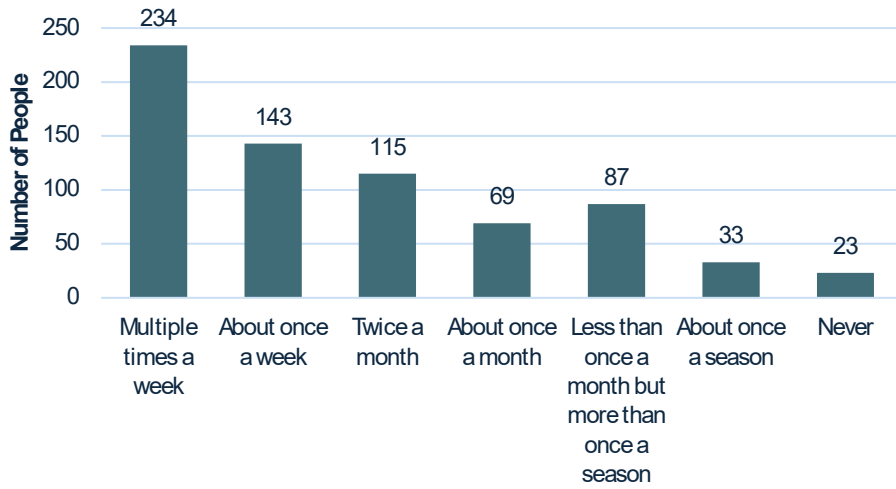
Conceptual Trailhead Sign



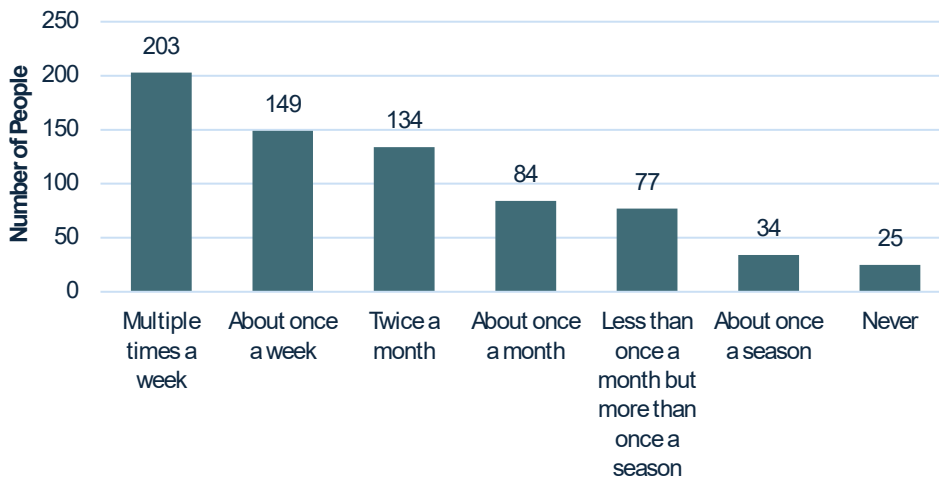
APPENDIX B - SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you to all 709 people who responded!

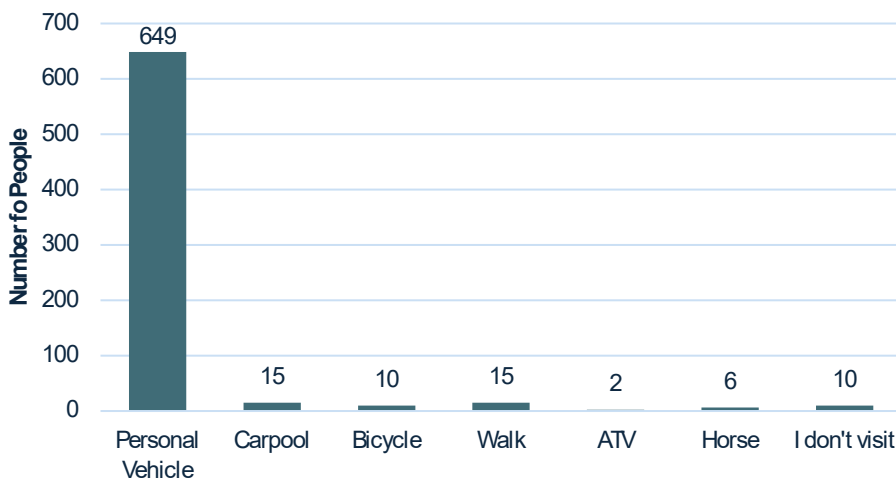
How often do you visit GPRA in winter/spring?



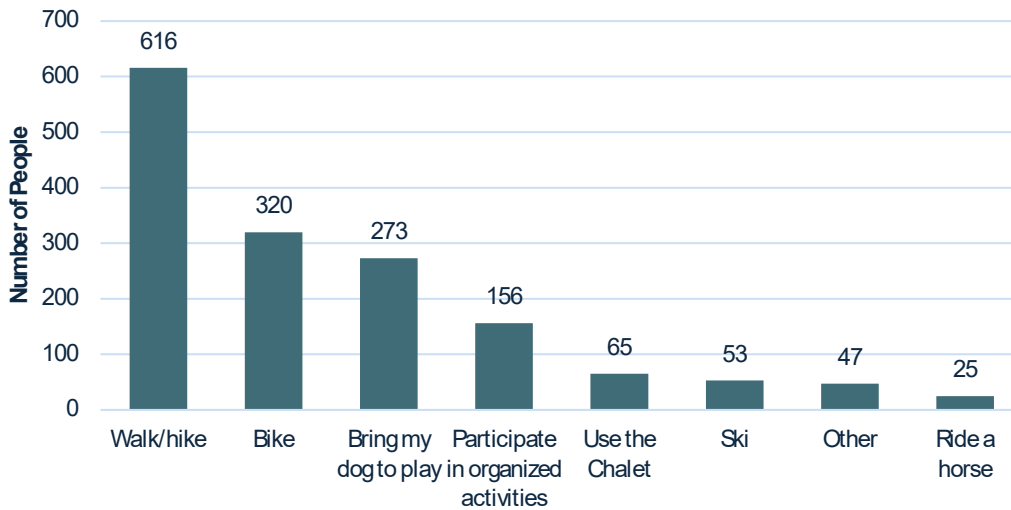
How often do you visit GPRA in summer/fall?



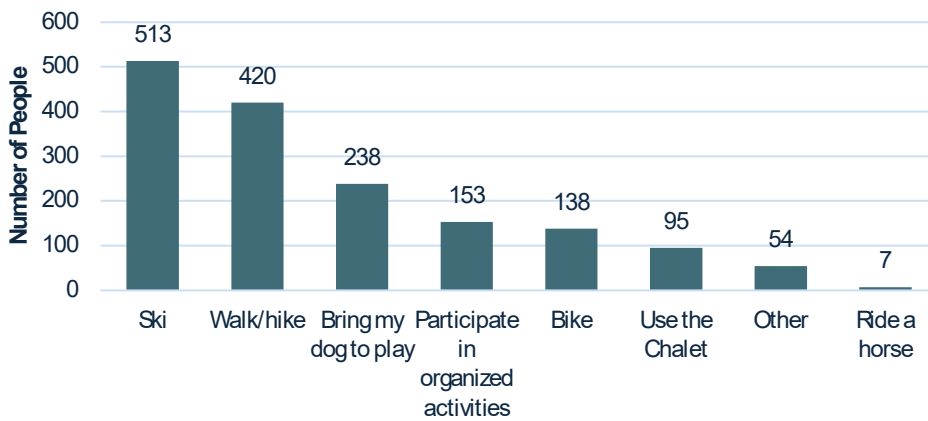
How do you usually get to GPRA?



What do you do at GPRA in the summer and fall?

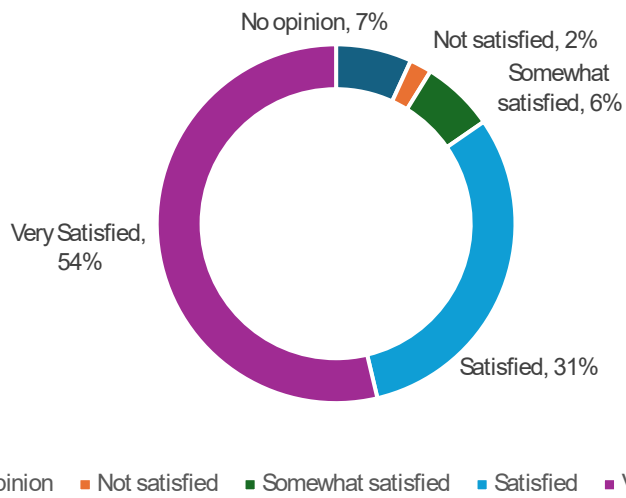


What do you do at GPRA in the winter and spring?

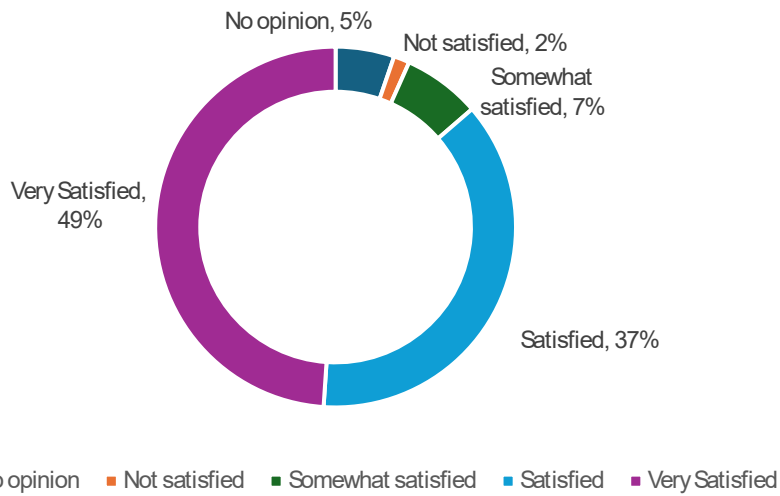


How satisfied are you with...

Trail system maintenance in winter and spring

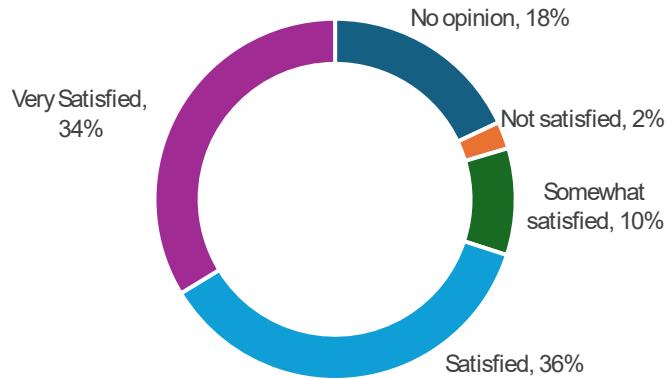


Trail system maintenance in summer and fall



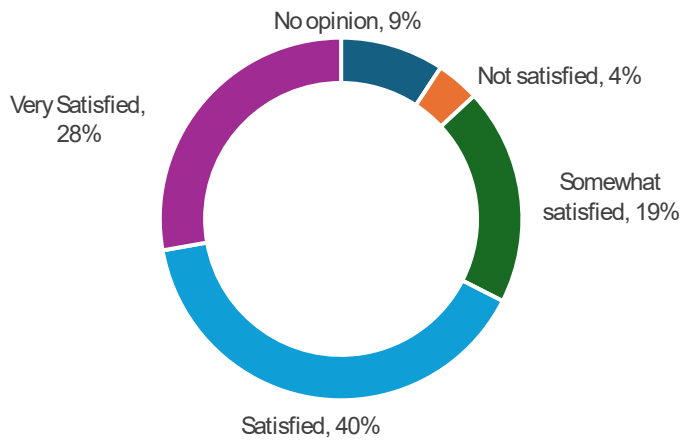
How satisfied are you with...

Amount of groomed ski trails



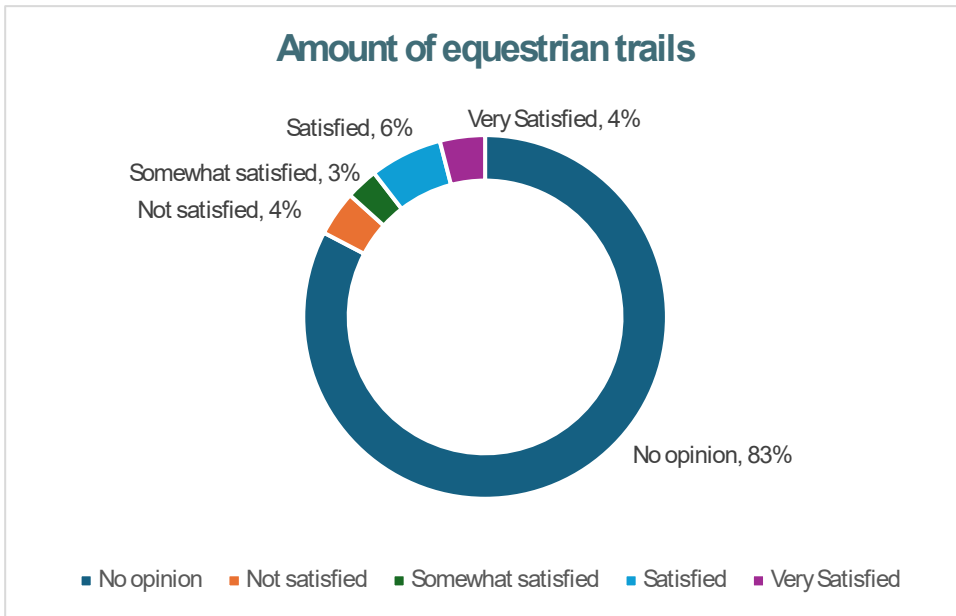
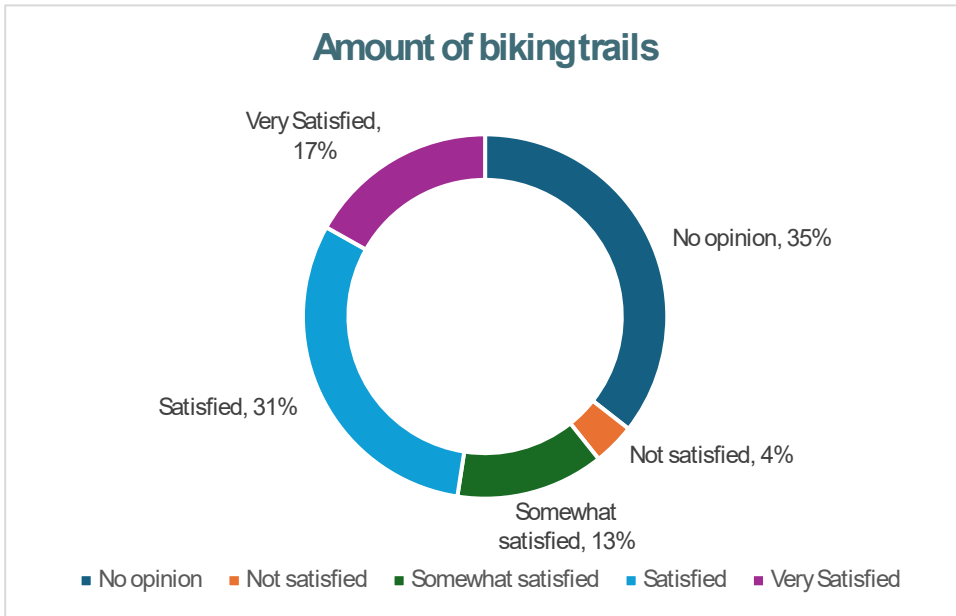
■ No opinion ■ Not satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied

Amount of walking trails



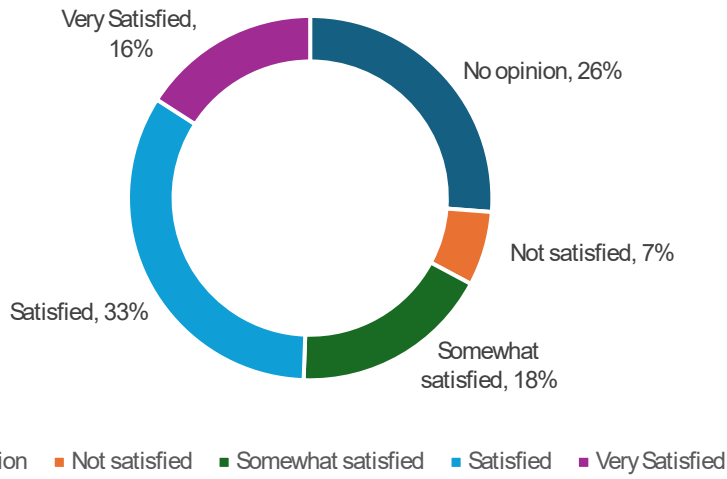
■ No opinion ■ Not satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied

How satisfied are you with...

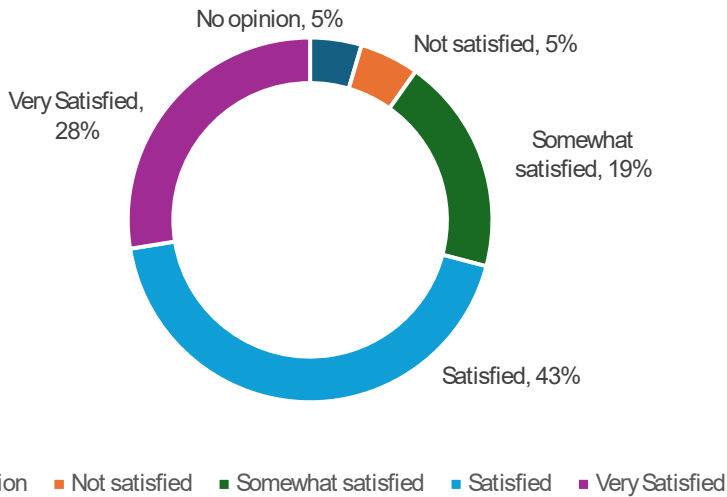


How satisfied are you with...

Amount of multi-use trails

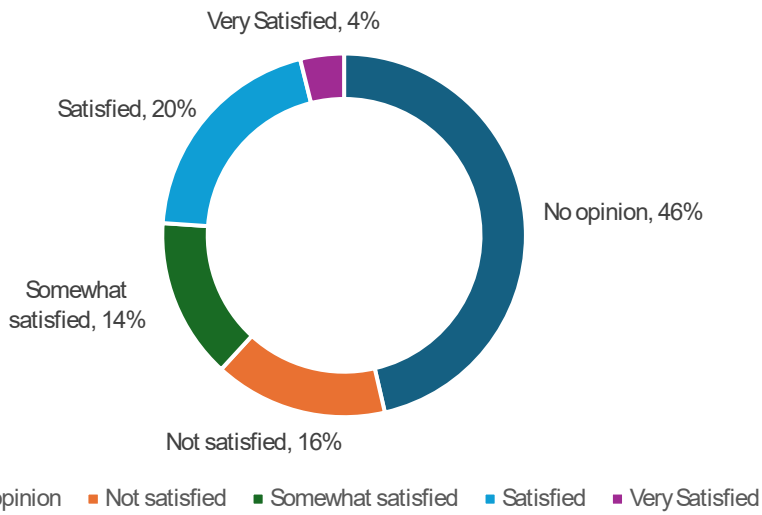


Wayfinding to help people navigate

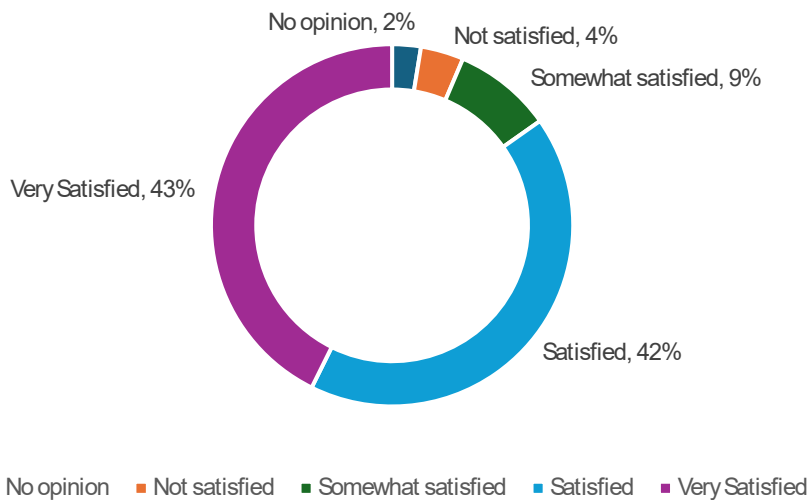


How satisfied are you with...

Availability and opportunity to use Chalet

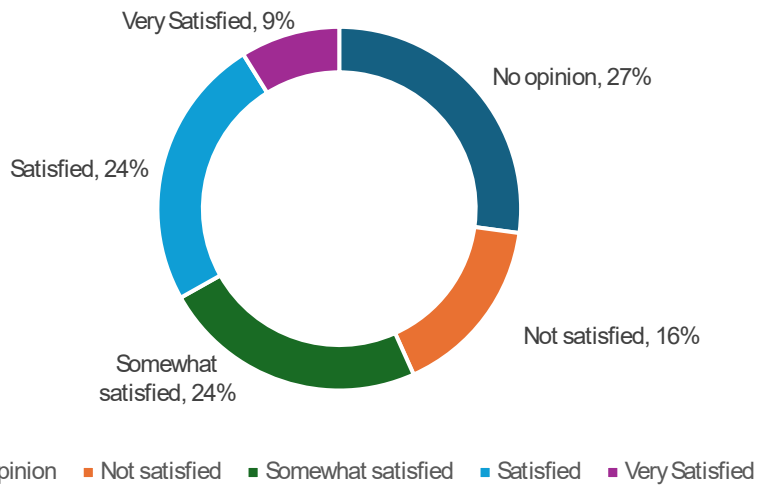


Amount of parking

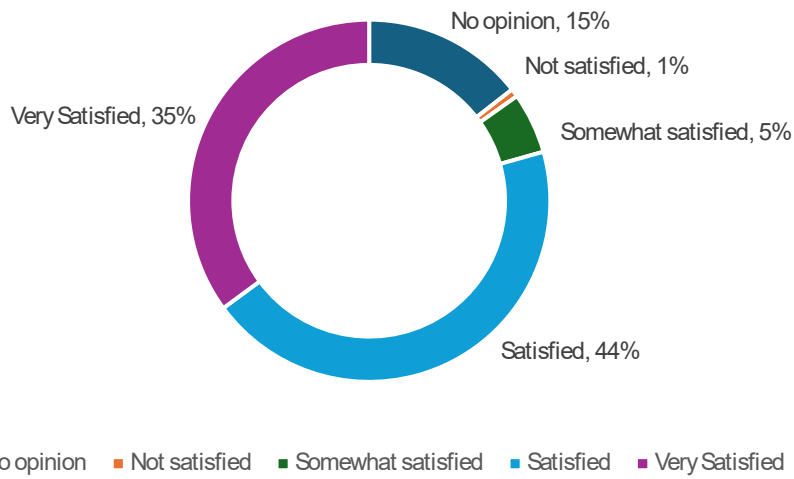


How satisfied are you with...

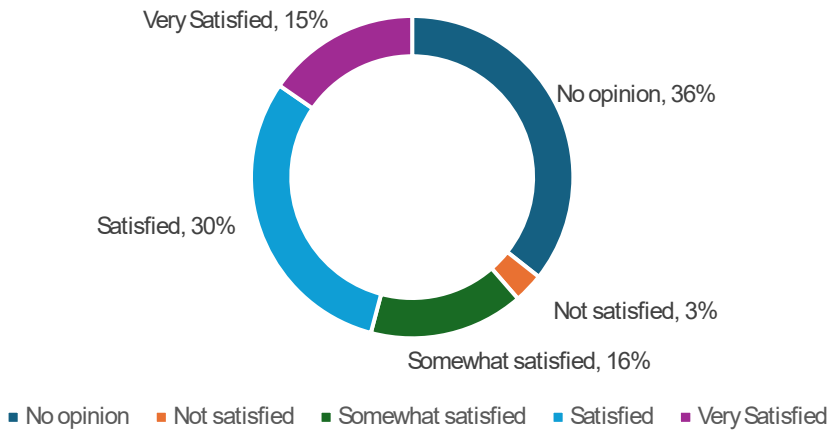
Connectedness to nearby trail systems



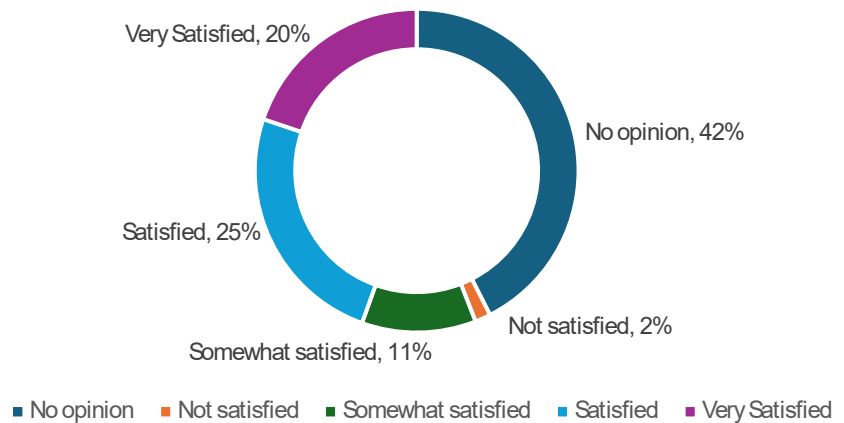
Cleanliness of Facilities



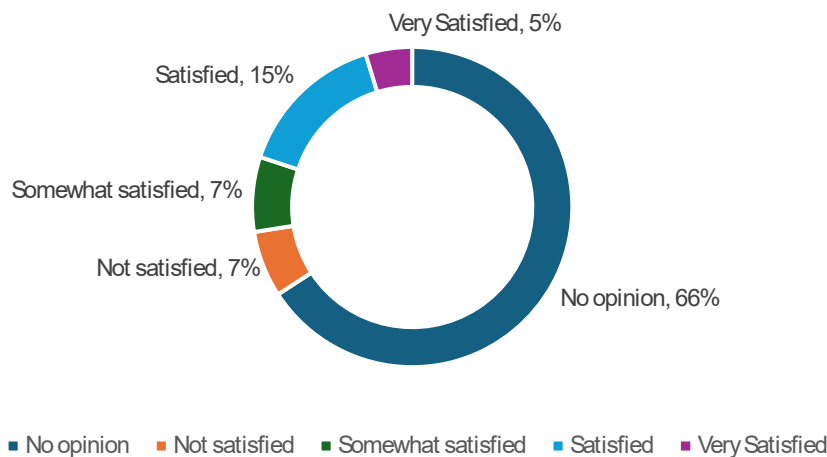
Recreational programs and opportunities for adults



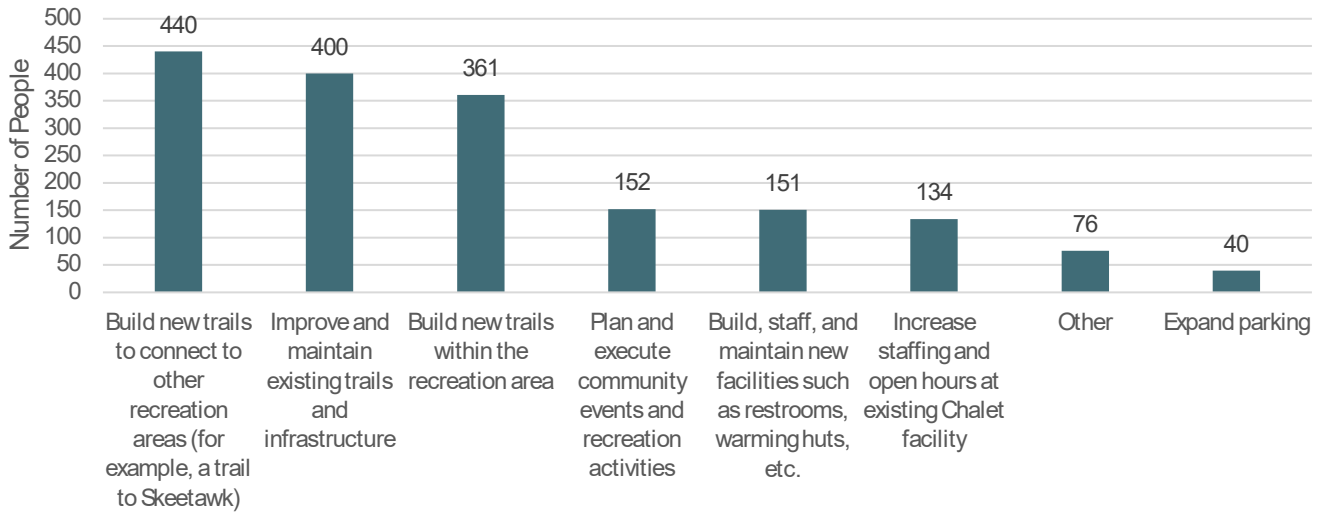
Recreational programs and opportunities for children and teens



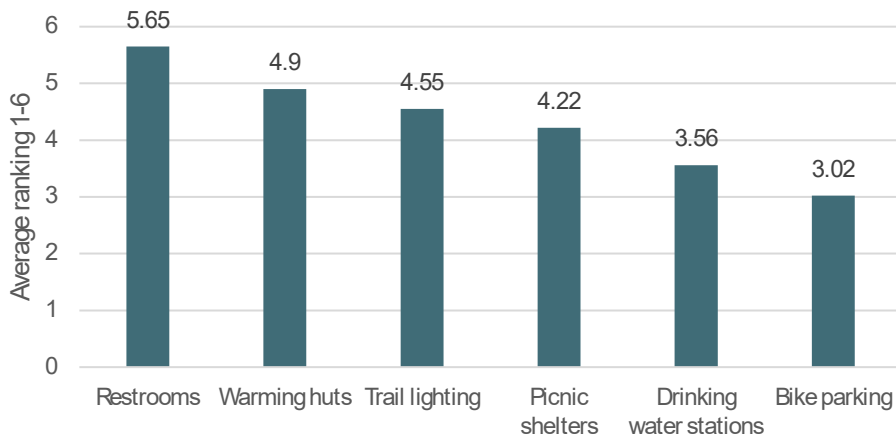
Recreational programs and opportunities for seniors



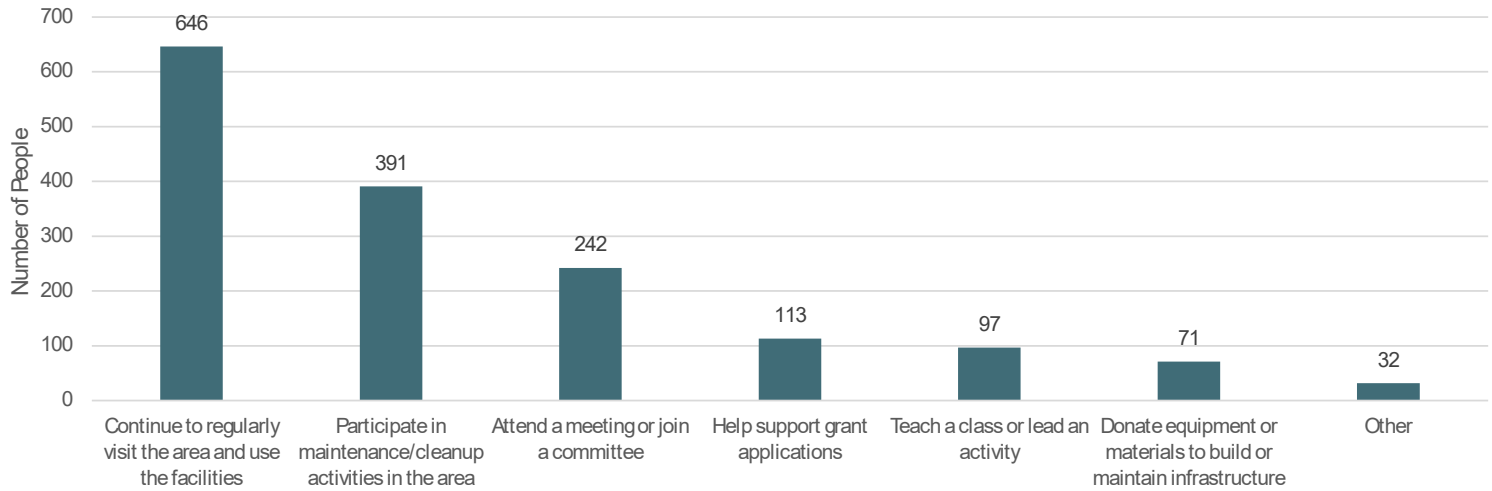
What should GPRA prioritize when deciding where funds should be allocated?



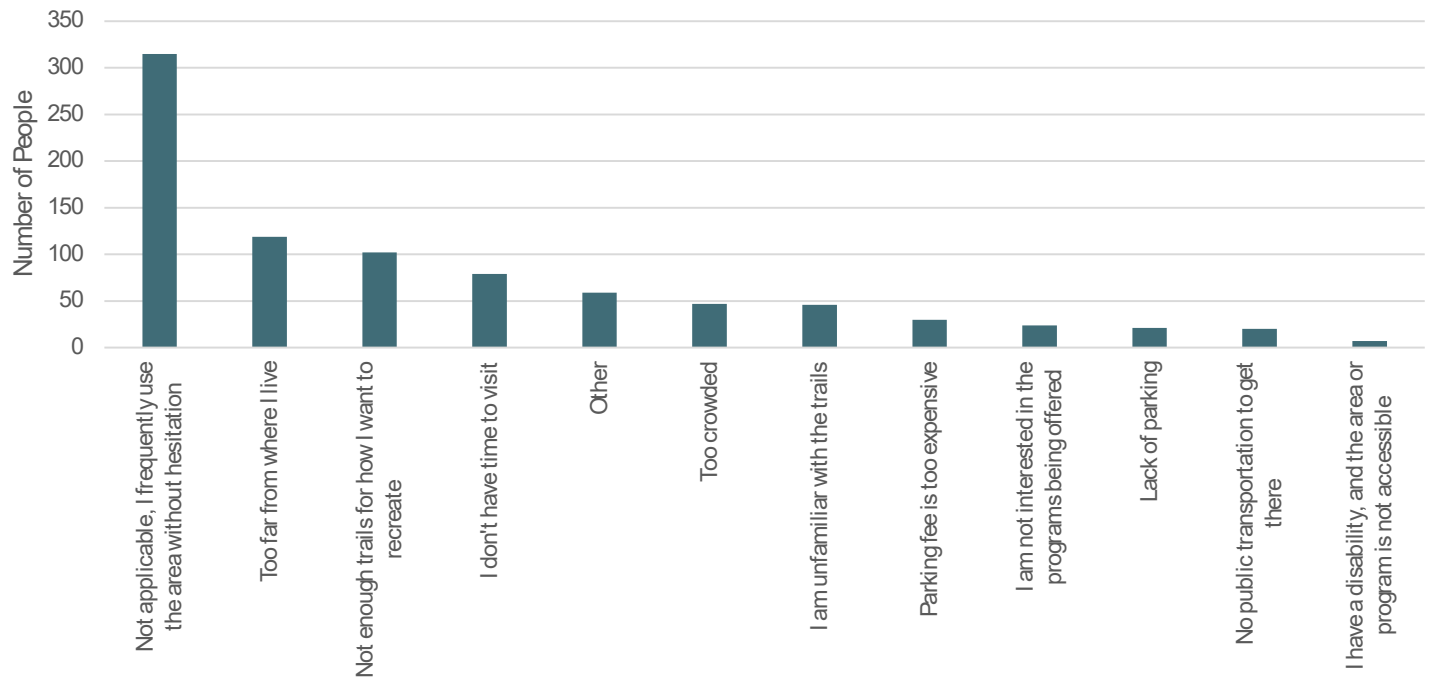
What facilities would improve your experience at GPRA?



How are you willing to help GPRA thrive?



What keeps you from visiting GPRA?



APPENDIX C - PUBLIC COMMENTS

Note: this appendix will be updated to include public comments received during the comment period.

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>My name is XXX XXX and I'm with Big Cabbage Radio and we do something called Page 2. It's a morning broadcast and I would like to on Tuesday be able to broadcast a little bit about the GPRA recreation area plan update and the survey that's going on. And what is expected from the survey and how much that area has grown perhaps past/beyond expectations. So if you would like to give me a call that'd be great, my phone number is 907-xxxx-xxx. My name is XXX, Big Cabbage Radio. And I hope we can talk sometime, you know by Monday afternoon at the latest. Thanks a lot have a great weekend. Bye bye.</p>	<p>MSB staff responded to schedule a radio interview.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>On behalf of the Mat-Su Disc Golf Association (MSDGA), I would like to express our appreciation for the ongoing work to update the Government Peak Recreation Area (GPRA) Plan. We value the Borough's commitment to engaging user groups and ensuring the future of this important public space reflects the needs of the community. The MSDGA serves as the steward of the Alcantra Disc Golf Course and supports disc golf facilities at Meier Lake, Palmer High School, Butte Elementary, Houston High, and Sutton Elementary. With several established courses across the Valley and a large, growing membership, our organization is committed to developing and maintaining high-quality recreational assets in partnership with local agencies and land managers. (cont. on next page)</p>	<p>Thank you for reaching out on behalf of the Mat-Su Disc Golf Association and for sharing your thoughtful input regarding the Government Peak Recreation Area (GPRA) planning process. We appreciate your commitment to providing diverse recreational opportunities and your expertise in disc golf development across the Valley.</p> <p>Your feedback about terrain suitability and your recommendation to focus on the Pioneer Loop and a portion of the Denali Loop is very helpful. Preserving disc golf as a compatible recreational use in the updated GPRA Plan will remain part of the discussion, and your input will be considered as planning continues. (Cont. on next page)</p>	<p>None</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>(cont. from above) A member of our club recently walked the area identified for disc golf in the existing GPRA Master Plan and noted that much of the terrain is wet and not ideal for future course development. Based on our experience designing and managing courses throughout the Borough, we believe GPRA has exceptional potential for a world-class disc golf course. We recommend that any future evaluation focus on the Pioneer Loop and a small portion of the Denali Loop, where the terrain and layout are more suitable and where a course could integrate smoothly with the existing trail system while minimizing user conflicts. At this time, the MSDGA is not seeking to construct a course at GPRA. However, we respectfully request that disc golf remain identified as a compatible recreational use in the updated Master Plan. Preserving this designation will keep the door open for future opportunities should community interest and appropriate conditions align.</p> <p>We would welcome the opportunity to provide input as the GPRA planning process continues. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing commitment to providing diverse, accessible recreational opportunities for Mat-Su residents and visitors.</p>	<p>(cont. from above) We'll expect to share the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March, and we'd love for you to review it and provide your thoughts. When the draft is ready, we'll send out an email, post updates on borough social media channels, and link the plan on the GPRA website so you'll have plenty of ways to stay informed and join the conversation.</p> <p>Thank you again for your engagement and for helping us shape the future of recreation in the Mat-Su Borough. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional ideas or questions.</p>	<p>None</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>I met with you, XXX, and the head of the MatSu Ski Club and some other folks back in September there at the GPRA parking lot. You had mentioned that there were going to be the planning process and everything was going to be starting up somehow or another. I do plan on going to the one here on the 10th coming up but i see that the team has already been meeting and I wanted to be a part of that team. Then there was a couple of other individuals that were there at the parking lot with me that day when we had the meeting with Hugh that also would like to be a part of the planning committee. So I don't know if it's possible if we can still become engaged in that process as you guys move forward. I see that you plan on trying to keep working forward and roll that plan out in March. But my number is 907-xxx-xxx and my name is XXX. Thank you very much talk to you later, bye.</p>	<p>This was a case of mistaken identity. This person spoke with someone else. However, the team contacted him and spoke with him at the open house event.</p>	<p>None</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>[Written comment at open house] We spend probably ~10 hours a week here and as our family grows it will only [go up]. We live about 10 minutes away and have 2 small kids (so far). This area is incredible! Some thoughts: We'd love to see playground, picnic shelter, and pumptrack if we are dreaming big. Some policy questions include potentially expanding the areas where kicksledders can go in the winter since its a ski/walking hybrid tool. More signs about where dogs are allowed would also be nice. The chalet being open for the community would also be amazing - and opportunities like having a toddler storytime in deep winter would really serve the community! (Also - Sutton playground and library is an amazing inspiration.) Definitely disappointed about rate of the chalet rentals @ \$350 I feel like it still isn't cheap enough for true community events - and now there will be more weddings than ever.</p>	<p>Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for taking the time to share your thoughts with borough staff. We truly appreciate your engagement and the perspective you bring as a frequent user of the area and as part of the TrailSprouts community. Your feedback about amenities such as a playground, picnic shelter, and pump track, as well as ideas for expanded winter kick-sled areas, clearer dogs-allowed signage, and community programming like toddler story time, is invaluable. These suggestions help us understand what families need to make GPRA even more welcoming and accessible. We also acknowledge your concerns regarding chalet rental rates and the impact on community events. Affordability and accessibility are important considerations, and your input will be included as we review future plans for the facility. In 2027, the borough will assume management of the GPRA Chalet when the current contract ends. Our goal is to increase accessibility for the public, and we hope this transition will create more opportunities for community use. We expect to release the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March. We invite you to review the plan and share your feedback during that time. Notification of the draft's availability will be sent via email and posted on the borough's website and social media channels. Thank you again for your thoughtful comments and for being part of the conversation about enhancing recreation opportunities in the Mat-Su Borough. Please feel free to reach out anytime if you have additional feedback or ideas.</p>	<p>None</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>[Written comment at open house] I have attended Fishhook community council meetings where they have stated that putting in a playground is out of their hands and with the Borough. There is not enough area in this community for very young children to play - not one playground in Fishhook neighborhood. Since GPRA is supposed to be recreation for everyone, it would make a lot of sense to have one here.</p>	<p>Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for discussing your thoughts with borough staff. We appreciate your engagement and the time you've taken to share your perspective on recreation opportunities for young children in the Fishhook community. Your comments about the lack of playgrounds in the area and the importance of creating spaces for very young children are noted. GPRA is intended to serve the entire community, and your feedback helps us better understand how to make the area more inclusive for families. We will include your input as part of ongoing discussions about future improvements at GPRA. We expect to release the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March. We invite you to review the plan and share your feedback during that time. Notification of the draft's availability will be sent via email and posted on the borough's website and social media channels. Thank you again for being part of this conversation and for helping us shape recreation opportunities in the Mat-Su Borough. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional ideas or questions.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>[Written comment at open house] I'm concerned about the proposed biathlon/other range head is present in propellant and most projectiles. Many houses are downstream of the range area. What mitigation measures are being considered? What will be mandated by Muni, Borough, State, Federal? Who ensures compliance? etc.</p>	<p>Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for discussing your concerns with borough staff. We appreciate your engagement and the time you've taken to share your perspective on the proposed biathlon and shooting range, especially as it relates to lead contamination and any necessary mitigation measures. At this time, the borough is not strongly pursuing the development of a biathlon course at GPRA, but we will continue to review community feedback and regulatory requirements before any decisions are made. A biathlon range is not a priority at this location at this time because prioritizing a biathlon range could delay or limit investment in projects that benefit a wider range of users, public input shows stronger support for system wide improvements and projects that serve more users on a year-round basis. Additionally, the project would have a high capital and safety consideration, with potential environmental impacts, and ongoing maintenance. (cont. next page)</p>	<p>None</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
	<p>(cont. from above) The borough is committed to ensuring that any proposed activities meet all applicable municipal, state, and federal regulations. Environmental safety and community health are priorities, and your input will be included in ongoing evaluations and discussions. If a biathlon range is constructed in the future, it will be built to industry standard best practices to include lead abatement. We expect to release a draft GPRA plan later in March for a 30-day public comment period. We encourage you to review the draft plan when it is released and share your thoughts during that time. Notification of the draft availability will be sent via email, as well as shared on the Mat-Su Borough’s social media channels and website. Thank you again for being part of this conversation and for helping us address these critical considerations. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional questions or would like updates as planning progresses.</p>	None
<p>[Written comment at open house] We love the bike/running trails and we would enjoy the addition of a dirt pump track for all ages. The pump track at mirror lake is awesome! Also the kids of the Fishhook would love nature based playground made from natural features not plastic!</p>	<p>Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for discussing your ideas with borough staff. We appreciate your engagement and the time you’ve taken to share your thoughts on recreation opportunities at GPRA. Your suggestions for adding a dirt pump track and creating a nature-based playground using natural features are valuable input and things suggestions we’ve heard from other community members as well. These ideas help us better understand how we could make GPRA more enjoyable for families and all ages. We expect to release the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March. We invite you to review the plan and share your feedback during that time. Notification of the draft’s availability will be sent via email and posted on the borough’s website and social media channels. Thank you again for being part of this conversation and for helping us shape the future of recreation in the Mat-Su Borough. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional ideas or questions.</p>	None



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>[Written comment at open house] Let's get a biathlon Range built. I drafted the last proposed plans at the poor location I was allowed to use. There are better locations we identified and I will gladly volunteer my time again. My day job is as an Engineer and Land Surveyor. I can send 35% drawings from last design (2020?)</p>	<p>Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for discussing your ideas with borough staff. We appreciate your engagement and the expertise you bring as an engineer and land surveyor, as well as your willingness to volunteer your time to support biathlon development. Your enthusiasm for building a biathlon range and your offer to share the previous design drawings are noted. At this time, the borough is not strongly pursuing the development of a biathlon course at GPRA, but your input will be considered as part of the broader planning process. A biathlon range is not a priority at this location at this time because prioritizing a biathlon range could delay or limit investment in projects that benefit a wider range of users. Public input shows stronger support for system wide improvements and projects that serve more users on a year-round basis. Additionally, the project would have a high capital and safety consideration, with potential environmental impacts, and ongoing maintenance. We expect to release the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March. We invite you to review the plan and share your feedback during that time. Notification of the draft's availability will be sent via email and posted on the borough's website and social media channels. Thank you again for being part of this conversation and for your willingness to contribute your expertise. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional questions or would like updates as planning progresses.</p>	<p>None</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>In support of a biathlon range and stadium at GPRA, a consideration could be target systems placed inside shipping containers. This protects the targets from the elements, controls access, and eases lead containment. See the photos below.</p> <p>Kurvinen also makes a targeting system that collects the bullets via a shoot-through design. See link below: biathlontargets.com</p> <p>I would also prefer to see a single-track MTB trail through the biathlon stadium, as mountain bike biathlon is also a variation of the sport.</p> <p>Regarding race loops, ideally, all 7 race loops would be incorporated, but fitting a biathlon complex into an existing trail venue can be challenging. If at least a 1.5km and 2km race loop could be identified with the biathlon range, this would meet most of the race requirements with creative planning.</p> <p>In the past five years, biathlon venues have grown at Bozeman, MT; Brillion, WI; and Casper, WY. Improvements have been made at Soldier Hollow, UT, and Lake Placid, NY. More range projects are under consideration. With challenging snow conditions and large Nordic ski populations, Alaska in general and the MatSu specifically is well poised to grow and succeed at the biathlon sport.</p> <p>Any questions, please let me know. Also the existing GPRA plan references an “asset mgt plan (biathlon (per Asset Mgt. Plan)), What is this plan? Where can I find it?</p>	<p>Thank you for reaching out with your question. The “Asset Mgt. Plan” referenced in the existing GPRA plan is the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Hatcher Pass – Government Peak Unit Asset Management & Development Plan, adopted on November 20, 2012. This plan is for the Government Peak Unit as a whole, not only the GPRA.</p> <p>It’s important to note that not everything outlined in the 2012 plan was implemented, and inclusion in that plan does not guarantee that a project will happen in the future. Plans like this serve as a framework, but priorities and feasibility change over time. Similar to the current update process for the GPRA plan, the Asset Management Plan will also need to be revisited and updated to reflect current needs, resources, and community input.</p> <p>You can access the plan here: Overview page: https://matsu.gov/plans/hatcher-pass-government-peak</p> <p>Direct PDF link: https://msb-cms-documents.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/mergedredhpgpuassetmanagementplan-final-2PSlpKLAZp7eoUGzDBbQgg.pdf</p> <p>The plan does include references to biathlon facilities:</p> <p>Chapter 3, Page 3-8</p> <p>“During Phases III and IV, some of the skiing trails will have night lighting installed along with a biathlon shooting range and penalty loop. Additional trails for general use, equestrian and mountain biking should be added and possibly a beginner hill for Alpine skiing and boarding.” (cont. next page)</p>	<p>None</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>(cont. from above)</p>	<p>(cont. from above) Chapter 3, Page3-43</p> <p>“Biathlon Shooting Range</p> <p>A biathlon range site would be located near the top of the race venue firing directly into the side of the mountain from an ideally-situated, level site. Biathlon ranges are sited to have uphill approaches to increase the difficulty of the shooting. No attempt has been made at this time to specifically tailor the trail network for biathlon competitions but it would make a serviceable race and excellent training venue. For safety it would be separated from the adjacent parking and sledding hill with berms and screening. The biathlon facility is planned for Phase III/IV. Other than the shooting range, the biathlon trail system has been designed into the Nordic trail system.”</p> <p>Appendices, PageA-207</p> <p>“Topic: Funding Priorities. Commenter’s Name: The Mat-Su Ski Club. Comment/Issue: The Mat-Su Ski Club recommended the following priorities for future funding: 1. Trail lighting of the lower stadium and Matanuska Loop 2. Extension of Ullr’s Trail to the competitive stadium area and construction of the competitive loops. 3. Large day lodge and community center 4. Trail lighting of competitive stadium area and ski trails, sledding hill and construction of a biathlon range.” We also wanted to thank you for attending the January 5 open house at the GPRA Chalet and taking the time to leave a comment and for emailing another comment on January 8. Your comments about the growth of biathlon and its benefits, such as promoting firearm safety, discipline, fitness, and healthy lifestyles, are well noted. We recognize the passion and commitment behind your advocacy for this sport and appreciate the examples you provided of successful facilities across the country. (cont. below)</p>	<p>None</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
(cont. from above)	<p>(cont. from above) At this time, the borough is not strongly pursuing the development of a biathlon course at GPRA, but your input will be considered as part of the broader planning process.</p> <p>A biathlon range is not a priority at this location at this time because prioritizing a biathlon range could delay or limit investment in projects that benefit a wider range of users. Public input shows stronger support for system wide improvements and projects that serve more users on a year-round basis. Additionally, the project would have a high capital and safety consideration, with potential environmental impacts, and ongoing maintenance.</p> <p>We expect to share the draft GPRA plan later in March for a 30-day public comment period, and this will be another opportunity to share thoughts. When it's ready, we'll send out an email and post updates on our website and social media channels so you'll have plenty of ways to stay in the loop and join the conversation.</p> <p>Thank you again for being part of this conversation and for helping us shape recreation opportunities in the Mat-Su Borough. Please feel free to reach out if you have questions.</p>	None
[submitted at open house] Please improve access to the Equestrian trail. The first part that crosses the water is boggy, poorly signed, and full of obstacles both seen & unseen. This first part of the trail is an impediment to use of ANY other part of the equestrian area of GPRA. Very few riders will risk their horses wellbeing to get past this area. Wish List: Improve access through improvement of 1st part of trail; AND extend the trail that begins at GPRA all the way past the Carl Wagon Rd on to Independence Mine!	No response requested.	None



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
[submitted at open house] I understand that summer weddings must be profitable, however, the summer is short and having the use of the chalet year-round for community events would be amazing. Finding better ways to use the lower parking lot would be great also. A covered picnic area down there, maybe a playground (think like Sutton's) also community gardens would be a great use around the parking area.	No response requested.	None
[submitted at open house] I would like to see the mountain bike trail more well-maintained. Winter: The fat bike trail needs more frequent grooming/compacting especially after heavier snowfall. The fat bike trail also needs to be off limits for walkers, which severely disrupts the trail. Summer: There are a lot of water spots that have been filled with large gravel and needs proper draining. In the fall the trail can become pretty soupy.	No response requested.	None
[submitted at open house] Would like the Chalet to be open to the public. Have the MatSu Ski Club manage it and maintain hours open for skiers & hikers. Love the ski trails & hiking trails. Blueberry Knoll could use some TLC.	No response requested.	None
[submitted at open house] Biathlon is one of the fastest growing winter sports across the N hemisphere. New biathlon complexes at Brillam, WI; Bozeman, MT; Hayward, WI; Craftsbury, VT; -Upgraded biathlon facilities at Lake Placid and Soldiers Hollow, UT. With the growing Nordic Ski programs and rifle clubs, biathlon is a good fit for the MatSu. Biathlon adds a sport opportunity and it teaches firearm safety, discipline, fitness, and a healthy lifestyles. The only Winter Olympic sport USA hasn't medaled in yet...	No response requested.	None

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>I'm a big supporter of GPRA and applaud your planning effort, but I do have some questions about the data you have presented in the arc gis story website. Where does the "over 300,000 annual users" figure for GPRA come from? That is 822 users per day on average! Are you using the Borough's car counter at the gate to estimate use? Did the Borough properly use the device i.e., cut the count in half, since each car gets counted twice, once going in and once going out? Did the Borough ever audit that device to check its relationship with reality? The ski club has had trail counters at GPRA for 5 years now, and our data seems to indicate less than half of your stated user rate. Although our estimate does not include users who only use the Chalet (wedding parties, etc) or those users who drive up for the view but never leave the parking lot, those users are really a separate class from outdoor recreationists actually using GPRA. It does need to be noted that our estimate does not include users of bike trails or the Blueberry Knoll trail. We have (inconsistently) maintained a counter on the Blueberry Knoll trail that indicated use there of an average of ~50 users per summer day in 2021. VMBaH does or did once have trail counters on the bike trails. (cont. below)</p>	<p>MSB staff spoke with this commenter and thanked them for pointing out these discrepancies. The 300,000 number was a carryover error.</p>	<p>None, numbers have been updated in plan.</p>



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT APRIL 2026

Comment	Response	Action Required
<p>(cont. from above) Our auditing (actual manual counts of trail users compared to trail counter results) indicates that the counter at Lightpole 29 (the green line on the first graph) is a decent proxy for the total number of Nordic trail users in any given time period. (Most users pass by several counters, many users multiple times in a single visit, so the counters can not simply be added up to determine user numbers)</p> <p>Some sample data graphs for the GPRA trail counters are included below. The first two graphs cast doubt on the claimed 25,000 users per month (300k annual) at GPRA and on the claimed 300% increase in GPRA use since 2017, unless all of that increase occurred before December of 2020.</p>	See response above.	None.

