

## BASHER COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### RESOLUTION

#### **Adopting Neighborhood Comments on the January 2010 Public Review Draft of the Chugach Access Plan**

**WHEREAS** a Public Review Draft of the Chugach State Park Access Plan was released for public comment in January 2010; and

**WHEREAS** public comments on the draft plan are due by May 3, 2010; and

**WHEREAS** the "Hillside Unit" section of the draft plan includes both existing and proposed access points adjacent to the Stuckagain neighborhood;

#### **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**

**THAT** the Basher Community Council offers the following comments on the draft plan:

- (1) **Access Generally.** As indicated in prior comments on the draft trail plan, the Basher Trailhead at the beginning of the Stuckagain neighborhood should be the primary point of public access from the neighborhood to the park, and any additional access points in the neighborhood should be considered secondary only. Directing most users to the Basher Trailhead would reduce both the traffic on neighborhood roads and the dangers of congestion on the single ingress/egress routes in the event of a fire or other emergency. This approach follows that set forth in the 1986 Chugach State Park Master Plan and remains the preference of the neighborhood.
- (2) **H1a—Dome Trail Trailhead.** This site has been used for access into both the park and adjacent military land for many years, and the Stuckagain neighborhood supports its continued use for these purposes. However, the draft should clarify the following:
  - a. **Status: Dome parking is "secured."** The existing parking lot at H1a, which accommodates at least 12 cars, is located within the easement of Basher Road and is not on military land. As such, it will exist in perpetuity and should be considered "secured" and available for future users of the nearby parklands. Although it is not directly connected to Chugach State Park, the existing Dome parking lot is close to the existing and proposed Near Point trailheads and provides a permanent and viable parking alternative to these access points that should be recognized.

- b. **Type: “Vehicular, small ‘lot’” status.** Because it accommodates between 10-20 cars, the existing Dome parking area should be designated a small “lot,” as distinguished from a small “pullout”.
- c. **Justification/Actions: Strongly endorse.** The Stuckagain neighborhood strongly endorses the recommendation to “work with the Army to establish a trail easement to ensure secure access to Chugach State Park is reserved in perpetuity,” and also recommends adding the phrase “and to improve the current trail.”
- d. **Minor Corrections.**
  - i. **Under “Uses.”** “Tank Trail” on line 5 should be replaced with “Dome Trail.”
  - ii. **Under “Current Condition.”** “Reliable” should be substituted for “viable.” Access through H1a is viable, it simply can’t be guaranteed under current military ownership and management of the land.

(3) **H1b—Dome Access Trail.** We strongly support these provisions. We especially support the following recommendation under “Justification/Actions”: *“Evaluate the section line easement and work with the Army to identify a sustainable trail alignment and trail easement to ensure pedestrian access to the park and adjacent alpine uplands is reserved.”* The existing Dome Access Trail provides superior access to the North Fork Valley. Ensuring long-term access to the park from this route across the short spans of military land that currently make access problematic would be a great service to the neighborhood, the Anchorage community, and users of surrounding trails.

- a. **Minor Corrections:**
  - i. **Under “Uses.”**
    1. “User developed” trail on lines 2 & 3 should read “old homestead” trail.
    2. After “...Trailhead (entry H1a),” the current language is inaccurate and should be replaced with: “and the East-West Section Line, which borders private property and military land and is much steeper and more difficult to traverse.”

ii. Under “**Current Condition.**” “Viable” in the fourth line from the bottom should be changed to “reliable” for the reasons given in (2)(d)(ii) above.

- (4) **H2a—Aletha’s Mountain Way.** This site should be the vehicular access point for Near Point and environs instead of the proposed site at H3. This was the original proposed location for parking to support the park’s easement up Near Point when the Near Point parcel was in the process of being platted for development by the prior private owner. **See Exhibit A.** The “Type” should be designated as “Vehicular, small pullout” which would allow from 2-6 cars, instead of “Pedestrian,” which would allow no parking. However, parking must be “off-street,” in suitable improved areas adjacent to the roadway, not in the roadway itself. Appropriate signage must be installed to ensure against on-street parking.
- (5) **H2b—Near Point Access Trail.** We support these provisions and have no comment.
- (6) **H3—Near Point Access.** We recommend eliminating this site, which calls for “Vehicular, small” access accommodating 10-20 cars, and this entire section of the draft plan. The 12-car existing parking we support at H1a, which is “secured;” and the 2-6 car pullout we propose at H2a, which could be readily “secured” through off-street improvements along the existing roadway, would adequately provide alternate access for 10-20 cars, making a separate lot at H3 unnecessary. Also, parking at H1a and H2a would likely entail fewer neighborhood impacts and be more feasible and affordable than a lot at the H3 site. In addition, it would comply more fully with neighborhood concerns expressed in the Basher Community Council resolution regarding the Chugach Master Plan process dated April 2008. **See Exhibit B.**
- (7) **H4—Tulugak Circle East, Stuckagain Heights.** Neighborhood residents have traversed private property in this area for many years to gain access to Near Point and the park. In 2007, the developer of “End of the Road Subdivision” (MOA Platting No. S-11592-3) proposed a new residents-only trail easement from the Tulugak cul-de-sac to the park. The Platting Board rejected a private residents-only trail, but ultimately approved a “neighborhood access easement to Chugach State Park” at its July 2, 2008, meeting. The minutes of the meeting specifically state: “*Note: The intent is to “provide convenient, low intensity access (pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian) through 15’ to 30’ wide easements for neighborhood residents designed to disperse use throughout the Park boundary and reduce vehicular traffic at major trailheads.*”



**See Exhibit C.** The definition of “neighborhood access” in the 2002 Chugach State Park Access Inventory in effect at the time the subdivision plat was adopted in 2008 conforms to the definition of “pedestrian” access in the draft access plan. **See Exhibit D.** Based on this history, we support pedestrian access at this site because it is consistent with the terms of the subdivision plat, but oppose vehicular access because it was specifically excluded from the plat and would violate the intent of both the Platting Board and neighborhood residents involved in resolving the controversy.

a. **Status: Tulugak trail is “secured.”** A trail easement into Chugach State Park from the H4 site exists on the final submitted plat of End of the Road Subdivision, and a new trail is being planned and constructed by neighborhood residents. Under these circumstances, the trail itself should be considered “secured” in the access plan.

b. **Type: “Pedestrian,” not “Vehicular, small pullout.”** Trailhead parking was not included in the End of the Road Subdivision plat, and the trail itself was labeled “neighborhood access,” which precludes parking. Accordingly, H4 should be designated “pedestrian,” not “vehicular, small pullout.”

(8) **H5—Midden Way.** There are several traditional use trails across private property along Midden Way, but none meets the description given for “H5” in the draft access plan. There are no public park access easements along the road, and restrictive covenants governing many of the lots in the area prevent owners from granting public access to the park. Specifically, deed provisions dating from 1975 bar: “(h) granting any public easement which would provide access, by vehicle or otherwise, either to the south line of said Section 6 or to the public easement along said south line; or (i) granting any easement which would make public the trail easement provided for herein.” **See Exhibit E.** Accordingly, we recommend that the proposed H5 access site be eliminated.

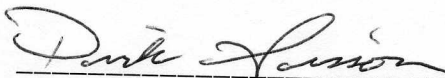
(9) **H6—Basher Drive Trailhead.** The Basher Trailhead should continue to be the main public access point from the Stuckagain neighborhood to Chugach State Park. However, any improvement to the Basher access point should include construction of a road further into the park boundaries to a security-monitored vehicle parking area that is out of sight to neighborhood homes and to residential traffic on Basher Road. We strongly oppose any development of a parking lot “strip” adjacent to Basher Road. In addition, any new lot should be built to greater safety standards than the current lot, which poses a traffic hazard because of a

narrow entrance built on a blind curve at the top of a hill on a substandard road.

- a. **Uses.** Noted year-round uses should include “equestrians and off-leash dog-walkers,” as adjacent trails are used frequently for these purposes.
- b. **Type: “Vehicular, large lot” should be changed to “Vehicular, medium lot”.** We recognize that the Basher trailhead has been designated as a site for a large parking lot of 30-50 cars since the 1985 Chugach Park Master Plan was adopted. However, we believe that the capacity of any parking lot at the Basher access point should not exceed 30 cars. A large lot is defined in the plan as one allowing “40+” cars—an unlimited designation that would allow far more parking than the site and the neighborhood can sustain. We do not support this designation and instead recommend that H6 be designated as a “medium lot,” defined as one accommodating “25-35” cars.
- c. **Justification/Actions.** We strongly support the intent to work with the MOA Far North Bicentennial Park in developing the site to overcome challenges such as steep terrain and wetlands and ensure the best possible outcome for both park users and neighborhood residents. We also encourage the park to work with MOA to facilitate use of the Bicentennial Park parking lots at the South and North Bivouac Trailheads for public parking for Chugach State Park as appropriate.

- (10) **Sufficient Public Access Provided.** The above recommendations of the Stuckagain neighborhood, if adopted by the park, would provide six major access points into the park: three vehicular sites affording up to 48 parking spaces for park users (H1a--12; H2a--2-6; and H6—30) and three pedestrian access points (H1b, H2b, and H4). These points fairly balance the park’s interest in public access with the interest of Stuckagain residents in the safety and integrity of our neighborhood.

**ADOPTED** this 8th day of April, 2010.



Dirk Sisson  
Basher Community Council President

**VOTE:      42 IN FAVOR      0 OPPOSED      1 ABSTENTION**