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Anchorage Areaurde Trails
Plan

ALGERIA

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ANCHORAGE AREAWIDE TRAILS PLAN

April, 1979

Prepared By
Municipal Planning Department

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Municipality of Anchorage
George M. Sullivan, Mayor

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INTRODUCTION

Trails are a vital and integral part of the total transportation system of the community. They provide recreation as well as access to schools, commercial centers, and recreational facilities. The Trails Plan is intended to provide Anchorage with an integrated system of trails which when fully implemented will allow a bicyclist to traverse the city in safety; will allow a shopper to walk to the neighborhood market; will provide school children with non-hazardous routes to school; will provide mechanized off-road vehicles with areas not in conflict with inappropriate uses; and will preserve historical trails such as the Fur Rendezvous Sled Dog Trail. In addition to identifying proposed routes for various forms of trails, this Plan proposes a variety of use areas for snowmobile and dirt bike operations.

A. Scope of Study

This Plan recommends trails that will serve a variety of means for getting around without automobiles or other large motor vehicles. These trails are intended to provide safe, convenient routes of travel for bicyclists, pedestrians, dog mushers, horseback riders, cross country skiers, snowmobilers, joggers, handicapped persons, and to a lesser extent, motorcyclists. Recommendations are also included on methods to finance trails acquisition and construction, procedures for trails maintenance and signing, and other aspects of trails planning necessary to the successful development of a trails system in Anchorage.

The area covered by the Plan includes the entire Municipality of Anchorage. However, the majority of the trails proposed herein are situated within the Anchorage bowl (that land area comprised of Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Air Force Base south to Potter). This concentration reflects the preponderance of population, the need to establish a trail system as rapidly as possible before current opportunities disappear, and the demand for commuter and recreational facilities in this area. Other communities, such as Eagle River, Chugiak and Girdwood, are not undergoing pressures as severe as this and correspondingly fewer recommendations are included for these areas. In addition, recommendations are not made for the areas within Chugach State Park and Chugach National Forest. Both areas contain extensive recreational trail systems, and it is not the intent of this Plan to duplicate previous state and Federal planning efforts. Rather, the purpose has been to complement these efforts by identifying important trail linkages.

The trail recommendations proposed herein are designed to provide facilities sufficient to meet the demands of the Anchorage bowl population to the year 2000. These recommendations are meant to be of a general nature and are intended to indicate the general corridor of trail development. Alternate trail locations should exist within each corridor, and it is expected that the basis for final site selection will be based upon the results of later design studies.

One of the major objectives of the Trails Plan is to identify the full range of nonvehicular user needs and to develop recommendations for each of these uses. Because of the unique characteristics of the Anchorage area, a wide variety of both winter and summer facilities are used and have therefore been included in this report's future planning. The following represent the types of trails and use areas that are included within this Plan, separated into their motorized and non-motorized components:

Non-Motorized

Pedestrian Facilities

Specialized Trails

- Bikeways
- Historic Trails
- Sled Dog Trails
- Equestrian Trails
- Cross-country Ski Trails
- Physical Fitness Trails
- Handicapped Persons Trails
- Nature Trails

Motorized

- Dirt Bike Areas and Trails
- Snowmobile Areas and Trails

B. Intended Users of Plan

The Trails Plan is intended to be the basic policy document for the development of trails in the Anchorage area. As such, it will serve as the basis for establishing and maintaining access routes and use areas as they relate to community centers and recreational activities.

Several organizations will be involved in implementing the various aspects of the Trails Plan. The Planning Commission is to be generally responsible for ensuring that areas designated for eventual trails development are protected from development. The acquisition of land and eventual construction of trails and related facilities is to be the responsibility of several agencies, but primarily the Department of Cultural and Recreational Services. The Assembly is to be responsible for the overall planning and development of trails within the Municipality.

This plan is to aid in carrying out these functions by specifying the general location for trails development and identifying the types of uses associated with this development. As mentioned previously, the location of trails development are intended to be somewhat generalized. For this reason, the users of this plan -- commissions and Assembly -- are intended to have substantial flexibility in the eventual design and location of trail facilities.

C. Criteria for Route Selection

A series of factors were used to formulate the recommendations contained in the Trails Plan. The most important of these included integration with existing trails, population characteristics, soils and visual resources and demonstrated need. Generally speaking, more trails were identified within areas of dense populations lacking needed facilities than in other areas. Of course, terrain and other considerations

effected this distribution since most trails have particular user or terrain characteristics. Then, too, the demand for these facilities tends to be somewhat regional in character – in that the users of the proposed facilities might come from all parts of the Municipality – and the location of those facilities also reflected regional access needs.

The location (and number) of certain facilities was also affected by two remaining characteristics, the location of parks and the opportunity to link different types of trails types together. Because of the recreational nature of trails and the need to interconnect major park areas, trails that tied these areas together were given a high priority. Similarly, those trails that interconnected with existing trails were given a high priority because they should provide a better use of current facilities.

D. Organization of the Report

This report is organized into three major sections. Recommendations for pedestrian facilities are included in the first section. These trails generally involve fairly typical and unspecialized access functions and include such facilities as footpaths, sidewalks, neighborhood trails, and elevated pedestrian crossings. The second portion of the study includes recommendations for the typical trail types, and is divided into a non-motorized and motorized component. Recommendations are included in the former for bikeways, historic trails, equestrian and cross-country skiing trails, specialized types of physical fitness and nature trails; while dirt bike and snowmobile use areas and trails are included in the latter. The concluding sections focus on the methods to implement the recommendations identified in the Plan and upon the procedures required for satisfactory trail design, maintenance and signing.

CHAPTER I

ACCESS WAYS

Access ways are designated corridors for foot or pedestrian travel. They are significant because they provide safe, convenient passage and are used extensively throughout the community. Access ways can be further defined as footpaths, sidewalks, and pedestrian ways. Each of these corridors and the functions they serve are discussed subsequently in greater detail. Recommendations for the further development of these facilities are included at the end of this section.

A. Footpaths

Footpaths can best be described as narrow, informal and frequently unimproved pathways used by foot travelers. They are usually unpaved, winding and may have steep grades.

Most footpaths in the metropolitan area have evolved through use. Many remain and are still used in the less developed portions of the city. Some footpaths have been eliminated by development in the more built-up portions of the city where sidewalks, in conjunction with streets, now provide for pedestrian access.

The largest number of actively used footpaths found near the city center are on land owned by the Universities, Providence Hospital and Alaska Psychiatric Institute, and along Chester Creek. These informal trails are used extensively by students and provide access between residential areas, the Universities, and institutional facilities.

Other areas of concentrated footpaths occur around the many elementary and secondary schools throughout the community. At a school site surrounded by open land, paths emanate from the site to connect with nearby residential areas. Many of these footpaths provide the fastest and safest way to and from school for students living nearby. And some of the better footpaths are used as jogging and cross-country running and skiing trails.

B. Sidewalks

Sidewalks are required (since December, 1972) in all subdivisions within the "urban" area of Anchorage, except where it is impractical to build them. The urban area is defined as the Muldoon, Spenard, and City Service areas. Pedestrian ways are required in the "suburban" areas as defined by the Subdivision Regulations, which includes the Sand Lake, Campbell-Klatt, and Abbott-O'Malley communities; although sidewalks are not mandated. Sidewalks or pedestrian ways are not required in the rural areas which comprises all parts of the Municipality not in the urban and suburban area, including the Hillside-Rabbit Creek area and Eagle River.

Nearly all sidewalks in Anchorage are immediately adjacent to the street and are constructed of concrete, like the curb and gutter. In recent years, criticism has been directed at their effectiveness in performing an adequate pedestrian function in those residential areas where they are located adjacent to streets. Often they are little used, and in winter when the streets usually are the only area swept of fallen snow, roads are used for pedestrian access instead. If so, it would seem preferable to build sidewalks some distance from the street. Alternately, separate pedestrian ways could be constructed to provide pedestrian access. Drainage of surface water adjacent to streets and needs more attention so that sidewalks are more useful for walking.

C. Pedestrian Ways

Pedestrian ways are paved or gravel trails well separated from a street, and often are not even associated with streets. Pedestrian ways assume a variety of forms. Pedestrian malls, skywalks, pedestrian street overpasses or underpasses, stairways, and boardwalks are pedestrian ways designed for special access functions.

1. Skywalks

Skywalks are used to connect the upper stories of adjacent buildings. Normally they are used only where pedestrian volumes are high and it is advantageous to separate dense pedestrian and vehicular traffic. They shield the pedestrian from rain, snow, wind, cold and the undesirable effects of vehicle traffic. The sole existing pedestrian overpass between commercial centers is the 6th Avenue overpass connecting Penney's Mall and parking garage with the main department store.

Undoubtedly there are other locations in the Central Business District (CBD) where a similar all-weather pedestrian street crossing would function well and add greatly to the safety and convenience of shoppers. Most of these pedestrian ways could be constructed by private enterprise in association with department store complexes or large shopping malls. Others, in key locations where pedestrian traffic is heavy and obstacles such as heavily-used streets exist, could be built by a combination of private and public funds. The location of these walkways would be determined largely by the way in which the CBD grows. In general however, they probably would be concentrated along 4th, 5th and 6th Avenues and north-south connecting streets or wherever high-rise commercial buildings are concentrated.

2. Pedestrian Overpasses/Underpasses For Schools

The purpose of these facilities is to provide for the safe crossing of busy streets where arterials separate the school from large residential areas. In some instances this may eliminate the need for bussing children because a more direct access is provided.

Pedestrian overpasses have been constructed in five school locations in Anchorage. In each case, an elevated walkway provides pedestrian access near a school site separated by an arterial from a large residential area.

Additional pedestrian overpasses should be considered over busy arterials at the locations indicated below.

These locations were selected from an analysis of student enrollment in a particular school, noting those students which would have to cross a busy arterial in order to walk to school. A number of schools were sufficiently well-located as to require no pedestrian overpass because few of the students lived on the other side of busy arterials. In the case of West High School, a pedestrian crossing over Minnesota Bypass (via Hillcrest Avenue) now exists.

Proposed School Overpasses/Underpasses

| General Area | School Served | Arterial to Be Crossed |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Mt. View | Williwaw Elementary | Bragaw Street |
| Muldoon | Scenic Park Elementary | Muldoon-Tudor Rd. |
| Muldoon | Collegiate Elementary | Boniface Parkway |
| Central | Lake Otis Elementary | Lake Otis Pkwy |
| Central | Fairview Elementary | 15th Avenue |
| Central | North Star Elementary | Fireweed Lane |
| Spenard | Tudor Elementary | Lake Otis Pkwy |
| Sand Lake | Sand Lake Elementary | Jewel Lake Road |
| Spenard | Turnagain Elementary | Northern Lights Blvd. |

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

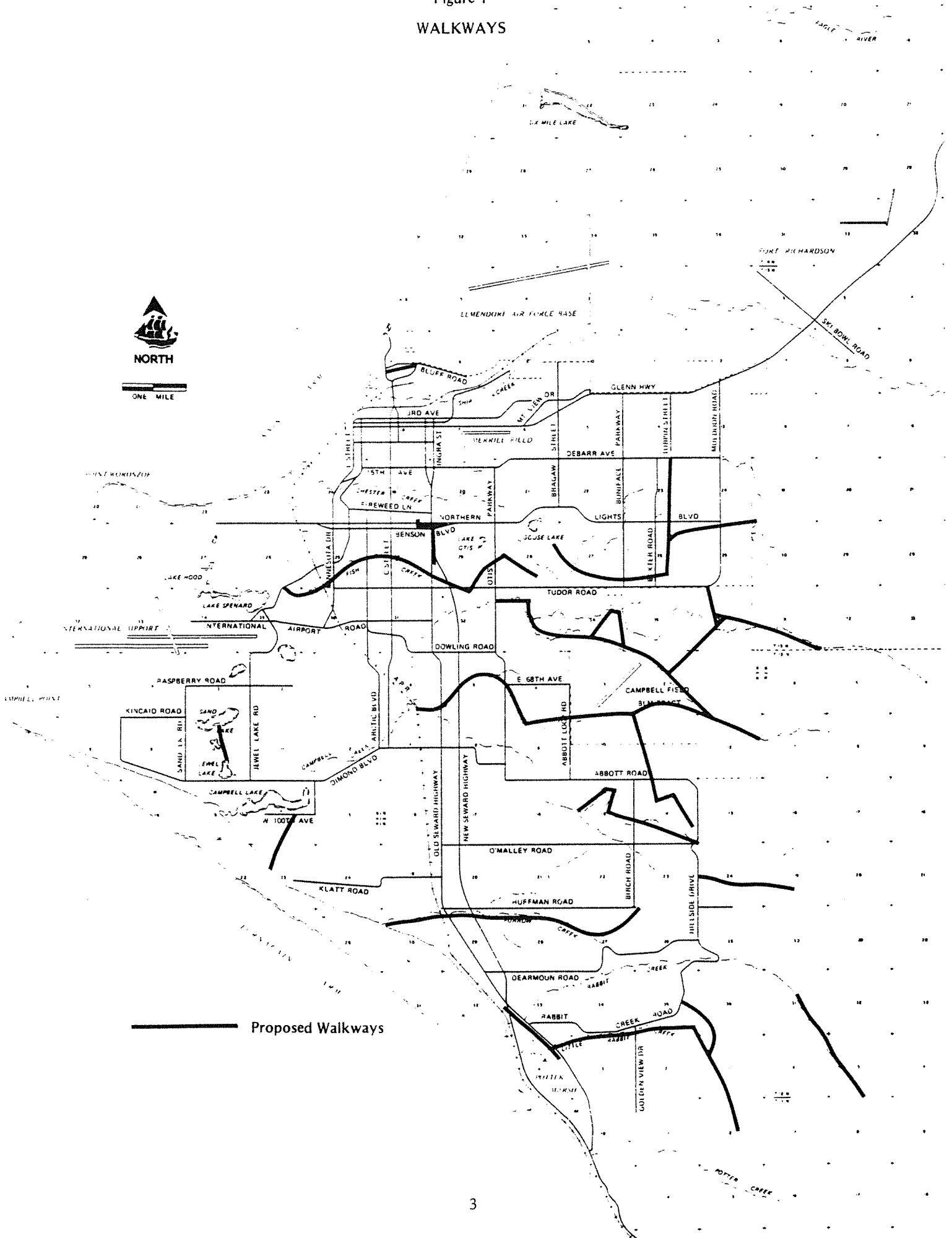
1. The Municipality establish a system of footpaths and walkways in all parts of the community to aid in the safe and convenient movement of people and to lessen the dependency on the automobile. See Figure 1.
2. Pathways connect major centers of activity with residential areas and be implemented in a phased process or whenever residential development would present an opportunity.
3. The walkway network shall be recognized as legitimate transportation routes and included in the Municipal and AMATS Capital Improvement Programs.
4. All pedestrian overpasses shall be designed to accommodate bicycles and handicapped persons.
5. The Municipality begin a program of trail right-of-way acquisitions within existing subdivisions where direct access to subdivision streets and collectors is not provided.
6. The Department of Public Works must, in granting a waiver of the requirement to provide pedestrian pathways or sidewalks in subdivisions, identify the reasons for such waivers and provide such information to the Platting Board.

D. Neighborhood Trails

Neighborhood trails provide pedestrian ways that serve a complementary or even substitute function to sidewalks. Most pedestrian activities are safer and more functional if they are some distance removed from busy streets. For this reason, there has been a trend toward the construction of neighborhood trails in preference to sidewalks in subdivisions. In most neighborhoods a paved asphalt surface about four feet wide is considered adequate for the amount of pedestrian use expected there.

Neighborhood trails can be designed for a variety of locations and to make use of limited space. The outside edge of a street right-of-way can be used if there is at least eight or ten feet of separation between the street and the walkway. The area along the back lot line normally occupied by utility easements could also be used by a trail system if part of the area assigned to the easement were used instead of a right-of-way which would include the trail. This concept would not be practical in an existing subdivision without a great deal of effort, but might work well in new subdivisions if incorporated at the design stage. Of course, not all utility easements would have to be developed as pedestrian facilities, only those necessary to serve an identifiable access need.

Figure 1
WALKWAYS



CHAPTER II

NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL FACILITIES

Trails are the combination of designated corridors and surface tread which best meet the needs of particular forms of transportation. In Anchorage, trails serve as access corridors for bicyclists, sled dog racers, horse riders, cross-country skiers, hikers, runners, handicapped persons and naturalists. Because trails serve a variety of users, they vary in design and aesthetic characteristics. Trail width, alignment, overhead clearance, grade and tread are all important characteristics for each type of trail.

The remainder of this section discusses the characteristics of nonmotorized trails, and proposes a system of facilities for each type. A section analyzes the access needs of motorized trail users. The discussion has been split in this manner because of the varying characteristics and use areas of the two major trail types.

A. Bikeways

During the past years, Anchorage has witnessed a rapidly increasing interest in the use of bicycles as a form of recreation and as a method of transportation between the home, work place, and shopping. This interest has resulted in a desire for a comprehensive system of bicycle routes, lanes, and paths. The Municipality has responded to this need by planning an extensive bike trail system and constructing numerous bike trails. These actions represent initial steps in providing for the increasing needs of a population with more leisure time, larger incomes, and a growing ecological awareness.

Recommendations for bikeways in the 1973 *Bikeways and Related Trails Plan* focused on trails in the more densely populated, urbanized portions of Anchorage. As a result of this study's recommendations, many miles of bikeways have been constructed in the more developed central and southern areas of the community. Previous to 1973, there were only three miles of such facilities.

This plan incorporates most of the yet-to-be-built trail proposals of the 1973 plan, while adding considerably to the list of desirable facilities to be constructed over the next twenty years. Many of these recommendations are for the more rural areas of Anchorage where much of the best open space remains. A primary purpose of these bikeways is to link parks and the best remaining open spaces with residential areas. These trails, then, tend to be more recreational in nature. Indeed, these bikeways, especially those well separated from the roadway, are intended to be important recreational facilities in their own right; and are expected to provide a recreational form of access to large urban parks, regional parks, and State parks and waysides. They are also designed to serve commuter needs. Because of the increased demand for facilities during the rush hours,

several of the Plan's recommendations are also within urbanized areas, such as C Street between Benson and 15th Avenue. These facilities were not included in the 1973 Plan because their need was not anticipated at that time.

The bikeway construction program recommended herein is separated into five- and twenty-year components. Figure 2 depicts the bikeway facilities recommended under each period. A detailed description of each project is included within the recently revised Bicycle Plan. The five-year program was developed about expected funding levels by an inter-agency task force on bikeways composed of the Alaska Department of Highways; the Municipal Planning, Parks, Transportation, and Public Works departments; Alaska Methodist University, and the University of Alaska. Under this program about 77 miles of Class I* bikeways will be constructed between now and 1983, primarily within the more densely developed parts of the community. Together with the existing 53 miles of bikeways, this will provide over 130 miles of bikeways within the Anchorage bowl by 1983. An additional 84 miles of bikeways will be added under the construction program scheduled between the 5th and 20th years. The latter facilities are concentrated along the developed edges of the community, especially to the east and south. It is also intended that multi-purpose bicycle-pedestrian facilities will be developed in the Eagle River area, particularly along Peters and Fire Creeks, and a portion of Eagle River. The two former facilities would extend between Knik Arm and the Glenn Highway and the latter, between a proposed school site and the Glenn Highway.

These routes may be used for other functions as well. During the winter they can serve as cross-country ski routes, and as walkways and hiking routes in urban and suburban areas during the summer months. Currently the Municipality lacks sufficient sidewalks in many areas of the community, especially along major arterials, and a comprehensive bikeway network would contribute to such a system. The multi-purpose nature of these routes provides, then, an additional incentive to develop a system of bikeways.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Municipality establish, in cooperation with other local and state agencies, a system of officially designated bikeways. They should serve recreational and commuter needs. These bikeways shall connect major centers of activity to residential areas and shall be constructed in a phased process. Bikeways shall be recognized as a mode of transportation and included in the Municipal Capital Improvement Program, as well as the AMATS Transportation Systems Management Element (TSME) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These bikeways are identified on Figure 2.

2. A public information program be established to publicize security and safety measures.

*Class I bikeways: paved thoroughfares or bikeways specifically for bicycle or pedestrian use which are separated from vehicular traffic by at least 12 feet.

3. At intersections involving bicycles and motorized traffic, a "zebra" type crosspath be striped to delineate bike use and alert motorists to the presence of a bike crossing.

4. Lockable bicycle racks be provided in those areas where a cyclist might be absent from the area of his bike, and where security problems and bicycle usage are high.

5. Standard signs, striping, stenciling, and rest areas be developed along officially designated bikeways.

6. Adopt the Bicycle code in areas outside of former City limits. Delete from the Code the requirement to ride on a designated trail rather than the roadway where there is a trail. Many of our trails are not designed for high-speed commuting uses.

7. Where feasible, develop trails at elevations no lower, when in close proximity to roadways, than the highest point of the adjacent roadway. This will protect non-motorists from exhaust gases which settle in lower elevations.

B. Historic Trails

Historic trails are those trails which were built many years ago before other forms of transportation became available or were developed somewhat more recently for recreational use. Alaska has a rich heritage of pioneer and gold rush trails which were used as overland transportation routes early in this Century. At the peak of their use, almost 10,000 miles of trails existed. These trails were variously used by dogpulled freight sleighs, horses, wagons, and foot travelers.

Iditarod Trail

There are two historic trails in the Anchorage area. One is a branch of the Iditarod Trail which ran from Seward to Nome. The other is the Fur Rendezvous Trail to be discussed later. The Iditarod Trail was once one of Alaska's most famous gold rush trails and is now the site of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. This trail split at Girdwood with one branch going over Crow Pass and down through Eagle River and thence on to Knik and Nome. In times of good weather, this route was preferred because it was more direct, though steeper, than the others. Another branch followed Turnagain Arm from Girdwood to Indian, and thence over Indian Pass to Ship Creek where it followed Knik Arm until it joined the main trail near Eagle River. The Indian Ship Creek branch was used when stormy weather made travel in Crow Pass dangerous or impossible.

A third branch of the Iditarod Trail, commonly referred to as the Potter Trail, split off from Indian following the rocky cliffs above Turnagain Arm to the hillside area of Anchorage, passing near Our Road, Birch Road and thence across the Campbell Tract and military land to Ship Creek where it rejoins the Indian Ship Creek Trail. This trail was preferred for heavily-weighted freight sleds when there was adequate snow along Turnagain Arm. It had gentler grades and was less subject to the whiteouts and storm conditions which frequently occur in the passes.

Potter Trail Along Turnagain Arm

This trail largely follows natural benches and inner valleys, and is not readily visible from the Seward Highway. The trail between Potter Valley and Indian Valley along Turnagain Arm is in relatively good condition, and the tread is largely intact except in landslide chutes or where washouts have occurred. In very rocky areas, it is clear and well marked, particularly where the trail has been cut into the rock formation. In birch-forested areas, it is frequently overgrown with young birch and alder trees, although generally a passage has been kept open by animals. The scenic views from the trail of Turnagain Arm and the Chugach Mountains are spectacular.

The historical value of this trail is such that it should remain intact, and maintained or improved consistent with the standards for State Historical Trails. Most of the trail between Potter and Indian is on State land, a large part of which is Chugach State Park. The trail appears to cross some private land near Potter, in Rainbow Valley, Falls Creek, and Indian Valley. Trail dedications will probably be necessary on these lands to prevent the trail being lost to development.

From Indian to Girdwood and Portage, the trail followed the flat areas along Turnagain Arm in an area now largely occupied by the Seward Highway. Relocating the trail through this area would be technically feasible above the highway, but it would be subject to avalanches, expensive to build and difficult to maintain. Nonetheless, this portion of the trail would provide the vital link needed to connect with the State-wide trail system. It would provide access to Chugach National Forest Trails and Kenai National Moose Range Trails, as well as to State Land Trails connecting Homer and Seward with Anchorage and to points along the Iditarod Trail north of Anchorage.

Because of its essential access function, it is recommended that the portion of the Iditarod Trail from Indian Valley to Portage be reconstructed using a combination of Municipal, State and Federal funding, appropriate to the land ownership involved.

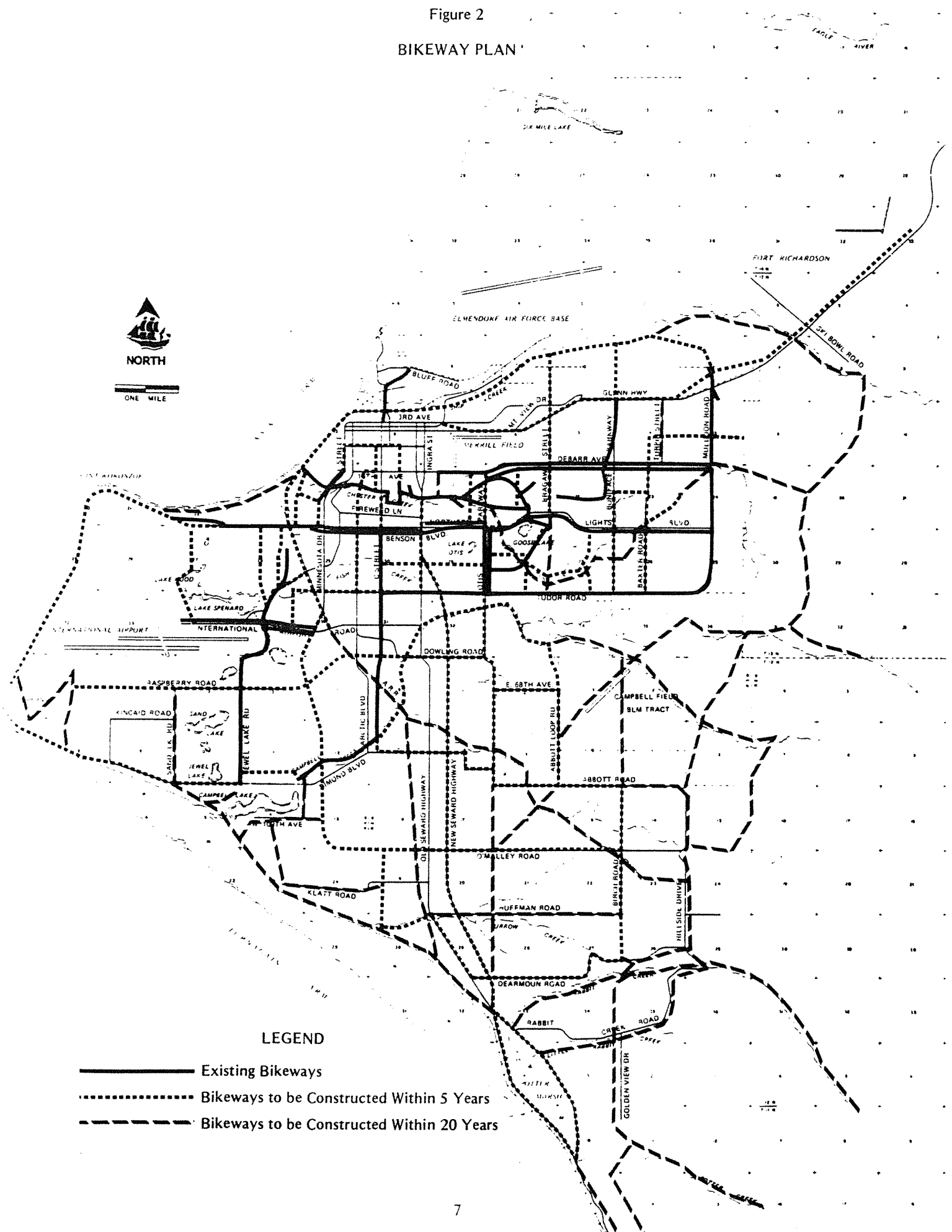
Anchorage Fur Rendezvous Trail

The Anchorage Fur Rendezvous sled dog racing trail is the only other historical trail in Southcentral Alaska besides the Iditarod Trail, having been in use at its present location since 1946. This 25 mile trail begins on Fourth Avenue in the downtown area, follows Cordova Street to Chester Creek Greenbelt and follows this to Alaska Methodist University Campus property, thence along a powerline easement to Tudor Road where it crosses into the Campbell Tract. The Campbell Tract contains the major part of the trail as well as the most natural and scenic part of it.

In order to preserve this trail it should be dedicated through right-of-way easements where it passes through AMU and University of Alaska property, the Campbell Tract, and the powerline right-of-way connecting the areas between Tudor Road and AMU. In these areas the trail serves a necessary access function, would not interfere with the primary function of the land, and would contribute to each

Figure 2

BIKEWAY PLAN



ONE MILE

LEGEND

- Existing Bikeways
- Bikeways to be Constructed Within 5 Years
- - - - - Bikeways to be Constructed Within 20 Years

university's environmental and physical education programs. Part of the trail also lies east of Muldoon on the Fort Richardson Military Reservation. To the extent that it does not interfere with military activities, this portion of the trail should remain in use.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Municipality of Anchorage, in cooperation with other government agencies, adopt a list of historic trails – depicted on Figure 3 to include:
 - a. The Old Potter Trail (a branch of the Iditarod Trail).
 - b. The Indian-Ship Creek Mail Trail (a branch of the Iditarod Trail).
 - c. The Crow Pass-Eagle River Mail Trail (a branch of the Iditarod Trail).
 - d. The Iditarod Trail from Eagle River to the Municipal boundary near Goat Creek.
 - e. The Anchorage Fur Rendezvous Sled Dog Racing Trail.
2. Application be made to include the above trails in the National Register of Historic Places or Historic Trails System, as appropriate.
3. Special efforts be made by the Municipality to prevent the development of land uses or other activities which would disrupt or destroy these historic trails.
4. The Municipality of Anchorage, in cooperation with other government agencies, sign, improve and develop ancillary facilities along historic trails.

C. Sled Dog Trails

In the early days of Anchorage, sled dog trails served both the commuter needs of residents living on the urban fringe and as woodhauling trails. The rapid growth of Anchorage has eliminated many of these trails and now only a few remain in areas protected from development, such as parks and various State and Federal lands.

To preserve this tradition, Anchorage Assembly Resolution 5476 recommends the dedication of the Anchorage Fur Rendezvous Sled Dog Racing Trail at its present location. It also confirms the Municipality's intent to keep this trail open and usable. In order to develop a comprehensive system of these facilities, other sled dog trails must also be developed, and are depicted on Figure 4.

Dog sledding trails require very special conditions to be functional. They must be fairly long, cannot have sharp turns, and must be free of impediments and dangerous intersections or street crossings. Above all, sled dog trails should be well-separated from motorized trails and closed to motorized uses.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Municipality, in cooperation with other agencies, establish a system of sled dog trails. To the extent practical the existing sled dog trails would be used as the base from which to extend others. Figure 4 depicts the general location of these trails.
2. Motorized uses be restricted from all sled dog trails, except as necessary to patrol or maintain the trail.
3. The Anchorage Fur Rendezvous Trail be designated as having the highest priority to receive such funding as may exist.

D. Equestrian Trails

Equestrian activity has been largely concentrated in the rural portions of the Municipality, especially in the hillside area and to a lesser extent, in Sand Lake and the Earthquake Park vicinity. Among the most widely used equestrian trails are roadside trails, usually within the road right-of-way. These are a functional and even attractive type of equestrian trail if they are separated by a vegetative screen and are not too close to the roadway. Other non-motorized activities are sometimes compatible with the equestrian use of these trails. Motorized activities are, however, a direct conflict and present some degree of danger to equestrians. Power line easements are also used for horseback riding where clearing has been adequate and man-made barriers do not block the trail. In the hillside areas such barriers have not developed appreciably, probably because the larger lot sizes have allowed for adequate storage off the easement. These same easements are frequently used during the winter for cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and to a lesser extent, dog mushing.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Municipality in cooperation with other government agencies and utility companies, establish areas for equestrian trails utilizing easements, road right-of-ways, public lands, and parks. These trails are depicted in Figure 5.
2. Equestrian trails be located and administered to prevent motorized use and to avoid conflicts with other non-motorized uses such as bicycling, cross-country skiing and sled dog mushing.
3. Equestrian trails be developed to form a system connecting important centers of horseback riding with desirable public lands and parks such as Section 16, Earthquake Park, and Chugach State Park.

Figure 4
SLED DOG MUSHING TRAILS

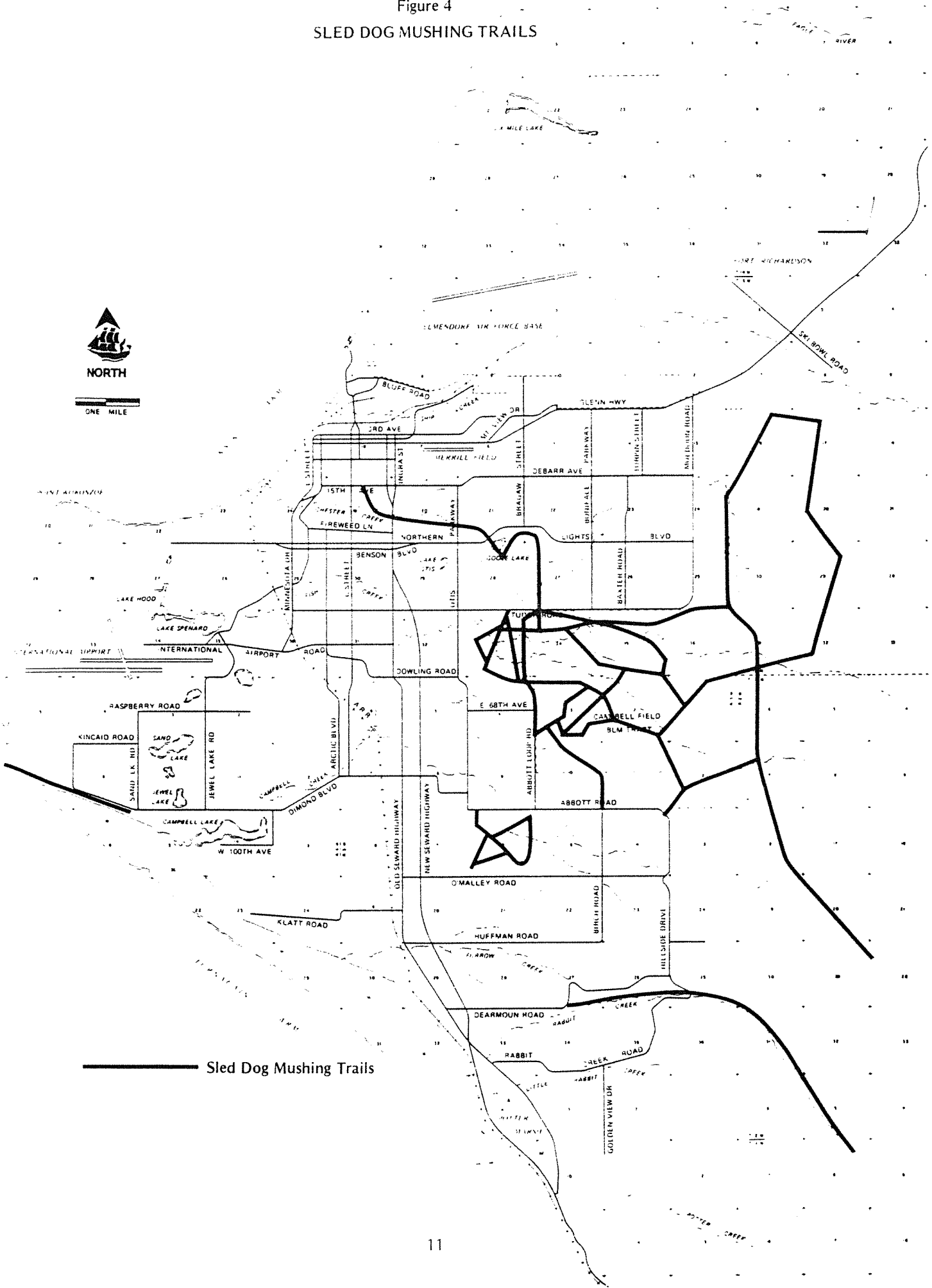
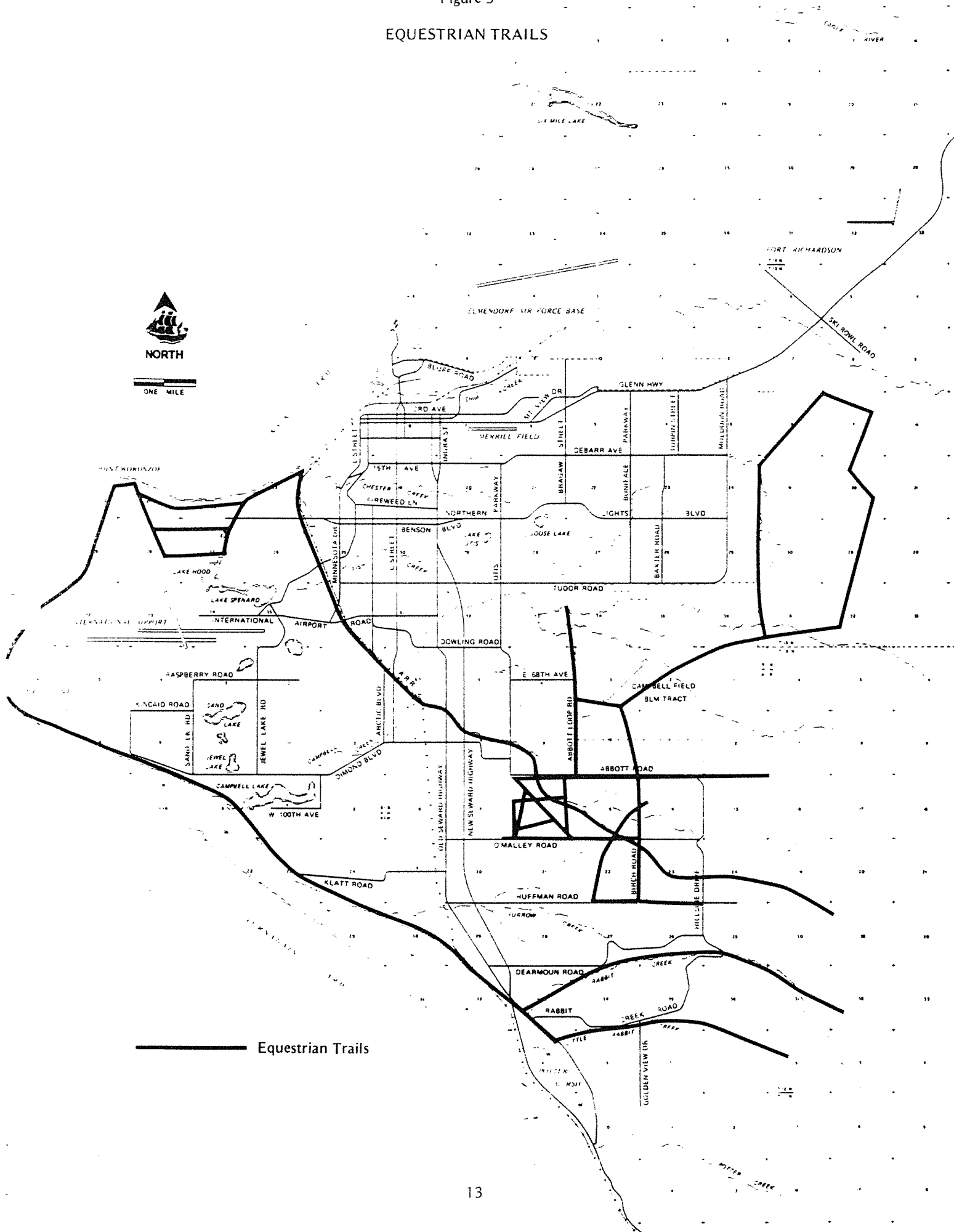


Figure 5

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS



E. Cross-Country Skiing Trails

Cross-country skiers can use most trails adapted to such summer uses as walking, hiking, and bicycling. A wide range of grade and curvature are permissible in ski trails, depending on the degree of skill for which they are intended. Racing and competition trails often have sharp curves and steep pitches to make them more challenging. Recreational and beginners' trails are usually without sharp turns and abrupt grades. Ski trails intended for night use should also be without sharp turns and steep grades, because of poorer visibility. It is desirable to have equal amounts of uphill, downhill and level terrain for an interesting cross-country trail. Clearing widths vary from only five and six feet in competition trails to eight and ten feet on recreational and commuter trails. An eight-foot wide tread is desirable on well-used trails because it allows for two tracks and enough room for skiers to pass comfortably. For this reason, bikeways make excellent ski trails.

Cross-country ski trails are easily damaged by horseback riding and, to a lesser degree, by snowmobiling or by people walking or snowshoeing on the trail. These conflicting uses are to be discouraged whenever possible, especially on heavily used trails.

The construction of cross-country trails in the Anchorage area has been by volunteer groups. These groups, which have included the Nordic Ski Club, the AMU Cross-Country Ski Team and the Biathlon Association from Fort Richardson, have built ski trails once parks or open space have been provided for these uses. It has been found that one of the limiting factors to the roadside use of ski trails is the distance to which snow is side-cast during snowplowing. This is the difficulty with locating bicycle trails too close to the roadway that are used as ski trails in winter. Generally, such trails cannot be closer than twenty feet from the edge of a major roadway if it is to escape sidecast debris. It has also been found that artificial lighting appreciably extends the usefulness of ski trails during the short winter days. A very low illumination is adequate on most trails as long as such key points as junctions, bridge crossings, and turns are illuminated. Comprehensive illumination would be extremely expensive and generally unnecessary.

A specific ski trail proposal, which has the potential for serving as a major cross-country ski facility in the Anchorage area, should be described. This trail, the Chugach Mountain Rim Trail, would traverse the edge of the bowl area from a saddle below McHugh Peak to Arctic Valley Road at about the 1,500-foot elevation level. Contouring the entire front range of the Chugach Range in the trees just below timberline for a length of about 21 miles, it would cross five minor subdivision access roads. Most of the southern part of the trail lies on private land, while the middle part is within Chugach State Park. The northern part is almost entirely on the Fort Richardson Military Reservation. The southern portion, containing private land, is presently some of the wildest and least developed terrain in the Anchorage area. A trail easement would have to be obtained from land owners — a width of 100 feet would be desirable, although a minimum of fifty (50) feet could be allowed. Future residential development in this region,

which undoubtedly would be large-lot (2½ to 5 acres) or cluster development, should be designed to incorporate this trail into their design. There is virtually no development along this part of the proposed trail thus far. Access would be available through existing and proposed trail heads at Upper O'Malley Road, Rabbit Creek Road, Little Rabbit Creek Road, Prospect Heights and Arctic Valley Road.

The Chugach Rim Trail would provide the opportunity for a ski trip up to 21 miles in length without leaving the Anchorage basin. It would give users the distinct advantage of utilizing the short winter daylight hours to maximum advantage without driving long distances. In winter or summer, this trail would provide views of the Anchorage basin, the Alaska Range, Mc. McKinley and the sunsets for which this region is famed.

Summary of Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

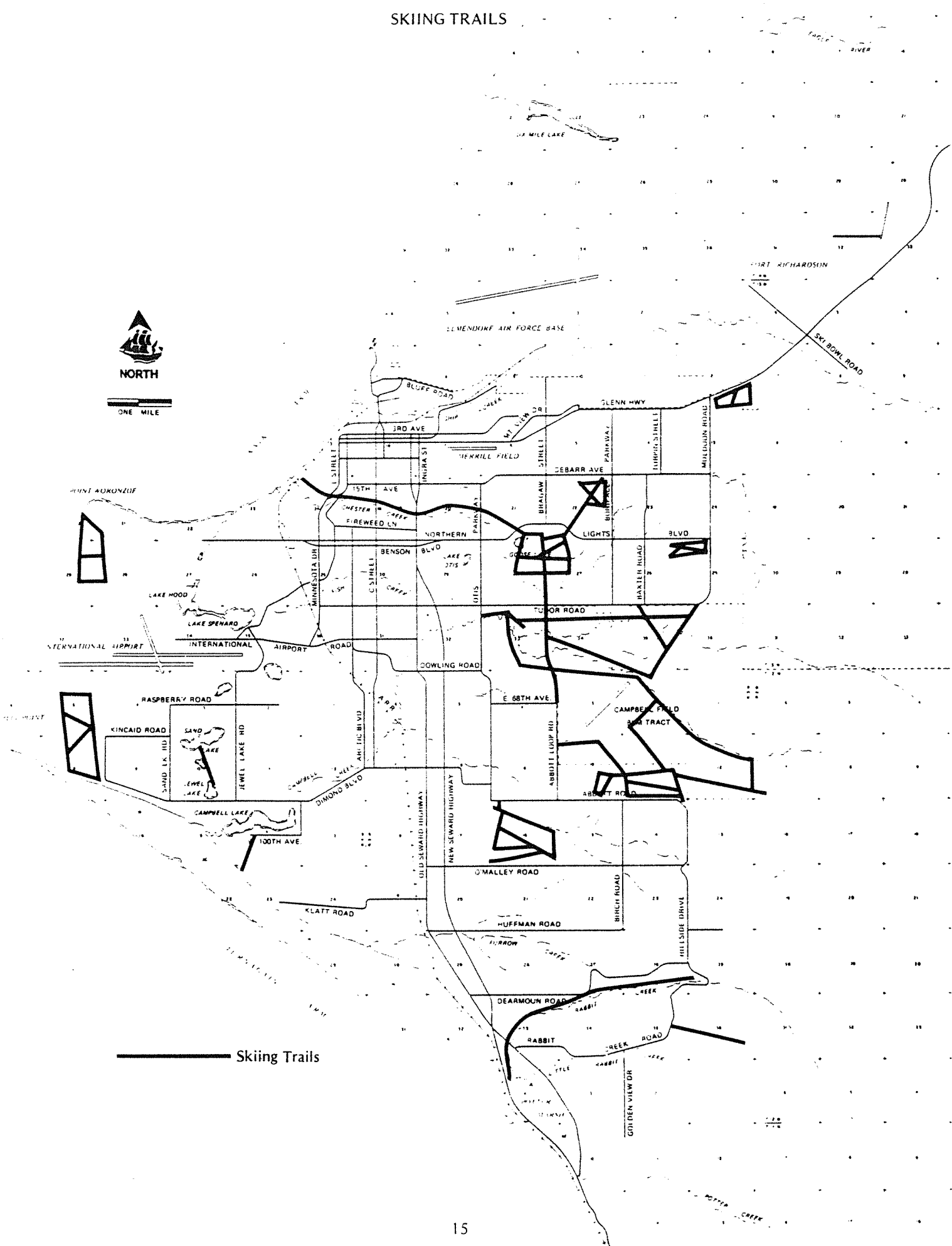
1. The Municipality, in cooperation with other local and state agencies, establish a system of cross-country ski trails in all parts of the community for recreation and transportation purposes. This system is depicted on Figure 6.
2. The ski trails shall utilize bicycle trails wherever snow conditions are adequate to permit.
3. No motorized vehicles, horses, sled dog teams or people on foot or using snowshoes shall be allowed on designated ski trails in order to increase their usefulness during the winter months.
4. Artificial lighting shall be considered on some trails in order to increase their usefulness during the winter months.
5. Portions of the northern half of Bicentennial Park shall not be used for cross-country skiing because of conflicts with sled dog use areas, except for the Stuckagain Road right-of-way.

F. Physical Fitness Trails

Almost any trail can be used in ways that promote physical fitness whether or not they are designed for that purpose. Nearly any non-motorized trail use results in some degree of improvement in physical fitness. However, specialized trails can be designed to make the pursuit of physical fitness a primary goal, and one which can be practiced with a minimum of hazard or interference.

One of the most important requirements for a physical fitness trail is that it be located away from roadways or other sources of pollution. The concentration of carbon monoxide and other airborne pollutants near roadways pose a health hazard to athletes in the process of prolonged, deep respiration. Also the noise, dust, and road dirt or splash characteristic of roadside areas would be unacceptable to many potential users. This, coupled with the desire for aesthetically pleasing surroundings, is sufficient reason to choose exercise trails in the larger parks, greenbelts, and open spaces well removed from busy roadways.

Figure 6
SKIING TRAILS



— Skiing Trails

Parcours Trail

One very specialized and highly successful type of exercise trail is the Parcours. Typically they are 1.4 miles long and offer twenty exercise stations of various degrees of difficulty. Rolling terrain is ideal for this type of trail. Each station is marked with a wooden sign illustrating the particular exercise and number of repetitions to achieve par for both beginners and the experienced user. A major goal is to allow the user to take sufficient time to enjoy the natural surroundings, hopefully resulting in a sensation of mental and physical health.

The Municipality is planning to construct a Parcours-type physical fitness trail in the eastern half of Muldoon Park. The trail will be approximately 0.9 miles long and will feature twenty turnouts with exercise stations. The same trail will be available for use in the winter for cross-country skiing.

Jogging Trails

Jogging trails are a more conventional and commonly seen type of exercise trail. Almost any trail with a durable tread located in pleasant surroundings well away from roadways can be used for jogging. Conflicts with other kinds of trail uses would be the only difficulty in developing these types of facilities. Otherwise, jogging can take place on most trails or even lightly trafficked residential streets and rural lanes.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. A system of physical fitness trails be constructed by the Municipality in areas that are convenient for community use and where exercise activities are free of environmental hazards. This system is depicted on Figure 7.
2. Parcours exercise trails, of the type planned for Muldoon Park, be built in other parts of the community.

G. Handicapped Persons Trail

These trails are designed to provide quality outdoor experiences for disabled persons, using a setting that furnishes greater safety than provided by ordinary facilities. A handicapped persons' trail should be well-paved and follow flat grades so that they can be used by people in wheelchairs or on crutches. The trail side should be free of drop-offs, fast-moving water and thorny vegetation. The trail should also be signed to warn other trail users of the conflict when encountering a disabled person.

The Municipality has built one of these trails in Chester Creek Park. It is located in the easterly part of Westchester Lagoon. This site was chosen because it contains a good variety of Alaska trees and shrubs as well as small mammals and migratory birds.

An important aspect of the trail is that it is open to the general public, which gives the handicapped the opportunity to participate in a "normal" activity. The trail emphasizes use by the deaf, blind, and wheelchair user. The

trail is one-half mile long and is confined to the south side of Chester Creek. It contains benches and interpretive signs.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. A system of handicapped persons' trails be constructed by the Municipality in or near high-density residential areas as depicted on Figure 7.
2. All persons shall be allowed to use these trails so that the handicapped are not isolated from other community users.

H. Nature Trails

Nature trails are specially designed footpaths that take advantage of scenery, natural features and wildlife. The location of these trails is critical since they must not disturb the unique character of the attraction, yet must provide sufficient access to allow observations without damaging the area through indiscriminate walking.

Nature trails should be narrow, winding, and of low profile, to blend well with the natural terrain. When the trail travels over a bog garden, it may be desirable to construct a boardwalk to accommodate periods of high water and minimize the potential damage to fragile aquatic plants. Interpretive signing is often an important element in a successful nature trail.

Nature trails are presently found in Earthquake Park, Kincaid Park, and Russian Jack Springs Park. They would be desirable features to be initiated in a number of special scenic and biological areas within the Municipal Park System. In addition to the areas mentioned subsequently, nature trails should also be developed in Rabbit Creek, Johns Park, Bentzen Lake parks.

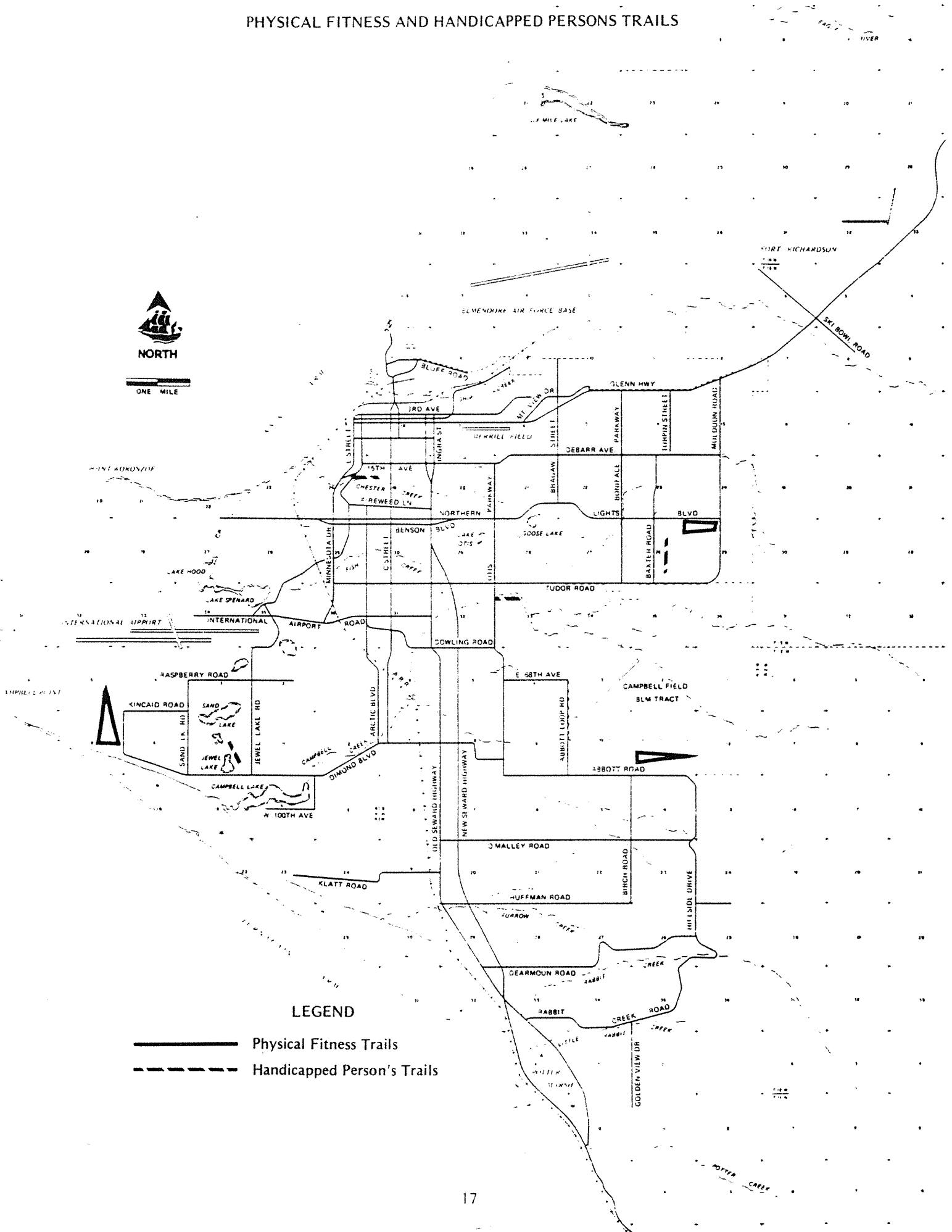
Proposed Nature Trails

Goose Lake Park: The south and east sides of Goose Lake presently contain no trails, but are an interesting biological area because of its waterfowl habitat. It would not be advisable to construct a trail through this nesting area, however, unless unregulated foot traffic threatens to damage the habitat. To minimize these impacts, it would be better to construct a boardwalk. A trail located well beyond the marsh at the edge of the forest, and on higher ground, would be a satisfactory location.

Baxter Lake Bog: This area features many interesting plants and berries and is used as a nesting area by shore birds. A trail along the west side of the lake would provide an excellent view of the Chugach Mountains, and would allow for wildlife observation. The trail should be at least twenty feet back from the lake shore. A boardwalk would be desirable along the lake and in the wetter areas.

Figure 7

PHYSICAL FITNESS AND HANDICAPPED PERSONS TRAILS



LEGEND

- Physical Fitness Trails
- - - - Handicapped Person's Trails

Cheney Lake: This lake is a nesting area for ducks and shore birds, and is a stopover area for geese. A trail following the high ground around the edge of the lake would be desirable after major work or the recontouring of the area is completed, and after a master plan is developed. Such a trail would offer a view of the Chugach Mountains and an opportunity to view wildlife within a developed residential area.

Jewel Lake: A trail through the bog from Jewel Lake to Sundi Lake would traverse an extremely attractive and interesting bog area. Generally, the area is dry enough to avoid the use of a boardwalk trail. This bog supports a great variety of berries, and both lakes are used as nesting areas by ducks.

Far North Bicentennial Park: A number of nature trails are possible and desirable within this park. A nature center and a network of trails have been recommended in the *Far North Bicentennial Park Master Plan* for the two small lakes and surrounding bog in the central part of the park. A nature trail along Campbell Creek should have a minimum impact on the stream-side vegetation, yet would provide an opportunity to view spawning salmon and other aspects of stream life. The lesser impact of a nature trail would be preferable to a bikeway near the stream. A nature trail following the low ridge around a seasonal lake in the southwest corner of the Park would provide access for observations and scientific studies from nearby Service-Hanshew School.

Little Rabbit Creek Site: This 68.7 acre park adjoins the Potter Marsh area and could be used in conjunction with the wildlife refuge, to establish a nature trail encompassing a range of environments. A parking area along the Old Seward Highway between the two sites would provide access to several trail heads. Detailed wildlife observations would be possible in the birch forest at the edge of Potter Marsh, while the nature trail along the ridges above Little Rabbit Creek would allow the viewing of birds and small mammals.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Municipality of Anchorage, in conjunction with other local, state and Federal agencies, establish a system of nature trails to provide access to unusual natural features. These trails should be designed to minimize the impact of man's presence, and are depicted on Figure 8.

2. All nature trails be non-motorized and limited to those uses which do not conflict with the observations of birds, mammals or other natural phenomena.

3. Nature trails be signed, when possible, to interpret natural features.

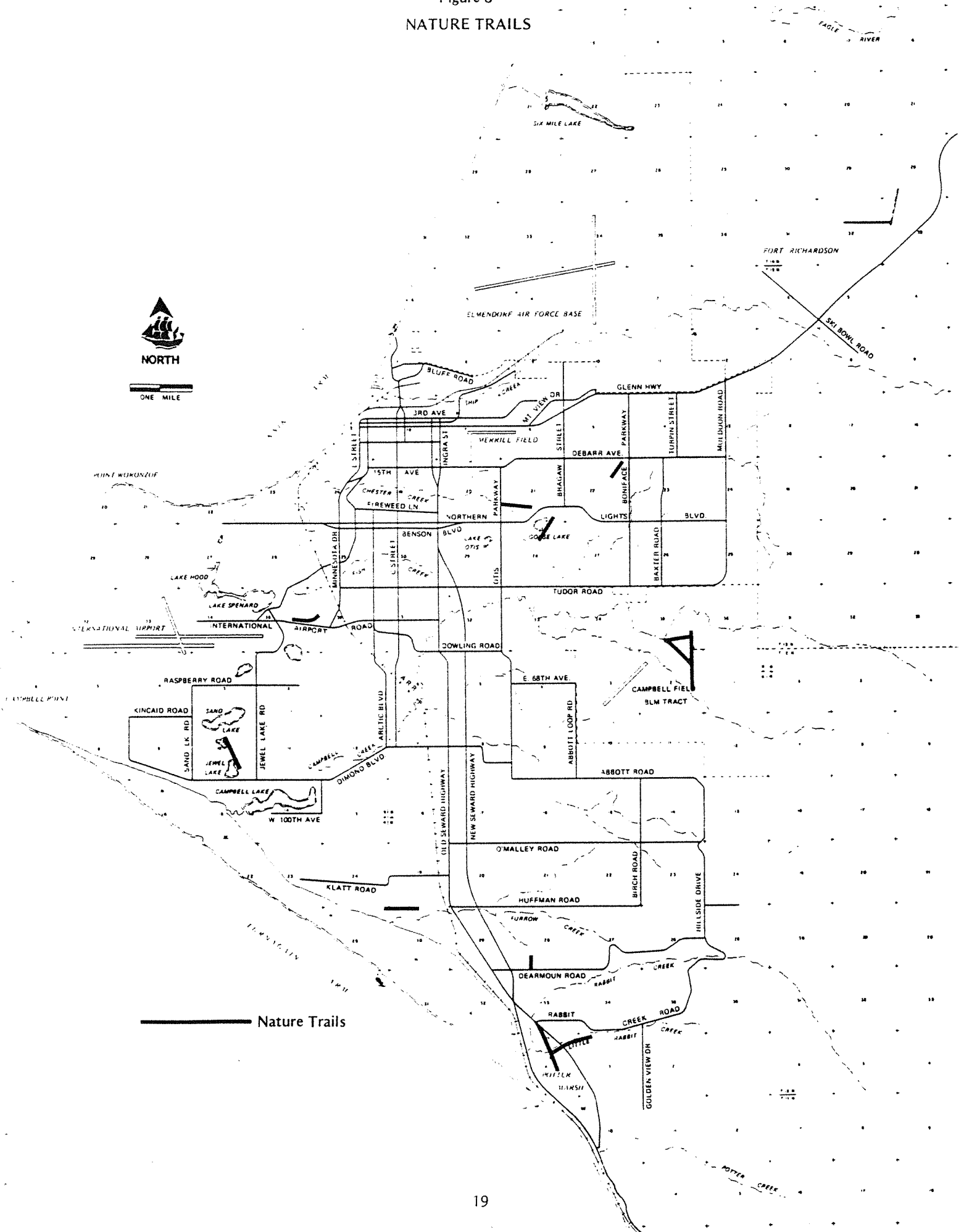
I. Water Trails

A final category of trail use not mentioned previously is that associated with canoeing and kayaking. An exhaustive evaluation of these trail forms was not intended in the development of this Plan. Nonetheless, to stress the importance of this use along Campbell Creek, the section of the Creek between Knik Arm and Bicentennial Park is explicitly recognized as being a water trail for the purpose of canoeing, kayaking, and other forms of water based recreation. Eagle River and Ship Creek are also recognized in this plan as potential water trails in this Plan. See Map 9.

J. Summary

The needs of recreation and transportation require that a suitable system of bikeways and trails be developed within the community. To satisfy this need, a comprehensive system of non-motorized trails has been proposed, including bikeways and historic, sled dog, equestrian, cross-country skiing, physical fitness, water trails, and nature trails. To the extent practical, these facilities have been located within the more densely developed parts of the community. These areas have the greatest need for more facilities. Nonetheless, terrain, unique user characteristics, and the absence of sufficient opportunities, required that many trails be located in the suburbs and in generally less developed areas. It is believed that these facilities will satisfy, together with the motorized type trail facilities to be discussed next, the majority of recreation needs for trail-type activities to the year 2000. The recommendations for bicycle facilities are described in greater detail in the revised *Bikeways and Related Trail Plan*.

Figure 8
NATURE TRAILS



— Nature Trails

CHAPTER III

MOTORIZED TRAIL/USE AREA FACILITIES

Access facilities described within this section include areas for the use of small, motorized recreation vehicles. The use of off-road vehicles (ORV's) is treated somewhat differently than other trail uses due to their mobility and conflict with noise and sensitive recreational and residential areas. Because the growth of Anchorage reduces the land available for recreational use while increasing numbers of motorcyclists and snowmobilers need more land for their use, it is increasingly apparent that areas be provided which are generally well-separated from most other land use activities. Recommendations on trails and use areas for dirt bikes and snowmobiles are described in the sections that follow.

A. Dirt Bike Areas and Trails

There are three categories of motorcycles: Road bikes equipped for street use only, "Endura" or trail bikes designed for use on public roads as well as off-roads on trails or other areas. The third type is the "Dirt Bike" which has no lighting equipment and is designed exclusively for off-road use. Dirt bike areas are designated to provide recreational areas in which to operate off-road motorcycles safely while reducing their impact on residential areas and on non-motorized trail uses. Ideally, the area should be large enough to give the rider the varied terrain and a combination of wooded and open landscapes he desires. It is also important that dirt bike areas be conveniently located near population centers because travel to distant areas with trucks and trailers is either impractical or not available to many of the users, particularly the younger ones. Distance increases the very same conflicts that dirt bike areas are intended to alleviate.

The range of sites which have been historically used includes most gravel pits within the bowl area, parks, roadways, and large areas of vacant land, both public and private. Because dirt bikes are capable of going almost anywhere and are too often noisy, their impact on the community has aroused considerable opposition. This is unfortunate because their use, if properly managed, could be beneficial in terms of providing a specialized means of recreation and low-cost transportation.

1. Guidelines for ORV Areas

Because of the wide differences that exist among the various use areas it is not possible to establish specific standards for the development of ORV areas that would be useful in all or even most cases. All that can be reasonably devised are guidelines indicating the differences between small urban ORV areas and the larger regional ORV areas usually located on the fringe of developed areas. What follows are descriptions of the character and qualities desired in the selection and development of an ORV area.

Specific sites must be developed to fit the particular problems and circumstances of that time and place. These guidelines are included to help in the subsequent development of ORV use areas, and to indicate certain of the general criteria used to initially select ORV areas in this Plan.

As with more traditional parks and recreation areas, it is highly desirable to provide ORV areas and facilities at locations either within or relatively close to the urban area where most of the users live. Such locations are especially convenient for users who wish to ride after work or school or who do not have the time, desire, or ability to travel to a more remote location. Such facilities would generally be small, serving only the needs of the locality or the immediate region.

Small Urban Areas

Relatively small ORV areas are appropriate and desirable in urban and suburban areas to accommodate minibikes, small motorcycles, go-karts, and vehicles that are often owned by persons too young to have ready access to more distant use areas. Ideally, such areas should be within a few minutes of the users' homes.

Size and Scope

Minibike parks and similar small urban ORV areas should be designed for concentrated use, providing only minimal auxiliary facilities, such as parking, water, and sanitation. The general size of such an area would be in the range of 10 to 100 acres. Its design would include open use areas and limited trails, with a staging area free of ORV activity. Intense management and concentrated use would be expected.

Terrain

A combination of flat and gently rolling surfaces would be desirable, with perhaps a few moderate hills. Intensity of development may preclude extensive natural environmental amenities.

Soil Conservation

With very heavy and concentrated use, extensive vegetation ground cover would be impractical. Erosion control would be accomplished through mechanical grooming similar to the techniques used with snow at ski areas. In dry periods, wetting would be needed to keep dust down.

Compatibility

Small urban ORV areas will generally be best located where there is already substantial commotion and noise, such as near airports, freeways, and in industrial areas. Residential and quiet park areas should be avoided. Limitations on available space may preclude using vacant land as a buffer to protect surrounding development from noise and dust, although some buffering may be achieved through the use of fences, earth mounding, and vegetation on the perimeter of the use area.

Regional Areas

Intermediate-size areas located on the fringe of urban and metropolitan areas would accommodate a variety of ORV types. Good access by highway is important. Such areas are appropriate for family and individual day-use activities for visitors who have only a few hours available.

Size and Scope

Regional ORV areas should be large enough to accommodate motorcycles of various sizes as well as other vehicle types. Sufficient space would be needed to accommodate auxiliary facilities, such as parking space for autos, trucks, and trailers; sanitary facilities and water; picnic sites and possibly some concession facilities; and play areas free of ORV's. The design should include a staging area, a minibike area, novice areas, trails, hill climbs, and courses for scrambles and motorcross. Suitable acreage would be between 100 and 3,000 acres. Whenever possible, a regional ORV area would provide other recreation opportunities, such as hiking, fishing, and camping in areas separate from ORV use.

Terrain

A regional ORV area should furnish a good variety of slopes. Relatively flat and rolling areas are needed for beginners, and steep and rough areas should be provided for more advanced users. Grassy areas and trees are desirable for visual interest and environmental quality, particularly in the areas set aside for picnicking and such recreational activities.

Soil Conservation

Sites with highly erosive soil should be avoided, and areas for trail and open use should be designed to minimize cuts and fills and subsequent soil movement. Mechanical grooming and runoff catchment basins, together with vegetative management programs, are necessary.

Compatibility

Regional ORV areas should be located on the urban fringe, some distance from residential areas. Areas of significant environmental quality should be avoided. Noise should be buffered from other developments by distance and, where possible, by topography in the form of protective hills or ridges. Future encroachment by new urban development compromising the usefulness of ORV area or forcing its closure should be prevented by proper land use controls on the part of the appropriate local jurisdiction.

Once developed, ORV areas of any size should be carefully managed for the protection of the user, the facility, and its neighbors. Any ORV area should have limited and fully controlled access and be staffed by qualified people whenever open for public use.

The ORV area itself should be maintained in a condition free of hazards and unpleasant or unsightly conditions and should be patrolled regularly. Admission would be granted only to identified individuals with demonstrated minimum

ability (or under parental supervision), who had signed an appropriate liability release form. Upon each admission, the machines would be inspected for mufflers, spark arrestors, and apparent safety problems.

2. Proposed Dirt Bike Use Areas

To alleviate the existing situation, it is recommended that an adequate number of areas be established for dirt bike use and that all other non-designated public areas be closed, at least within the Anchorage bowl. These areas, to be described subsequently, and shown on Figure 10, were proposed based on an application of the previous guidelines and follow certain criteria:

1. Suitable terrain, including rolling and steep hills, wooded trails or open areas. Minimum preferred area – 40 acres per site.
2. Adequate distance from residential areas in order to avoid conflicts from noise and dust. All vehicles in the area should be equipped with an exhaust system which emits no more than 80 dbA at 50 feet.
3. Safety for both dirt bike users and others. Trails should be equipped with an exhaust system which emits no more than 80 dba at 50 feet.
4. Distribution within 10 minutes travel time from most neighborhoods.
5. Natural boundaries or buffers to contain the effects of dirt bike use, such as roads, streams, topography or signing.

Proposed Dirt Bike Use Areas

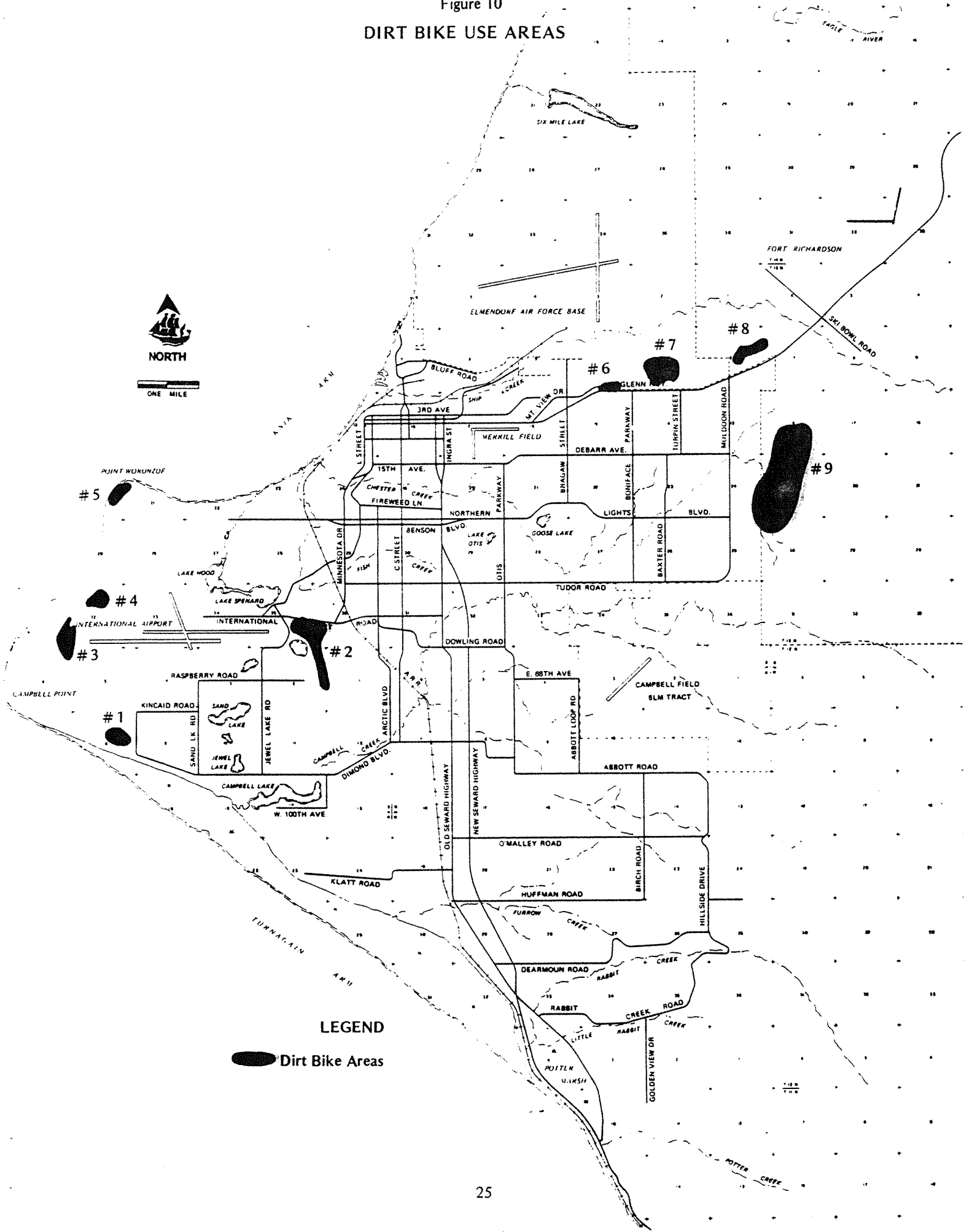
1. Kincaid Municipal Park, South Portion – 40 acres.

Within a former gravel pit area, this site offers varied terrain, some steep slopes and is well removed from residential areas. However, use of that portion of Kincaid Park south of the Campbell Point access road may be desirable because it would alleviate this situation by creating a more enforceable northern boundary. Use of this site could be allowed on a permanent basis. A system of marking new trails could increase the use of this area during the winter by skiers at no cost to the Municipality. Periodic shifting of use areas would minimize environmental impacts.

2. International Airport. Approximately 200 acres. State Land.

This area has been used as the central part of the 600 acre snowmobile area leased by the Municipality and its former entity since 1971. It seems well suited for dirtbike use as access to it is good, and because it is well-separated from residential areas and is already in a high noise area, lying east of the main runway. The trunk sewer line, which is a broad dirt road, would be a part of the course as far south as Raspberry Road (extended). Clearance with the State Division of Aviation is secured annually. The use of this area could be improved if the site could be used as a

Figure 10
DIRT BIKE USE AREAS



LEGEND

 Dirt Bike Areas

material disposal site for the dirt and peat removed from construction projects. Private development is diminishing this area and the Minnesota Bypass Extension will further reduce the usable area.

3. Campbell Point Gravel Pit. Approximately 80 acres. State Land.

This recent gravel pit is quite isolated, being at the west end of the main runway. It is in a high noise zone, contains suitable and varied terrain, but access through the Division of Aviation Lands might be a problem. Some fencing would be required to separate the dirt bikes from the runway. A gravel road provides access.

4. Campbell Point Gravel Pit. Approximately 20 acres. State Land.

This smaller pit lies near the previously described pit and has similar problems and advantages. It could be linked to site 5 through a trail system.

5. Point Woronzof Gravel Pit. Approximately 20 acres. State Land.

If the construction of the north-south runway does not eliminate this site, it would be well suited to temporary use. It is well isolated from residential areas, and access to it is good via a paved road. Eventually this site could be redeveloped for park purposes since it occupies a prime location as a viewpoint and recreation area. Clearance with the State Division of Aviation would be required.

6. East Mountain View Gravel Pit. Approximately 20 acres. Elmendorf A.F.B.

This gravel pit lies between the Glenn Highway and Davis Highway, just east of Mt. View. It appears to be screened enough from nearby residential areas to avoid conflicts, and careful sound controls could further minimize these impacts. It would primarily serve local recreational needs.

7. Elmendorf A.F.B. Tank Trail Site. Approximately 270 acres.

This wooded area lies between the Davis and Glenn Highways, and between Mt. View and a new Elmendorf housing area. The terrain and extensive trails system of this area makes it ideal for dirt bike use. However, strict muffler noise controls would be required in order to reduce impacts to Elmendorf Hospital, which is about one-quarter mile away through heavy woods. Clearance with Elmendorf Air Force Base officials would be required.

8. Glenn Highway Gravel Pit. Approximately 70 acres. Elmendorf A.F.B.

This gravel pit lies adjacent to the north side of the Glenn Highway, about one-half mile east of the Bartlett Begich School. It offers varied terrain with numerous small hills. The pit is far removed from any residential area and access to it is good. Use of this area would require clearance from Fort Richardson officials.

9. East Muldoon Portion of U.S. Army Reservation.

The section of Fort Richardson east of Muldoon Road is now used for limited ORV use. It is recommended that a cooperative management agreement be established with the Army to permit use of this area on a regulated basis. Use permits would be issued by the military.

10. North Fort Richardson Dirt Bike Area.

It is recommended that a 2,000 acre site be established in the Clunie Lake area for dirt bike uses on a scheduled, part-time basis. Widespread, unauthorized use of this area by ORV users now exists. However, by confining this use to a single restricted, acceptable area, much of the unauthorized use should be eliminated and the impact upon wildlife lessened.

11. Bird Creek Valley — Approximately 2,000 acres — State Division of Parks.

This area has received extensive use and is suitable for all types of off-road vehicles. Over twenty miles of logging roads provide varied terrain; heavy timber confines users to the designated trails. Continued use of this facility is recommended providing that dirt bike activities can be regulated and contained.

B. Snowmobile Areas and Trails

While snowmobiles can be operated on almost any terrain it is desirable to have areas which include varied topography and open areas or trails. The use of these vehicles is further governed by the availability of adequate snow coverage, to reduce the damage to vegetation.

Frequently, the same areas that are used for dirt bikes in summer can be used for snowmobiles in winter. As with dirt bikes, long trails which give the rider the feeling of "going somewhere" are important to produce a satisfying ride. Many areas near Anchorage are capable of providing this opportunity and they are discussed, as well as the problems that have arisen, in the following sections:

- ♦ International Airport Road Sanitary Landfill. About 500 acres of leased land at Conner's Lake are used by snowmobiles.
- ♦ Chugach State Park (Parts). Following the accumulation of adequate snowcover, as determined by Park personnel, the south fork of Campbell Creek Canyon in its upper reaches, together with a corridor leading to it from Upper Huffman Road, are used for snowmobiling.
- ♦ Elmendorf Air Force Base. Snowmobiling in the Military Reservation is strictly regulated. A variety of areas are available for use, including a forty-mile trail that follows the perimeter of the base, offering varied terrain and views of the Chugach Range and Upper Cook Inlet plus the Knik River bluff. Many other shorter trails intersect this trail to provide a diversity of possible routes.

- ◆ Fort Richardson Military Reservation. The northern part of Fort Richardson, in the vicinity of Clunie Lake, is generally open to snowmobiling on a permit basis. Numerous miles of trails occupying varied terrain exist, although strict area control is enforced. The area of Fort Richardson south of the Glenn Highway is a critical winter range for moose, and is closed to snowmobile use. The area on Fort Richardson for dirt bike use near the Glenn Highway would also be appropriate for snowmobiling.
- ◆ Bird Creek Valley. This area contains several thousand acres of large spruce and hemlock forests, and over twenty miles of snowmobile trails. Spurs radiate from the basic trail system to provide many additional miles of trails. This area is administered jointly by Alaska State Parks and the Municipality.
- ◆ Eagle River Entrance to Chugach State Park. The Eagle River drainage is open to snowmobile use when adequate snow is present. The combination of access through the Eagle River Road, the absence of steep grades, ample parking, and relative proximity to Anchorage, potentially make this one of the best and most used nearby snowmobile areas.
- ◆ Private and Other State Lands. In addition to the previous areas, there is a variety of State and private lands that are used for this purpose on an unofficial basis. State lands now used for snowmobile use include the following: State Section 16 between O'Malley and Abbott Roads, State Section 36 near Hillside Drive, Potter Marsh Game Refuge, Division of Aviation Lands not specifically fenced off, and various other State lands in the Strawberry Lake area, the Campbell-Klatt bog, and areas near the confluence of the north and south forks of Campbell Creek. Private property that is neither fenced nor signed to restrict use, and especially large natural or unused tracts crossed by trails, are often used for snowmobiling. Historically, many of the large holdings in the Hillside and the vast bogs north and south of Dimond Boulevard in the Sand Lake area have been used for this purpose.

It is probable that as more and more rural areas are developed, the need for designated motorized trails will increase. See Figure 11. At the same time it will become increasingly difficult for the community to accommodate this activity in the Anchorage bowl. Snowmobile areas within the bowl will probably continue to be used (with the exception of some private and State land), but any major new facility would probably have to be provided on Federal and State lands beyond the bowl area. The development of these areas is dependent on the cooperation of the State Division of Parks, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fort Richardson, and Elmendorf Air Force Base.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Municipality, in cooperation with other local, State and Federal agencies, establish a system of snowmobile and motorcycle trails and areas which do not

conflict with residential areas and established nonmotorized uses. See figures 10 and 11.

2. Designated snowmobile trails at Connor's Lake, portions of the Campbell Tract, Chugach State Park, and the Chugach National Forest be continued unless serious conflicts develop in or near these areas with other uses.

3. Motorcycles using dirt tracks be allowed continued use of the gravel pit at Kincaid Park, the extensive network of logging roads in Bird Creek Valley, and private tracks where racing is now permitted unless serious conflicts develop in or near these areas.

4. All Municipal parks, except those specifically designated for these uses, be closed to snowmobile and motorcycle uses.

5. State Mental Health lands slated for acquisition as a part of the Campbell Creek Greenbelt Park system (east of Lake Otis Road and south of Tudor Road) should be closed to snowmobile use to prevent serious conflict with dog mushing trails emanating from the adjacent Tudor Sled Dog Race Track.

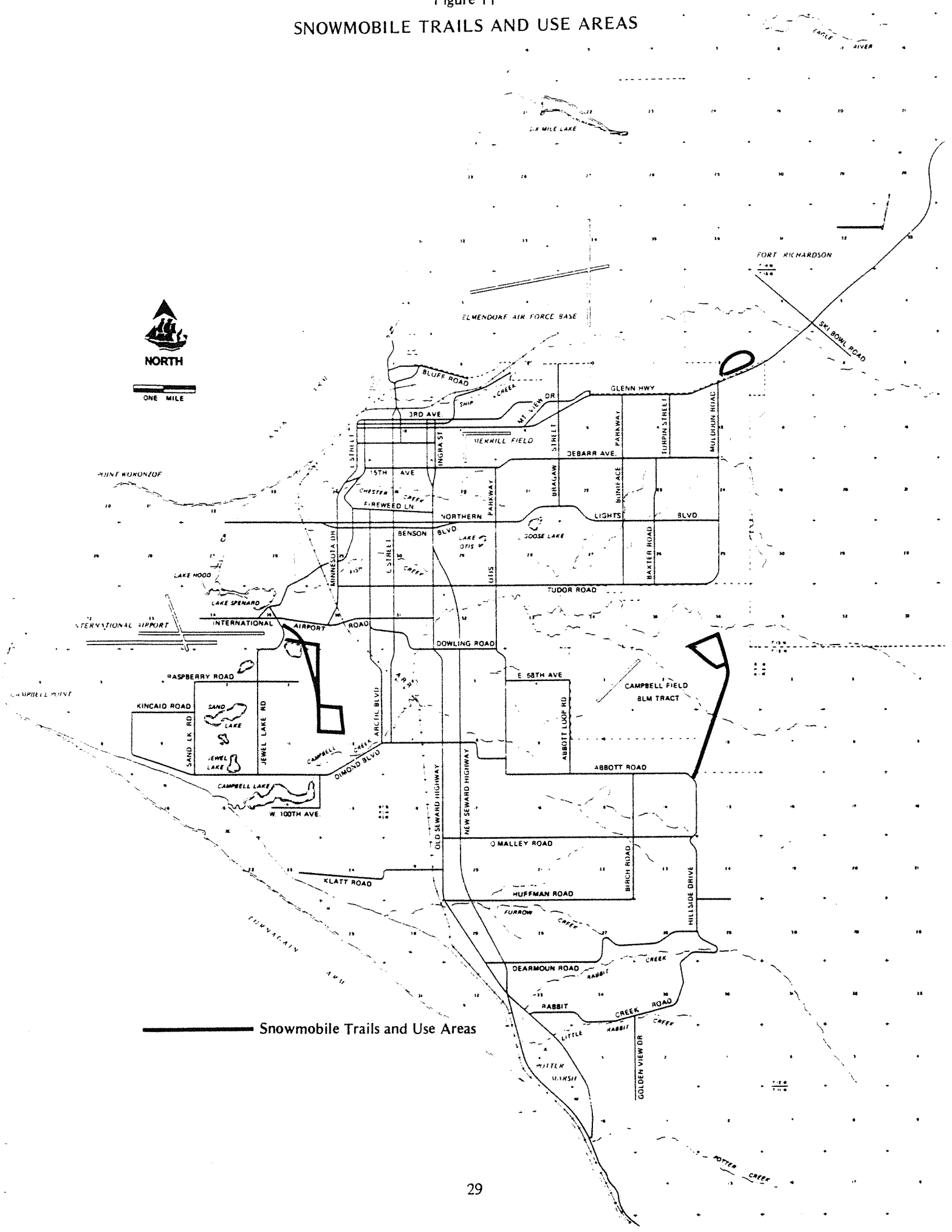
6. A coherent policy regarding when, where, and under what conditions off-road vehicles may be used within the Municipality of Anchorage should be developed.

7. In addition to specific sites, which accommodate the needs of many of the off-road motorized recreational users, the Municipality should encourage a program of establishing Trail Corridors for trail riders (summer and winter) in and around the Chugach Range, Fort Richardson, Elmendorf AFB and other sections of the Anchorage area. (One example is a 100' wide corridor along the Pipeline-Powerline from Flattop Mountain to Indian.) Use of this program would give riders a place to ride legally, help establish a trail pathway, and would allow rotation of trail uses to benefit all back-country users.

C. Summary

Recommendations have been proposed herein for trails and use areas by dirt bikes and snowmobiles within the Anchorage bowl, Eagle River, and Girdwood. Unlike non-motorized uses, the associated noise and large acreages associated with motorized trail activities require the development of use areas away from noise-sensitive land uses. It is expected that many of the areas within the more densely developed areas of the community will be eliminated as urbanization occurs. For this reason, it has become necessary to designate use areas and trail corridors for dirt bikes and snowmobiles which are either owned or managed by the State or Federal Government. Cooperation with these organizations is essential if the recreational activities associated with dirt bikes and snowmobiles are to continue in the future, as most of the Plan's recommendations involve the use of the lands administered by these agencies to some degree. Whenever practical, joint dirt bike and snowmobile areas have been designated. The use areas recommended herein have been based on the criteria of adequate vehicle noise control; separation from residential neighborhoods; and satisfactory enforcement, especially within the two military reservations.

Figure 11
 SNOWMOBILE TRAILS AND USE AREAS



— Snowmobile Trails and Use Areas

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTATION

It is intended that the recommendations contained in this Plan will be carried out on a phased basis over the next twenty-five year period. For this to be possible, however, consideration must be given to the methods that will be used to implement these recommendations. Most facility-type studies, as the Trails Plan, rely largely on local or other governmental financing to carry out their policies. But besides the financial aspect, this Plan is to rely also upon both the use of subdivision review procedures and upon highway and utility easements and rights-of-way.

A. Subdivision Review Procedures

The subdivision ordinance directs how and under what conditions a subdivision may be designed and constructed. The ordinance may, depending on the powers assigned to it, require a variety of public and private improvements. These improvements may include the installation of sidewalks, storm drains and streets; they may also require that certain lot sizes and height restriction be adhered to in the design of the subdivision. These requirements must, however, be based upon a demonstrated public need to protect or improve the public health and safety.

Following these guidelines, it is recommended that:

1. If a proposed plat includes an area designed as a trail in this plan, the Platting Authority shall require that the area be dedicated as a trail easement pursuant to AMC 21.80.135.

2. A report from the Planning Department staff containing a letter from the Division of Parks and Recreation regarding the implementation of the plan set forth in this ordinance shall be required.

B. Rights-of-Way and Easements

The purchase of trail rights-of-way from private owners is expensive and generally should be undertaken only to complete a greenbelt system or a proposed link in a vital trail system. Consequently, highway rights-of-way and utility easements are usually the only corridors in which trails can be developed without excessive costs. These rights-of-way are usually of limited width and frequently present many obstacles to trails development. Nonetheless, they often provide the best chance to develop trail systems without high costs.

1. Street and Highway Right-of-Way

In the more rural parts of the metropolitan area, street and highway right-of-ways are frequently used for a variety of activities. The latter includes horseback riding, walking,

cross-country skiing, sled dog mushing, and bicycle riding. In addition, the gravel and dirt roadsides near the paved surfaces are also used by trail bikes, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles.

Several of the factors regarding off-pavement uses of road rights-of-way should be mentioned, since they effect the type and extent of recommendations that will be suggested.

- Trails have evolved over time in the right-of-way and vary in width and smoothness; nonetheless, they are usually devoid of vegetation.
- Nonmotorized uses do not raise clouds of dust nor greatly damage roadside vegetation.
- Snowmobiles and motorcycles are often poorly-muffled and therefore create excessive noise levels next to residential areas.
- Motorcycles create airborne dirt and tend to both eliminate roadside vegetation and erode highway shoulders.
- Snowmobiles and motorcycles can create severe night vision problems for motorists who are often disoriented by the weaving headlights of these vehicles.
- The speed of motorized trail vehicles makes them a hazard to automobile drivers while entering or leaving driveways via the public roadway.

Recommendations:

(a) All off road rights-of-way in the Anchorage bowl be closed to motorized vehicles except those needed for the administration, maintenance, or construction of new roads or utilities. Exceptions to this policy are those off-road rights-of-way which may be officially designated for certain types of motorized uses because of suitability, safety, and lack of conflict.

(b) Non-motorized uses continue to be allowed in off-road rights-of-way where adequate space exists between the roadway and private property at the edge of the right-of-way.

(c) A vegetative screen be established wherever possible at the edge of the right-of-way between the roadway and private property. These areas would be used to screen residential properties, provide a buffer between uses, and discourage those off-road motorized uses which tend to break down road shoulders.

2. Utility and Creek Drainage Easements

Public utilities such as natural gas lines, electric power lines, telephone lines, and sewer lines, occupy easements for the purpose of providing and maintaining essential services within the community. These easements cross both private and public property and require the signed permission of the landowner or administrator, for other than the intended easement use. Generally, the easement is granted by the landowner for the specific purpose that was intended and

no other. Foot or other forms of trail access are not permitted, although they often occur where there is either no physical impediment or attempt by landowners to restrict access.

Easements can be dedicated for trail or related purposes, but require the permission of the landowner for such use. This may require financial compensation. Other leaseholders of easements must also be consulted for their approval, to avoid conflicting uses which could damage either the utility or trail. Nevertheless, there are many utility easements which could provide trailways where it otherwise would not be possible to achieve them, and where no significant ~~conflict~~ would result. Large lot subdivisions or other large tracts represent areas in which many landowners continue to allow trail access in easements designated for other purposes.

Utility easements would seem to provide a logical means of providing for trail access. They frequently provide the only open area for a trail system not tied to roadways, and the width of the easement clearing is generally satisfactory. They have the added advantage of linking neighborhoods with other neighborhoods, and with schools, commercial centers, and oftentimes parks and open spaces.

The following types of easements could be developed to accommodate potential trail systems.

a. Trunk Sewer Lines:

These are among the widest of utility easements. They have a minimum 60' clearing width and follow very gentle, uniform grades.

Such clearings are especially suited for bikeways or perhaps even several well-separated trails within the clearing, such as a foot trail, ski trail or equestrian trail and bikeway. The Municipality administers and maintains all trunk sewer lines through the Public Works Department. An agreement with the Public Works Department would be necessary in locating, constructing, and maintaining trails using trunk sewer rights-of-way.

b. Lateral Sewer Lines:

These easements are narrower than trunk sewer lines, but a twenty to thirty foot clearing is very common within a twenty-foot permanent easement. The grade of lateral sewer lines is generally quite flat along the ground surface, making it suitable for bikeways. Lateral sewer lines, in performing their function, follow the back lot lines through subdivisions or sometimes, subdivision streets. These easements can be developed for trail use if the back lot line is not used as an alley and if *all* property owners agree to alter their easement to include trail access.

c. Natural Gas Lines

These easements generally follow road rights-of-way within the between subdivisions. In those instances where they follow back lot lines or undeveloped lines between subdivisions, it would be possible to develop these easements for trail access.

d. Overhead Telephone and Power Lines:

These utilities generally follow road right-of-ways between subdivisions. The development of trail access in these corridors would require the agreement of both the utility company and affected property owners.

e. Creek Maintenance and Drainage Easements:

These easements have been established along streams such as Chester and Fish Creeks, primarily where channel modifications such as straightening and deepening have occurred. Generally they are between 40 and 60 feet wide, although in a few cases they narrow to 20 feet. They should be 100 feet wide. Because these easements must be kept open for maintenance purposes, involving the use of motorized vehicles, a potential exists for some form of trail use. Development of these easements for trail access will, however, require the concurrence of affected property owners. This process is now underway for the Chester Creek Greenbelt and Trail System in the Muldoon area.

3. Alaska Railroad Right-of-Way

The Alaska Railroad right-of-way travels the Anchorage Bowl from North to South, and extends further, connecting Palmer with Portage and points beyond. The right-of-way is generally 200 feet wide, although only a small amount of this width is actually occupied. Safety and space for future expansion were used as criteria in establishing the right-of-way width.

The latter notwithstanding, it is recommended that a bikeway be established within the railroad right-of-way following the original suggestions of the 1973 *Bikeways and Related Trails Plan*. Experience in other parts of the nation have indicated that trails can safely exist within railroad right-of-ways.

Summary of Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

1. The Municipality, in cooperation with the utility companies and other governmental agencies, establish a plan that identifies current utility easements on which trails could now be developed and areas of future utility easements that should require eventual trail access.
2. Creek Maintenance and Drainage easements and sewer easements obtained in the future by the Municipality include the provision for a trail right-of-way where this conforms to the approximate location to the desired trails depicted in this Plan.
3. The Municipality secure an agreement with the Alaska Railroad to build a bikeway and walkway within their right-of-way.
4. The Municipality, in granting encroachments for utility easements, review the application for possible conflicts with planned trails or potential patterns of pedestrian circulation.

C. Financing of Trails

The financing of trails acquisition, construction and maintenance is possible through a variety of local, State, and Federal sources. These sources provide varying levels of funding, and are usually intended for other purposes than trails development.

The amounts of revenue available are also somewhat limited. A brief description of these sources follows:

1. Local Government Annual Budget

Local revenues for trails development currently are limited to park development and community development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Park development funds are derived from single-issue general obligation bonds. CDBG funds are available on an annual basis for a variety of projects within neighborhoods eligible to receive this category of federal funds. Unless additional bonds are authorized by the voters, this should be considered a one-time funding source.

Other revenue sources could be developed to provide funds for trails development. A common method is the serial levy.

2. Local Service Roads and Trails (LSR&T) Funds

These are State Highway funds available to local governments to use for both road or trail construction. The share allocated to the Southcentral Highway District, which includes Anchorage, was \$892,145 in 1976.

In the past these funds have been used almost entirely for the construction of roads. But since they can be used to build any type of trail, it is recommended that a reasonable portion of these monies be allocated for trail construction each year.

3. State Highway Construction Funds

Many times a bikeway or walkway within the right-of-way, or sufficiently close to it to be considered a part of the highway project, can be built as part of a road improvement project.

The amount of money that can be spent by the State for bikeways is entirely discretionary. There is no upper or lower limit of funding so long as the project is justified. Whenever a proposed road is to be improved or constructed, it is the Department's policy to build a bikeway if the trail is designated as part of the Municipality's comprehensive trail system. In the next five years, many of the bikeways and related trails built in the Municipality will be constructed from this funding source.

4. Local Government Road Funds

Walkways and bikeways along the shoulders of existing roadways can be built in conjunction with road improvement projects, if proper justification exists. There is no limit to the amount of funds that can be spent for trails in association with road improvements as long as the need can be justified. Under this program, special funding of separated trails is also possible. This source of funding is derived

from general obligation bonds, and is therefore subject to voter approval. Funding levels tend to vary over time. Provision must be made for accommodation of bicycle travel when the original estimates are down.

5. Federal Assistance and Grants-in-Aid

Federal funding for trails is difficult to obtain. It is also a onerous, time-consuming process. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service provides acquisition and development funds for trails and bike routes. HCRS grants require an equal amount of local matching funds.

6. State Trails and Footpaths Grant Program

Administered by the State Division of Parks, this program provides a limited amount of funding for trails. The application process is relatively straight forward, this source is being used to the full extent available.

D. Design Standards

At the present time, design standards largely exist for sidewalks and bikeways. In order to provide somewhat more specifically to these standards, certain additional proposals are made. In addition, standards are recommended for the major trail types recommended in the Plan; only partial standards now apply to most types of trail design.

1. Bikeways

Under current standards, bike paths must be a minimum of eight feet wide, where possible, and have a vertical clearance of eight feet and seeded shoulders of two feet. They are to be surfaced with asphalt over a gravel base and conform to national design standards insofar as practicable.

In addition, it is proposed that:

- ♦ All new and rebuilt roads and bridges provide 16 feet outer lanes to accommodate bicycle travel wherever practicable within available right-of-way.
- ♦ Lockable, well-designed bicycle racks be provided at major activity centers such as nature study areas, recreational facilities, business districts, public facilities, and large office buildings, in order to improve security.
- ♦ The grade for any bikeway be generally less than 5% in slope. For relatively short distances (300 - 500 feet), however, the grade may be as much as 8%. Grades steeper than this or over longer distances are both difficult and dangerous.
- ♦ The application of the National Standards for Signs be applied consistently throughout the Anchorage Metropolitan area. In particular, the following three conditions are identified as of highest priority for bikeway striping:
 - the striping of bikeways where they cross parking lots within the road right-of-way.

- striping where bikeways cross dangerous intersections.
- the striping of bikelanes along roadways.

2. Sidewalks

The construction standards for sidewalks require a four foot width along residential streets and five feet along collectors and larger streets. This width will vary somewhat depending on the type and volume of pedestrian traffic.

In addition, it is proposed that:

- ◆ A planter area at least five feet wide along residential streets and ten feet wide or more along collectors or arterials is to be provided. This area is to contain shrubs or small trees; during the winter this area may be used for the storage of snow. The planter width is to be sufficient to accommodate the volume of snow expected to be sidecast from the street.
- ◆ In those instances where it is practical, asphalt sidewalks shall be constructed. Most concrete sidewalks are twice as expensive as asphalt ones, and they deteriorate more rapidly because road salts corrode them.
- ◆ The Department of Public Works must, in granting a waiver of the requirement to provide pedestrian pathways or sidewalks in subdivisions, identify the reasons for such waivers and provide such information to the Platting Board.

3. Exercise Trails and Handicapped Persons Trails

The Municipality has adopted national guidelines regarding these trails for use in the local area. Application of the standards is varied to fit terrain and other requirements.

4. Other Trails

In the category of other trails, which include sled dog trails, equestrian trails, cross-country ski trails, motorized trails and nature trails, the Municipality has constructed only a few ski trails and the nature trail for handicapped persons and other in Westchester Lagoon. Nearly all of the existing trails that serve these functions were built by user groups to their own specifications and desires. With the exception of nature trails, for which there are national guidelines, it is anticipated that most of the other trails will be built by user groups according to their own requirements, as they have been in the past.

E. Trail Maintenance

The maintenance of trails must be an essential part of any trails development program. Specific procedures for trail maintenance are contained in more detailed publications and ordinances, and are incorporated by reference in this Plan. Procedures not now identified in these studies and recommended herein are that:

- ◆ Class III bikeways which utilize the roadway for their

travel surface receive superior maintenance during the ice-free months, to eliminate debris which makes cycling hazardous.

- ◆ Parking meters, utility poles, and mail boxes be placed away from the street side of the sidewalk, to help in snow removal.

The aforementioned procedures are in addition to the following general policy for trail maintenance:

- ◆ That proper maintenance accompany the acquisition and development of trails. This policy recognizes the operational costs associated with trails construction, and specifies, further, that the program for trails development be generally consistent with the Municipality's ability to operate a maintenance program.

F. Trail Signs

Trail signs are an important part of any trail system and should provide the user with all the information needed in a clear and straightforward manner. A uniform system of marking trails should be applied to avoid the confusion of different signs representing the same thing, regardless of which agency administers the land.

Therefore it is recommended that:

1. All signs conform to Federal Trail Sign Standards as adopted and contained in the *Alaska Recreation Trail Plan*.
2. Three major types of signs shall be used:

- a. Trail Head Signs. These signs provide information about a specific trail at the beginning of the trail. It may include the name of the trail and may include its length, characteristics, destination, and important junctions.

- b. Use Symbols. These show which types of uses are permitted and which are not. The symbol shall be white on a brown background for recreation, scenic or historic sites, and white on green background for bicycle routes or other routes within a highway right-of-way.

- c. Safety Signs. These are used to warn users of dangerous curves, intersections, or other special instructions to be followed. The shape shall conform to the Alaska Traffic Manual and the color should be yellow for warnings and red to prohibit movement.

- d. Mileage Signs. These locate the trail and give distances. They are to be considered optional, although they are useful. Signs should conform to the Federal Recreation Symbols and the additions proposal in the Alaska Recreation Trail Plan.

3. The Municipal Traffic Engineering Department shall coordinate and implement the signing of trails.

4. All signs shall be of metal and placed on solid poles.

G. Summary

The utility of the recommendations for trails acquisition and development contained in this report depend upon a successful implementation program. The program proposed herein includes methods for acquiring and developing a trails system through the subdivision review process, the use of highway and utility easements, and a varied financial strategy. It also proposed methods to properly design, maintain, and sign trails.

To a large degree, the ability of the Municipality to develop a comprehensive trail system depends upon the more effective use of easements and rights-of-way, both public and private, and upon the subdivision ordinance which allows lands to be designated for trail access. These methods allow areas to be developed for trail use without

an excessive expenditure of funds. Although a variety of funding sources exist for trails construction, the amount available is limited. This Plan proposed that what limited funding exists be used to construct vital, integrative links in the overall trail system. It will also be necessary for the Municipality to ensure that sufficient funding exists to actually maintain those trail facilities that have been constructed and to sign those facilities.

Another essential aspect of the Plan's effective implementation is the creation of a "trail manager" position in the Municipality. Trail design, construction, and maintenance require the attention of a specialist. The addition of a qualified trails manager would allow the Municipality to avoid some of the very costly mistakes that have been made, including poor surfacing, inadequate sighting distances, curb cuts which are dangerous or discourage riders, and the like.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Trails Plan addresses the problem of providing adequate access for non-motorized forms of transportation (other than snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles) within the Anchorage bowl and its immediate environs. These facilities are intended to perform a basic recreational function in addition to providing, in certain instances, a low cost and alternative form of transportation.

The recommendations included herein are intended to satisfy the recreational and transportation needs of the community to the year 2000. In part these facilities fulfill an unmet existing need and in part are intended to satisfy the expected future needs of a metropolitan area whose population should exceed 376,000 by the year 2000. These recommendations are areawide in scope, reflecting the regional use of many facilities, although most of the proposed trails are concentrated within the more densely built-up areas of the community. The criteria of integration with current facilities, population demand, and adequate opportunity were applied in selecting these facilities, and it is believed that the major recommendations shown on Figures 12, 12A and 12B will prove effective in satisfying a very substantial, latent demand for non-motorized vehicle access.

A. Access Ways

Recommendations are included in the Trails Plan for what are termed "access ways" and for the non-motorized and motorized forms of trails use. Methods to implement these facilities are also proposed. The principal proposals for each of these functional areas are now described.

Access ways are designated corridors for foot or pedestrian travel. They are significant because they provide safe, convenient passage and are extensively used throughout the community. Access ways may include such facilities as footpaths, sidewalks, pedestrian ways, pedestrian underpasses or overpasses, and neighborhood trails. The major recommendations for access ways in this Plan include the following:

- ♦ The Municipality establish a system of footpaths and walkways in all parts of the community, connecting major centers of activity with residential areas.
- ♦ Walkways be recognized as a legitimate form of transportation and included in appropriate capital improvement programs.
- ♦ The subdivision regulations be amended to require pathways in new subdivisions.

B. Non-motorized Trail Facilities

The non-motorized forms of trails serve as access corridors for bicyclists, sled dog mushers, cross-country skiers, hikers, runners, handicapped persons and naturalists. And because these trails serve a variety of uses, they vary in design and aesthetic characteristics. Recommendations for each major form of non-motorized trail type are included in the Trails Plan, and it is intended that, to the extent practical, joint and multiple-use of these facilities occur. Among the recommendations are the following:

Bikeways

- ♦ The Municipality establish a system of officially designated bikeways, the majority of which should be separate paths where feasible, and otherwise as on-street bike lanes. Bikeways recommendations are separated into five- and twenty-year planning periods, and, if implemented, would provide 161 miles of bicycle paths, in addition to the 53 miles that now exist.
- ♦ Standard signs, stripings, stenciling, and rest areas be developed along officially designated bikeways.

Historic Trails

- ♦ The Municipality adopt a list of historic trails to include the Old Potter, Indian-Ship Creek Mail, Crow Pass-Eagle River Mail, Iditarod, and Anchorage, Fur Rendezvous trails.
- ♦ Application be made to include the aforementioned trails in the National Register of Historic Places or Historic Trails System, as appropriate.

Sled Dog Trails

- ♦ The Municipality establish a system of sled dog trails that integrates existing trails and complements this base.
- ♦ Funding priority for improvements be given to the Anchorage Fur Rendezvous Trails.

Equestrian Trails

- ♦ The Municipality establish areas for equestrian trails utilizing easements, road right-of-ways, and public lands.
- ♦ Equestrian trails be located and administered to prevent motorized use.

Cross-Country Skiing Trails

- ♦ The Municipality establish a system of cross-country ski trails in all parts of the community, including winter use of bicycle trails.

Physical Fitness Trails

- ♦ The Municipality establish a system of physical fitness trails in areas that are convenient for community use and where exercise areas are free of environmental hazards.

- ◆ Parcours exercise trails, of the type planned for Muldoon Park, be built in other areas of the community.

Handicapped Persons Trails

- ◆ A system of handicapped persons trails be constructed by the Municipality in or near high density residential areas.

Nature Trails

- ◆ The Municipality establish a system of nature trails to provide access to unusual natural features. The following represent sites that could accommodate nature trails: Goose Lake Park, Baxter Lake Bog, Cheney Lake, Jewel Lake, Far North Bicentennial Park, Little Rabbit Creek, Bentzen Lake, Rabbit Creek School, and Johns Park.

C. Motorized Trail/Use Area Facilities

Recommendations are also included in the Trails Plan for the use of small, motorized recreational vehicles. Generally, the use of dirt bikes and snowmobiles requires large, flat areas widely separated from major residential districts, in order to reduce the noise and other undesirable effects of these vehicles. Much of the land within the Anchorage bowl that can accommodate these more active recreational activities have already been developed for this purpose, and the additional areas required in future years for these activities, and particularly for snowmobiling, will necessitate the use of State and Federal lands in the rural areas surrounding Anchorage. Among the principal recommendations for these activities are the following:

- ◆ The Municipality establish a system of snowmobile and motorcycle trails in areas that do not conflict with residential areas and established non-motorized uses.
- ◆ Designated snowmobile trails at Connor's Lake, portions of the Campbell Tract, Chugach State Park, and the Chugach National Forest be allowed to continue.
- ◆ All Municipal parks, except those specifically authorized for these uses, be closed to snowmobile and motorcycle uses.
- ◆ A coherent policy regarding when, where, and under what conditions off-road vehicles may be used within the Municipality should be developed.

D. Implementation

These recommendations are proposed to be implemented by the more effective use of available financing sources and through the application of subdivision review procedures and use of utility easements and highway right-of-ways. The use of the latter — subdivision review and easements/ highway right-of-ways — are particularly important since the available funding sources are limited in amount and can be used for other purposes than trails construction. Nonetheless, more extensive use of these funding sources is recommended, primarily to eliminate major gaps in the overall trail system and develop critical trails facilities. Recommendations are also included for trails signing and

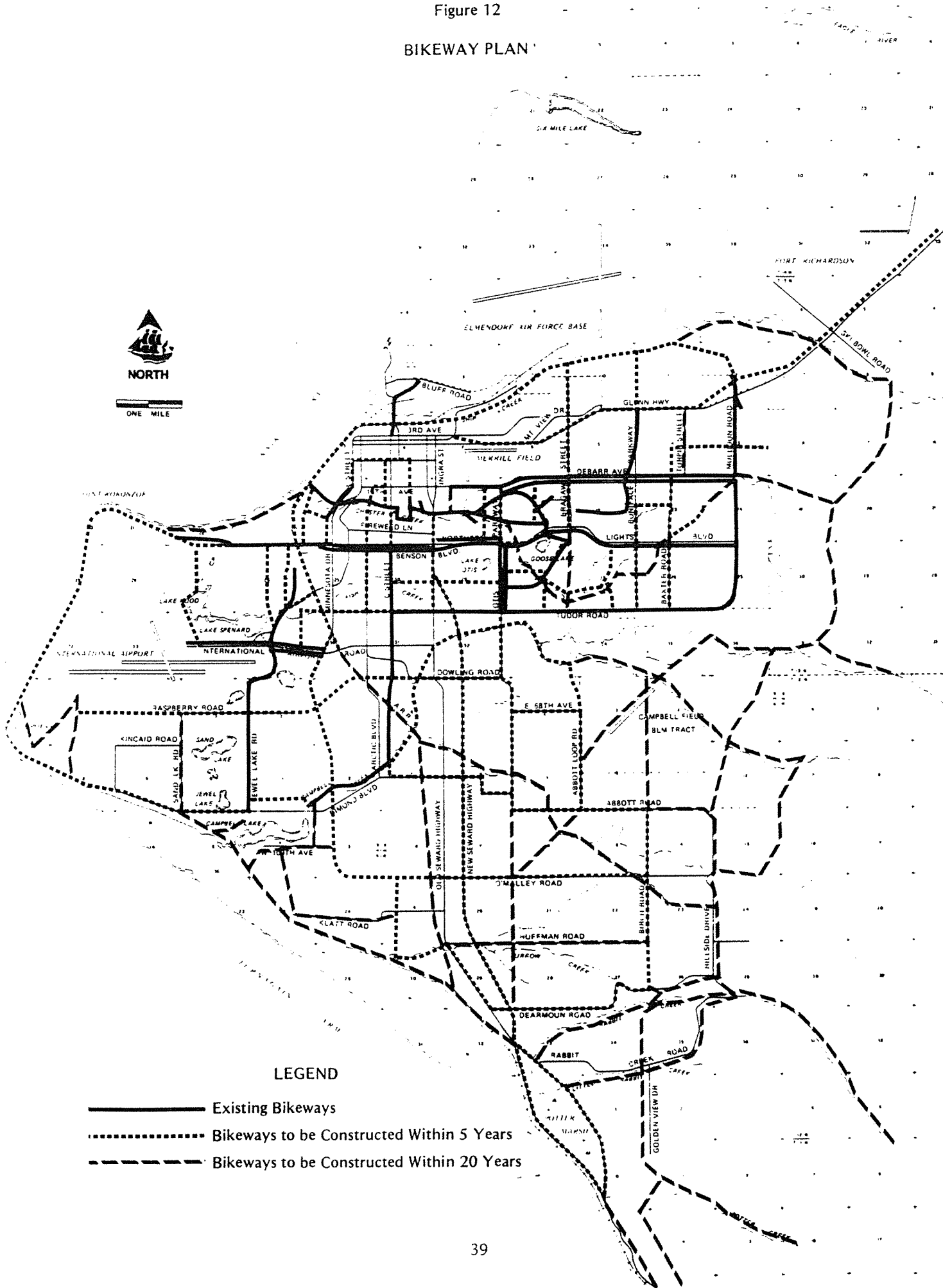
maintenance. It is especially important that the level of trails construction be generally consistent with the Municipality's ability to operate and maintain those facilities already built. Among the major recommendations included within the Plan for the implementation of access ways and trails are the following:

- ◆ If a proposed plat encompasses an area designated in the Trails plan, the Platting authority shall require that such land be designated as an easement in the proposed plat pursuant to AMC 21.80.135.
- ◆ The Municipality, in cooperation with the utility companies, establish a plan that identifies current utility easements on which trails can now be constructed and areas of future utility easements that should require eventual trail access.
- ◆ Creek Maintenance and Drainage Easements and sewer easements obtained in the future by the Municipality include the provision for a trails right-of-way where this conforms to an approximate location identified in this Plan for trails development. Creek easements should be at least 100 feet wide.
- ◆ The Municipality, in granting encroachments for utility easements, review the application for possible conflicts with planned trails or potential patterns of pedestrian circulation.
- ◆ Current design standards for bicycle facilities be modified to include the provision for lockable, bicycle racks at major activity centers.
- ◆ Current sidewalk standards be changed to require a planter strip separating the roadway from the sidewalk, allow asphaltic type sidewalks where practical, and restrict the use of the sidewalk waiver authority to the Platting Board.
- ◆ Parking meters, utility poles, and mail boxes be placed away from the street side of the sidewalk, to help in snow removal.
- ◆ Trails signing conform to Federal Trail Sign Standards as adopted and contained in the *Alaska Recreation Trail Plan*.

It is intended that the policies for trails maintenance are to be adopted along with the trails recommendations themselves. Previous experience has shown that a recreational type plan such as this requires a thorough and well-conceived implementation program in order to be effective. Finally, these recommendations are meant to be both flexible and somewhat generalized in scope. It can be expected that what is now conceived as an integrated trail system will alter over time as conditions and attitudes change, and for this reason these recommendations should be viewed as dynamic and alterable, with sufficient justification. Nonetheless, it is hoped, that the Trails Plan will provide an adequate jumping off point for the development of a comprehensive trails system in Anchorage and as the basis for subsequent trails planning.

Figure 12

BIKEWAY PLAN

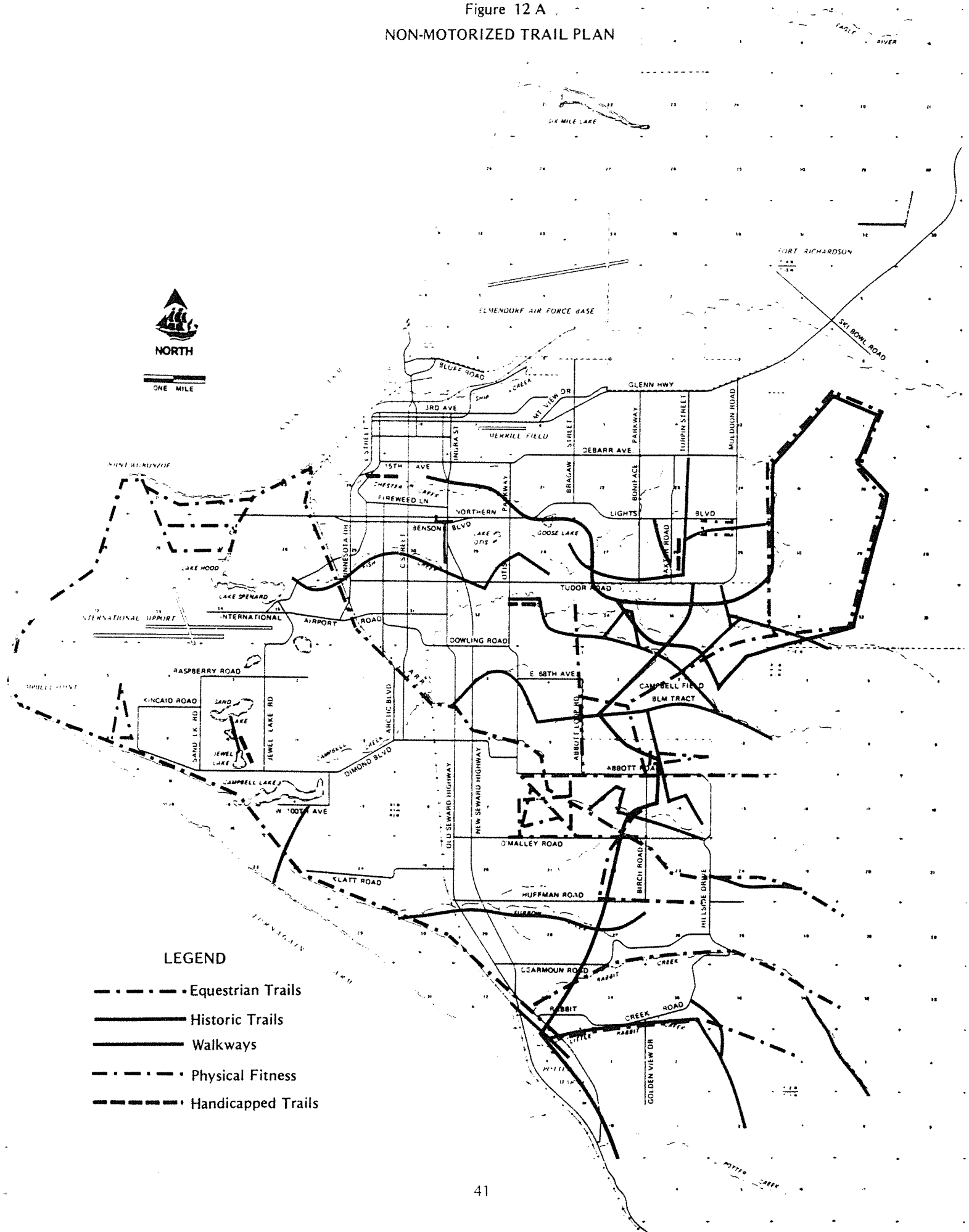


ONE MILE

LEGEND

- Existing Bikeways
- Bikeways to be Constructed Within 5 Years
- - - - - Bikeways to be Constructed Within 20 Years

Figure 12 A
NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL PLAN



LEGEND

- Equestrian Trails
- Historic Trails
- Walkways
- Physical Fitness
- . - . - . Handicapped Trails

Figure 12 B
NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL PLAN

