

Sitka Cross Trail Project – Cascade Creek to Kramer Avenue

Background information for the City and Borough of Sitka Mayor and Assembly

In February of 2010 Sitka Trail Works was notified of the conditional award of \$333,000 for construction of the Sitka Cross Trail from Cascade Creek Road to Kramer Avenue, in the Whitcombe Heights subdivision. The trail route begins at Cascade Creek Road and crosses National Forest 644 feet including an 80 foot by 8 foot bridge, 461 feet of Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the remaining 4,765 ft through the CBS Whitcomb Heights subdivision. The trail will connect to Kramer Avenue and a ten car parking area is planned to accommodate vehicles at the trailhead.

In order to inform the Assembly about the project, clarify actions that need to be taken to move the project forward, and to allow the Assemble to fully understand all the aspects of the project Sitka Trail Works has prepared a Resolution of Support for the Assembly members to consider. All points have been reviewed by the Planning Director and approved by Parks and Recreation Commission and original language has been modified at the suggestion of the Finance Director and CBS Attorney.

1. ***The trail and trailhead parking location in the Whitcombe Heights subdivision as shown on the attachments is approved with the understanding that the location of the trailhead parking area adjacent Kramer Avenue and the trail location could be moved or modified at a future date, as may be required to allow for future development of townhomes or other development of Lots 13A and 14A of the Whitcombe Heights Subdivision.***

Point #1 addresses the proposed location of the trail. See Attachments 1 & 2 to understand how the Cross Trail connects to Kramer Avenue, and how the trail and trailhead parking are designed to be compatible with possible future development of the Whitcombe Heights subdivision. Location of the trail and trailhead in a compatible manner with the subdivision was previously discussed by the Assembly during Mr. Droll's presentation of land use options for the subdivision in May. Some modification of the proposed trail location may occur during construction, but the trail, when finally constructed, will be located a minimum of 75 feet from the back property lines of adjacent lots.

2. ***Sitka Trail Works will apply for the Army Corps of Engineers permit required for the project. Sitka Trail Works will submit the Coastal Zone Questionnaire required by the State of Alaska and the Environmental Review checklist required by the Department of Transportation Western Federal Lands, as required by the Alaska Trails Initiative grant program.***

Because this trail project crosses multiple landowners the Army Corps of Engineers prefers to have Sitka Trail Works as the applicant for the Corps Permit. This was the practice for the Sea Lion Cove, Herring Cove, Thimbleberry and previous Cross Trail projects. Using grant funds and the partnership collection agreement with the US Forest Service Sitka Trail Works paid a USFS road engineer to establish the trail alignment in 2009. Because the Cross trail is designed for use by cyclists as well as pedestrians the trail has to be located on the land contour in a way that keep the grade less than 12% over most of the trail distance. A Wetlands Delineation and a Cultural Resources Survey has also been prepared for the proposed alignment. A Storm Water Pollution Plan is also in preparation by DOWL Engineers. The funds

awarded to STW for trail construction are federal and STW has a permitting procedure to follow in order to satisfy requirements of NEPA and the granting agency.

- 3. The public is guaranteed to have access to the Sitka Cross Trail from Cascade Creek to Kramer Avenue for a minimum of ten years and ideally, in perpetuity.***

This is a requirement of the Grant Administrator for the \$333,000 Alaska Trails Initiative grant and can be accomplished by a letter to the program from the CBS Administrator assuring the public's right to access the project.

“Public Access

The public must be assured legal access to trails and trail related facilities developed or maintained with grant funds. If any portion of a trail project is on private land, the applicant must obtain documented permission from the landowner for public access for a minimum of **5 years**. Projects on public land must have documented approval from the land manager and access assured for at least **10 years**.”

- 4. Title III Payments to States funds which have been dedicated to acquisition of trail easements for any of the trail projects previously approved by the CBS Assembly are authorized to be used to purchase a segment of property owned by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to allow for construction of the trail.***

Over the past several years the Assembly has set aside Title III Payments to States funds to cover the cost of establishing easements for several trail projects that connect to National Forest lands. A total of approximately \$64,000 remains in these accounts and could be used to acquire the easement on the Alaska Mental Health Trust property where the trail is located. STW made every effort to avoid crossing the Trust lands but the topography and grade requirements dictated otherwise. Representatives of the Trust have visited Sitka and met with the CBS Planning Office and STW. Authorization by the CBS Assembly would allow the Administrator and City staff to work with the Trust on the details of establishing the easement. The size of the parcel to be purchased is approximately 44,000 sq ft of 33% wetlands.

- 5. The existing USFS Special Use Permit for the Sitka Cross Trail will be amended to accommodate the new trail segment.***

This document is currently in preparation by the USFS.

- 6. The CBS Administrator is authorized to execute any and all required documents and contracts and subsequent amendments within the existing project scope and to take all actions needed in support of the Sitka Cross Trail project.***

This is similar language to previously adopted grant resolutions clarifying the authority of the Administrator to act in support of the project.

Dear Colleen,

Attached are documents and Resolution for the Cross Trail from Cascade Creek Rd to Kramer Avenue for the 7-27 Assembly packet. Changes were made to the previous wording of the Resolution and correspondingly to the Background information upon recommendation by Ms. Hillhouse.

I spoke with Mr. Bergstrom, Trust Land Office yesterday and he said an easement could be negotiated but we must work through the process of the appraisal and agree on valuation. This action by the Assembly lets us get started on that process.

Thank you and all concerned for your help 😊

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