



Fairbanks Trails Inc

**1750 Reed Circle
Fairbanks Alaska 99709**

FNSB Assembly
P.O. Box 71267
Fairbanks, AK 99707

Subject: VA002-24 Trail Realignment

To whom it may concern;

We encourage the FNSB assembly to reject the trail vacation VA002-24 Sky Summit Estates First Addition. We disagree with the applicant's narrative, surveyor's analysis, and staff findings. We think the new alignment is detrimental to the trail, not "more beneficial", and not of value to the municipality.

The primary reason we encourage the assembly to reject the trail reroute is because it does not meet code 17.32.030(E)(1). By code, a trail reroute is supposed to be "more beneficial." We have talked to several users of the subdivision trails and not one considers the reroute to be "more beneficial." All the benefits accrue to the applicants.

I have examined the existing trail easement and the proposed reroute. The reroute is worse than the existing easement in the following ways;

- The reroute is more on the north facing slope so less sun and worse soils.
- The reroute has a side slope where the existing easement is level side to side.
- The reroute is on the road embankment for about 40 feet with a steep side slope.
- The reroute is within sight, sound, and smell of the road where the existing easement provides some buffer to the road.

The second test in 17.32.030(E)(1) is that the existing route be "no longer practical for the uses or purposes authorized." The existing trail is on the north side of a 30-foot-wide cleared utility easement containing a GVEA power line. The new houses will likely be south of the powerline thus the trail should not interfere with the planned development. The existing route is practical for a narrow pedestrian trail.

Other Points:

- The applicants declined to work with current subdivision residents and nearby trail users.
- Motorized vehicles have already been blocked from the GVEA easement and once homes are constructed motorized use is not likely to be an issue. Even so, the motorized vehicle issue is not germane to the issue. Even if the non-motorized trail is moved, the motorized users of the utility easement will need monitoring and vehicle barriers will need to be maintained.

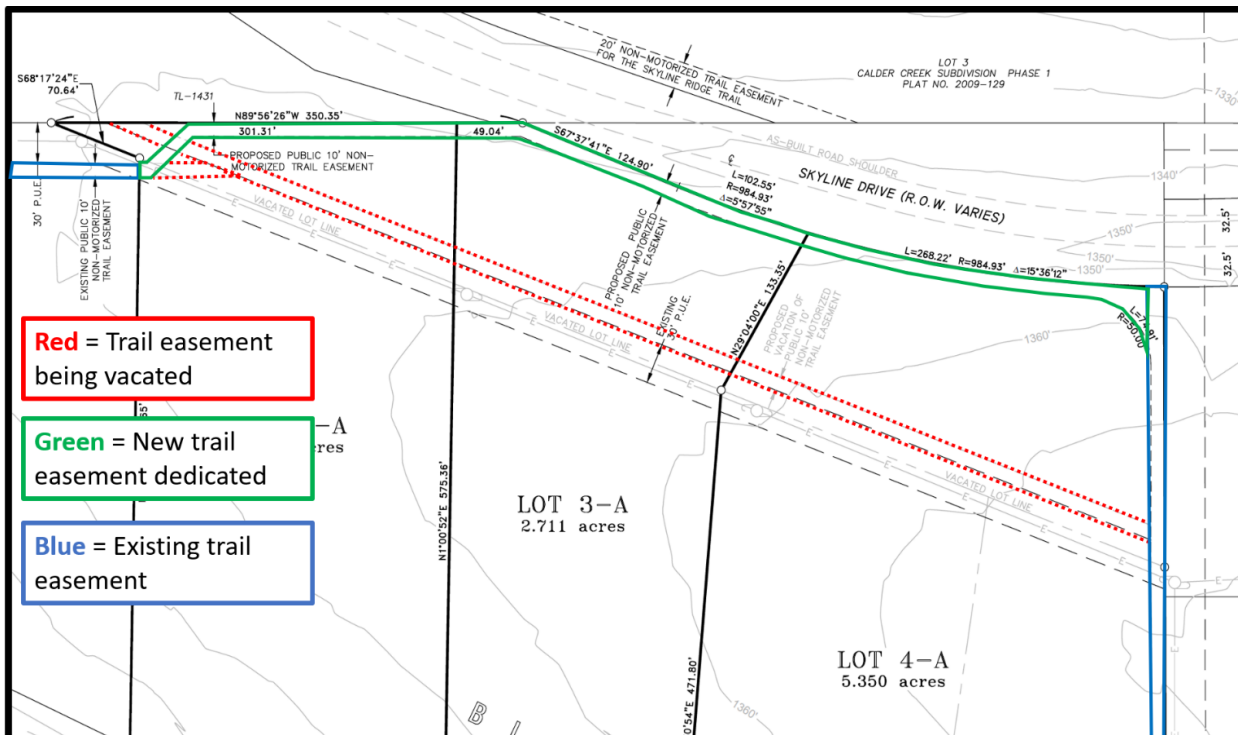
- Connection with Skyline Ridge trail is provided by the easement along the east side of the property. The proposed realignment does not improve the connection to Skyline Ridge Trail.
- The subdivision trails were originally provided to be quiet paths through the woods. They were not intended to serve as a path along Skyline Drive. It is unlikely that pedestrians on Skyline Drive will use the proposed easement. No transitions from the road to the trail are provided. For pedestrians on the road to access the rerouted trail they would have to go through the ditch and up a steep embankment. In the winter there would be snow berms to scramble over.
- Trails adjacent to roadways suffer from noise and exhaust from road traffic. They can also be impacted by snow removal activities such as snow being shoved into the trail or gravel and debris being flung onto the trail surface.
- The subdivision trails were unfortunately not included in the FNSB Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan, thus the FNSB Trails Coordinator felt she had little choice but to support the reroute.
- The existing trail alignment is more beneficial than the proposed realignment that puts the trail adjacent to a busy road and adds turns.

Fairbanks Trails, Inc., urges you to reject the trail reroute.

Sincerely

Stan Justice, President Fairbanks Trails Inc

Attachments from Platting Board meeting packet;



FNSBC 17.32.030(E)(1) states, “The platting board shall consider the merits of each vacation request and in all cases the platting board shall deem the area being vacated to be of value to the municipality. It shall be incumbent upon the applicant to show that the area proposed for vacation is no longer practical for the uses or purposes authorized or that other provisions have been made which are more beneficial to the public.”

Vacation Recommendation: Staff recommends approval for vacation of a portion of a 10-foot-wide non-motorized public trail easement within Lot 2, Block One, Sky Summit Estates First Addition, and Tract B, Sky Summit Estates, with the following findings of fact:

- a. As required by FNSBC 17.32.030(E)(1), the proposed vacation area shall be deemed by the platting board to be of value to the municipality.
- b. The portion of public trail easement proposed for relocation is not a part of the FNSB Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan.
- c. Other provisions have been made by the applicant which are more beneficial to the public:
 - i. According to the applicant’s narrative, there is motorized public use of the cleared public utility easement corridor adjacent to the existing non-motorized trail easement proposed for vacation.
 - ii. The relocation minimizes confusion and possible conflicting uses with private property and trespass.
 - iii. There will be better legal continuity and connection established with the Skyline Ridge Trail to the north (a Category B Trail per the FNSB Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan), and existing adjoining public trail easements.
 - iv. Per the applicant’s narrative, the terrain is more gently sloping in the new proposed trail easement location.