



PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA
MEETING TO BE HELD VIA HYBRID - IN PERSON AND ONLINE
[HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/86081125157?PWD=RjG8JMPCBUKTGXMCCXJU0VARNFVU.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86081125157?pwd=RjG8JMPCBUKTGXMCCXJU0VARNFVU.1)
MEETING ROOM LOCATED AT 102, 9 FIREHOUSE RD.
TAOS SKI VALLEY, NEW MEXICO
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026 AT 10:00 AM

- 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL (Woodard)**
- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Woodard/All)**
 - A. -July 28, 2026
- 3. CHAIR'S REPORT (Woodard)**
 - A. Report on stakeholder meetings
 - B. Ramming Nature Trail benches refurbishment
 - C. Cultural Closure support to Carson National Forest
 - D. August 31, 2026 Community Meeting
- 4. REVIEW OF PARC COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (Woodard/All)**
(near final)
- 5. NEW BUSINESS (Woodard, Bell/All)**
 - A. Consideration of pursuit of grant applications
- 6. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DATE, TIME & PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE**

09/22/2026-REGULAR MEETING. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Village of Taos Ski Valley will be held as a hybrid in-person and on-line meeting on September 22, 2026, at 10:00 am in Room 102, 9 Firehouse Rd., Taos Ski Valley, NM and the Agenda, Agenda attachments, and Zoom Meeting link will be available to the public on the Village website at <https://www.vtsv.org>.
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MEETING TO BE HELD VIA HYBRID - IN PERSON AND ONLINE
MEETING ROOM LOCATED AT 102, 9 FIREHOUSE RD.
TAOS SKI VALLEY, NEW MEXICO
TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2026 AT 10:00 AM**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

(Woodard)

The chair called the meeting to order at 10 am. Present were Steve Hoxie, Kent Kiehl, Janet Ratliff Thomas, and Joan Woodard. Also present were Henri Hammond Paul, Village Administrator, and Jordan Yutzy, Deputy Village Administrator and Planning Director, as well as some residents.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(Woodard/All)

A. June 16, 2026

The chair asked for approval of the committee meeting minutes from June 16, 2026. The committee approved them unanimously.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

(Woodard)

A. July 3&4 volunteer activities

The chair reported on volunteers' work at Williams Lake Trailhead and Hiker Parking on July 3 and 4. This work was in response to a request from Carson National Forest to better support the high visitor presence during this holiday weekend. It was reported that guests were very appreciative of the information provided as well as bottled water.

The chair reported on stakeholder meetings regarding the draft trails & parks comprehensive plan. The Enchanted Circle Trails Association director, Loren Bell, and the committee chair met with John Kelly, CEO of the Taos Ski Valley, Inc. and discussed the plan. Mr. Kelly was very supportive, stating support for all development in the area of trails. He stated support for the connector trails proposed for the Special Use Permit area where the parking lots are located, and expressed support to include PARC in the planning of the arrival area for future refurbishment. He also expressed willingness to consider trails within the Nordic center area and the gondola path, and consideration of a park in the refurbished arrival area, when and if these projects begin. Loren Bell and the chair met with Bob Corroon and discussed the plan. The meeting included discussion of possible easement for a trail from Hiker Parking to the upper entrance to Kachina Vista Park. Mr. Corroon expressed general support pending identification of the trail location. Loren Bell and the chair met with Questa district leadership of the Carson National Forest. The Forest Service leaders asked questions and explained the process for Forest Service approval. General interest in the concept of the plan was expressed while reminding all of the procedural steps that must precede any actions.

B. Report on stakeholder meetings

The chair reported that Loren Bell is also attempting to set up a stakeholder meetings with Taos Pueblo leadership and with representatives from the acequia community downstream from the Taos Ski Valley. One or more meetings are being planned to present the draft plan to the interested individuals from the community. The meeting will be virtual and possibly also in-person in the village.

4. REVIEW OF PARC COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

(Version 2) including prioritization (Woodard/All)

The chair presented to the committee the overall trail design including the grand loop and various connectors. The chair also described additional connectors that further develop subloops and connectors to allow better access by residents. Committee members offered observations and comments about design features and regarding safety features of various elements of the design. Design ideas and comments included best trail locations through and around the Amizette area, the same for the Kachina Basin, and the location of connectors to connect residential areas to the grand loop and subloops. The discussion also identified some areas that require additional safety considerations: the core village area and multi-use with bicycles and pedestrians; the improved bike trail/hiking path along highway 150; minimizing any paths that put hikers/bikers on roads; proper marking of paths crossing roads; and signage throughout the area to direct users to safe pathways.

5. NEW BUSINESS

(Woodard, Bell/All)

A. Consideration of pursuit of grant applications

The chair introduced the topic of grant funding to enable the village to commence the construction of elements of the plan. The committee was supportive, though no specifics were discussed.

6. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DATE, TIME & PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

08/25/2026-REGULAR MEETING. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks & Recreation of Taos Ski Valley will be held as a hybrid in-person and on-line meeting on August 25, 2026 at 10:00 am in Room 102, 9 Firehouse Rd., Taos Ski Valley, NM and the Agenda, Agenda attachments, and Zoom Meeting link will be available to the public on the Village website at <https://www.vtsv.org>.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The chair adjourned the meeting at 11:20 am.

ATTEST:

Joan Woodard, Committee Chair

Village Clerk, Marlene Salazar

The Village of Taos Ski Valley Trails, Parks, and Recreation Plan - DRAFT

August 2026



The Village of Taos Ski Valley Trails, Parks, and Recreation Plan - DRAFT

Prepared for

Village of Taos Ski Valley and Parks & Recreation Committee

Project Location

Village of Taos Ski Valley
Taos County, New Mexico

Prepared under contract by

Enchanted Circle Trails Association (ECTA)
enchantedcircletrails.org

August 2026

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	2
2. Overview.....	2
3. Project Landscape.....	3
4. Current Conditions Assessment.....	3
4.1. Use Patterns.....	4
4.2. Trails and Routes.....	4
4.3. Parks and Greenspaces.....	5
4.4. Additional Infrastructure.....	5
5. Community Input.....	5
5.1. Stakeholder Input.....	6
5.2. Community Meetings.....	6
5.3. Public Survey.....	7
6. Plan Priorities Informed by Community Input.....	8
7. Proposed Trail Alignments.....	9
7.1. Grand Loop Trail.....	9
7.2. Development Opportunity Trails.....	17
7.3. Future Feasibility Study and Extended Trails.....	21
8. Proposed Parks and Greenspaces.....	21
8.1. Beaver Pond.....	21
8.2. Kachina Vista Park Improvement.....	22
8.3. Rio Hondo Parcel.....	23
8.4. Lake Fork Streamside Park.....	24
8.5. Kachina Bend Park.....	24
8.6. Additional Park Facilities.....	25
9. Signage and Wayfinding.....	25
9.1. Regional Sign Plan.....	25
9.2. Village Sign Plan.....	25

9.3. Sign Maintenance Considerations.....	26
10. Maintenance and Management.....	26
10.1. Village Staff.....	26
10.2. Adopt-A-Trail Pilot Program.....	26
10.3. Specialized & Large-Scale Maintenance.....	27
11. Implementation Steps.....	27
11.1. Initiate Coordination with Land Owners and Managers....	27
11.2. Prioritizing Trail Segments.....	27
11.3. Potential Funding.....	28
11.4. Secure Legal and Public Access.....	29
11.5. Other Considerations in Design and Implementation.....	30
11.6. Stewardship and Maintenance.....	31
11.7. Evaluation and Monitoring.....	31
12. Conclusion.....	31



1. Executive Summary

Through five community meetings, eight stakeholder meetings, and 129 public survey responses, a clear and consistent need for the Village of Taos Ski Valley was identified: safer, better-connected non-motorized access within the Village of Taos Ski Valley. Today the Village's trails, roads, informal routes, and parks function in isolation, forcing residents, employees, and visitors onto narrow, high-traffic roads, private property, and informal stream crossings to fill the gaps.

Participants voiced strong support for safer walking and biking routes; better connections between Amizette, the Village Core, Kachina Basin, and existing Forest Service trails; improved signage and wayfinding; accessible and family-friendly recreation; and more functional public parks.

In response, this plan puts forth a network centered on a primary shared-use loop linking the Village's three main development areas, supported by connector trails, engineered bridge crossings, beginner-to-intermediate recreation loops, and targeted park improvements at Lake Fork Streamside (near Hiker Parking), Kachina Vista Park, and the Kachina Bend Park (at the upper end of Kachina Vista Park). Implementation will be phased. Prioritization will be built around achievement of goals, feasibility, and cost. Near-term priorities include low-cost, high-impact work like signage, basic amenities, accessibility improvements, and a durable stewardship model. Throughout, the plan depends on formal coordination, legal access agreements or land acquisition where needed, environmental and cultural review, and sustainable trail design and supporting stewardship models.

2. Overview

The The Village of Taos Ski Valley Trails, Parks, and Recreation Plan - DRAFT identifies opportunities to improve trail connectivity, public parks, and non-motorized access within the Village of Taos Ski Valley (VTSV, or the Village). Successful connectivity planning requires community input as well as coordination with the land managers and landowners whose support will be necessary for implementation. This plan is built around both.

The Village sits in a narrow alpine valley where steep terrain, weather, limited road width, and seasonal congestion shape how people move through the community. In that setting, trails and parks are not just recreational amenities. They are practical infrastructure. Better non-motorized connections can help residents, employees, and visitors move between housing, lodging, work, businesses, parking areas, trailheads, and public spaces without relying entirely on vehicles.

A more connected system can also support the local economy, improve public safety, expand close-to-home recreation, and give users more options than a handful of heavily used corridors. This is especially important in areas like Williams Lake Trail, where popularity, parking limitations, and concentrated use have created ongoing management concerns.

Although this plan focuses primarily on summer connectivity and use, some proposed improvements may also support winter access, circulation, or recreation where compatible with ski-area operations, snow management, and avalanche safety.

3. Project Landscape

Located between approximately 8,900 and 10,200 feet in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of northern New Mexico, the Village of Taos Ski Valley occupies a narrow alpine valley surrounded by Carson National Forest, designated Wilderness areas, Taos Pueblo lands, and private property.

The project area presents significant physical constraints for trail and greenspace development. Steep terrain, avalanche paths, unstable slopes, limited valley-bottom space, riparian corridors, and seasonal snow conditions all influence the location, design, construction, and long-term maintenance of recreational infrastructure.

The surrounding landscape consists primarily of mixed-conifer and subalpine forest, transitioning to alpine tundra at higher elevations. Sensitive resources include riparian areas, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and the headwaters of the Lake Fork of the Rio Hondo. The high elevation and short growing season can make disturbed soils and vegetation slow to recover, underscoring the importance of sustainable trail design and effective drainage. Warmer temperatures and increasingly dry seasonal conditions also raise concerns about long-term forest health.

Village development is spread through three main development areas: the Amizette area west on NM150, the core area containing most of the commerce and the main base area of TSVI, and Kachina Basin at the end of the road to the south. Existing development within the project area includes residential neighborhoods, condominium complexes, Village infrastructure, and facilities associated with Taos Ski Valley Inc. (TSVI), including lift-served recreation and related operations. Recreational use

occurs year-round and includes hiking, mountain biking, skiing, snowshoeing, and backcountry access.

The project area also contains important cultural and historical considerations that require ongoing coordination with adjacent land managers and stakeholders, including Taos Pueblo, the Carson National Forest, private landowners, and TSVI.



4. Current Conditions Assessment

Currently, the area's recreational assets function in isolation. While the Village has formal infrastructure like Kachina Vista Park and the Ramming Nature Trail alongside popular USFS routes like Williams Lake Trail, there is no real connectivity. Pedestrians and cyclists are often forced onto unmaintained paths or narrow, high-traffic roads, creating safety risks.

4.1. Use Patterns

Trails and greenspaces within the Village and surrounding areas receive consistent year-round use, with particularly strong growth during the summer. Users include residents, employees, visitors, and recreationists, although these groups frequently overlap. People use the area for hiking, dog walking, mountain biking, and backpacking, as well as for travel between homes, workplaces, businesses, and lodging. Residents and employees also use the trails for exercise, while guests staying in hotels, condominiums, and short-term rentals often access recreational opportunities directly from their accommodations.

Although users travel through the project area for different reasons, they rely on many of the same trails and informal routes.

4.2. Trails and Routes

4.2.1. Formal Trails

Currently, formal trails are limited to small, fragmented parcels managed by the Village. These include the Ramming Nature Trail near the base area and Kachina Vista Park. The latter serves a dual purpose as an emergency and service road and as a recreational trail, offering a different experience from most other trails in the region.

Forest Service trails connecting to VTSV include Gavilan near the Amizette area, Bull of the Woods Trail that leaves from the Village core, and the Williams Lake Trail, which leaves from Kachina Basin.

4.2.2. Informal Routes

Within the Amizette, the Village Core, and Kachina Basin, trail users have developed a number of informal routes. Some of these utilize public roads, cross private property, or provide unsanctioned connections into surrounding national forest.

Trail users are utilizing active roads like Twining, Zap's, Porcupine, and Kachina Road. These roads are characterized by steep grades, tight corners, narrow lanes with no designated space for pedestrians or bicycles, and very few traffic calming features. To avoid the dangerous conditions of these roads, some users are taking shortcuts through private property and crossing private, unengineered bridges.

Many of these informal routes were evaluated as a part of this planning work for their suitability for recreation easements or acquisition, shared use, and implementation of separated, non-motorized paths.

4.2.3. Informal Bridges

Existing private and unengineered bridges crossing the Lake Fork of the Rio Hondo pose wintertime safety, liability, and management issues, especially concerning access to the neighboring TSVI's Special Use Permit (SUP) area. The prevalence of these informal crossings demonstrates a strong community desire for access to the Rubezahl trail.

4.2.4. Williams Lake Trail

The Williams Lake Trail is one of the most heavily visited trails in New Mexico and receives significant year-round use. Summer visitation has raised ongoing concerns about parking, congestion,

environmental impacts, and wilderness character, leading to the formation of a working group focused on access management. Although these broader management issues fall outside the scope of this report, improving connections to other recreational opportunities within the Village may help distribute use and reduce pressure on the Williams Lake corridor.

Winter access to Williams Lake also remains a community concern. Many winter users continue to follow the historic trail alignment across private property because the Forest Service-approved reroute is considered less suitable for some forms of winter travel. Winter access is currently accommodated through the ski area's special use permit and across private property, but concerns remain among some users. Potential alternatives may exist, but evaluating them is beyond the scope of this plan.

4.3. Parks and Greenspaces

The Village currently manages two formal park and greenspace areas: Kachina Vista Park and the Ramming Nature Trail.

4.3.1. Kachina Vista Park

Kachina Vista Park serves several functions: a park and trail area, an emergency access route, and a storage area for surplus aggregate and equipment. Its well-graded gravel road and picnic tables help accommodate these varied uses. However, investment in recreational amenities has been limited by the park's competing uses, its location in avalanche-prone terrain, and the need to maintain vehicle access.

Access is further constrained by limited parking. The northern trailhead provides minimal space for vehicles and can be difficult to

navigate, while the southern trailhead accommodates only one or two vehicles along a busy main road.

4.3.2. Ramming Nature Trail

Small greenspaces along the Ramming Nature Trail feature picnic tables and benches made from repurposed ski chairs. Although popular with residents and some visitors, the trail is easily overlooked due to limited signage.

The trail and its associated greenspaces are intended to be ADA accessible, but a small staircase along the route currently prevents continuous accessible passage.

4.4. Additional Infrastructure

Many Village-managed trails, parks, and greenspaces lack formal trailheads and a cohesive signage system. While the main parking area in the Village Core generally provides sufficient access to the Bull of the Woods Trail during the summer, in winter the area is primarily used for skier parking. Because no parking is specifically designated for trail users, they may need to park some distance from the trail and walk or use the skier shuttle to reach it.

Parking at the Williams Lake Trailhead in Kachina Basin also frequently reaches capacity during the summer. With no designated public parking between the Village Core and the trailhead, visitors often park along Village roads.

5. Community Input

The Village contracted with the Enchanted Circle Trails Association (ECTA) to facilitate five community meetings, eight one-on-one

stakeholder meetings, and an online survey.

5.1. Stakeholder Input

Between the fall of 2025 and spring of 2026, ECTA facilitated eight one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders: the Village Parks and Recreation Committee, Carson National Forest, TSVI, Taos Mountain Alliance, Robert Corroon (owner of Taos Land & Cattle Company), Taos Pueblo, the Field Institute of Taos, and the TSV Neighborhood Association.

Overall, stakeholders support improving and expanding recreation opportunities within the Village and are open to conversations about collaborative projects. Initial conversations with private landowners have begun and have been constructive, though no formal agreements are in place.

Before any on-the-ground efforts are initiated, stakeholders suggested the need to establish a collaborative long-term maintenance plan, obtain consent from all relevant land managers and owners, protect culturally and environmentally sensitive areas, and address the overuse of the Williams Lake Trail. Taos Pueblo indicated that any collaboration on trails or interpretive signage will require a formal MOU with the Village before further engagement.

5.2. Community Meetings

Between the fall of 2025 and the spring of 2026, ECTA facilitated five community meetings to gather public input.

To make participation convenient, the meetings took place in the Village, the Town of Taos, and online via Zoom. There were 54 attendees in total, which included members of the general public,



residents of the Village, employees of local businesses in the Taos Ski Valley, residents of Taos Pueblo, and local organizations.

5.2.1. Amenities and Features

Across all five meetings, participants consistently requested a more accessible trail system serving a broad range of users. Common priorities included easy to moderate non-motorized trails, ADA-accessible routes near the Village Core, beginner-friendly and stacked-loop systems, and year-round trail access. Frequently requested amenities included bathrooms, dog waste stations, maps, improved signage, benches, trash cans, picnic tables, additional parking, public transportation or shuttle options, and small Village Core improvements such as a playground or other family-friendly features.

5.2.2. Trail Connections and Locations

The most consistent theme was the need for better connectivity and walkability throughout the Village. Participants repeatedly called for non-motorized connections between Amizette and the Village Core, between the Village Core and Kachina Basin, and between Kachina Vista Park and the Williams Lake Trail parking area. They also emphasized the need to connect existing trails, parks, and greenspaces throughout the valley. Additional priorities included formal access to the Rubezahl Trail via safe crossings of the Lake Fork and alternatives to walking or biking along Village roads.

Additionally, participants expressed a desire for backcountry connections, including between Bull of the Woods and Middle Fork/Lost Lake, as well as from Kachina Basin to Middle Fork Lake. Several groups also emphasized a desire for easier recreational loop trails near the Core and Kachina Basin.

5.2.3. Maintenance, Management, and Safety

Participants consistently emphasized that any new trails or parks should be paired with a clear long-term maintenance, management, and safety plan. There was broad support for volunteer-based maintenance, though some participants also identified the Village, TSVI, land managers, or professional trail organizations as necessary partners for larger maintenance responsibilities.

Common safety and management concerns included user conflict, motorized use, dog behavior and waste, leash-law enforcement, road safety, avalanche and weather hazards, steep and unstable slopes, and the need for better maps, trail etiquette information, hazard signage, and protection of open space, cultural resources, riparian areas, and other sensitive environments.

See **Appendix A: Community Meeting Summaries** for a more detailed summary of each community meeting.

5.3. Public Survey

Between the fall of 2025 and the spring of 2026, ECTA maintained an online survey to gather feedback about the community's vision for future recreation in the Village, as well as current conditions, usage, access barriers, safety concerns, and priorities for future trails and parks. The survey received 129 responses.

5.3.1. Core Values and Types of Trail Use

Respondents placed a very high value on easy, close-to-home trail access, with a median rating of 10 out of 10. However, respondents rated the fairness and equity of current trail access much lower, with a median rating of 5 out of 10. Respondents are drawn to Ski Valley trails for scenic beauty, high-alpine access, solitude, physical challenge, and iconic destinations. 96% of respondents participate in hiking, 54% in dog walking, 53% in mountain biking, 50% in backpacking, and 48% in wildlife watching. Williams Lake was the most commonly used trail, followed by Wheeler Peak/Bull-of-the-Woods, Wheeler Peak Summit, Gavilan, Gold Hill, and Long Canyon. Village-managed trails and parks were less frequently used or less familiar to respondents.

5.3.2. Primary Barriers to Access

The primary obstacles to accessing local trails and public lands include access restrictions and insufficient infrastructure like signage and parking, as cited by 35% of participants. Other barriers to better trail access include limited trail mileage, lack of trail diversity, inadequate signage and trail information, lack of trails close to

where people live, private land and access limitations, transportation or distance barriers, parking constraints, and trail maintenance needs.

5.3.3. Network and Design Priorities

93% of respondents said they would like to see more trails, and 93% said they would like to see more parks and greenspaces. Respondents strongly preferred dirt or natural-surface trails as a preferred trail type. 64% of respondents think it is important or essential that any new trails connect to existing trails.

Commonly requested connections included Amizette to the Village Core/base area, the Lake Fork/Rio Hondo corridor, Kachina Basin, Bull-of-the-Woods/Wheeler Peak access, and Williams Lake-related access areas, and general multi-use loop trails starting from the Village Core. Respondents also showed strong support for voluntary, fairly negotiated public trail easements across private lands if the landowner is agreeable, suggesting that easements may be an acceptable tool where landowner rights, liability, maintenance, and long-term management responsibilities are clearly addressed.

5.3.4. Signage

Signage and trail information emerged as major needs. 57% of respondents said current trails and parks in the Village are not adequately signed, and there is insufficient trail information. Respondents requested clearer trail names, mileage, difficulty ratings, larger-context maps, points of interest, QR codes, and information about local ecology, history, land ownership, and public lands etiquette.

5.3.5. Safety and Congestion Management

Most respondents rated walking and biking safety in and around the Village relatively high, with a median rating of 9 out of 10. However, written responses identified a need for safer separation between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists in key areas. Among respondents who suggested safety improvements, the most common request was separate, non-motorized paths, while others noted that installing traffic calming features on roads and increasing public transportation options would be helpful as well.

See **Appendix B: Survey Responses** for the full list of survey responses.

6. Plan Priorities Informed by Community Input

Community and stakeholder input identified several guiding priorities for future trail and park development in the Village:

- Improve non-motorized connectivity between Amizette, the Village Core, Kachina Basin, Forest Service trails, and Village-managed parks.
- Reduce reliance on narrow roads, informal routes, private-property shortcuts, and unengineered crossings by creating safer and more predictable public routes.
- Expand approachable, cost-free recreation opportunities, including easy-to-moderate trails, family-friendly loops, and accessible routes where feasible.
- Protect the Village's natural character by avoiding or

minimizing impacts to riparian areas, wetlands, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, and other sensitive locations.

- Improve public parks with basic amenities such as benches, picnic areas, dog waste stations, trash receptacles, restrooms where feasible, and small gathering areas.
- Develop a clear and consistent signage system that helps users find public routes, understand permitted uses, avoid private property, and recognize hazards or seasonal restrictions.
- Establish maintenance responsibilities, access agreements, and stewardship expectations before new facilities are constructed, signed, or promoted for public use.

7. Proposed Trail Alignments

The proposed trail network comprises a Grand Loop trail ringing the main regions of the Village, and connectors near developed areas and linking neighborhoods. Because the project area spans developed village areas, steep alpine terrain, avalanche paths, riparian corridors, and multiple land ownerships, trail character and infrastructure needs will vary by location.

The alignments shown in this section are planning recommendations. Routes crossing private land, Carson National Forest lands, TSVI Special Use Permit areas, public road corridors, or other managed lands will require additional coordination, field verification, legal access agreements, environmental or cultural review where applicable, and formal approval before construction or public promotion. Where easements, acquisitions, permits, or maintenance agreements cannot be secured, alternate alignments

may be necessary.

7.1. Grand Loop Trail

The "Grand Loop" concept proposes a loop ringing the Village's primary hubs: Amizette, the core base area, and Kachina Basin. This will provide safer off-road connectivity for recreation and local circulation, as well as link users to existing trails that extend further into the surrounding forest.

Conceived as a soft-surface, non-motorized, multi-directional, shared-use path, it will ideally be constructed to accommodate hikers, bikers, e-bikers, jogging strollers, and adaptive cyclists, and possibly, in some areas limited areas, equestrians. Most segments are recommended as machine-built with wider corridors and tread. Each segment may have distinct management priorities, which may include things like speed limits or biker dismount requirements.



Construction standards prioritize accessibility, featuring gentle grades and minimal obstacles, and adhere closely to the U.S. Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG) and Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG) where feasible.

7.1.1. Grand Loop Segments

Existing Trail: 3.73 miles

New Trail: 3.33 miles

Road Shoulder Enhancement: 1.74 miles

The continuous loop route is approximately 8 miles long and serves

as the primary traffic corridor. Tread widths of 4-6' ensure room for safe passing traffic. Though initial construction can be a natural surface trail, usage patterns may warrant future upgrades to improved or paved surfaces. Trail character will remain as consistent as feasible across the loop.

Individual segments represent specific land status, connectivity points, or unique construction challenges. Where segments already exist, suggested improvements are recommended to standardize them with the cohesive design and quality of the overall loop system.

ID	Trail	Miles	Description	Status	Action	Land Status
L1	Pioneer	0.39	Gateway trail connecting the Core area near TSVI base to the Rubezahl trail. This will be many visitors' first introduction to the loop.	Existing	Improve trail tread, reduce slope at upper end, define connector to Village Core trails at west end, and consider improved surface tread.	TSVI
L2	Rubezahl	1.20	The primary corridor between Core and Kachina Basin provides a quiet forest connection along the Lake Fork.	Existing	Currently usable, but could be rerouted in sections to reduce slope by establishing climbing turns either in the current road cut or the side hill above.	USFS SUP
L3	Hiker Parking Trail	0.22	Maintenance roadway with adjacent sidewalk accommodates heavy usage.	Existing	N/A	VTSV SUP
L4	Wheeler View	0.35	Moves users between the Hiker Parking and Kachina Vista Park off the main roadway.	New	If supported by the landowner, negotiate a legal agreement, before final design and construction. If access cannot be secured, retain a roadway-based alternate.	Private VTSV

The Village of Taos Ski Valley Trails, Parks, and Recreation Plan - DRAFT

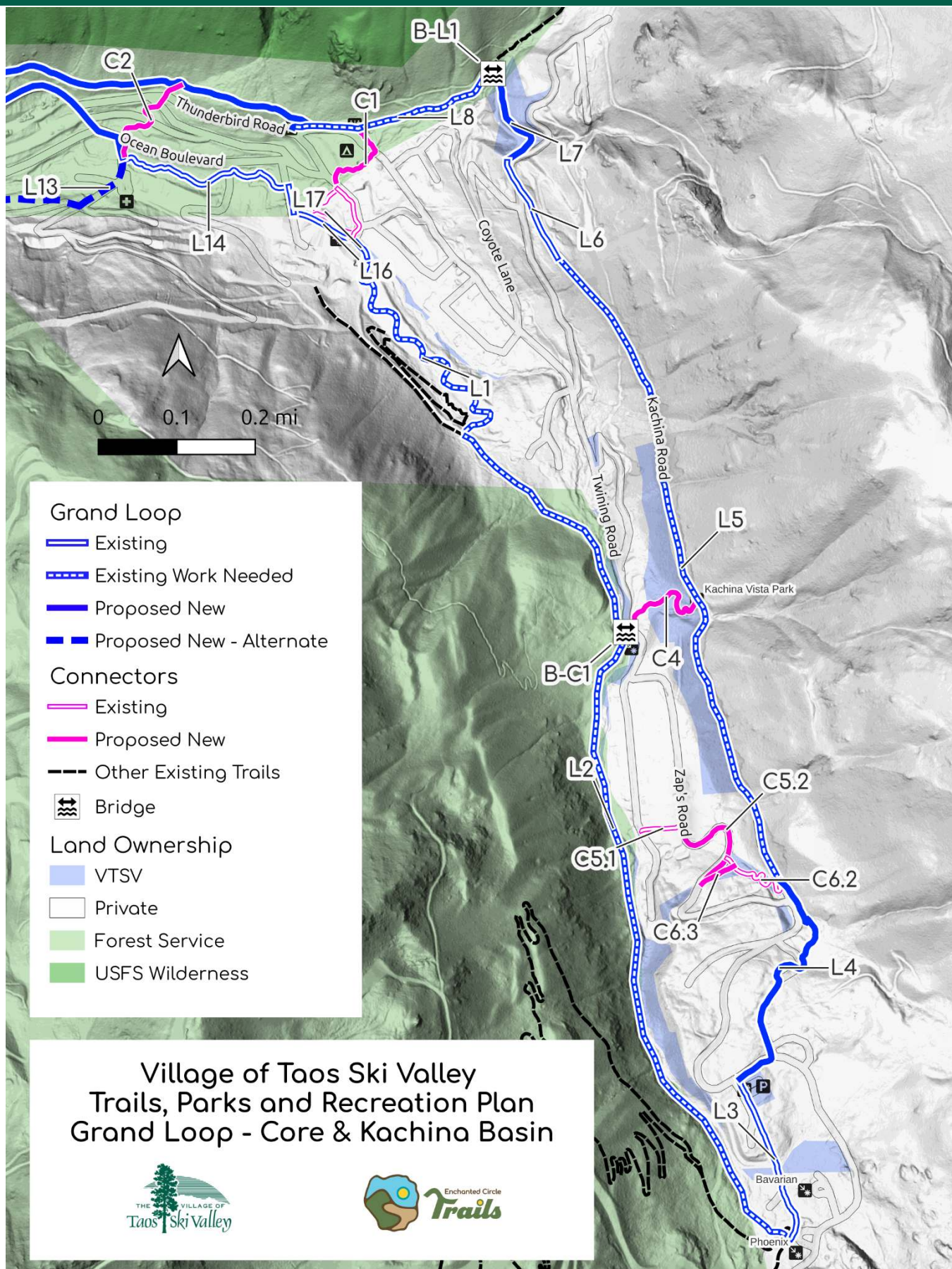
L5	Kachina Vista Park	0.86	The emergency access roadway provides continual views above the Village.	Existing	Define trail tread adjacent to or within the existing roadway. (See Kachina Vista Park.)	VTSV
L6	Kachina Vista Park to Rio Hondo Parcel	0.14	Public road connection.	Existing	Signage and potential pedestrian infrastructure.	VTSV
L7	Rio Hondo Parcel to Bull of the Woods	0.15	Shaded path through a park-like setting that takes users to viewpoints and the Rio Hondo.	New	Bench cut tread connecting the Kachina Vista Park roadway to Rio Hondo. Coordinate Bridge B4 with USFS as needed. (See Rio Hondo Park.)	VTSV
L8	Bull of the Woods	0.28	Steeper trail following the Rio Hondo with some accessibility limitations.	Existing	Re-engineer existing route and tread. Install re-routes and climbing turns where feasible to improve accessibility, drainage, and sustainability.	USFS
L9.1, 9.2	Amizette North	1.15, 0.85	The trail above the arrival/parking area and NM150 provides views of the ski area and a connection between Gavilan and Bull of the Woods, creating a commuter connection and backcountry loop.	New	Evaluate the conceptual alignment, complete the required environmental review, and pursue construction if approved.	USFS
L10	Gavilan Trail	0.27	The western backcountry gateway trail serves both the loop and backcountry access.	Existing	Re-engineer existing route and tread. Install re-routes and climbing turns where feasible to improve accessibility, drainage, and sustainability. Evaluate opportunities for a formal parking area on NM150.	USFS

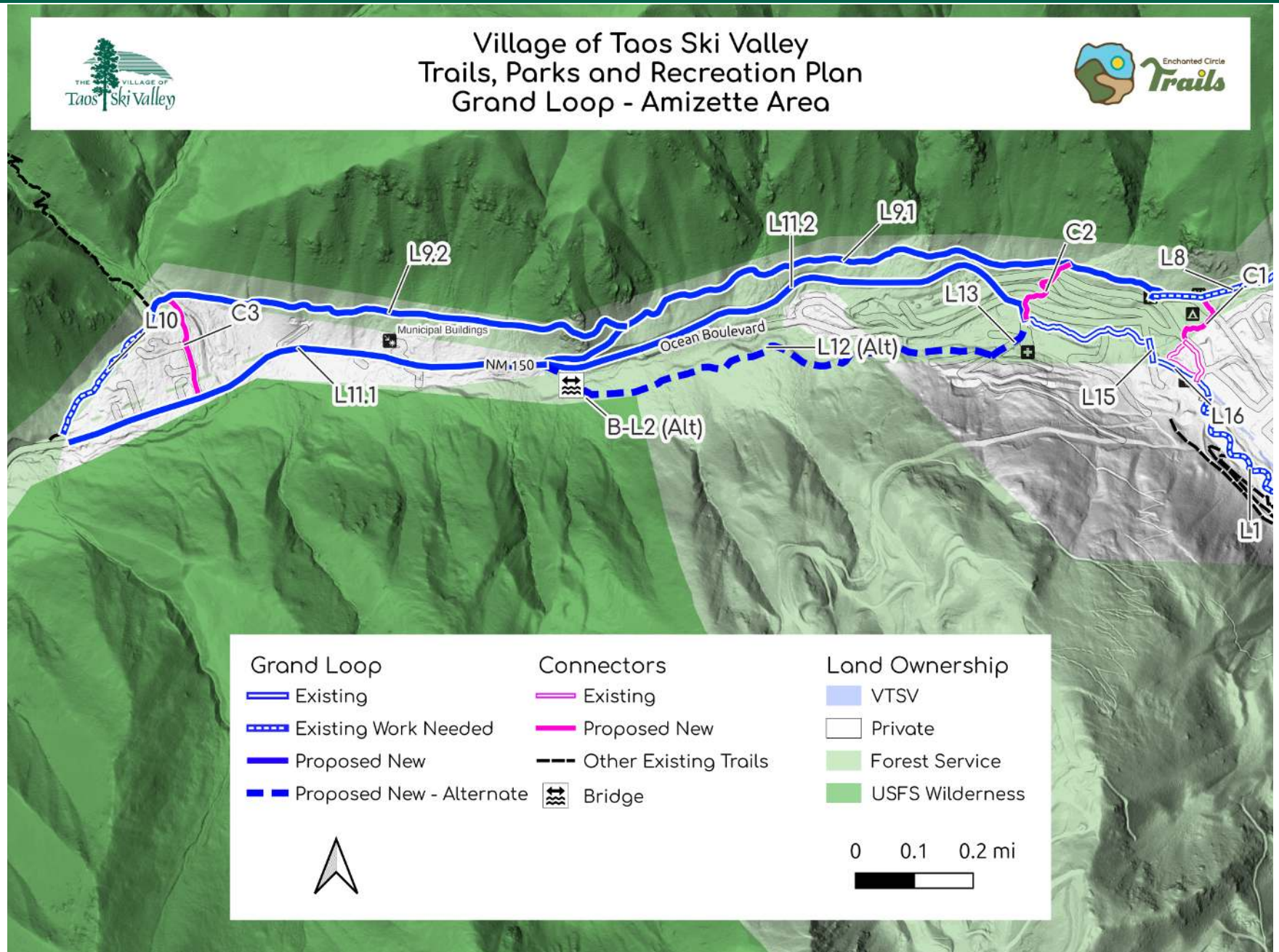
L11.1. 11.2	NM150 - Amizette to Core	0.84, 0.90	Bicycle/pedestrian improvements within the Amizette neighborhood and connecting the Village core area could include sidewalks or dedicated paths along the roadway.	Existing Road	Coordinate with NMDOT, the Village, and adjacent land managers to evaluate roadway improvements consistent with AASHTO guidance for shared-use rights-of-way.	NMDOT USFS VTSV
L12 (Alt)	Amizette South	0.83	Winding pathway on the south side of NM150 provides access to XC trails, as well as Village core.	New	Coordinate with TSVI and Carson National Forest to evaluate alignment, potentially following planned XC ski trail area design when complete.	USFS SUP
L13 (Alt)	Firehouse Road	0.08	Village road connector.	Existing	Signage and improved pedestrian infrastructure.	VTSV
L14	Ramming Nature Trail	0.23	ADA-accessible trail along the creek.	Existing	Remove the staircase to establish ADA accessibility. Add defined pedestrian crossing for Sutton Place.	SUP
L15, L16	Pathways	0.03, 0.08	Sidewalks and pathways connect Ramming to Pioneer.	Existing	Consider safety management strategies for high-traffic multi-use area.	TSVI VTSV
L17	Thunderbird service road	0.03	Connects existing creek-side paths behind the resort to Pioneer via road	Existing	Consider pedestrian infrastructure and signage.	TSVI

7.1.2. Grand Loop Bridges

Completing the core trail system only requires one bridge across the Rio Hondo (L1). A second bridge (L2) is only necessary if the alternate route through Aspen Grove is pursued. All new bridges will be constructed according to Forest Service engineering design specifications. The expectation of the Forest is that the Village will assume ownership of the bridges through a special use permit and be responsible for all maintenance and inspections.

ID	Location	Segment	Status	Land Status
B-L1	Rio Hondo Parcel to Bull of the Woods Trail	Main Loop	New	VTSV / USFS
B-L2 (Alt)	Amizette East	Main Loop Alt	New	USFS





7.1.3. Core Connector Trails

The core connector trails provide key access points to the Grand Loop while creating opportunities for shorter, more flexible routes throughout the valley. Connectors C1 and C2 form short loops near the Village center arrival area, where most visitors park. These routes will be designed in coordination with the arrival area improvements and will provide an introductory walking experience for visitors and a convenient lunchtime route for Village employees.

The Amizette connector will improve access for nearby residents using an existing easement and infrequently used road that already serves as an informal route. The Beaver Pond connector will allow users to complete a shorter loop without continuing to Kachina Basin. Together, these connections improve access, expand route choices, and make the overall trail system more functional for residents, employees, and visitors.



ID	Trail	Miles	Description	Status	Action	Type	Land Status
C1	Twining CG	0.11	Connector between Bull of the Woods and Core through the existing Twining CG	New	Design-build.	Machine	USFS
C2	Parking Lot Route	0.15	Connection between the north and south loops and village offices.	New	Design-build in coordination with arrival area redesign.	Hand	USFS SUP
C3	Amizette Emma Connect	0.18	Mid-Amizette connector to north trail.	Informal	Confirm land status and formalize legal access before improving the existing social trail.	Hand	USFS VTSV

C4	Beaver Pond to Kachina Vista Park	0.25	Mid-system connector between Rubezahl and Kachina Vista Park. Reduces climb commitment for the main loop.	New	Inquire about easement across private land. Evaluate replacing or refurbishing the existing bridge.	Hand Machine	Private USFS SUP
C5.1	Twining Zap's Shortcut	0.05	Neighborhood connector between Twining and Zap's Road to provide residents access	Informal	Identify landowners, clarify the trail on the existing easement, and consider signage to mitigate trespassing on private property.	Hand	Private
C5.2	Zaps Road Improvements	0.16	Neighborhood connector	Roadway	Evaluate feasibility for improving pedestrian safety along the roadway.	Engineer	VTSV
C6.1, 6.2, 6.3	Shortcut Zaps to Kachina Vista Park	0.01, 0.11, 0.05	Connects Zap's Road to Kachina Vista Park via stairways and alternate sidehill trail suitable for bicycles.	Existing	Construct climbing turns above stairs. Create an alternate stair-free route south toward the road switchback.	Machine	VTSV

7.1.4. Core Connector Bridges

Only one bridge is required for these additional connectors. The existing bridge at the Beaver Ponds may need to be refurbished or replaced.

ID	Location	Segment	Status	Land Status
B-C1	Beaver Ponds bridge at dam	Connector	Refurbish or replace	SUP / VTSV



7.2. Development Opportunity Trails

The Grand Loop and core connectors described above form a cohesive, stand-alone plan that will significantly improve access and recreational opportunities within and around the Village. The planning process also identified secondary connectors that could link additional neighborhoods and Village hubs to the Grand Loop, creating smaller loops, more flexible routes, and better residential access.

This section documents those ideas for consideration in future planning or if funding and other circumstances create opportunities

for implementation. Specific alignments will be pursued only after confirming landowner interest and coordinating with related infrastructure projects, such as a potential gondola or redesign of the arrival area, to ensure compatibility and long-term feasibility.

7.2.1. Development Segments

Anticipating less traffic, most connectors are hand-built single-track but follow accessibility guidelines. Several existing informal and proposed new trails cross private property and require negotiating easements with landowners. While each trail will create added benefit to the overall system, none are critical to the function of the main loop.

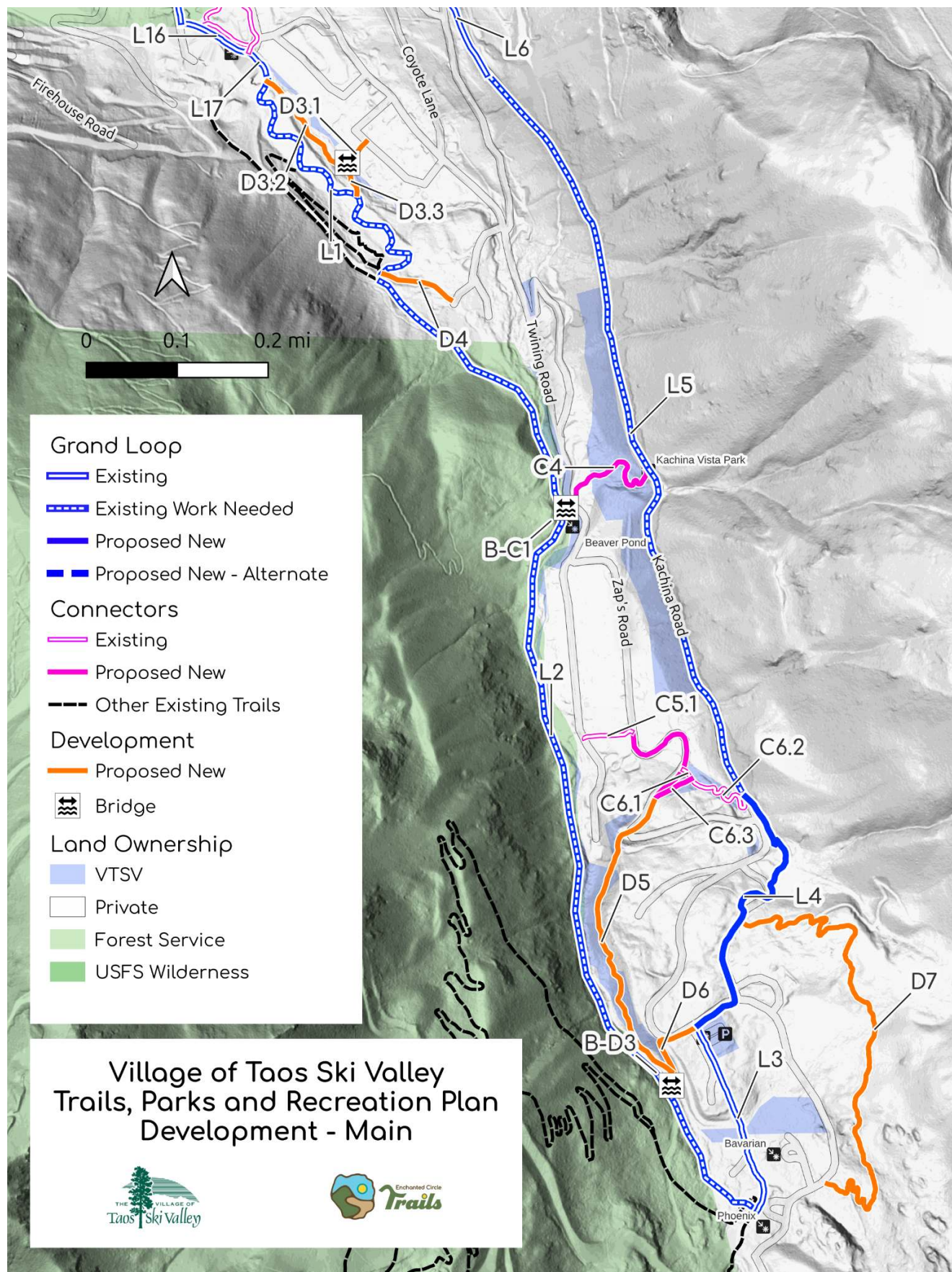
ID	Trail	Miles	Description	Status	Action	Type	Land Status
D1.1	Amizette Wilderness Trail	0.96	Off-highway connection from the west end of the Amizette area through the Wheeler Peak wilderness (bicycles not allowed).	New	Obtain Forest Service approval for the trail and determine whether the landowner is open to a recreational easement for the existing bridge; otherwise, consider a new bridge.	Hand	USFS Private
D1.2	150 Wilderness Connect	0.03	Mid-Amizette connection to south trail.	New	Inquire about easement across private land and feasibility of bridge.	Hand	Private USFS
D2	Municipal Connect	0.09	East-Amizette connection to the north trail.	New	Design-build.	Hand	VTSV USFS
D3.1, 3.2, 3.3	OE Pattison Connections	0.03, 0.13, 0.03	Various access trails for residences at OE Pattison Loop to the pioneer area.	Informal	If the landowner is supportive, negotiate an easement across private land and formalize the bridge.	Hand	Private TSVI

D4	Pioneer Connect	0.08	Connects Phoenix Switchback Road and Pioneer neighborhood to the main loop.	Informal	Investigate whether the existing utility easement can accommodate public trail access.	Machine	Private TSVI
D5	Lakefork Sidehill	0.35	Lower sidehill trail that connects from Rubezahl to the stairway to heaven, avoiding the busy hiker parking area.	Partial	Confirm existing easement. Stabilize the sidehill above private property. Reroute the trail above the creek to reduce the trail slope and avoid riparian impacts. Development will consider gondola implementation.	Hand Machine	Private VTSV
D6	Rubezahl to Hiker Parking	0.10	Connector on the south end of Rubezahl where it ties in with the Williams Lake hiker parking	Existing	Reroute to reduce slope from roadway to stream. Pursue permits for the bridge.	Machine	VTSV SUP USFS
D7	Phoenix to Kachina Vista	0.65	Alternative route to connect the Phoenix/Bavarian area to Kachina Vista Park.	New	Inquire about an easement across private land.	Hand	Private VTSV TSVI

7.2.2. Development Bridges

To establish a sustainable and professionally managed trail network, the Village, landowners, and land managers will consider replacing unsanctioned crossings with formal, legal access points. Well-placed, engineered bridges will provide safe, legal, and predictable access for all residents and visitors. The proliferation of informal crossings demonstrates community interest in access, which can be addressed through formal, public rights of way.

ID	Location	Purpose	Status	Land Status
B-D1	Amizette Mid	Connector	New	Private / USFS
B-D2	OE Pattison Loop to Pioneer	Connector	Informal	Private / TSVI
B-D3	Hiker Parking to Rubezahl	Connector	New	SUP / VTSV





7.3. Future Feasibility Study and Extended Trails

The public process identified additional trails that could improve connectivity within and around the Village. Some require further feasibility analysis and coordination with private landowners, while others extend beyond the Village’s jurisdiction and may be more appropriately led by another land manager. For completeness, these potential trails are described in **Appendix C: Additional Community Requested Trails**.

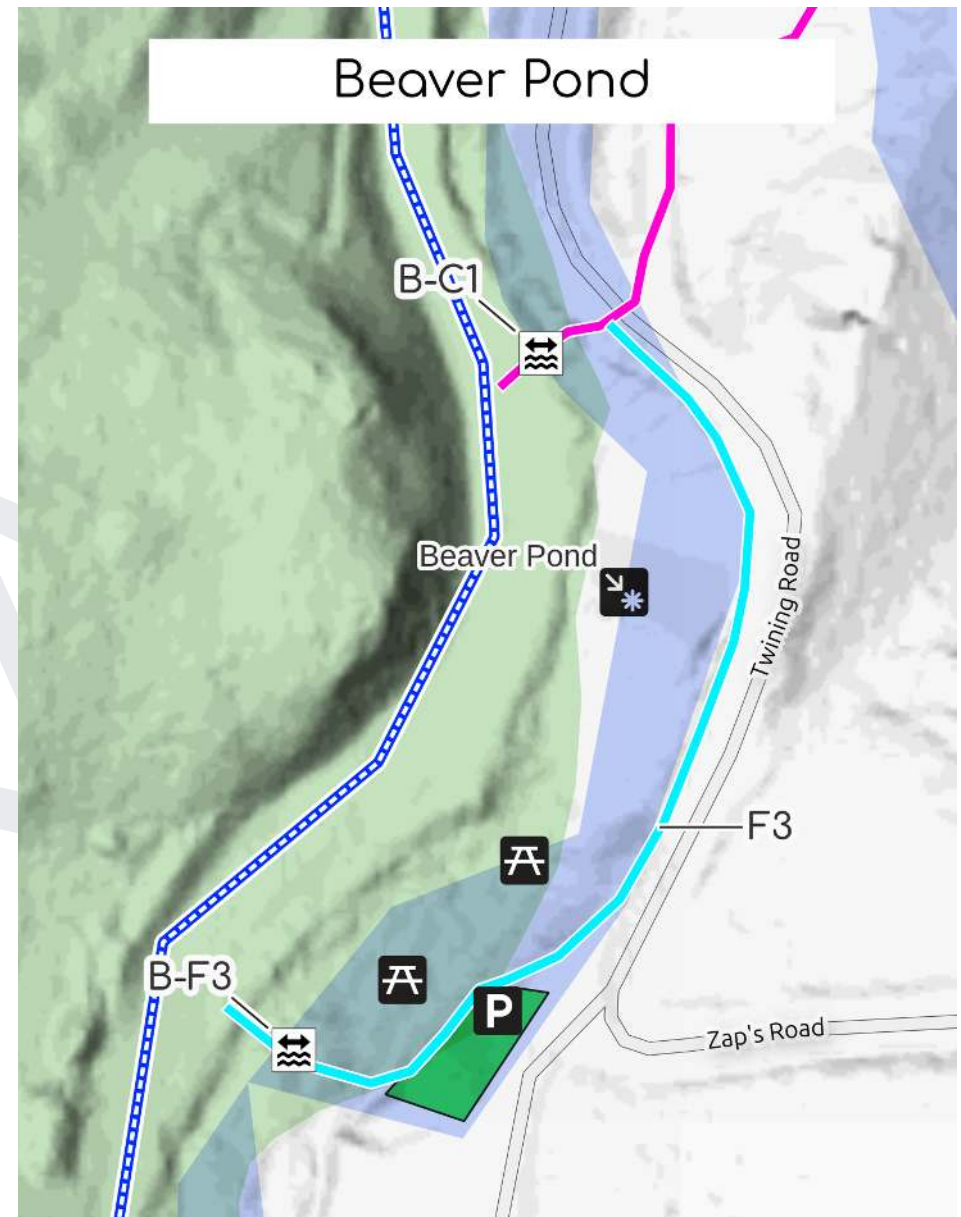
8. Proposed Parks and Greenspaces

8.1. Beaver Pond

The Beaver Pond area presents an opportunity for a small neighborhood-scale park within the proposed trail network. Located along the Rubezahl corridor and adjacent to existing residential areas, it could serve as both a local gathering space and an access point between the lower Rubezahl alignment and Kachina Vista Park. With the addition of the proposed Beaver Pond–Kachina Vista Park connector, the area could also provide a shorter loop option within the broader trail system. The area is already consistently used by residents and visitors for picnicking, stand up paddle boarding and fishing.

Potential improvements may include:

- Removal of trash and debris.
- Selective clearing of deadfall and debris.



- Restoration of disturbed areas with native vegetation.
- Installation of basic amenities such as benches, picnic tables, dog waste stations, and interpretive or wayfinding signage.
- Development of a loop trail parallel to twining road to pull pedestrians off the roadway.

Parking is a significant limitation with limited space and significant road traffic. Formalizing a small parking area at the south end of the site may be desirable to accommodate existing use patterns. Since the area is also used for seasonal snow storage, design considerations will ensure compatibility between winter operations and summer recreational use.

Given the riparian nature of the site, any improvements will be limited in scope and designed to minimize impacts to existing wetland hydrology. Before implementation, site-specific evaluation of drainage patterns, wetland conditions, property ownership, flood behavior, snow storage requirements and impacts, and maintenance requirements will be completed.

Overall, the Beaver Pond area will be considered for a low-impact pocket park that complements the surrounding natural environment.

8.2. Kachina Vista Park Improvement

Kachina Vista Park differs from other park sites in the Village because it functions primarily as a through-access corridor rather than a traditional park. The existing corridor consists of a gravel road cut into a steep side slope, with limited opportunities for expansion beyond the existing bench cut. Despite these constraints, it provides scenic views and an important connection to Kachina

Basin.

Future improvements will maintain emergency and maintenance access for village operations while making the corridor more usable for pedestrians.

Potential improvements may include:

- Defining a pedestrian walking route along the edges of the corridor
- Narrowing or visually defining the vehicle travel lane while maintaining emergency access requirements
- Narrowing vehicle travel to a single lane with periodic pullouts for vehicle passage and maintenance operations
- Establishing native vegetation or low-maintenance landscaping in shoulder areas where feasible
- Installing durable benches, picnic tables, or small gathering areas in locations that do not interfere with vehicle access or snow-clearing operations, or ones that can be moved.
- Removing or consolidating stored materials and equipment that detract from the appearance or usability of the corridor
- Installing access gates at both ends of the park, constructed of materials appropriate for a park setting.

Because the corridor may be used for snow storage and winter maintenance operations, all improvements will be designed to minimize conflicts with plowing and seasonal access needs. Permanent features will be located outside anticipated maintenance areas whenever possible or be removed seasonally.

8.3. Rio Hondo Parcel

The Rio Hondo parcel presents an important opportunity for both trail connectivity and small-scale park development. The parcel occupies a steep side hill between Bull of the Woods Road and the Rio Hondo, with the creek forming its northern boundary. While the topography limits conventional park development, the site contains several locations that could be improved for public access, scenic viewing, and quiet recreation.

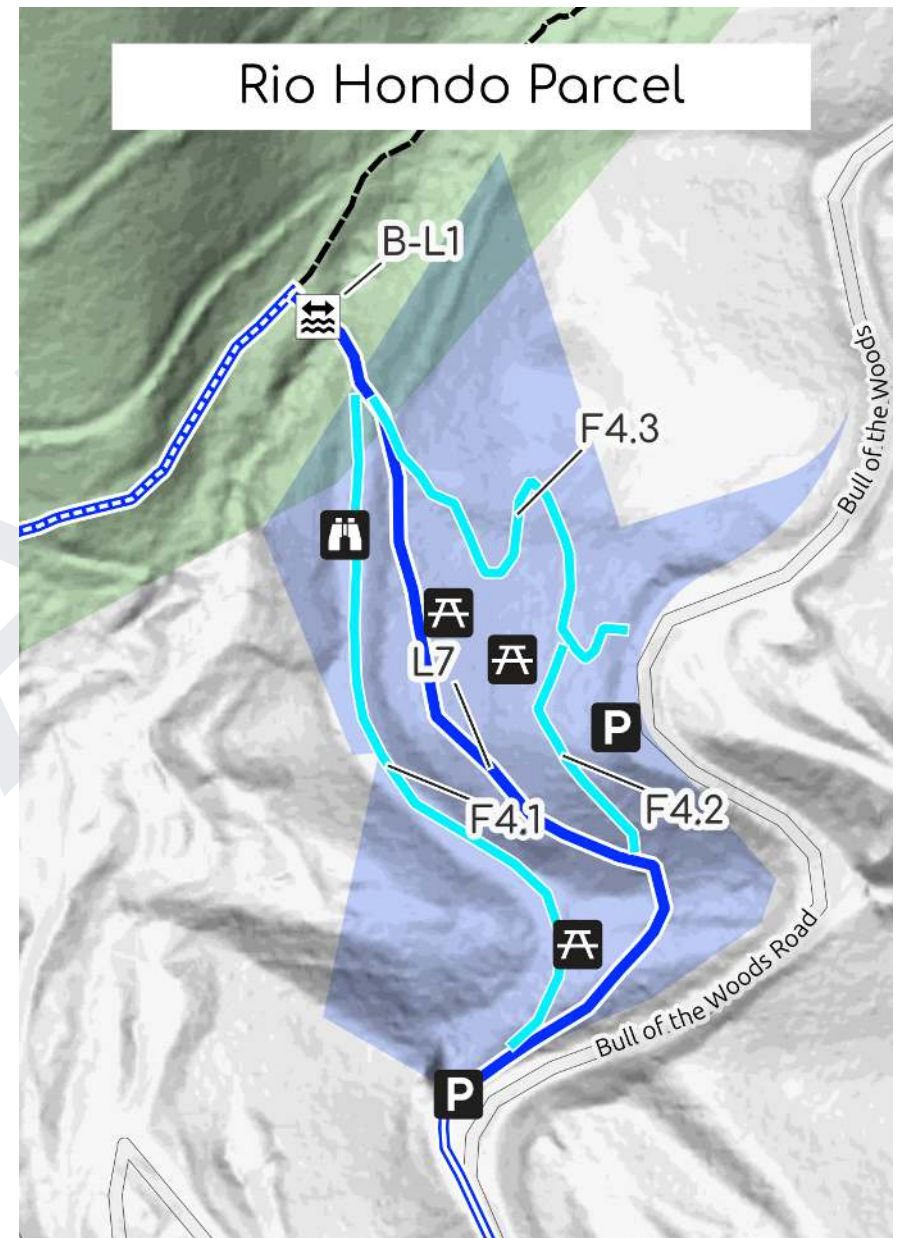
8.3.1. Trail Connectivity

The main loop runs through this parcel as a sidehill connection linking Kachina Vista Park to a new proposed bridge crossing the Rio Hondo connecting to the Bull of the Woods Trail. An existing road cut has previously been considered for this purpose, but a new trail alignment higher on the parcel may provide a cleaner and more sustainable option while avoiding private property. Final alignment will be determined through coordination with the neighboring landowner.

A secondary trail connection could be developed from the Rio Hondo crossing uphill toward the east edge of the parcel and Bull of the Woods Road. This will create a potential link between Bull of the Woods Trail and the Northside trail system if public access to that property is reestablished. Until such access is formalized, this uphill connection will be treated as a future opportunity rather than a core requirement.

8.3.2. Recreation Opportunities

The parcel includes several strong opportunities for small park improvements. Near the north side of the parcel, just south of the



Rio Hondo, the existing road cut provides a scenic overlook toward the Village core and downvalley. This location is well suited for a bench, picnic table, or small rest area.

The southern portion of the parcel includes a seasonal seep or spring running east to west, which may also support a small picnic or gathering area if improvements are carefully placed to avoid riparian impacts.

Potential improvements may include:

- A sidehill trail connecting Kachina Vista Park to the Rio Hondo crossing and Bull of the Woods Trail
- A bench or picnic table at the down-valley overlook near the north side of the parcel
- Limited picnic areas or resting points near the southern seep area, located outside sensitive wet or riparian zones
- Small, benched gathering areas where existing topography allows
- Native revegetation, erosion control, and drainage improvements where trail or park development disturbs soils

Additional improvements may be possible in the broader parcel but will require more substantial design and construction. The north and east portions of the property are steep. Some naturally bench-like pockets may be suitable for modest earthwork to create flat areas for picnic tables, seating, or small grassy openings. More developed amenities, such as a playground, may be physically possible but will require significant grading, retaining structures, drainage design, and careful consideration of cost, maintenance, and visual impacts.

8.3.3. Access and Implementation Considerations

Parking remains one of the parcel's major constraints. Because the road sits above much of the property, direct access is limited by steep terrain. Small parking areas may be possible along the south or east edges of the parcel through engineered retaining walls or parking platforms, but each could likely accommodate only a few vehicles and will need to be evaluated for cost, drainage, snow storage, roadside safety, and visual impacts. Any parking improvements will be considered optional and secondary to the parcel's primary value as a trail connection and small park.

Overall, the priority will be a sustainable trail connection from Kachina Vista Park to the Rio Hondo crossing, paired with modest scenic and picnic improvements. Larger investments, such as engineered parking, retaining structures, and expanded gathering areas, will be evaluated separately through site-specific design and cost analysis.

8.4. Lake Fork Streamside Park

Located near the Williams Lake Trail parking area, this small greenspace includes benches and a picnic table along the Lake Fork. Although currently underused, it could provide a convenient place for hikers and other visitors to rest. Improved signage, better access from the main trail, and basic cleanup and landscaping will make the area more visible and inviting.

8.5. Kachina Bend Park

A Village-owned parcel at the upper end of Kachina Vista Park includes a section of Gunsight Creek and is located near the proposed upper parking area. Adding picnic tables and modest

landscaping could create a small streamside park and resting point along the uphill portion of the Grand Loop.

8.6. Additional Park Facilities

Village residents have expressed a longstanding need for a park with a playground. Such a facility would serve residents and guests and will be considered as future park improvements are planned. The arrival area may offer a suitable location, but other potential sites will also be evaluated with input from the community and the Parks and Recreation Committee.

9. Signage and Wayfinding

Clear signage and a wayfinding system will help make the Village trail and park network easier to use. Signage will help users identify public access points, understand where trails lead, recognize appropriate uses, and avoid unintentionally crossing private property or entering sensitive areas.

9.1. Regional Sign Plan

The Village is partnering with ECTA and other regional entities to develop a coordinated regional sign plan that creates a consistent trail user experience throughout the Enchanted Circle region while still allowing for local identity within the Village.

The regional sign plan will establish design standards, sign hierarchy, placement guidance, naming conventions, and recommendations for durable materials appropriate for high-alpine environments. Sign templates may include trailhead kiosks, directional signs, reassurance markers, regulatory signs, interpretive

signs, and on-trail wayfinding.

From this regional sign strategy, the village will develop a sign plan to define specific locations, purpose, and content for signs.

9.2. Village Sign Plan

9.2.1. Village Signage Placement Guidance

Sign placement will be based on entry points and decision points. Recommended sign placement locations include:

- Primary trailheads, park entrances, and access points
- Junctions between loop trails, connector trails, parks, sidewalks, road crossings, and Forest Service trails
- Road-to-trail and trail-to-road transitions where pedestrians and cyclists need clear guidance
- Locations where public access passes near or through private property or sensitive areas
- Hazard or management areas, including avalanche-prone corridors, steep terrain, winter operations areas, plowed routes, and seasonal closures

Signage will be minimal but complete. Over-signing can clutter the landscape, while under-signing can lead to confusion, trespass, informal trail creation, and safety issues.

9.2.2. Interpretive Signs

Interpretive signage can help educate visitors and residents about the ecological, geological, recreational, and cultural significance of

the area. Potential focus areas include Kachina Vista Park and the Ramming Nature Trail.

Potential topics include riparian systems, hydrology, alpine ecology, watershed health, avalanche terrain, trail stewardship, and the history of the Village.

Interpretive materials related to Taos Pueblo history, culture, traditional lands, or cultural resources will only be developed in coordination with Taos Pueblo through future formal agreements with the Village.

9.3. Sign Maintenance Considerations

Due to the Village's alpine environment, snowfall, freeze-thaw cycles, avalanche exposure, and winter maintenance operations, signage will be designed and positioned for durability and low maintenance. Sign structures will be located where they will not interfere with snow removal, emergency access, trail grooming, drainage, or vehicle circulation.

Where signs are installed near plowed roads, trailheads, or snow storage areas, posts and panels will be placed outside likely plow zones or designed to be removable seasonally.

10. Maintenance and Management

A long-term maintenance and management strategy is essential to ensure the sustainability and safety of the Village's trail and park network. Given that the proposed trail system spans Village-owned property, private parcels secured through easements, and interfaces

with the Carson National Forest, effective stewardship requires a collaborative approach involving Village staff, nonprofit partners, and community volunteers.

10.1. Village Staff

Village staff may be best suited to provide core maintenance on trails and parks located on Village-owned property. Their responsibilities may include regular inspection, upkeep of trailhead infrastructure (e.g., Kachina Vista Park and Beaver Pond area), removal of trash and debris, and basic trail maintenance (e.g., clearing minor fallen trees and drainage issues). They will also serve as the primary liaison between the Village Council and all stewardship partners, including ECTA, the Carson National Forest, private landowners, and volunteers.

10.2. Adopt-A-Trail Pilot Program

A formal Village Adopt-a-Trail program could engage local businesses, community groups, neighborhood associations, and individual volunteers in regular inspections, cleanup, and basic maintenance of designated trails and greenspaces. The program could be administered by an outside organization such as ECTA, which would coordinate volunteers and manage any necessary agreements with the Village and other land managers.

In 2026, the Village Parks and Recreation Committee piloted an adopt-a-trail program on Village-managed trails and lands. Participating volunteers regularly inspect adopted areas, remove trash, and report maintenance needs or other concerns. Building on this effort could expand community participation and strengthen stewardship of the Village's trails and public spaces.

10.3. Specialized & Large-Scale Maintenance

For specialized or large-scale projects requiring technical skill or professional equipment, the Village will contract with experienced trail construction outfits. This may include local non-profits, such as ECTA or Rocky Mountain Youth Corps. This allows larger or more technical projects and trail management to be completed by experienced trail crews without relying solely on Village staff and volunteers.

11. Implementation Steps

11.1. Initiate Coordination with Land Owners and Managers

Successful implementation and long-term sustainability of the trail and park plan depend on collaborative, ongoing communication with all adjacent land managers, with formal, documented approval required for any work impacting private property.

During this planning process, some initial conversations with private landowners have begun, but the Village must secure formal agreements, easements, or land acquisitions before implementation.

Both the Carson National Forest and TSVI are open to connecting the proposed trail networks, but implementation with these entities requires establishing clear action plans with the respective agency before on-the-ground efforts can begin.

Furthermore, open and ongoing discussions with Taos Pueblo are essential to ensure that trail and park implementation respects

cultural and traditional land uses.

11.2. Prioritizing Trail Segments

Implementation will occur in phases, recognizing that the proposed network includes existing routes, public lands, and potential easements and will require many individual projects over time.

Projects will be prioritized based on how well they:

- Improve or refurbish existing facilities and assets;
- Provide recreational opportunities not currently available in the Village;
- Preserve or enhance the appearance and character of the Village;
- Benefit a broad range of residents, guests, and visitors; and
- Address identified safety concerns.

Prioritization will also consider cost, feasibility, readiness, implementation timeline, land ownership and access, and required approvals and permits.

Near-term work will focus on connecting, improving, and increasing the visibility of existing trail segments that can become part of the Grand Loop. At the same time, the Village will begin planning and coordination for projects with longer lead times, including environmental review and permitting by the Carson National Forest, roadway improvements requiring coordination with NMDOT, and projects requiring easements or agreements with private landowners.

The Parks and Recreation Committee will review and update this plan approximately every five years to reflect completed projects, progress on permits and access agreements, and changing community needs.

11.3. Potential Funding

Implementation of this project will require a diversified funding strategy combining federal, state, and private sources. Early funding efforts will focus on planning, access, and design tasks that position the project to compete successfully for larger construction grants

11.3.1. Potential Funding Opportunities:

Funding Source	Description & Fit	Eligibility / Match Notes	Relative Likelihood
Trails+ Grant (NM Outdoor Recreation Division)	Funds planning, development, and improvement of trail infrastructure, including trailheads and signage.	Open to municipalities, counties, and non-profits; requires a 2:1 match and shovel-ready documentation.	High
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	Federal program (FHWA/state DOT) for trail construction, rehabilitation, and trail-related facilities.	Public access required; typically 80/20 match; administered by NMDOT.	High
Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	Federal program supporting land acquisition and recreation access; potential funding for easements or trailhead parcels.	Longer review process; typically requires a 1:1 match.	Medium
IMBA Trail Accelerator Grant	Supports planning and design of bike-optimized or shared-use trails; ideal for refining alignments and generating detailed design documents.	Smaller award amounts; early-phase funding.	High
American Trails Trails Capacity Program	Funds stewardship training, volunteer programs, and maintenance planning.	Best suited for post-construction stewardship and signage.	Medium

Federal Lands Access Program	Improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands.	Typically 15% match. Future funding uncertain.	High
Outdoor Equity Fund (NM ORD)	Supports youth engagement and interpretation; complements infrastructure with education and inclusion.	Smaller awards; non-capital uses.	Low
Regional Recreation Centers / Quality of Life Grant (NM DFA)	Provides capital for regional recreation facilities, including trailheads and staging areas.	Requires a match; subject to state fiscal-year cycles.	High
National Trails Fund / American Hiking Society	Private grants for small-scale trail improvements, signage, or volunteer programs.	Smaller scope; can provide local match.	Low – Medium
National Park Foundation Rivers & Trails Program	Supports projects enhancing public access and cultural interpretation.	Competitive, partnership-based.	Medium
Local and Private Partnerships	Business sponsorships, community donations, and in-kind matches (volunteer labor, materials, and land access).	Strengthens competitiveness of major grant applications.	High

*Likelihood reflects the general alignment of each program with the project scope and typical competitiveness for similar rural trail systems

11.3.2. Funding Match Sources

Most grants require the recipient to procure a certain percentage of matching funds. The Village may secure matching funds from volunteer labor, Village staff time, and the NM Match Fund Program, as well as Development Impact Fees.

11.4. Secure Legal and Public Access

Trails can be established through private property through either

easements or fee-simple acquisition. The selection between these two mechanisms depends on a number of factors, including the specific use, the property's ecological sensitivity, liability considerations, and the required scope of infrastructure.

11.4.1. Easement

A recreational trail easement is a recorded legal agreement that allows the Village to construct and maintain a trail across privately owned land and permit public use of it while the underlying property remains in private ownership. Easements are commonly used to

secure long-term public access and can be purchased at market value or donated by the landowner.

Easements are perpetual and run with the land, remaining in effect through future property transfers. They typically define the corridor location, permitted uses, legal responsibilities, access rights, trespassing restrictions, and operational authority associated with the trail. Common rights include trail construction, maintenance access, drainage improvements, signage, and bridges. Agreements specify permitted uses such as walking, bicycling, horseback riding, or skiing, while prohibiting unauthorized motorized use.

- **Benefits:** Preserves private ownership while securing public access; generally less expensive and time-consuming than fee-simple acquisition.
- **Drawbacks:** Limits the Village's control over the property; requires ongoing, clear communication and maintenance adherence to prevent legal challenges that could void the easement.

11.4.2. Liability and Risk Management

Liability will be addressed in any easement, landowner agreement, or acquisition associated with public trail access. While New Mexico law provides certain protections for landowners who allow recreational use without charge, those protections are not a substitute for clear agreements and maintenance commitments.

Agreements will clearly define responsibility for trail construction, maintenance, inspections, signage, hazard response, insurance, and public use management.

11.4.3. Fee-Simple Acquisition

Fee-simple acquisition involves the Village purchasing or accepting the donation of full, outright ownership of the land corridor intended for the trail. Unlike an easement, fee-simple acquisition transfers the property title entirely to the Village, granting the municipality complete control over the land, its management, and its ultimate disposal.

This approach is best utilized for critical trail junctions, trailheads, highly sensitive ecological areas, or segments requiring extensive infrastructure (such as parking lots, restrooms, major retaining structures, or public gathering spaces) where partial ownership could create operational friction.

Fee-simple ownership can be achieved through negotiated market-value purchases, negotiated trades of land, or partial/full donations from civic-minded landowners (which may offer tax benefits to the donor). This provides the highest level of legal security and operational flexibility for the Village.

11.5. Other Considerations in Design and Implementation

Once access locations have been confirmed, professional design services will be engaged to develop trailhead, parking, and park plans. The plans will address an array of factors including:

- Parking capacity, circulation, and snow storage in the winter
- Accessible routes and staging areas
- Trailhead amenities like signage, kiosks, trash disposal, dog waste stations, and restrooms

- Stormwater management, erosion control, avalanche-prone locations, private property boundaries, and neighborhood interface considerations
- Park design in a subalpine environment

These designs will generate cost estimates and shovel-ready documentation necessary for grant applications and land manager review.

11.6. Stewardship and Maintenance

During implementation planning, the Village will assign maintenance responsibility for each trail, bridge, trailhead, and park before construction or public promotion. These responsibilities should be documented with relevant partners, including the Carson National Forest, TSVI, private landowners, ECTA, volunteer resident groups, or other stewardship entities as appropriate.

11.7. Evaluation and Monitoring

The Village and partners will periodically assess trail condition, user experience, maintenance needs, and environmental impacts on a systematic and consistent basis.

12. Conclusion

The Village of Taos Ski Valley has an opportunity to turn a fragmented collection of trails, roads, informal routes, and parks into a more connected and usable system. This plan does not assume that every proposed trail or park will be built exactly as shown. Instead, it provides an overall concept of the Grand Loop and connectors and a framework for moving forward carefully: securing

legal access where needed, coordinating with landowners and land managers, protecting sensitive resources, designing trails that can be maintained, and building the system in phases as funding and capacity allow. If implemented thoughtfully, these recommendations can improve safety and mobility, expand accessible and family-friendly recreation, and strengthen trails and parks as practical community infrastructure.

