



MEMORANDUM

New Proposed City Project for Consideration for the 2025-2030 CIP: Extension of Reber Trail to Soundview Avenue

Item Type: Action Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
Date: September 9, 2024
From: Jenny Carroll, Special Projects and Communications Coordinator
Through: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

After the August 26, 2024 City Council worksession on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), Councilmember Davis proposed a new City project for consideration for the CIP: an extension of Reber Trail to connect to Soundview Avenue.

The new project description is presented here for City Council consideration when amending and adopting the 2025-2030 CIP at their September 9, 2024 Regular Meeting via action on Resolution 24-100.

The project was discussed by staff at the City's Development Workgroup after the proposal was brought forward. The trail would be designed to a Level 1 to Level 3 (as described on page 16 in the City's [Trail Manual Design Criteria](#)) – as an informal trail with natural surfaces.

At Level 1 to 3, no City trail maintenance equipment will fit on the trail and will require additional staff time to perform annual brush cutting and weed whacking to maintain the trail.

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Adoption of this project into the CIP requires Council approval through a formal motion. (Please note, the September 4, 2024 Memo CC-24-190 accompanying Resolution 24-100 did not include this new proposed project.)



Extension of Reber Trail to Soundview Avenue

Project nominated by Councilmember Davis

Project Description and Benefit: The Reber Trail, completed in 2009, is a .38 mile trail connecting the west end of Fairview Avenue to Reber Road off West Hill through a series of switchbacks. This project extends the trail by 750-800 feet by creating a route from the base of Reber Trail on Fairview, along a ridge and down to Soundview Avenue.

Securing the legal easements necessary preserves access to non-motorized travel opportunities. Completion of this project will improve non-motorized transportation options for residents on the west side of Homer. The extension provides more direct trail connectivity to walkers and hikers from the Soundview, Shelley Avenue and West Homer Elementary area, avoiding a detour to either West Hill or Mulliken. It also allows residents in the vicinity of Reber Road on West Hill (Alpine Way, Wythe Way, Miller, Highland Drive, Bell Avenue and above) to more easily access Soundview Avenue and West Homer Elementary School via a beautiful nature trail, rather using the much more circuitous and hazardous route down West Hill Road.

Plans & Progress: The trail is envisioned to be designed as a Level 1 (Backcountry) to Level 3 (Semi-improved) trail, as described in the City's Trail Manual Design Criteria - an informal trail with natural surfaces. Development would progress in two phases. Phase one requires easement acquisition, survey and trail design. Phase 2 is construction.

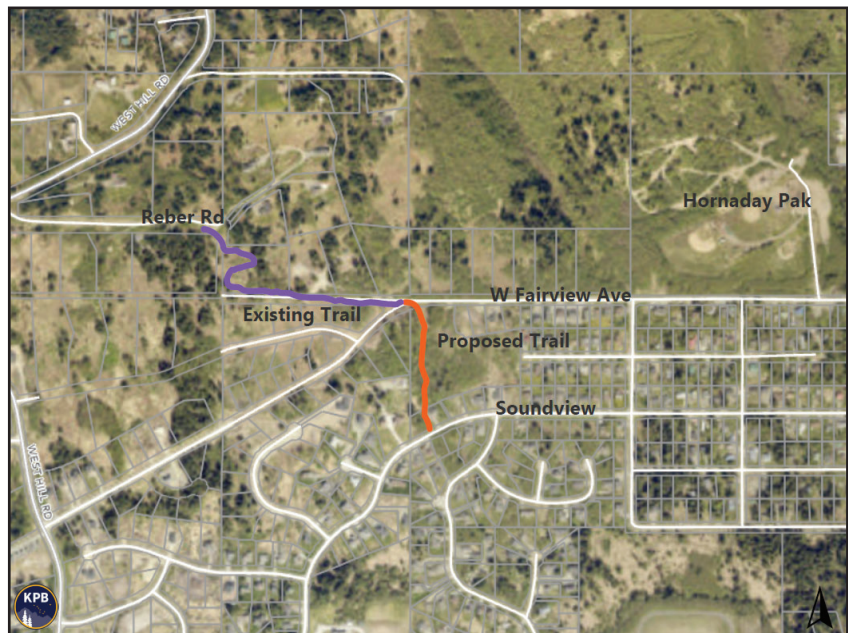
Total Project Cost: \$310,000

Phase 1: Easement acquisition, survey and design: \$60,000

Phase 2: Construction: \$250,000

Schedule: 2026 - 2028

Priority Level:



Map of potential corridor for trail extension. Please note: map is only for illustrative purposes as no design work has been done.

FY26 PROPOSED NEW PROJECTS - DRAFT

From: [Kelly Cooper](#)
To: [Renee Krause](#)
Subject: FW: R2024-037
Date: Monday, September 9, 2024 2:29:26 PM
Attachments: [R2024-037.pdf](#)
[R2024-037 Memo.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi Renee,

I don't have a report tonight. Nothing newsworthy. But I have attached the approved resolution and memo regarding the Tourism Working Group. Will you forward to the council please.

Thanks!

Kelly Cooper
P.O. Box 404
Homer, AK 99603
907-299-1519

From: Turner, Michele <MicheleTurner@kpb.us>
Sent: Monday, September 9, 2024 1:33 PM
To: Cooper, Kelly <kcooper@kpb.us>
Subject: R2024-037

Hi Kelly,

Per your request, please see attached.

Thank you,

Michele

Michele Turner - CMC
Borough Clerk
Direct: (907) 714-2162 **Office:** (907) 714-2160

PUBLIC RECORDS LAW DISCLOSURE: This email and responses to this email may be considered a public record under the law.

August 1 – Candidate Filing Period Opens 8:00 am
August 6 – Assembly Meeting (Homer)
August 15 – Candidate Filing Period Closes 4:30 pm
September 4 thru 6 – Logic and Accuracy Testing Election Equipment

September 16 – Borough/City Absentee In-Person Voting Sites Open
September 23 – Canvass Board Begins Meeting
September 24 – Requests for Absentee By Mail Deadline
September 30 – Request for Absentee By Fax Deadline
October 1 – ELECTION DAY

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brent Johnson, Assembly President
Members, KPB Assembly

FROM: Kelly Cooper, Assembly Member *KC*
Peter A. Micciche, Mayor *PAM*

DATE: August 22, 2024

SUBJECT: Resolution 2024- 037, Establishing a Tourism Industry Working Group to Evaluate the Balance Between Positive and Negative Tourism-Related Impacts on Kenai Peninsula Borough Costs and Services (Mayor, Cooper)

Since 2017 the question of a bed tax has been brought before the Assembly multiple times. The timing of the proposed ballot question inevitably occurs during the tourist season. Members of this industry have repeatedly asked to be part of the discussion and would like to participate in policy discussions that will have significant impacts on their industry. We believe a collaborative approach is in the best interests of all involved and is the only way to achieve stakeholder buy-in.

This Resolution will form a Tourism Industry Working Group (TISG) to evaluate tourism benefits and impacts on current revenue, costs and services and discuss potential options or ideas, and associated data, for ensuring that visitors are paying their fair share for services they use. The working group will provide a final written report to present to the Assembly.

Your consideration is appreciated.

Introduced by:	Mayor, Cooper
Date:	09/03/24
Action:	Adopted as Amended
Vote:	8 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION 2024-037**

**A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A TOURISM INDUSTRY WORKING GROUP TO
EVALUATE THE BALANCE BETWEEN POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE TOURISM-
RELATED IMPACTS ON KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH COSTS AND SERVICES**

WHEREAS, in recent years the question of a "bed tax" has been brought before the Assembly on multiple occasions unsuccessfully due to inadequate stakeholder processes and data gathering; and

WHEREAS, prior to moving forward with new policy for voter approval, the Assembly would benefit from community and industry engagement and economic data collection to evaluate the issue and consider various perspectives; and

WHEREAS, increased participation in local elections and an informed and engaged citizenry is of paramount importance in a democratic republic form of government; and

WHEREAS, a collaborative approach should also include the incorporated cities and affected service providers from the industry within the Kenai Peninsula Borough to find equitable solutions; and

WHEREAS, this working group will meet during the winter months and provide a report to the Assembly before the 2025 tourism season begins, thereby allowing full participating in this process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH:

SECTION 1. That the Assembly hereby forms the Tourism Industry Working Group ("TIWG") and directs the TIWG to focus its meetings on evaluating tourism benefits and impacts on current Borough revenue, costs, and services; discussing potential options or ideas, and associated data, for ensuring that visitors are paying their fair share for services they use; and assessing the anticipated affects of a potential bed tax. The working group will provide a final written report to present to the Assembly.

SECTION 2. That the members of the working group will include seven voting members and three ex-officio non-voting members comprised as follows: three tourism-related industry representatives appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Assembly (3); four community members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Assembly (4); and three ex-officio, non-voting members comprised of the Borough Mayor and two Assembly members appointed by the Assembly President to participate in the debate and discussion (3). Appropriate public notice will be given by the September 17, 2024 Assembly meeting describing how KPB residents can apply to be a tourism-related industry representative or community member appointee to the Tourism Industry Working Group.

SECTION 3. That all six incorporated cities within the Kenai Peninsula Borough are invited and encouraged to have a representative attend the working groups and join as a non-voting participant in this collaborative working group discussion.

SECTION 4. That the TIWG's first meeting may not occur prior to October 22, 2024 and the last meeting the working group must occur prior to April 15, 2025. Unless extended by the Assembly, the report of the working group must be provided to the Assembly by April 30, 2025.

SECTION 5. That, subject to availability, the working group will be staffed and noticed by the KPB's Clerk's Office, and Legal Department. Notice will be provided through the internet on the KPB website and posted at 144 N. Binkley St., Soldotna, AK 99669.

SECTION 6. That the working group is subject to the Alaska Open Meetings Act and will use Robert's Rules of Order to conduct business.

SECTION 7. That the working group is not authorized to act or communicate on behalf of the Borough other than to provide a written report containing its final recommendations to the Assembly.

SECTION 8. That this resolution takes effect immediately.

ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 3RD DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2024.

Brent Johnson

Brent Johnson, Assembly President

ATTEST:

Michele Turner

Michele Turner, CMC, Borough Clerk



Yes: Cooper, Cox, Ecklund, Elam, Ribbens, Tunseth, Tupper, Johnson
No: None
Absent: Hibbert

Homer City and Alaska Japanese Club have been celebrating the 40th Anniversary of our relationship with our sister city, Teshio in Hokkaido, Japan. Steve and Noko Yoshida with their group established exchange students' programs. For the past 15 years, Homer and Teshio's high school students have exchanged schools and carried memorable experiences to share back home.

The first exchange student from Homer to Teshio in 1986 was Julie Jones. She is now a director for Department of the Air Force Inspector General in Washington, D.C. and recently visited Teshio with her children, Sophia and Parker, who are in 5th grade. While visiting, Mrs. Jones shared her experiences with current Teshio High School students. They joined a tea ceremony at an afterschool program, tasting Matcha green tea with a Japanese sweet using one toothpick, and learning how to drink the green tea when they were served it by the students who made fresh the Matcha green tea in the Japanese Tatami room.

Her children met Japanese 5th graders. Together they made green tea during the lunch break at Teshio Elementary School. They used chopsticks to eat hot lunch with them. Those Japanese 5th graders have been learning English language, so they greeted the visitors from the United States in English.

Charlie Anderson, a former exchange student to Teshio, and his friends will visit Teshio soon. I have been coordinating with Teshio for their trip as well as I had coordinated with Cathy Stingley, her granddaughter and her friend to visit Teshio this past spring. Teshio requested Charlie Anderson's group share photos from Homer, and Teshio will show photos from Teshio during their visit. We appreciate that the groups can show videos or photos to our student delegation who are planning to visit Teshio next May.

Our Alaska Japanese Club has great relationships with Teshio through online sessions, exchange cards, the sister city program and student delegation. Students in the club made 70 chopstick holders to gift to Mayor Yoshida, to Town Council members, to staff from The Town of Teshio and to Teshio Junior High School students to show appreciation of our relationships. We appreciate that Teshio has been hosting visitors from Homer and Washington D.C. especially this year.

We appreciate that Cathy Stingley, her granddaughter and her friend, made 50 chopstick holders with an instructor from Teshio to use for fundraising for Homer's student delegation to Teshio next spring. We are thankful for Teshio's generosity.

Back in 2019, I became a liaison of the sister city project. Mayor Ken Castner was hoping that the sister city relationship would be developed strongly again. Mayor Ken Castner, Rachel Friedlander, the first former coordinator, two committees that included Flo Larson, Terri Spogilmeyer and I decided to send special gifts to share with Town Teshio while my family and I were visiting Japan. In March of that same year, former Teshio Mayor Asada passed away. Their new mayor Hiroyuki Sasaki at that time and Mayor Ken Castner sent and received a letter greeting each other and sharing their sympathies for their dear loss, Mayor Sasaki and his family. I have been translating both languages since then.

In 2020, I was invited to the City Council Meeting right after my family and I came back from Japan. I reported to Mayor Ken Castner and the council we gave gifts to Teshio which were pins of the state and the city of Homer and some of Gary Lyon's wildlife paintings which represent Homer and some letters from Mayor Ken Caster and Gary Lyon with my translations. We also sent some pictures from Tomas Sulczynski who is an IT analyst, City of Homer, and created a homemade Samurai costume. Former Teshio Mayor Asada and his staff appreciated the gifts and letters from us.

Meanwhile, the students from six elementary schools in Homer and Anchor Point, Alaska participated in a project called "Friendship without Boundaries" emphasizing living in harmony which develops true friendship. The elementary school children painted 1000 canvas panels, 22 inches by 22 inches each to make into 8 banners. The materials were donated by NOMAR. Downtown Rotary Club purchased art materials. These 1000 individual paintings were hung in Homer High School commons area and in the auditorium the night of the Peace Concert led by Mark Robinson and Kyle Schnieder. These two conductors took two of the banners to display in their concert trip to France and Belgium. One of these peace banners was mailed to Teshio Junior High School by Kakogawa Rotary Club and Teshio Rotary Club in Japan. Around that time, Downtown Rotary Club mailed gifts which included pictures and postcards by Gary Lyon along with the letters from students in the Japanese class from West Homer, Mayor Ken Castner, West Homer Principal and Downtown Rotary Club with my translations. Town Teshio published this article in their local magazine. One of the other beautiful banners is displayed at Homer Public Library with my translations.

That same year, the pandemic of the novel virus had placed many activities and new life styles such as the mandates of distancing, online callings and zoom meetings. During the pandemic, the Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage had started to launch the Japan- Alaska Sister City Forum to promote and develop each sister city in Alaska and Japan. They had already held different online forums through the past years. During the Covid, our second former sister city coordinator, Rachel Tussey, and our fourth coordinator, Dave Berry and I participated in those online forums to meet other sister city coordinators and share ideas or information about each sister city updates. I worked as an interpreter for a couple of different online events. One event was the Youth Online Forums with students who were from 9th grades to college in Alaska and Japan and Japan- Alaska Sister City -Town Pride FESTA in January, 2023. A good and surprising news is that the first place was a video about the Haiku club activities from Ryo Ueda who is a current host family for Cathy Stingley's group in Teshio. The third place was the art project from Alaska Japanese Club, which is called "Connections between Teshio in Hokkaido and Taishi in Hyogo in Japan and City of Homer in Alaska, United States". Kevin Co from Homer also won a prize with the theme of the Ginko seeds that survived from the atomic bombing in Hiroshima.

In 2022, when after school programs were reopened, I started to have Japanese class at West Homer and Paul Banks once a week for school year. Japanese International Exchange established

the online class sessions and pen pals' activities with students from Teshio Junior High School, Teshio High School in Hokkaido and Taishi High School in Hyogo in Japan.

In 2023, we had a total of 7 sessions with students from 3rd grades to 6th grades, and 3 sessions with some Homer High School students. Last school year, we had a total of 4 online sessions and pen pal activities with those schools.

All students, from toddlers through adults in Alaska Japanese Club, now have an opportunity to learn the rhythm, lyrics and tempo through Taiko drumming. Some students in the club also learned some Japanese songs called *Believe* and *Sakura, Sakura* which means cherry blossoms.

Town Teshio and Alaska Japanese Club have continued strong relationships since 2019 with a peace banner project, online class sessions, sister city project, and now student delegations. I strongly believe these great experiences help young generations have great opportunities to carry on our sister city projects. People who have had amazing experiences usually like to share their experiences with people who have never had those same opportunities before. It is possible they would pass this program onto their next generation. I think that our next generations are the ones who will serve our community, our society and our country the same way as those Japanese students are doing in their home town.

It's essential for us to establish the environment or circumstances to pass on this sister city program to the next generation. Since I became a liaison of our sister city, both mayors are hoping that our relationship will keep developing a strong relationship with each other in the future.

Megumi Beams
Sister City Liaison/ Interpreter
Japanese International Exchange Coordinator/ Instructor
Alaska Japanese Club Director