



# City of Homer

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## MEMORANDUM 21-171

To: City Council

Through: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager

From: Janette Keiser, PE, Public Works Director

Date: October 3, 2022

Subject: Adoption of City of Homer 2022 Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails Implementation Plan

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**Issue:** The purpose of this memorandum is to recommend adoption of the City of Homer 2022 Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails Implementation Plan.

**Background:** The first City of Homer Comprehensive Sidewalk and Trail Plan for the Homer Area was developed in 1984. It was updated in the form of a Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails Plan (NMTTP), developed *circa* 1996 and adopted in 2004. The 2004 NMTTP has been universally recognized as being outdated. We are planning to update it as part of the Master Transportation Plan update process, which is currently underway. In the meantime, new land uses, real estate developments and strategies have emerged, which require immediate attention. Earlier this year, staff developed a 2022 Implementation Plan to serve as an interim work plan to guide the development of non-motorized transportation within the City in the near future, until such time as the updated NMTTP was complete.

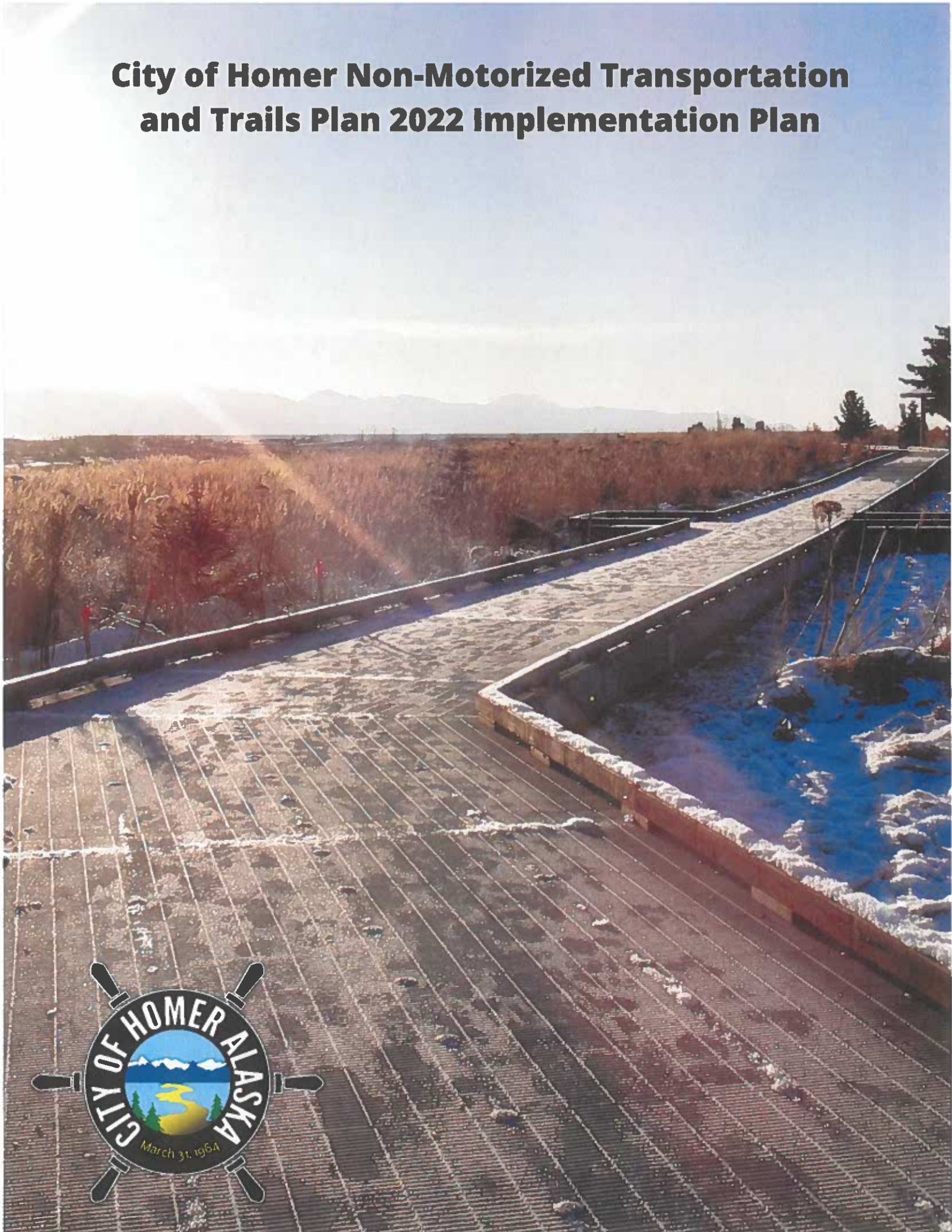
We reviewed the 2022 Implementation Plan with the Park, Arts, Recreation and Culture Commission, which endorsed it. The 2022 Implementation Plan has not yet been adopted by the City Council.

The City Council is planning to amend HCC 11.04, which addresses the design and construction of new streets in the City, which are planned to be adopted for City maintenance. The purpose of the amendments is to require such new streets, unless exempted, to include provisions for non-motorized transportation. The amendments, among other things refers to the 2022 Implementation Plan. The City Council should formally adopt the 2022 Implementation Plan, with the understanding that it will expire on the date the City Council adopts the updated Non-Motorized Trails and transportation Plan, which is expected to be in late 2023.

### Recommendations:

That the City Council pass a resolution adopting the 2022 Implementation Plan to the Non-Motorized Transportation & Trails Plan.

# City of Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails Plan 2022 Implementation Plan





**City of Homer**  
**Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails Plan**  
**2022 Supplement**

**I. Overview**

The City of Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails Plan (“NMTTP”) was created by DOWL Engineers in 2004 as a planning document to guide the development of trails, paths, and sidewalks in the City of Homer. This 2022 Supplement does not necessarily replace the 2004 NMTTP. Rather, it addresses some immediate issues related to new/pending development, changing priorities, resources, and standards to facilitate sensible near-term planning and implementation of non-motorized transportation. A more comprehensive replacement NMTTP will be developed later.

This Supplement was developed by a team consisting of:

- Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
- Rick Aboud, Planning Director
- Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner
- Matt Steffy, Parks Superintendent
- Aaron Yeaton, GIS Technician
- Janette Keiser, PE, Public Works Director



**II. Approach**

This Supplement considered possible non-motorized transportation routes from two perspectives:

- Perspective #1 – Which areas of the City, affected by recent or proposed development as well as important destinations, would benefit from new non-motorized transportation routes?
- Perspective #2 – Where were new routes needed to improve the function of existing non-motorized routes by providing connectivity or accessibility?

**Perspective #1 – Which areas of the City, affected by recent or proposed development as well as important destinations, would benefit from non-motorized transportation routes?**

The team identified four primary Areas of Interest, shown in Figure A. These areas were selected because of the extent to which recent development has affected, or the potential for future development could affect, the way people flow from the developments to important destinations. Further the four areas were identified as high priority due to their lack of non-motorized infrastructure as well as their proximity to schools, new residential construction, and recreational opportunities.

**Area of Interest #1 – West Homer (See Figure B)**

This area is currently undergoing rapid development. The City is attempting to address pedestrian access through this area by coordinating with developers involved with on-going design/construction as well as adjacent land owners. For example, West Fairview Avenue will be connected to Eric Lane, as part of a pending development. This connection should have a sidewalk/path at least on one side. Further,

discussions are underway with a landowner at the current terminus of West Fairview to develop trails across their property that would connect Fairview Avenue south to Soundview Avenue by accessing a City culvert easement.



*Fairview Ave looking east*

The Reber Trail currently connects to the terminus of West Fairview Avenue, providing a popular scenic hike and transportation route to Reber Road off of West Hill Road. Trails counters have measured up to 500 people per week using this trail. The northern-most 300 feet is steep, making it very difficult for most users to climb year round, and particularly dangerous in the winter. This section needs an additional switchback to improve the accessibility of this trail.

Fairview Avenue should allow non-motorized use from Bartlett Street to West Hill Road, through a combination of widened shoulders, sidewalks and trails. Connectivity to West Hill could be through Seascape Drive.

A non-motorized route on West Hill Road should be installed to direct pedestrians and bicyclists from the Sterling Highway to the Reber Trail. This would protect non-motorized traffic from the most dangerous switchback on West Hill Road. It would also connect with the City's non-motorized network, at Eric Lane and further north, at the Reber Trail.

The Karen Hornaday Park should be connected with a wilderness trail to a City-owned parcel on the ridge above the Park. This would provide access to, and use of, this parcel.

### **Area of Interest #2 – East Homer (See Figure C)**

There has been, and continues to be, a lot of development in this area, which is home to multiple important destinations including the Quiet Creek residential subdivision, Homer High School and Glacier View Baptist Church. There are dedicated trail easements in the Quiet Creek subdivision that should connect to the existing trail system on the High School property.

There is a small connector that comes down South Slope Drive to (New) Nelson Avenue that should be developed and maintained.

There is also a dedicated easement that connects Old Nelson Avenue to the High School and the Glacier View Baptist Church and ultimately, to the existing sidewalk along East End Road. A path should be developed in this easement.



*South Slope Connector Path*

### **Area of Interest #3 – Town Center (See Figure D)**



*ADA ramp on Poopdeck Extension Trail*

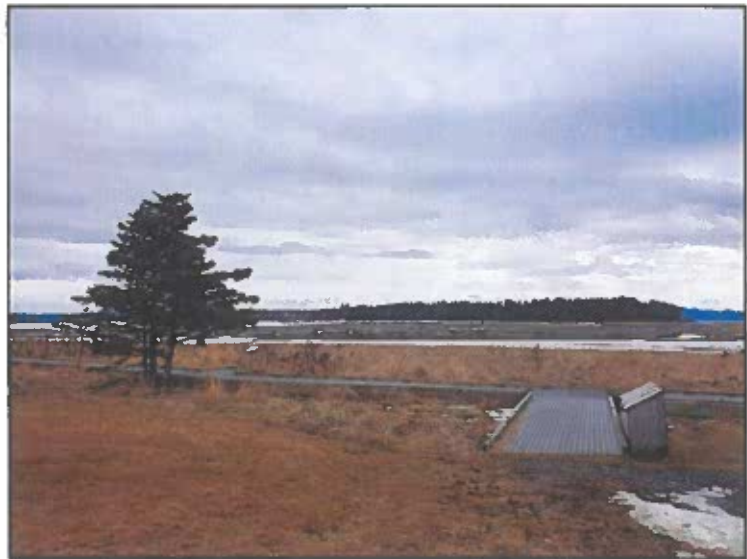
The Town Center consists of a mixture of land ownership, including Cook Inlet Regional Incorporated, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, City of Homer, and various private parcels. Access is needed from east to west branching off of the existing Poopdeck Trail system. The Poopdeck Trail system is one of Homer’s most popular trails. Trail counters have measured up to 160 users/week.

### **Area of Interest #4 – Beluga Slough (See Figure E)**

The Beluga Slough area, rich natural resources, is owned/maintained by the USFWS and the City of Homer. There is an existing boardwalk and trail that connects the Islands and Oceans Visitor Center with Bishop’s Beach Park. Numerous local natural resource agencies have expressed a high level of interest in extending the boardwalk to prevent pedestrians from straying into the slough, and its surrounding wetlands. This is because this straying adversely impacts the slough’s ecological function as well as breeding migratory birds. Also, the slough is listed as salmon habitat in Alaska’s anadromous inventory.

The goal is to ultimately connect the boardwalk from its existing location to the intersection of Lake Street and the Sterling Highway. There are two possible ways of accomplishing this. The first possible route crosses private land owned by the Aspen Hotel and sticks to the edge of the green, upland-ish areas of the slough.

The second possible route is situated entirely on City property, coming off the end of East Bunnell Avenue. Multiple natural resource agencies would be interested in this route and possibly, willing and able to partner with the City in its development, including: Islands & Oceans, Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Center for AK Coastal Studies.



**Perspective #2 – Where were routes needed to improve the function of existing non-motorized routes by providing connectivity or accessibility?** This perspective addressed the function of trails, etc., as elements of transportation infrastructure to get to and from destinations, not just as recreational assets.

From this perspective, the following projects that would improve connectivity and/or accessibility, were identified. These projects are listed in order of priority and are shown on Figure B. Most of these routes fall within the Areas of Interest and are listed in the City of Homer Public Works Department 5-year Capital Improvement Program.

<b>A. Sidewalks</b>	<b>Area of Interest</b>
1. Main Street – North of Pioneer	General
2. West Fairview Avenue	West Homer
3. Ben Walters Way	General
4. Svedlund/Herndon to Senior Center	General
5. Main Street – South of Pioneer to Sterling Highway	Town Center
6. Main Street – Sterling Highway to Bishop’s Beach	General
<b>B. Trails</b>	
1. Karen Hornaday Park – ADA Pedestrian Access Trail	West Homer
2. Upper Reber Trail grade improvements	West Homer
3. Old Nelson Trail	East Homer
4. Bishop Beach Sculpture Trail	Beluga Slough
5. Bishop Beach Wetland Trail	Beluga Slough
6. Beluga Slough Boardwalk Extension	Beluga Slough
<b>C. Paths</b>	
1. East Fairview Avenue	East Homer



# City of Homer: Pedestrian Features and Connectivity Gaps

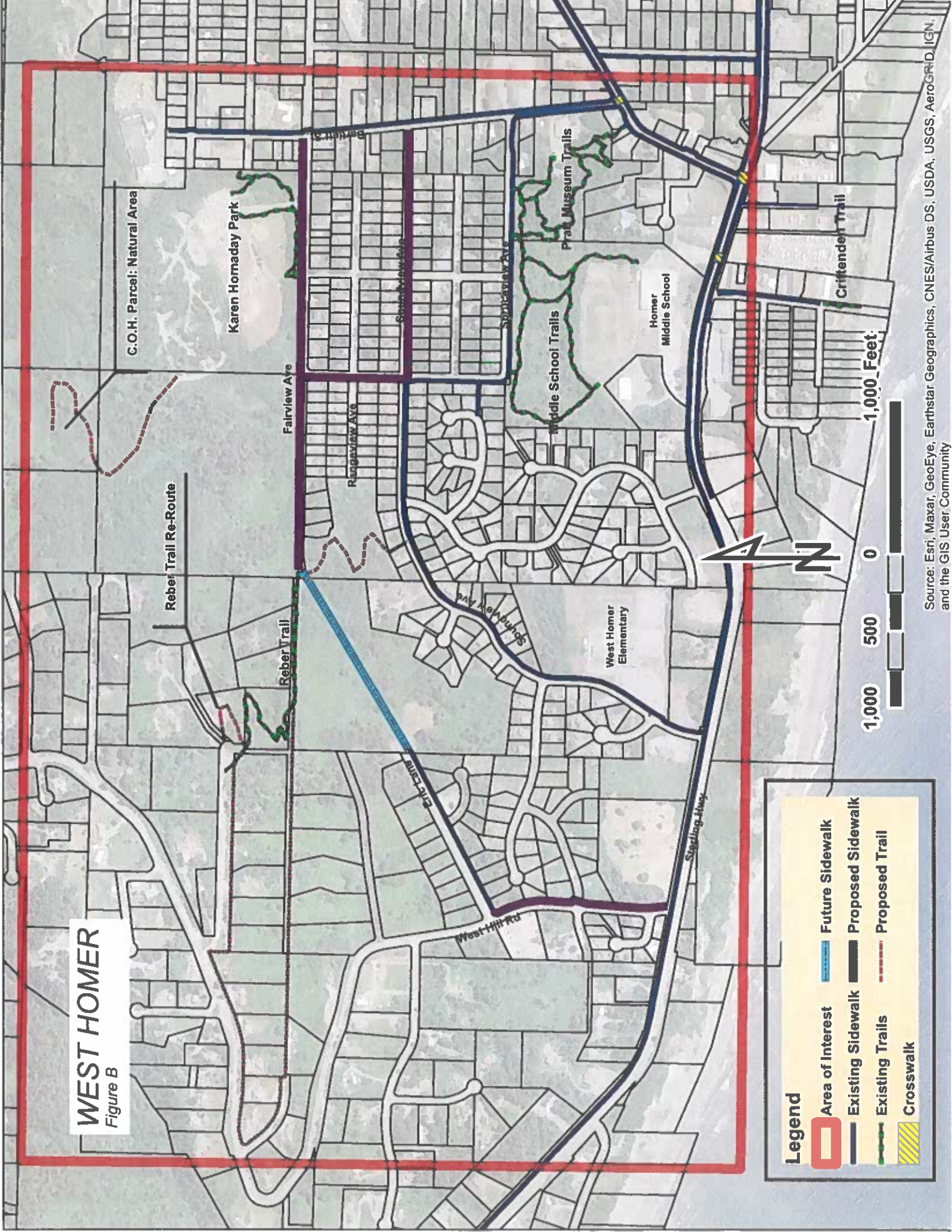
Figure A





# WEST HOMER

Figure B



## Legend

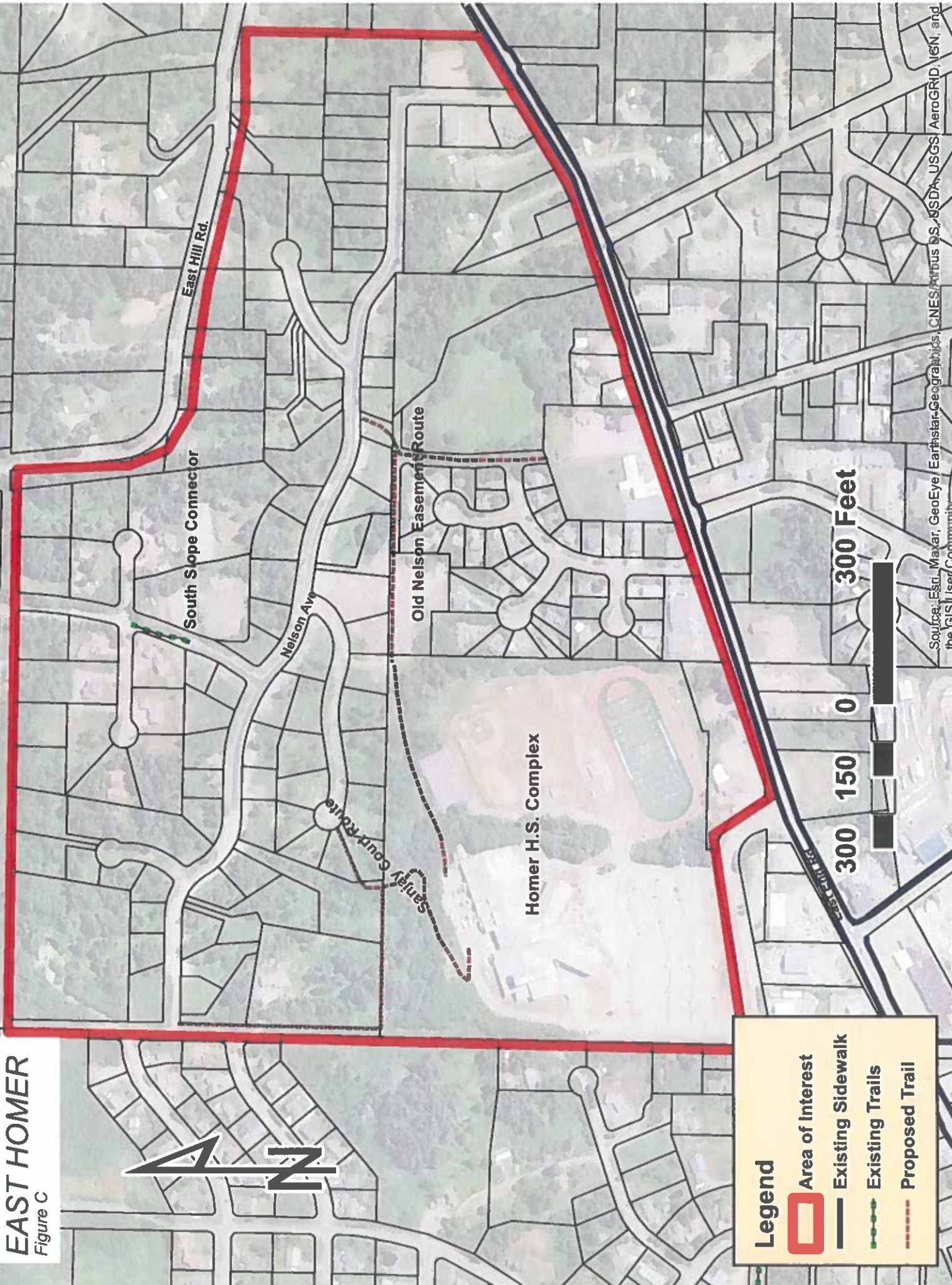
- Area of Interest
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Trails
- Crosswalk
- Future Sidewalk
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Proposed Trail





# EAST HOMER

Figure C

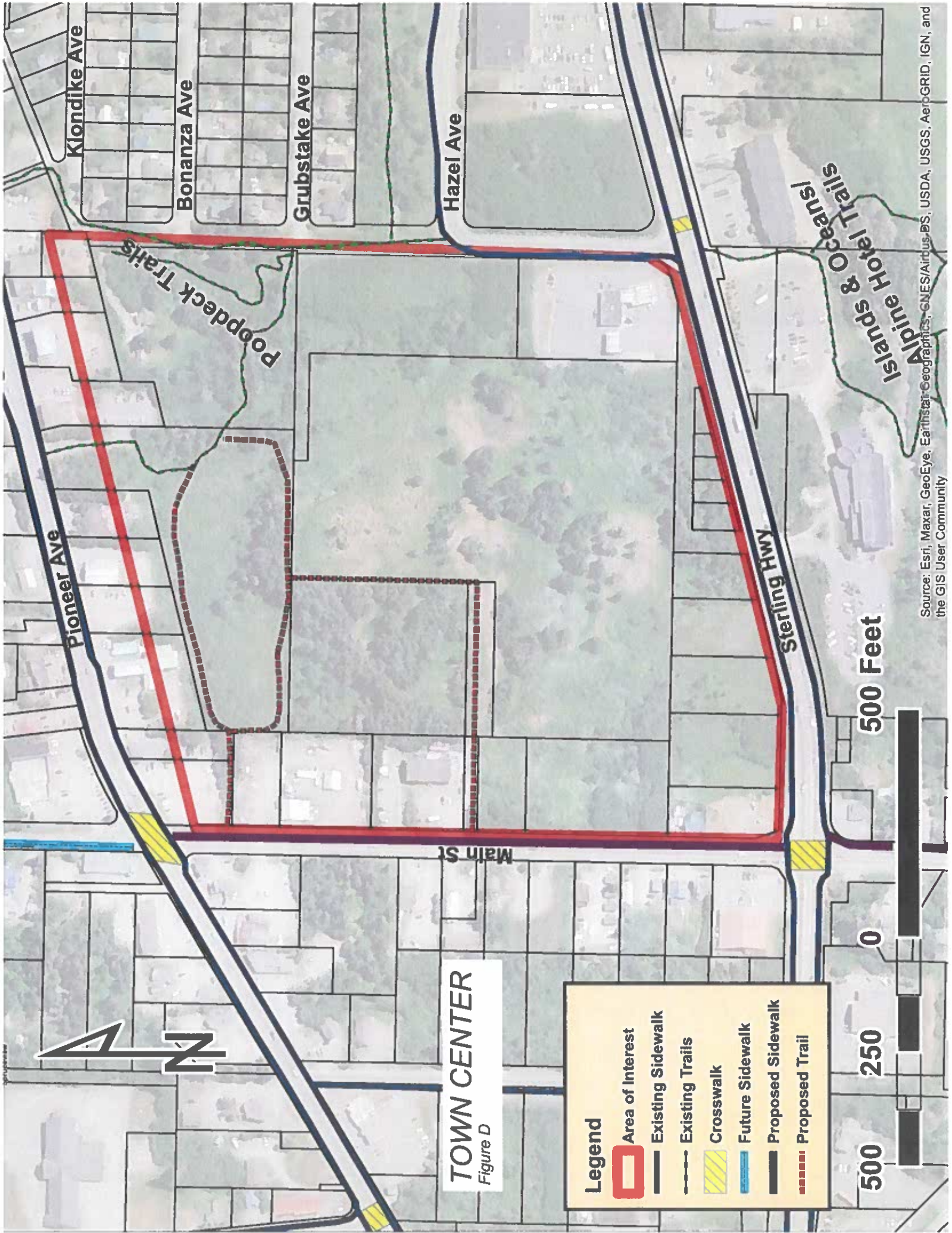


**Legend**

- Area of Interest
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trail

Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar-Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community





**TOWN CENTER**  
Figure D

**Legend**

- Area of Interest
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Trails
- Crosswalk
- Future Sidewalk
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Proposed Trail

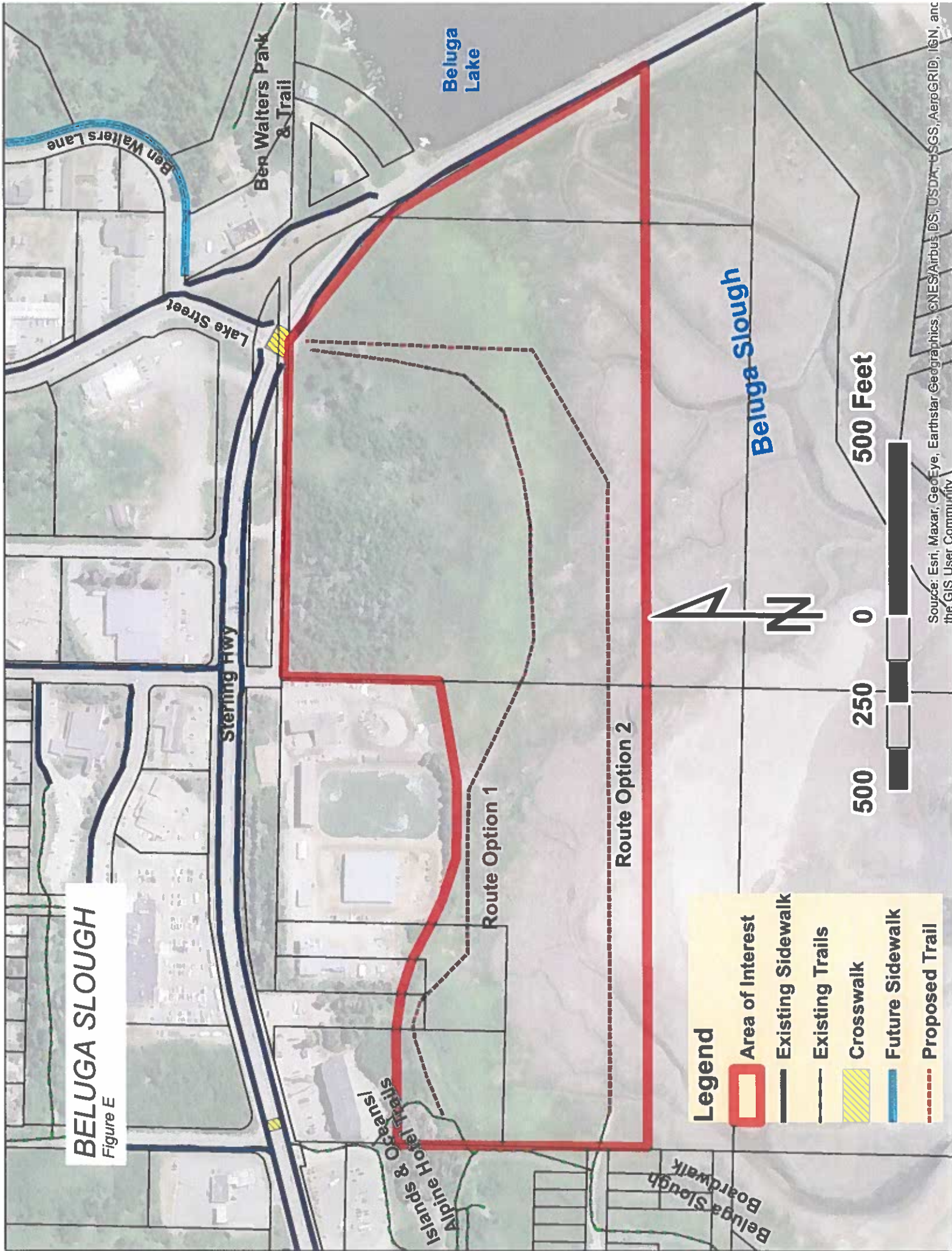


Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus-BS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



# BELUGA SLOUGH

Figure E



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community