
3.17 Recreation Resources

Existing Conditions

The only recreation resource in the study area is the Campbell Creek Greenbelt. The Campbell Creek Greenbelt runs north-south through Anchorage following Campbell Creek and perpendicular to Dowling Road across the project area. The Campbell Creek Greenbelt consists of a series of parks. In the project area, the greenbelt consists of Foxtree Park and Lynwood Park. Figure 3.4443 shows recreation resources in the project area. The Campbell Creek Greenbelt is a Section 4(f) resource.

Campbell Creek Trail is located adjacent to Campbell Creek in the Campbell Creek Greenbelt. The Campbell Creek Trail is a multi-use paved trail intended for nonmotorized uses, including bicycling, jogging, skating, cross-country skiing, and skijoring. The trail currently crosses Dowling Road at grade just east of the Campbell Creek bridge because the bridge is too low to allow enough headroom for the trail to pass under the road.

Other roadside trails in the area—along C Street, Dowling Road, Old Seward Highway, Raspberry Road, and Arctic Boulevard—are considered a transportation resource instead of a recreation resource and are not discussed here.

The Campbell Creek Greenbelt falls under the Land and Water Conservation Grant program, a federally administered program that is intended to protect lands acquired or developed with the grant funds in perpetuity. These properties are commonly known as Section 6(f) properties and are discussed in more detail later in this section.

For more information, please refer to the Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation.

What is Section 4(f)?

The Section 4(f) legislation as established under the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S. Code 303, 23 USC 138) provides protection for publicly owned parks, recreation areas, historic sites, wildlife, and/or waterfowl refuges from conversion to a transportation use. FHWA may not approve the use of land from a significant publicly owned park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge or any significant historic site unless the following determination is made:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the property; and
 - The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use (23 CFR 771.135).
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West Dowling Road Connection Project

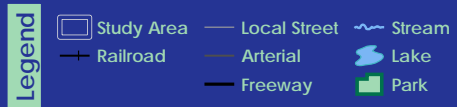
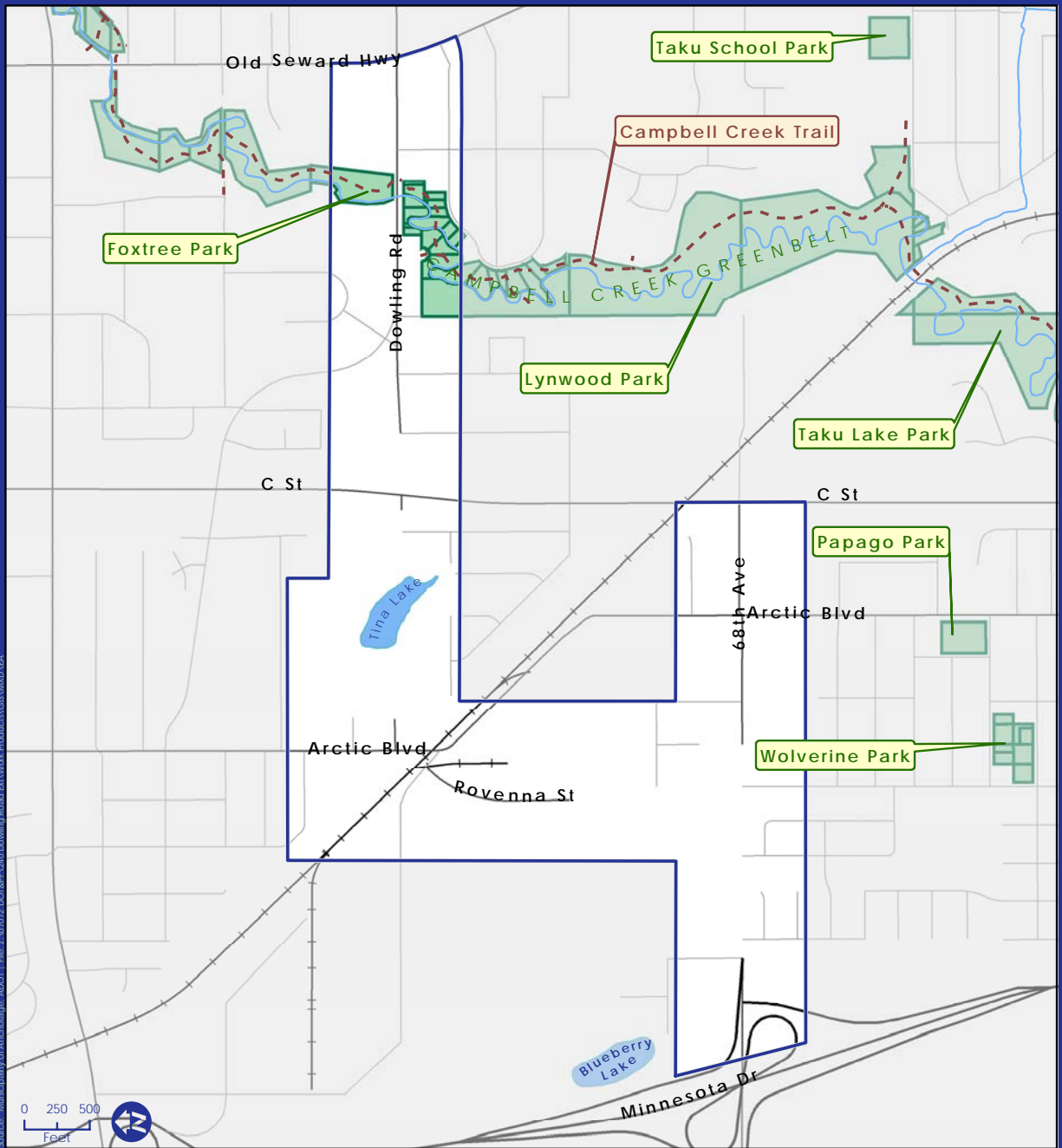


Figure 3.44-43
Recreation Resources

Environmental Consequences

The No Action Alternative would have no impact on recreation resources. The at-grade crossing of Dowling Road on Campbell Creek Trail would remain. Pedestrians and bicyclists would continue to cross Dowling Road at grade.

The Proposed Action would have a positive impact on recreation resources. The Proposed Action includes a bridge that is wider, longer, and has more clearance than the existing bridge.

Increasing the elevation of the bridge is necessary to allow the Campbell Creek Trail to cross under Dowling Road. To maintain acceptable grades, the bridge needs to be longer. A longer replacement bridge would not fit in the existing footprint.

At the request of the MOA Parks and Recreation Department, connections between the roadside pathways and the Campbell Creek Greenbelt would be included in the Proposed Action. Figure 3.4544 shows the cross section of the proposed Campbell Creek bridge.

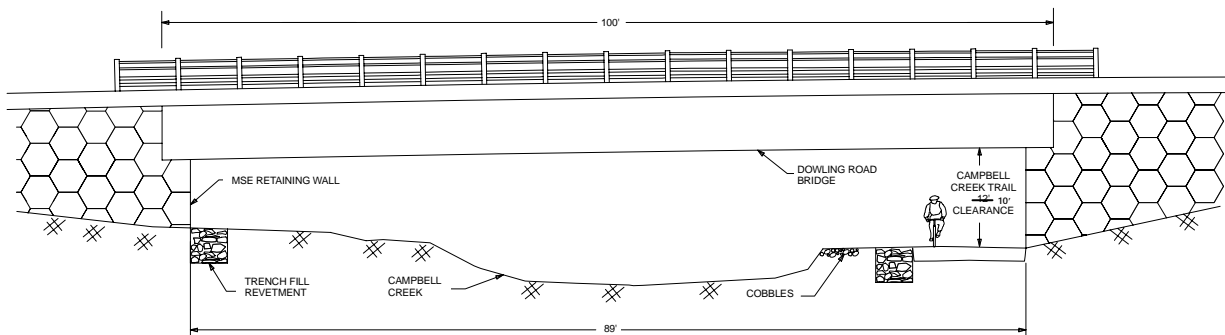


Figure 3.4544 Cross Section of the Campbell Creek Trail Crossing

To accommodate the larger bridge footprint, the Proposed Action would use approximately 0.21 acre of the Greenbelt (0.11 acre from Foxtree Park and **0.08** ~~0.10~~ acre from Lynwood Park). The trail connections would use approximately 0.37 acre of Campbell Creek Greenbelt. Figure 3.4645 shows the portion of the greenbelt proposed for use in the project.

What is 6(f)?

Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) concerns transportation projects that propose impacts, or the permanent conversion, of outdoor recreation property that was acquired or developed with LWCF grant assistance. The Act prohibits the conversion of property acquired or developed with these grants to a non-recreational purpose without the approval of the National Park Service.

These properties may be converted to a non-outdoor recreational use only if replacement recreation land of at least equal fair market value and or reasonably equivalent usefulness and location is assured.

FHWA guidelines prevent Section 4(f) properties from being used for transportation projects unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative.

To avoid any use of Section 4(f) properties, the bridge over Campbell Creek would have to be built within the existing ROW. While this could be accomplished by reducing the width of the bridge

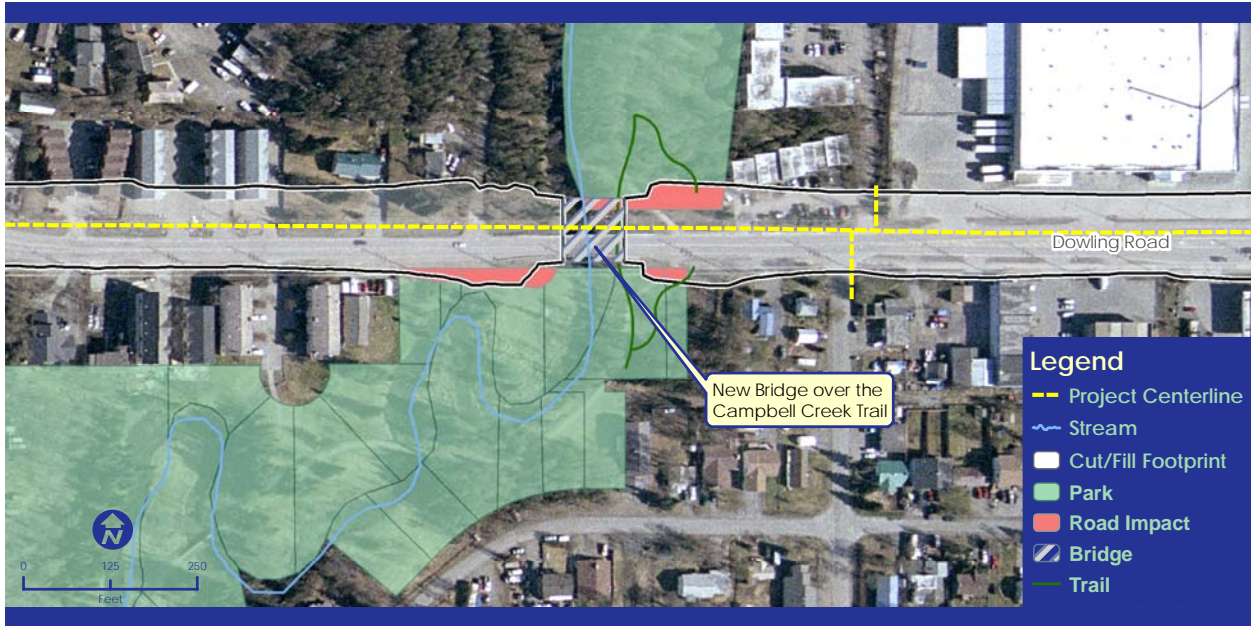


Figure 3.4645 Impacts to the Campbell Creek Greenbelt

so it is narrow enough to fit within the existing ROW, such a design is not recommended as it would miss an opportunity to benefit the park. This design would result in a bridge that is approximately 83 feet wide and 100 feet long. With this width, the bridge would consist of 4 12-foot travel lanes, a 4-foot median, a 6-foot sidewalk and an 8-foot pathway making it inconsistent with the rest of Dowling Road. An inconsistent roadway tends to reduce driver comfort and has a relatively higher crash rate. The bridge would have a reduced capacity compared to the rest of the roadway. DOT&PF would be unable to increase the capacity of the roadway in the future without replacing the bridge.

On the bridge, the shoulders would be the minimum allowed by DOT&PF standards. There would be no separation between the shoulder and

the sidewalk/pathway which would create a less pedestrian friendly environment as pedestrians would be much closer to the passing traffic.

Minimal shoulders do not provide adequate width for vehicles to stop without blocking traffic, bicycle use, bus stops, or the detouring of traffic during construction or maintenance activities. They reduce the amount of space drivers have for evasive maneuvers to avoid crashes. Minimal shoulders reduce the space available for snow storage. They also reduce the sight distance which tends to reduce safety. Drivers will have less warning of hazards such as trail users and wildlife crossing the road. Moose and other large wildlife would continue to cross the road at-grade because they are unable to cross under the bridge.

Left turns onto Austin Street would be prohibited as the median would not be wide enough to accommodate a turn pocket. Turning vehicles would block the traffic creating a safety concern.

To prevent fill from being placed in Lynwood Park, a wall would need to be built on the southwest quadrant. To minimize the amount of wall to be built, this bridge would only have 5-feet of clearance which is not enough for a grade-separated Campbell Creek Trail crossing. In other words, the continuous trail connection under the bridge would not be made and the benefits to the park would be foregone.

A narrower bridge might be feasible but it is not prudent because a narrower bridge does not meet all the transportation needs of the project and it misses an opportunity to benefit a recreation resource. A narrower bridge is not preferred by MOA Parks and Recreation, the owner of Section 4(f) resource, because it has found that bridge and trail improvements would be a benefit to the Campbell Creek Greenbelt and adjacent parks.

MOA Parks and Recreation agrees that this use of the Section 4(f) property would result in a net benefit to the property. For a more detailed discussion of the use of the Campbell Creek

Greenbelt, please see the Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation in Section 7.

What is a Use?

A "use" occurs (1) when land from a Section 4(f) site is acquired for a transportation project, (2) when there is an occupancy of land that is adverse in terms of the statute's preservationist purposes, or (3) when the proximity impacts of the transportation project on the Section 4(f) sites, without acquisition of land, are so great that the purposes for which the Section 4(f) site exists are substantially impaired (normally referred to as a constructive use).

The section of the Campbell Creek Greenbelt that would be in the proposed project area is a 6(f) property. The LWCF Act prohibits the conversion of properties acquired or developed with these funds to a non-recreational use without the approval of the National Park Service. To allow DOT&PF to convert this property, replacement land of equal value, location, and usefulness must be provided. The proposed replacement property is discussed in the mitigation and authorizations section.

The Proposed Action is consistent with the July 2004 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. One goal of the plan is to support efforts to assist communities in meeting the outdoor recreation needs of their citizens. MOA Parks and Recreation supports the project and the grade-separated trail crossing.

By grade-separating the trail, users of the greenbelt would be less likely to be affected by visual and/or noise impacts associated with the road. The grade separation would also increase the safety of trail users.

Construction

Construction activities are expected to require temporary closures of the Campbell Creek Trail. Because of safety concerns, recreational use would not be possible at times when heavy equipment is present.

Pedestrian detours would be established and maintained as part of the construction phasing and traffic control plan.

Mitigation and Authorizations

The proposed bridge is being designed to enhance the trail in the Campbell Creek Greenbelt. The project would provide trail connections to the Campbell Creek Trail from the multi-use pathway

and the sidewalk. These trail connections would help implement the MOA *Areawide Trails Plan* (1997). The trail would allow bikers and pedestrians to stay off the road and on the trail.

Incorporating the grade-separated crossing into the Proposed Action would result in a mutual net benefit for DOT&PF and the Campbell Creek Greenbelt.

No net loss of parkland would result from the Proposed Action. The amount of Section 4(f)/6(f) land used by the Proposed Action (approximately ~~0.210~~^{0.37} acre) would be replaced.

The proposed mitigation site is part of the parcel located on the north side of Dowling Road and is adjacent to Foxtree Park. This property currently has two apartment buildings. The Proposed Action would acquire the building closest to Dowling Road. DOT&PF would acquire part of this parcel and convert it to a city street to provide access to the second apartment building. The remainder of the acquired portion of the parcel (approximately 0.5 acre) would be converted to a trailhead. According to property values in the area, the value of the replacement property is approximately \$50,000. Figure 3.4746 shows the location of the proposed mitigation property and the trailhead.

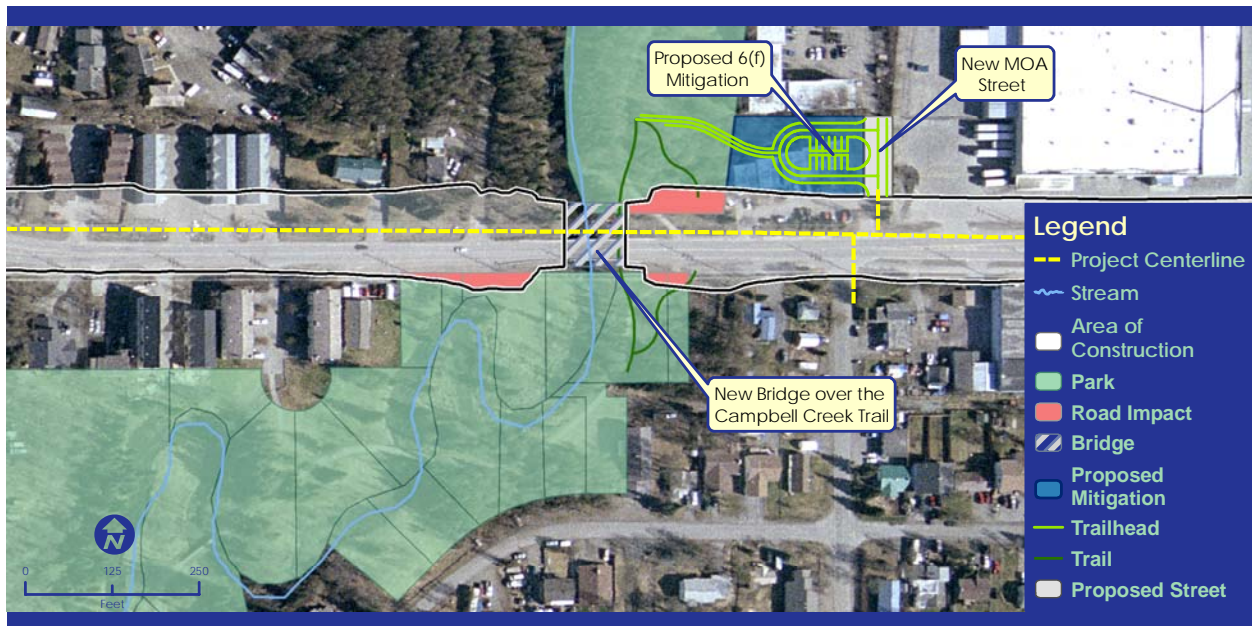


Figure 3.4746 Proposed Section 6(f) Mitigation

DOT&PF would continue coordination with MOA Parks and Recreation to ensure the Campbell Creek bridge and associated trails meet the appropriate standards.

DOT&PF has been coordinating with MOA Parks and Recreation as well as the ADNR LWCF coordinator about the replacement 6(f) lands. Coordination would continue throughout the project.