



TO: Chris Mertl, Chair Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
FROM: Michele Elfers, Deputy Director Parks and Recreation
DATE: September 6, 2022
RE: Christopher Trail Reroute

Trail Mix and Parks and Recreation staff are proposing a change to the Christopher Trail corridor to avoid a steep, erosive slope and to minimize bike and pedestrian conflict on the Flume. The lower section of Christopher Trail has been closed for a few years due to an eroding section of the Gold Creek bank and Trail Mix has been planning to reconstruct it this year. The planned improvements would likely only last five or ten years and then major maintenance would have to be done again to keep the trail open along this slope. However, this slope can be avoided and a more stable route is possible by installing a bridge further downstream on Gold Creek. This option had been deemed too expensive in the past but now a bridge is being removed from the Kaxdigoowu Heen Dei Trail with the appropriate span and can be used at Cope Park.

As part of a Transportation Alternatives Program grant, ADOT will be replacing the pedestrian bridge over Montana Creek on the Kaxdigoowu Heen Dei Trail next summer. The bridge span is too short as Montana Creek is incising and widening, however the bridge is in good shape, with an appropriate span for Gold Creek.

Trail Mix has identified and flagged a new route for the Christopher Trail that starts at the lower asphalt plaza and picnic area and joins up with the existing route of the Christopher Trail on the North (Mt. Juneau) side of Gold Creek. The trail then crosses the flume and continues uphill to an existing old bench road above the flume and connects to Perseverance Trail.

The proposed trail alignment will be safer, requires less maintenance and will help to resolve issues along the flume of pedestrian and biker conflict. A 1989 agreement between CBJ and AELP outlines ownership and management of the flume structure and trail. AELP owns the flume structure and maintains it. CBJ maintains the pedestrian walkway atop the flume structure including the deck boards and hand rails. The agreement states that no bikes, skateboards, skates, skis, sleds, motorbikes, wagons, ATV's or rollerblades can use the flume. Bikes do use the flume and CBJ receives complaints from the public about the conflict in use as the flume is narrow and can't accommodate a bike and pedestrian side by side in some areas.

The proposed trail would create a connection for bikers from Perseverance trails to Cope Park pump track and lower downtown. By designing the trail as a fun bike trail for beginners with some low rollers, it will encourage biker use and move bikers off of the flume. The trail could also be used by pedestrians, and the low rollers are easy to walk over. Juneau Mountain Bike Alliance (JMBA) is supportive of this proposed route and plan.

The proposed route as shown on the attached map passes through CBJ, AELP, AJT, DNR and private land. CBJ will need to develop easements with AELP, AJT and DNR for the trail corridor. Staff requests a motion of support from the PRAC to obtain easements for the Christopher Trail corridor with AELP, AJT and DNR.