



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of the Meals Hill Master Plan is to provide the City of Valdez (COV) a vision and implementation strategy to guide the future development and management of the Meals Hill site as a natural area and park that complements the community’s existing recreation and cultural opportunities. The plan is grounded in a thorough background analysis and public process that included the research of existing COV plans, site visits with community members, a statistically significant community and visitor survey, stakeholder interviews, the contributions of a planning committee of residents, and a series of public meetings.

GUIDE TO THE PLAN

The Meals Hill Master Plan and appendices are a comprehensive report that summarize the project background information, the project process, and the final recommendations. The report is divided into two sections:

- PART I: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PROCESS
- PART II: MEALS HILL MASTER PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The full document provides an in-depth analysis of the process and the development of the master plan. However, the first six pages of the document, including this executive summary along with the graphic master plan, provide an overview summary and the key takeaways of the plan.

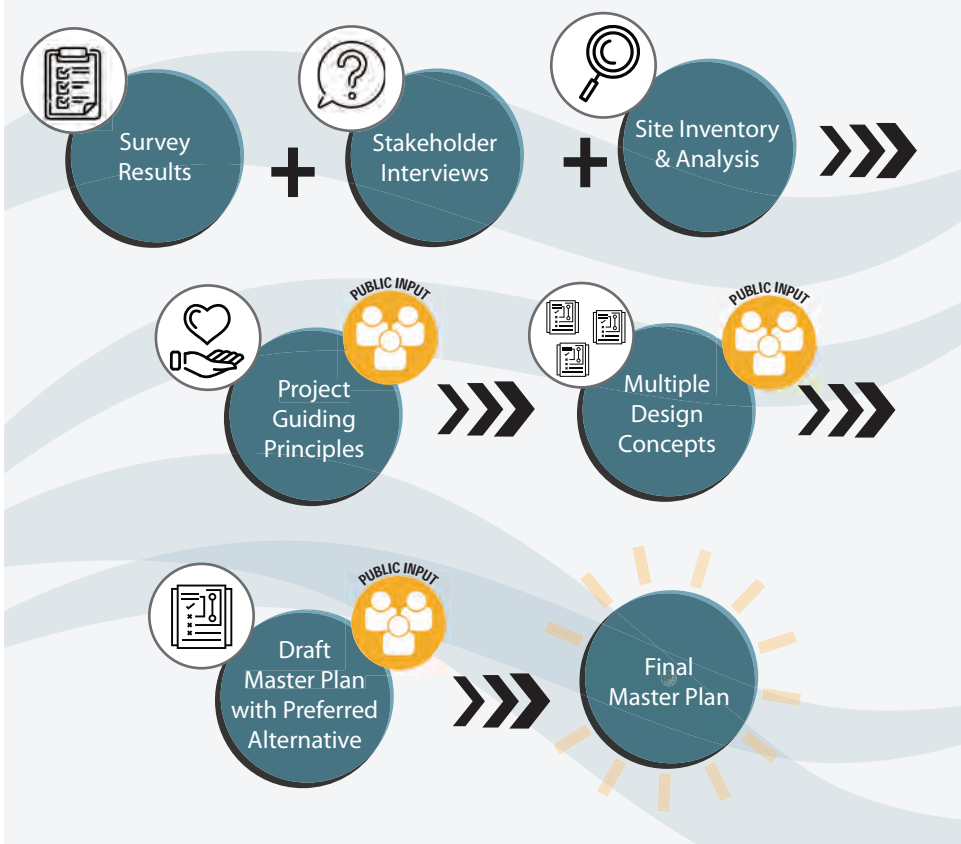
CONSERVATION EASEMENT

In 2019 the Great Land Trust (GLT) worked with the previous landowner, The Port Valdez Company, and agency partners to establish a conservation easement on the property and secure the funding needed to transfer land ownership to the City of Valdez for use as a natural area and public park. The acquisition was funded by a grant from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC) specifically for the purpose of benefiting the species and human services impacted by the oil spill.

The conservation easement legally establishes protections for the property in perpetuity with specific conditions, restrictions, and limitations to protect and restore the natural assets of the site and is held and enforced by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The easement also allows for limited non-motorized recreational enhancements to facilitate and benefit passive public recreational uses of the property.

The purpose of the easement is to ensure the conservation values of the property will be protected and maintained in perpetuity and to prevent any use or alteration that will impair, degrade, or interfere with its natural and undisturbed habitat values. These values include restoration and preservation of natural, scenic, forested, non-forested, wetlands, marine coastal shoreline, and other ecological values, as well as the conservation and protection of migratory bird, fish, and wildlife resources supported by habitats on the property. The conservation easement sets the foundation for the master plan through the conservation values and allowable uses that the easement establishes.

PROJECT PROCESS



PROJECT PROCESS & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The project process included initial research of existing COV plans, site visits with locals, analysis of existing conditions including terrain, soils, hydrology, vegetation and wildlife, and adjacent infrastructure. Following the initial existing condition and site analysis the project included a comprehensive community engagement process including:

- A statistically significant community and visitor survey
- Stakeholder interviews
- Three virtual public meetings with two in-person open houses
- Five Meals Hill Planning Committee (MHPC) meetings
- Two work sessions with the Parks and Recreation Commission, one as a joint session with the City Council

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Five guiding principles statements were adopted for the project to help guide the master plan. The guiding principles set the tone and intent of the plan and guided planning decisions. The statements were developed based on the conservation easement, initial survey results, stakeholder input, and were verified by an interactive poll completed by the public during the first public meeting.

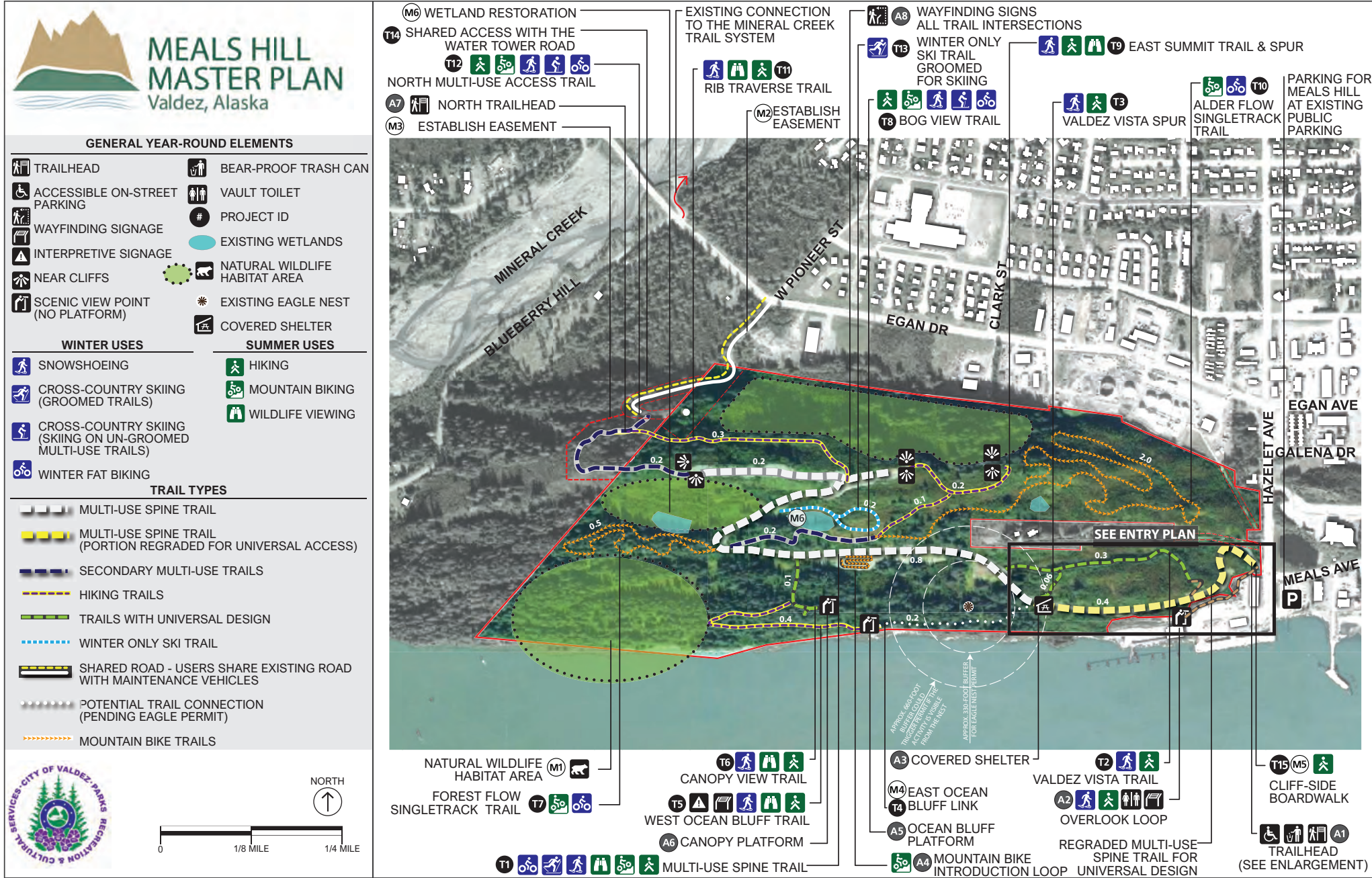


MEALS HILL MASTER PLAN

With the foundation of existing conditions analysis and community engagement, the proposed master plan encompasses a community vision for Meals Hill that reflects the unique character of the site. The proposed Meals Hill Master Plan:

- Balances the community’s desire for nature-based recreation and habitat conservation.
- Is community-focused providing trails, amenities, and access that best serve daily uses.
- Serves a range of non-motorized users in a variety of terrain creating opportunities for year-round activity.
- Uses the site’s terrain, ecosystems, and vantage points to create vistas and opportunities for solitude.
- Includes a phased approach that considers funding, maintenance, and long-term community well-being.

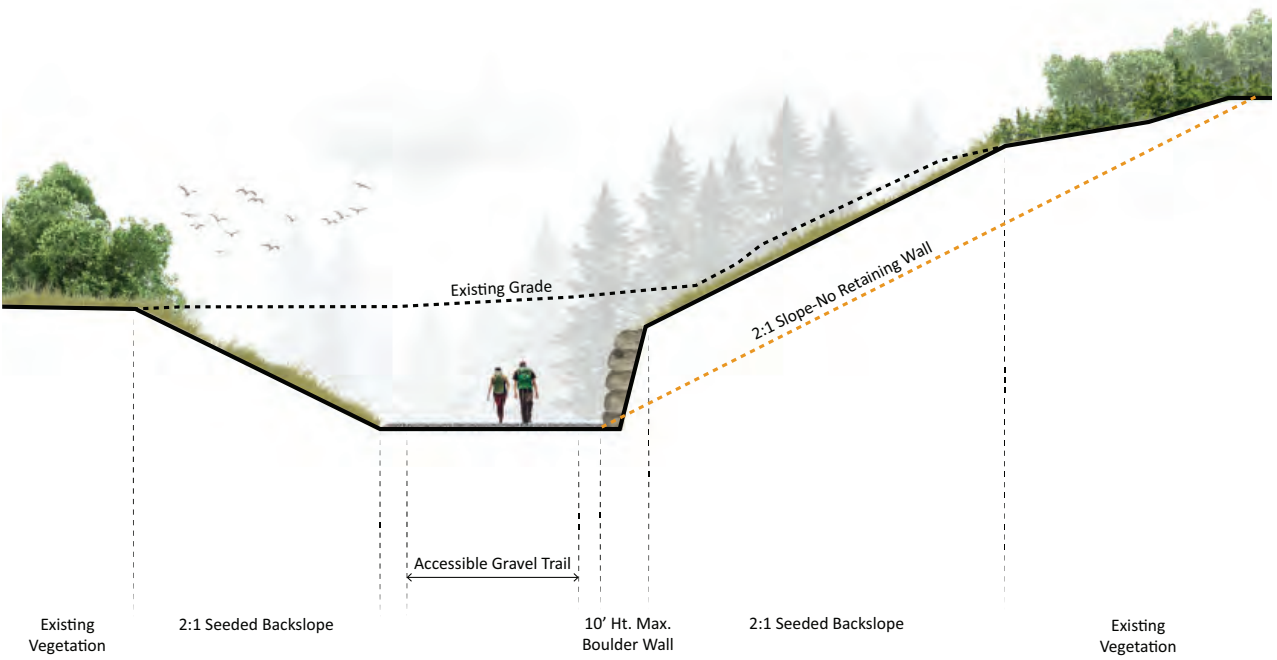
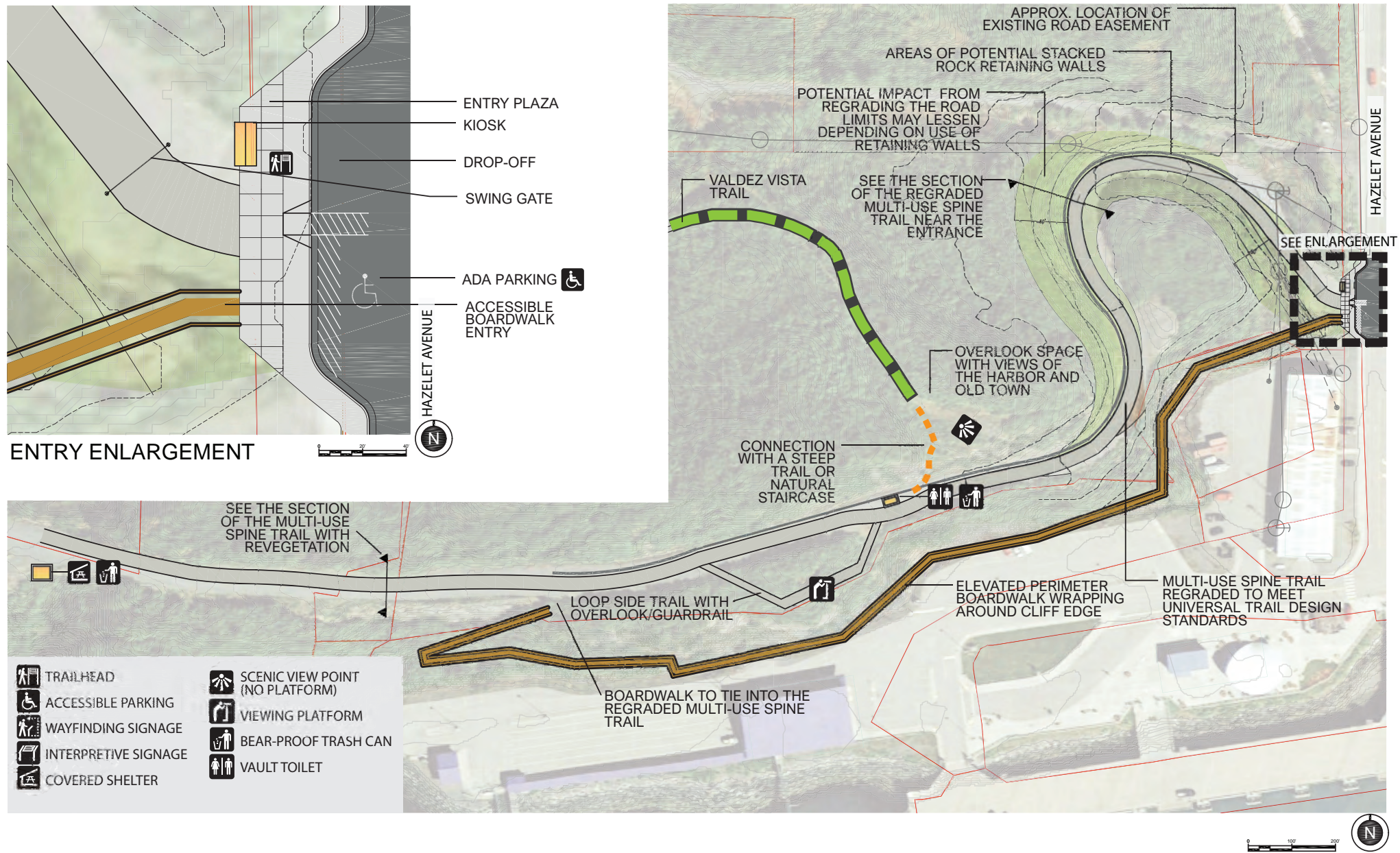
OVERALL SITE MASTER PLAN



TRAIL & AMENITY EXAMPLE IMAGES



ENTRY PLAN



Section of the regraded Multi-Use Spine Trail near the entrance.



Section of the Multi-Use Spine Trail with revegetation.



Rendering of proposed covered shelter.



Rendering of proposed cliff-side boardwalk.