Special Meeting of the Land Committee of the Spokane Park Board
May 4, 2016, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room 5A
808 W Spokane Falls Boulevard
Spokane, Washington
Tony Madunich – Park Operations Director

Committee Members:
Van Voorhis, Ken – Chairperson
Kelley, Ross
McGregor, Ted
Mumm, Candace
Selinger, Samuel
Traver, Susan

A special meeting of the City of Spokane Park Board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 4, 2016, City Hall Conference Room 5A, City Hall, 808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington.

The meeting will be conducted in a standing committee format for the Land Committee of the City of Spokane Park Board. Because a quorum of the Park Board may be present, the standing committee meeting will be conducted as a committee of the whole board.

The meeting will be open to the public, with the possibility of moving into executive session only with the members of the Park Board and appropriate staff. Discussion will be limited to appropriate officials and staff. Public testimony may be taken at the discretion of the committee chair.

Agenda

Action Items:
None

Information Items:
1. Coeur d' Alene Park Anniversary – Julie Biggerstaff, Browne's Addition Neighborhood

Discussion Items:
1. Beacon Hill Trail System Preservation Plan – Will Stone, Evergreen East Mountain Bike Alliance
2. Bridges – Tony Madunich
3. Excess Reserve Funds

Standing Report Items:
1. Park Operations Financial Report - if available
2. Capital Projects Update – none this month
3. CSO Tank Update – none this month

Agenda is subject to change

Please note: Agenda is subject to change. **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) INFORMATION:** The City of Spokane is committed to providing equal access to its facilities, programs and services for persons with disabilities. Individuals requesting reasonable accommodations or further information may contact Lisa Richards, 48 hours before the meeting date, at (509) 625-6909; Human Resources, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA, 99201; or lrichards@spokanecity.org. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact Ms. Richards at (509) 625-6909 through the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1.

Beacon Hill Trail System Preservation Plan

Prepared by Evergreen East Mountain Biking Alliance

April 2016

Beacon Hill Trail System Preservation Plan
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Appendix

Figure 1 – Existing Trail System Map

Figure 2 – Current Ownership Map

Figure 3 – Proposed Ownership Map

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Beacon Hill Trail System Draft Concept Plan (2009) was prepared by the Fat Tire Trail Riders Club (FTTRC) after receiving a technical assistance grant through the National Park Service's RTCA Program in 2008. The plan was recognized by Spokane County in the Spokane County Regional Trail Plan (2014). In 2012 the FTTRC dissolved and became the Evergreen East Mountain Biking Alliance (Evergreen). Evergreen is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and the eastern chapter of the statewide Evergreen Mountain Biking Alliance organization which is dedicated to trail building, maintenance, advocacy, and education for the sport of mountain biking.

The Beacon Hill Trail System Draft Concept Plan identified landowners effected by the Beacon Hill Trail System (trail system) and identified several methods in which private properties may continue to be utilized for future recreational use. The plan found that in order to preserve the existing trail system for future recreational use agreements between landowners and the public must be formalized. The purpose of the Beacon Hill Trail System Preservation Plan (Evergreen, 2016) is to build on concepts discussed in the Beacon Hill Trail System Draft Concept Plan and provide a means of preserving the trail system for future use.

1.2 PURPOSE

The plan's scope of work is comprised of the following:

- Inventory the existing trail system
- Discuss any existing park management practices
- Identify the different land ownership entities within the Beacon Hill area
- Provide alternatives for maintaining access to the existing/future Beacon Hill trail system
- Provide alternatives for managing the existing/future Beacon Hill trail system
- Create a shared vision for promoting and developing the area among partners including land managers, owners, trail users and adjacent neighbors

1.3 PROJECT NEED

The Beacon Hill Trail System is located on approximately 30 contiguous parcels spanning approximately 650 acres. The existing trail system is located on public, private, and utility owned lands. Recreational use is permitted on these lands based on "handshake" agreements with private landowners, utilities and land trust entities. Excluding the existing memorandum of understanding between the Evergreen East Mountain Biking Alliance (Evergreen) and the City of Spokane for operation and management of the Camp Sekani trails there are no formal agreements between landowners and the public ensuring continued access of their land. The trail system risks becoming fragmented and unusable if land use permission is restricted.

Much of the trail is not formally managed by any entity and the recreating public is often ignorant of land ownership issues in the Beacon Hill area. This has led to the construction of illegal or "rogue" trails. Older trails were often not constructed in a sustainable manner and have led to habitat destruction by erosion and soil disturbance. Formal management of the entire trail system is needed to ensure that trails are constructed and maintained in a responsible and sustainable manner.

2 EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM

2.1 LOCATION

The Beacon Hill Trail System is located on land within the City of Spokane and Spokane County. Beacon Hill proper is considered to be bounded by Esmerelda Golf Course to the east, Camp Sekani to the west, Upriver Drive and Frederick Avenue to the south and Valley Springs Road to the north. The city limits of Spokane extend past Esmerelda Golf Course east to the Avista Corporation property. Land to the east of City limits is within Spokane County. Camp Sekani is located outside of City limits but is owned by the City of Spokane.

The trail system lies on land within and just outside of City limits and offers one of only a handful of outdoor urban recreation experiences within the greater Spokane area. Beacon Hill consists of approximately 1,000 acres of undeveloped ridgeline, pine tree forests, and granite rock outcroppings which offer vista views of the surrounding mountains, valley and the City of Spokane and Spokane Valley.

2.2 TRAIL SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

The Beacon Hill Trail System consists of over 30 recognized singletrack and doubletrack trails. There are approximately 17 miles of recognized singletrack trails and approximately 10 miles of recognized doubletrack trails (**Figure 1)**. The existing trail system serves to connect the individual parks within the Beacon Hill park system. The parks which are connected by the trail system include Camp Sekani, John C. Shields Park and Minnehaha Park as well as the Centennial Trail and Esmerelda Golf Course. The trail system is accessed by the existing parking lots.

Trail use is made up of hikers, trail runners, disc golfers and mountain bikers. Trails are most concentrated within Camp Sekani Park and contribute approximately 60% of the overall singletrack trails within the trail system. Camp Sekani functions as the hub of the existing trail network and hosts several annual community events such as Hub-A-Palooza, the Double Down Hoe Down, Spoketopia and the Sekani Trail Run. Camp Sekani offers a great selection of multi-use trails but specializes in mountain biking specific activities such as downhill racing, dirt jumping, cross country riding and also contains a skills park. Trail users may access the western portion of the trail system from the Camp Sekani parking lot. An 18-hole disc golf course is provided within Camp Sekani.

Outside of Camp Sekani trails extend west toward Shields Park, Minnehaha Park and Esmerelda Golf Course. Esmerelda Golf Course is commonly used to access the western trails off of Beacon Hill. Trails from the Esmerelda Golf Course access the top of Beacon Hill. The western section of Beacon Hill generally consists of privately owned lands including several properties owned by the Avista Corporation.

2.3 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Excluding the existing memorandum of understanding between the Evergreen East Mountain Biking Alliance (EEMBA) for operation and management within Camp Sekani there are no formal agreements between landowners and the public for continued public access to their land. Due the lack of formal management some of the older trails were not constructed in a sustainable manner. Non-sustainable trails may cause destruction to habitat through erosion, are unsightly and may be built without private landowners consideration.

2.3.1 Existing MOU Between EEMBA and the City of Spokane

In 2014, Evergreen East Mountain Biking Alliance (EEMBA) entered into a 2-year contract with the City of Spokane Parks and Recreation Department which defines the working relationship between the Evergreen East Mountain Bike Alliance and the City of Spokane; Parks and Recreation Department (Parks),

for the City park property, known as Camp Sekani under the Parks' "Adopt-a-Park" program. Under the current MOU EEMBA is responsible for the following trail construction and maintenance practices:

1. Maintaining the single track trails, using standards and techniques for sustainable trails as presented in the IMBA trail building manual, Trail Solutions
2. Using techniques for maintenance that include water control treatments and correcting tread by de-berming and maintaining outslopes
3. Re-routing fall line trails as contour trails in order to correct drainage, minimize erosion and provide for sustainable trail conditions
4. Decommissioning and reclaiming excess braided trail lines and rerouting to a single line
5. Decommissioning unused trails
6. Vegetation and overgrowth control
7. Maintaining and up keeping the mountain bike skills park, structures and the dirt jump park
8. Implement a risk management plan for trails, dirt jump park, skills course and structures within Camp Sekani
9. Preparing a trail map of Camp Sekani and creating a trail numbering or naming system
10. Providing volunteers and tracking volunteer hours per the program
11. Collecting signatures on agreed upon liability waivers, and provide copies of records to Parks of all EEMBA work performed within Camp Sekani

EEMBA intends to continue their stewardship of the entire Beacon Hill trail system. EEMBA is dedicated to maintaining and managing the trail system on all future acquired lands.

3 LAND OWNERSHIP

3.1 SUMMARY OF LAND OWNERSHIP

Ownership of the Beacon Hill trail system consists of public, private, and utility owned lands. **Figure 2** shows the ownership layout of Beacon Hill. A parcel breakdown for the area is shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Summary of Land Ownership of the Existing Trail System

Ownership	No. of Parcels[(1)]	Total Acreage[(2)]
Public (includes City & County)	14	450[(3)]
Private	32	465
Utility (includes Avista Corporation)	4	100
Total	50	1,015

(1) Number of parcels are the number of parcels which currently have a section of trail located on them

(2) Total acreage is the summation of parcels which currently have a section of trail located on them

(3) Includes Esmerelda Golf Course, Camp Sekani, Minnehaha Park and John C. Shields Park

3.2 CRITICAL PARCELS

Maintaining access to trails which currently act as connectors to the various parks as well as maintaining the overall quality of the trail system represents the best means of preserving the trail system to its' best and fullest potential.

Parcels which are critical are as follows:

- Parcel 35012.9023 which serves to connect City owned parcels just west of Camp Sekani
- Sections of parcels 36364.9052, 36364.9064, 36364.9065, 36364.9066 north of Camp Sekani in order to preserve the downhill (race) trails and key climbing trails
- Corridor from the western border of Camp Sekani to the top of Beacon Hill and continuing west to the Esmerelda access
- Parcel 35021.9055, 35021.9056 and 35021.9057 which could serve as an access point or trailhead along E. Valley Springs Road

4 PRESERVATION ALTERNATIVES

The greatest challenge that the Beacon Hill Trail System faces is that most of the corridor trails and downhill trails off of Beacon Hill are privately owned and therefore public access may be restricted at any time.

4.1 ACCESS ALTERNATIVES

Approximately 60% of the existing trail system is located on privately owned lands. Recreational use is permitted on these lands through handshake agreements between the landowners and the public. Landowners may withdraw permission for use of their lands. Much of these lands are crucial to the connectivity and enjoyment of the overall trail system and loss of access may result in the fragmentation of the trail system.

4.1.1 Renew Handshake Agreements

Private landowners allow recreational use of their lands under RCW 4.24.200 and 4.24.210. RCW 4.24.200 states: "The purpose of RCW 4.24.200 and 4.24.210 is to encourage owners or others in lawful possession and control of land and water areas or channels to make them available to the public for recreational purposes by limiting their liability toward persons entering thereon and toward persons who may be injured or otherwise damaged by the acts or omissions of persons entering thereon."

Handshake agreements have been made between private landowners and the public and are intended as an informal means of allowing access to the trail system. Handshake agreements are non-binding and may be withdrawn at any time.

Trails which are on private lands currently operate under such handshake agreements. This system of recreational use has been mostly effective in the past but there have been occasions in which property owners have restricted access onto their land necessitating the rerouting of trails to maintain trail system connectivity.

4.1.2 Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandums of understanding (MOU) are a formal agreement between two or more parties. Evergreen East Mountain Biking Alliance entered into a 2-year MOU with the City of Spokane Parks and Recreation Department in 2014. The MOU established Evergreen as the Camp Sekani trail system stewards. Under this agreement Evergreen is committed to maintaining and operating the Camp Sekani trails and Beacon Hill Trail System.

MOUs could be sought between Evergreen and private landowners in order to formalize recreational use on private lands. This option is not beneficial for private landowners as RCW 4.24.200 and 4.24.210 does not apply to private lands operating under legally binding MOUs. More liability is incurred by the private party if the agreement is legally binding.

4.1.3 Easement

Easements grant the right to cross or otherwise use someone else's land for a specified purpose. Easements are legally binding and could be sought to ensure that trail corridors are preserved for future use. Easements may be purchased and owned by the City or County or gifted for the purpose of recreation use.

Recreational trails have a service life and must be reconstructed after they become degraded over time. If easements are pursued for the trail system, then future reroutes must be planned in order to ensure that connector trails are maintained within the designated easement.

4.1.4 Land Acquisition

Much of the Beacon Hill Trail System is located on private, undeveloped lands. These private lands are situated between several existing parks and make up the Beacon Hills Park System. The trail system serves to connect each of these parks.

The preferred alternative is that land is purchased by the City or County and used to expand upon these existing parks. By acquiring public lands, the trails which are currently situated on private lands may be preserved, expanded upon or rerouted for future use.

Several funding options are available for the acquisition of private lands. Potential routes of funding are:

- Conservation Futures
- Recreation and Conservation (RCO) Grant
- State Legislative Set-asides

Figure 3 is intended to show future ownership roles for the City of Spokane and Spokane County for critical parcels located within the Beacon Hill area.

4.2 TRAIL SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

The City of Spokane currently owns approximately 450 acres of parkland within the proposed Beacon Hill preservation area and Spokane County currently owns 13.5 acres of parkland within the proposed Beacon Hill preservation area. The Beacon Hill Trail System consists of trails which are situated within the public parks and outside of public parks on private lands. In 2014 Evergreen entered into an MOU with the City of Spokane which established Evergreen as the trail stewards to the Camp Sekani trails.

4.2.1 No Action

The no action alternative represents the least cost to landowners and includes suspending all management actions to the existing trail system. Under this alternative it is expected that the trail system would fall into disrepair and the trails would become degraded and unusable. In some cases, trails may be kept up by unqualified individuals and rogue trails may be reestablished leading to the destruction of natural habitat. Pride of ownership will fade and the Beacon Hill area will become unusable over time.

4.2.2 Ownership Management

Established City and County parks are owned and maintained internally by the landowners. As sections of the Beacon Hill trail system are acquired by the City and County over time, the cost of maintaining the trail system may increase. In addition, it is difficult to appropriate sufficient labor to maintaining a heavily used and expansive trail system.

The proposed ownership of the trail system will be by either the City of Spokane or Spokane County depending on property locations. Trails within the existing trail system extend from Camp Sekani (City owned), through Spokane County and then back into the City of Spokane. Therefore, individual trails management will need to be coordinated between the City and County.

4.2.3 Formalize Management Agreements with Evergreen East Mountain Biking Alliance

Trail system management is currently performed by Evergreen under the existing MOU between Evergreen and the City of Spokane. Evergreen works with the City of Spokane in order to maintain the existing trail system within Camp Sekani. Additionally, Evergreen performs services to the overall trail system which are located on private/utility lands, Evergreen is the main point of contact between landowners and the public.

The Evergreen East Mountain Bike Alliance is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) and volunteers trail management for the greater Spokane area. As the existing trail system becomes acquired by the City/County MOUs could be expanded between landowners and the Evergreen consistent with the existing MOU between the City of Spokane and Evergreen for management of the Camp Sekani trails.

5 GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals and policies section is intended to discuss the preferred alternatives and additional steps that will be required in order to preserve the Beacon Hill Trail System.

5.1 PRESERVE THE BEACON HILL TRAIL SYSTEM

Preserving the existing trail system requires that access to all corridor trails between Esmerelda Golf Course, Minnehaha Park, John C. Shields Park and Camp Sekani are maintained. Current handshake agreements between private landowners and the public are non-binding and may be withdrawn at any time. Developed lands or lands which become restricted may become unusable and result in the overall fragmentation of the existing trail system.

Maintaining access to the existing trail system involves acquiring privately held lands, renewing handshake agreements with landowners and securing trail easements through properties while focusing effort on critical sections of the trail system.

Policies identified to preserve the existing trail system include:

- Maintain working relationships with private landowners in order to renew handshake agreements
- Dedicate future ownership of acquired lands to either the City of Spokane or Spokane County (**Figure 3**)
- Secure public grants for the intent of purchasing critical properties
- Seek other ways in which to formally maintain access to the trail system

5.2 SUSTAINABLY MANAGE THE BEACON HILL TRAIL SYSTEM

The Beacon Hill Trail System consists of over 30 designated trails located on approximately 650 acres of land. Camp Sekani contains the highest concentration of the trail system and is operated and managed by the Evergreen East Mountain Biking Alliance (Evergreen) through a memorandum of understanding between the City of Spokane Evergreen. Evergreen also manages trails outside of Camp Sekani "unofficially." Under this preservation plan Evergreen proposes to become the de facto managing organization for the entire Beacon Hill Trail System.

Policies identified for management the existing and future trail system include:

- Renewal of the current MOU between the City of Spokane and Evergreen in managing the Camp Sekani Trail System
- Expand existing MOU's between the City of Spokane and Evergreen for management of all City owned properties/easements which support the Beacon Hill Trail System
- Enter into new MOU's between Spokane County and Evergreen for management of all County owned properties/easements which support the Beacon Hill Trail System
- Coordinate trail maintenance and development with current landowners

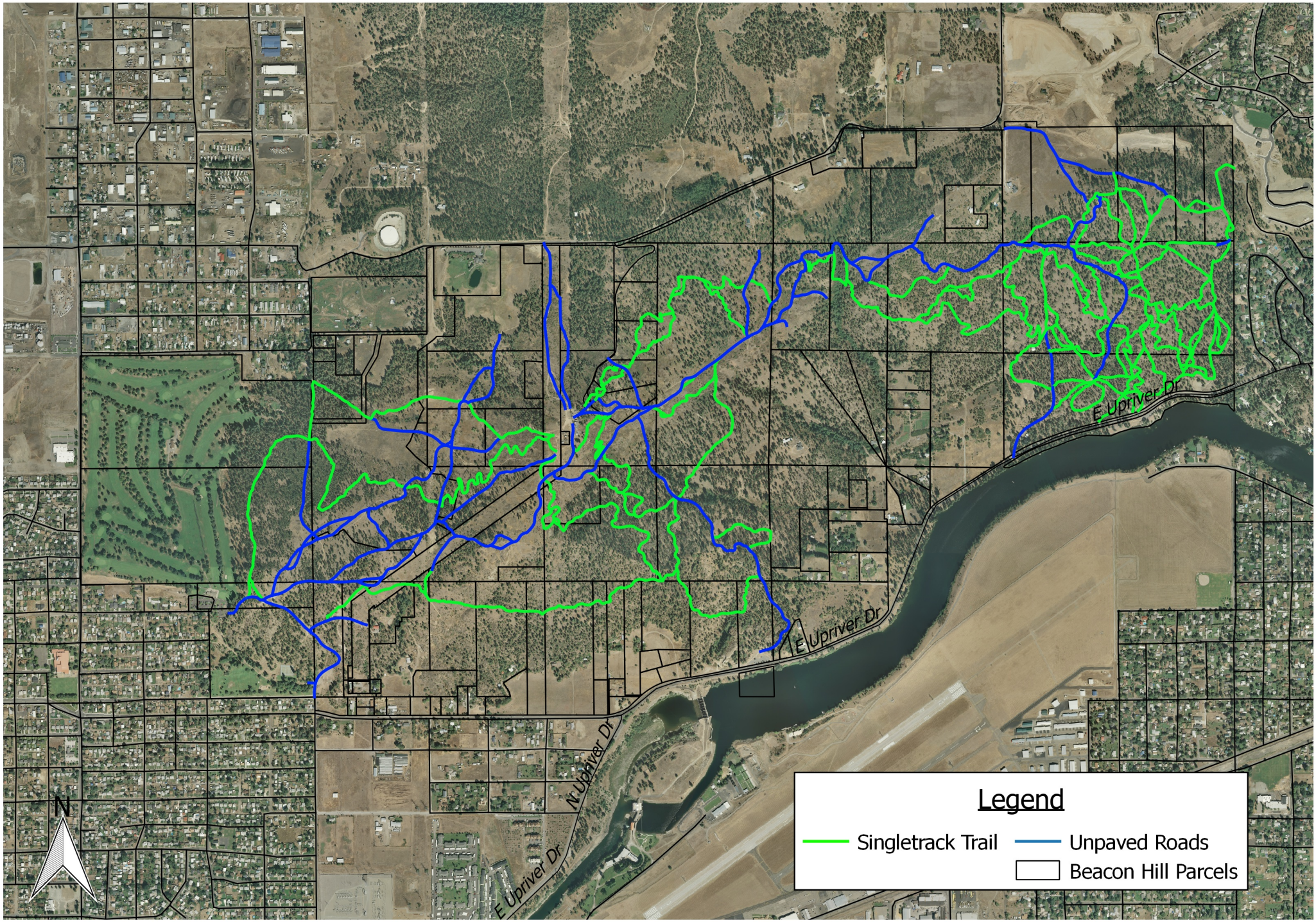
5.3 PROMOTE AND DEVELOP THE TRAIL SYSTEM

The Beacon Hill Park System serves as one of the only urban recreational areas within the greater Spokane area. The three existing parks (Camp Sekani, John C. Shields, Minnehaha) are all connected by the existing Beacon Hill Trail System. Many of the recreational users of the trail system do not understand that many

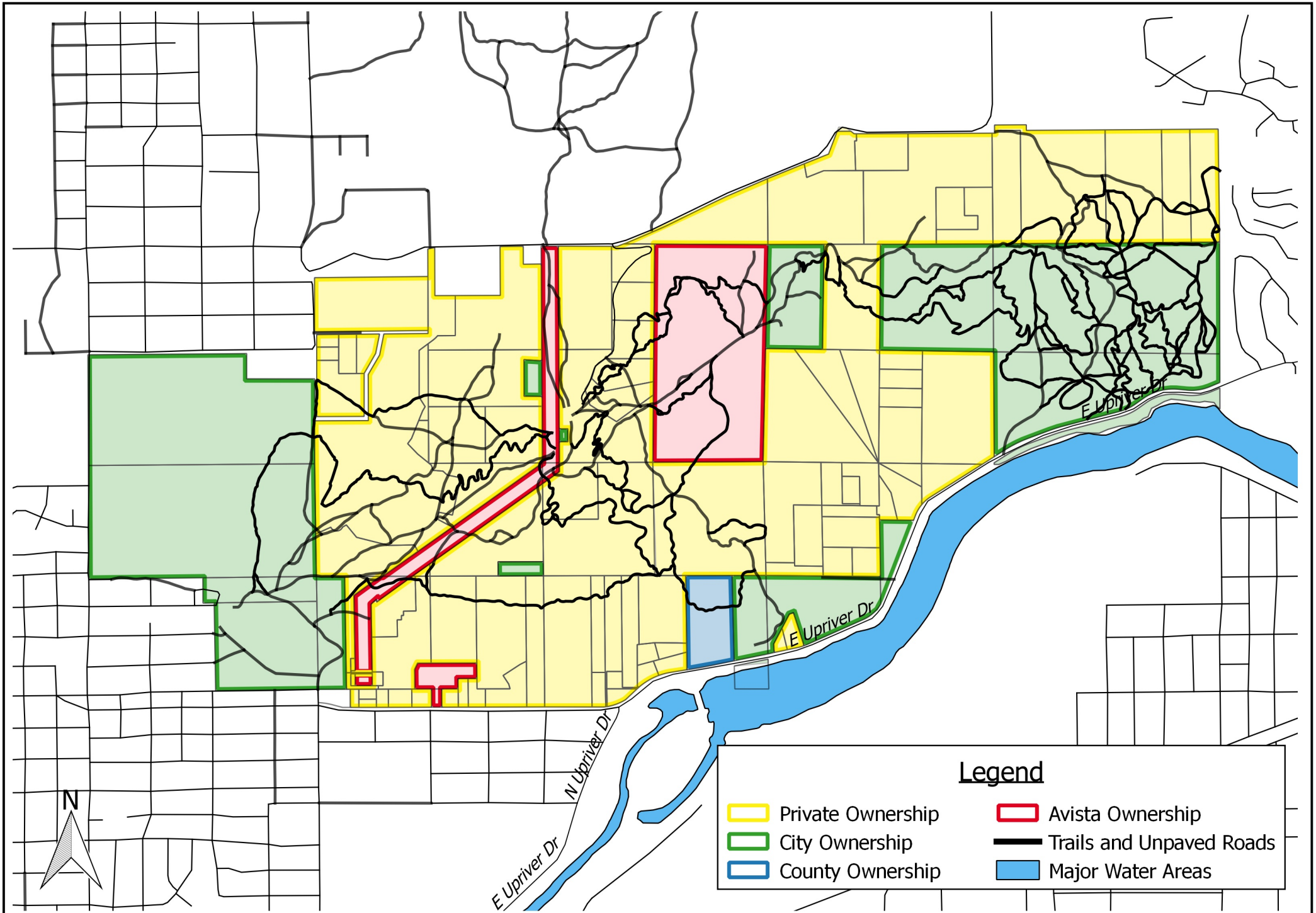
of the connecting trails are not public and may be restricted at any time. Since lands are not owned by the City or County outside of the established parks development of these lands are limited.

Polices identified to promote and develop the existing and future trail system include:

- Evergreen will produce the Comprehensive Beacon Hill Trail System Plan with input from the City, County, private landowners and the numerous user groups
- Perform community outreach programs with the intent of educating trail users of trail management policies and trail use policies
- Promote and develop the Beacon Hill Trail System to be a community gathering place which has a greater capacity to host trail-based events and attract recreation-based tourism



SCALE: NTS DESIGNED: -- DRAWN: NVH CHECKED: APPROVED: PROJ. NO.: DATE: 3/29/16	evergreen MOUNTAIN BIKE ALLIANCE EASTERN WASHINGTON CHAPTER	**BEACON HILL TRAIL SYSTEM PRESERVATION PLAN**	**FIGURE**
		EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM MAP	**1**



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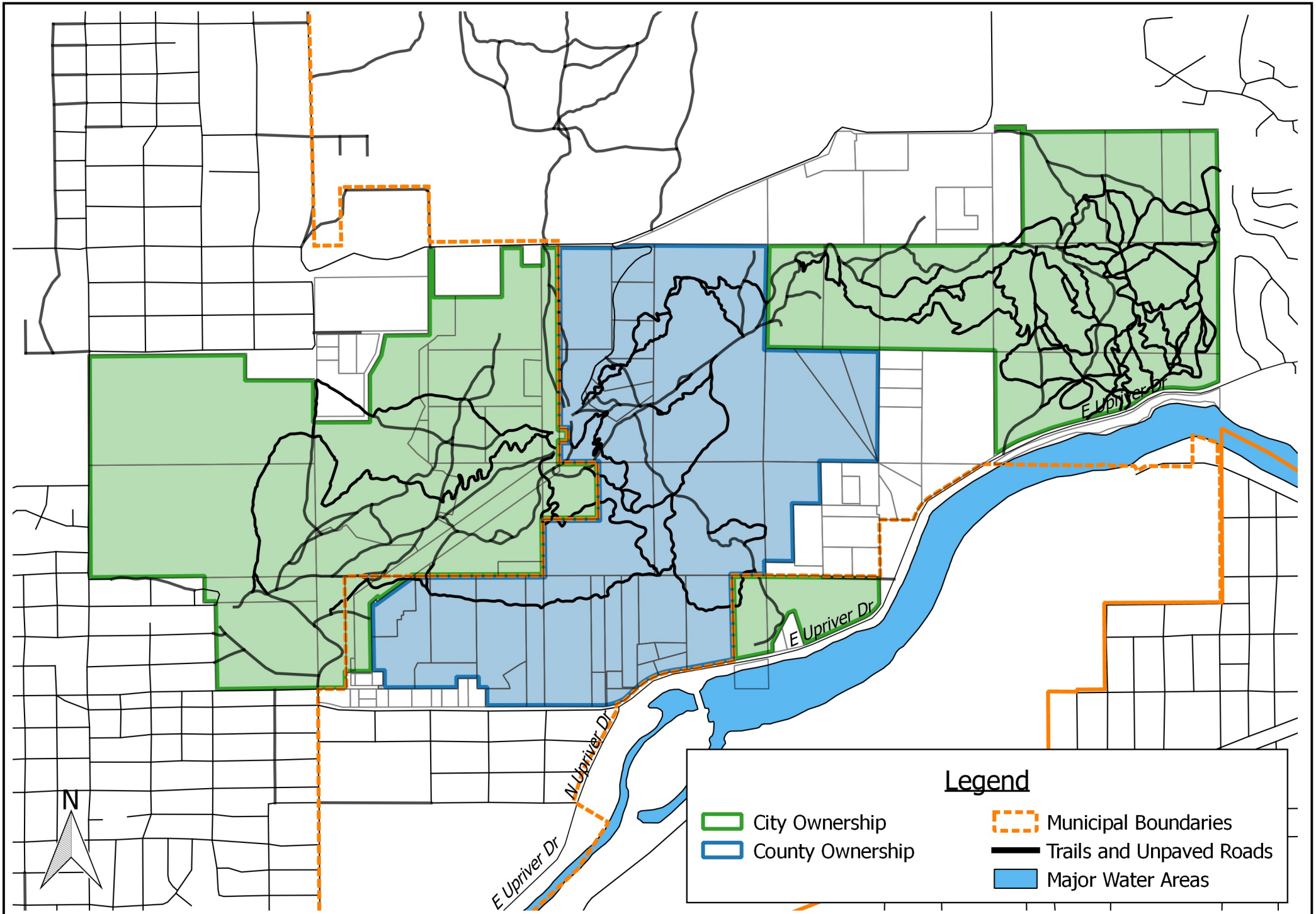

SCALE: NTS DESIGNED: -- DRAWN: NVH CHECKED: APPROVED: PROJ. NO.: DATE: 3/29/16	evergreen MOUNTAIN BIKE ALLIANCE EASTERN WASHINGTON CHAPTER	BEACON HILL TRAIL SYSTEM PRESERVATION PLAN PROPOSED LAND PARTNERS	FIGURE 3