



## Scope of Application

This proposal is pertaining only to the 5.2-acre triangular piece of property, lot 05930101, across the Unity Trail from Soldotna High School on the corner of Marydale Avenue and River Watch Drive, in Soldotna, AK.

## History of Shimai Toshi Garden Trails

In February of 2018, Sarah and Matthew Pyhala received seeds from atomic bombed trees in Hiroshima, Japan. Four of these seeds germinated and have resulted in one Gingko (whose parent tree is located approximately 1200 meters from the hypocenter of the atomic bombing of the city), and three Japanese Hackberry seedlings (whose parent tree is 530 meters from the hypocenter). These seedlings spurred the idea for a peace garden and trail system located in Soldotna with the purpose of honoring the Kenai Peninsula Borough's Sister City of Akita, Japan, and providing educational opportunities.

In order to achieve this, the Shimai Toshi Task Force was formed for garden and trail development. The following vision for this parcel is based on the ability to create the illusion of space with elemental depth. It includes a fenced perimeter with outlying green space, gated arches that lead to handicap accessible trails, a rotunda with a peace crane sculpture, and garden trail system. Along the garden trails there will be a mountain waterfall than leads to a stream, and infinity pond. A bridge will be located over the stream, a tea house will be along the inner trail loop, and skirting the pond will be an education action space. Trails will have at least a 5' green barrier between them and the water features, and benches will be located throughout the trail system for reflection and meditation.

Japanese gardens have been scientifically proven to have positive physical and psychological effects on visitors. Shimai Toshi Garden Trails, once developed, will provide an integrated, asymmetrical, space where all parts are reliant upon each other, and beauty is the essential realization and insight. It will be a place where community members can balance themselves in a stress-free environment and be transformed via quieting of their minds in a serenely uplifting space that creates internal calmness. This will be a restorative, health-giving environment<sup>3,4,5</sup>. It will provide an emotionally safe place of solitude that is non-demanding and aesthetically pleasing. The simplicity of Shimai Toshi will allow for a heightening of intuitive awareness by experiencing nature through contemplative relaxation that will help to create an internal sense of harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility, or chado.

At this time, no public money has been involved in the forming of or planning for this garden and trail system. Grants, private donations, and memberships will be looked at as the primary means of funding for developing Shimai Toshi Garden Trails. Entrance fees will not be charged, but rather, a donation system will be set up for users to give as they are able. In addition, maintenance of these gardens and trails will be performed in a manner that will not burden the tax rolls.

Shimai Toshi is the Japanese phrase for sister city. The primary objectives of the garden are not only to honor Akita, Japan, but also to provide an education space for a variety of topics, such as the history of WWII. The trails that meander through the gardens are meant to facilitate meditation, respect of space, and a pensive atmosphere. Overall, these gravel trails will be established to create a peaceful area within the Borough for community members to experience.

The Master Gardeners will be able to participate in some aspects of fostering environmental harmony to meet required service hours necessary for obtaining their official certification. Collaboration between humans, nature, and time, following the creative ingenuity of our board of directors and task force members, will allow for the creation of a new tradition of, and within, this community. These garden trails have the potential to redefine how our Borough is perceived outside its boundaries. Please refer to management plan attached following references.

Educational workshop events will be occurring whenever specialized educators visit the Borough with registration being open to the public on a first-come-first-served basis. Field trips for Borough schools can also be arranged during regular hours of operation. In addition, an interactive program such as Haiku Alive<sup>1</sup>, developed by the Portland Japanese Garden, as a photographic exploration, and creative writing experience for children in Title 1 schools would fit into the Shimai Toshi vision. There is also the opportunity for a Path to Wellness<sup>2</sup> program, similar to what is being done at the Friendship Japanese Garden of San Diego, to occur with local military servicemen, both active and retired.

### **Type of Organization**

Shimai Toshi Garden Trails, Inc. is a non-profit association. We obtained 501(c)3 status in November of 2019.  
EIN: 83-2378146

#### Founding Board of Directors include:

Sarah Pyhala, President and Treasurer

Kumi Shields, Vice President

Matthew Pyhala, Secretary

Marion Nelson, Board at Large

Heather Daniels, Board at Large

#### Current Board of Directors include:

Sarah Pyhala, President and Treasurer

Kumi Shields, Vice President

Matthew Pyhala, Secretary

Sara Dixon, Board at Large

Heather Daniels, Board at Large

### **Trail Management Plan**

Shimai Toshi Garden Trails task force was formed to properly address and manage the needs of the garden and enclosed trails. It is composed of five prominent community members, as well as one sculptor who is based out of Anchorage. Members of this task force include: John Morton, Ph.D., a plant, fish, and wildlife biologist; Casey Matney, Ph.D., an aquaculturist, horticulturist, and agriculturist; Nancy Casey, a landscape planner and designer; The current President, or other representative, of the Rotary Club of Soldotna; Christina DeMetro, artist and sculptor; and Sarah Pyhala, primary project organizer. These members are available as consultants to the garden on an as needed basis.

The Shimai Toshi Garden will have a tiered membership plan, that will contribute to other funds raised that will be used for annual maintenance and will pay for a contractor to provide for ongoing maintenance and upkeep on the grounds

and garden. The entrance will be open to the public, with a spot for public donation. Monies for this trail-heavy garden's improvements will be sought via memberships, fundraising events, and grants.

Trash pick-up and safety patrols will be performed on an as-needed basis by an independent contractor.

The land will be designed with native Alaskan vegetation leaving minimal exposed ground, save packed gravel pathways, thus minimizing the potential for erosion. With a pond, stream, and waterfall on-site, flooding will be prevented via a water control system. Any necessary on-site repairs will be sent out to bid and professionally performed.

Measures of performance will be based on random sampling of visitors throughout primary hours of operations, and monies donated. These samples would be collected on regular intervals across varying times to obtain hard data on trail and garden usage. Monies collected via membership and volunteer donations will be recorded, and records reports will be provided on a quarterly basis.

As this will be a garden with gravel trail access, reclamation of the property would be able to occur in a minimal timeframe for risk mitigation. If reclamation should occur, several structures would need be disassembled, and removed from the site within an agreed upon timeframe. Structures include the traditional-style tea house (that will double as an education-action space), fencing, the bridge, water features, and gates, all of which could be removed with minimal damage to the parcel.

Pumps for the waterfall, and rock placement will be installed and set up by a licensed and bonded construction company that will also perform excavation necessary for pond development (\$100,000.00). A separate local licensed and bonded construction company will be hired for designing the education action space (\$1,000,000.00) and courtyard, a bridge (\$15,000.00), tea house (\$50,000.00), gates (\$20,000.00), trails with stairs (\$45,000.00), and fencing (\$30,000.00). Essential landscaping rocks have been located and are available in the Kenai Peninsula Borough landfill as overburden via mutual agreement. Additional materials will be obtained from communities across Alaska, and carefully logged as to location and date of receipt. At this time, Blazy Construction, and Foster Construction companies have agreed to work with Shimai Toshi Garden and Trails to perform the above-stated work.

A safety plan, see below, has been developed, and includes a means of contacting EMS, addressing insurance that indemnifies KPB, cameras on-site to deter vandalism, fencing, and lighting.

Short-term goals include establishing a garden with parking lot, trails, water features, rock and sand garden, and plantings laid out in the traditional Japanese style and form.

Long-term goals would be the building of the education action space/ tea room for specialized educational events. These events will include guest educators performing workshops. The space could also be rented out for specialized conference meetings and events.

Another long-term goal would be to build a toilet facility, and to change out any fencing that requires upgrades or maintenance.

### **Safety Plan**

The Shimai Toshi Garden and Trail system is designed to be a relaxing, meditative, and educational space. The space is designed to be self-sufficient, and not require ongoing staffing. However, this requires special care to ensure that the environment remains safe for visitors.

The perimeter will include fencing around the maintained site. In addition, the garden areas will include well-delineated trails using vegetation and other natural methods to encourage visitors to remain in the proper areas, which will reduce the risk of injury.

It is expected that lighting will be installed in several areas of the garden such as along paths and in the parking area, although a detailed lighting plan has not yet developed. This plan will likely be developed in parallel with a security plan,

to include the use of security cameras to deter vandalism and promote a safe environment. The lighting and security plan will likely be modeled after the memorial park and campground plans operated by the City of Soldotna.

Planning for fencing, trails, and access will take place with the need for emergency access in mind. Upon consultation with Central Emergency Services, fencing and access will be provided to ensure that in the event of illness or injury, emergency services can access the area with ease.

The garden will possess the appropriate insurance and will be following the advice of the insurance carrier to reduce risk and the potential for injury. Based on requirements of future agreements, the insurance will name the KPB as an additional insured.

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1. Portland Japanese Garden Haiku Alive, <https://japanesegarden.org/school-programs/haiku-alive/>
  2. Japanese Friendship Garden of San Diego Path to Wellness program (booklet to available upon request)
  3. Goto S, Gianfagia TJ, Munafo JP, Fujii E, Shen X, Sun M, Shi BE, Liu C, Hamano H, Herrup K. *The Power of Traditional Design Techniques: The Effects of Viewing a Japanese Garden on Individuals with Cognitive Impairment*. HERD 2017 Jul; 10(4):74-86. Epub 2016 Dec 18.
  4. Goto S, Kamal N, Puzio H, Kobylarz F, Herrup K. *Differential responses of individuals with late-stage dementia to two novel environments: a multimedia room and an interior garden*. J.Alzheimers Dis. 2014; 42(3):985-98.
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**APPLICATION FOR A COMMUNITY TRAIL MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT FOR  
PUBLIC TRAILS ON BOROUGH LAND  
LAND MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
KPB.17.10.185**

144 N. Binkley Street  
Soldotna, AK 99669-7599  
[lmweb@kpb.us](mailto:lmweb@kpb.us)

Phone: 907-714-2205  
Fax: 907-714-2378

**NAME OF APPLICANT**

Organization Name:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:  Fax Number:

Email Address:

Website Address:

**AGENT/REPRESENTATIVE**

Name:

Title:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:  Fax Number:

Email Address:

**TYPE OF ORGANIZATION**

Non-Profit Association       Community Organization       Government Entity

Note: Please submit, as appropriate, the following items with this application:

- Designation of signatory authority to act for the organization or individual
- If non-profit, has IRS tax exempt status been obtained?  Yes  No.  
If yes, attached letter of determination. If no, please attach certificate, articles in incorporation, by-laws, or other appropriate documentation.

**TRAIL LOCATION** (add additional pages as needed)

Trail(s):  Existing  New

Trail name(s) if existing:

Parcel Identification Number(s):

05930101

Describe any existing uses of the trails identified above:

None, as site is undeveloped.

**Terms of management agreement:**

Start Date:

April, 2019

End Date:

April, 2069

Adjoining Land Uses: Identify any existing uses of improvement that may affect this proposal (i.e.: schools, other 3<sup>rd</sup> party uses)

Soldotna High School is currently using the portion of this parcel that is on the opposite side of the Unity Trail.

Does the applicant anticipate applying for grant funding?  Yes  No If yes, briefly describe the nature of the grant:

We have been awarded a \$20,000.00 Rotary Matching Grant through the Rotary Club of Soldotna. Other Grants include a \$10,000.00 AK Humanities Grant, a Rasmussen Foundation \$25,000.00 grant, a JFLALC \$5,000.00 grant, and an AK DNR \$250,000.00 grant.

Please describe how this trail management proposal serves the public's best interest:

This public garden will be a pensive, quiet, meditative space that has many healing properties, including those for Veterans suffering from PTSD, and community members with dementia. It will be an educational space with opportunities for guest artists, craftsmen, and speakers to be showcased. In addition it will honor the KPB sister city of Akita, Japan.

Briefly describe the qualification of the applicant to perform the activities outlined in the proposed trail management plan:

Members of the Board of Directors, and Shimai Toshi Task force have the necessary educational backgrounds, and skills to ensure that this space lives up to its potential.

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIVITIES (Check All That Apply)

### SEASONS OF TRAIL MANAGEMENT

- Winter    Summer    Year Round

### TRAIL WIDTH (Typical)

- Under 5 Feet  
 5-10 Feet  
 10-20 Feet

### TRAIL MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

- Periodic Brushing/Clearing  
 Grading  
 Snow Grooming  
 Erosion Controls

### TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

- Trailheads  
 Parking Area  
 Loading/Unloading Area  
 Signs  
 Sanitation (Trash/Outhouse)  
 Picnic Area  
 Shelters  
 Culverts  
 Bridges  
 Stairs  
 Gates & Bollards  
 Hardening  
 New Trails  
 Interpretive/Heritage Sites  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### TRAIL ADMINISTRATION

- Competitions/Sponsored Events  
 Grants  
 Signage  
 Equipment Storage Facilities

### TRAIL ACTIVITIES

#### **Motorized:**

- ATV  
 Snow Machines

#### **Non-Motorized:**

- Dog Sleds  
 Skiing  
 Snowshoeing  
 Skijoring  
 Sledding  
 Hiking  
 Biking  
 Walking/Running  
 Biathlon  
 Horses  
 Pet Friendly  
 Other:

#### **Water Access**

- Landing Area  
 Dock  
 Mooring

Comments:

Organizations entering into a Community Trail Management Agreement (CTMA) may manage and regulate the type of use, time of use, or restrict specific types of use: however, all trails shall be considered open to the public.

- a. Please describe any proposed regulations that may affect the type of usage and times of usage of the trails:

The garden will have a vegetation barrier between it and pathways. Fencing (at least 6-feet in height) will be placed to ensure neighbors are not disturbed visually, or imposed upon by garden trail visitors. Three access gates, one primary for visitors, and two for maintenance/emergency purposes, will be set within the perimeter. The main entrance will be open during regular park hours for the City of Soldotna Monday through Sunday. Months of operation expected to be year-round.

- b. Please describe proposed management methods to support the any proposed regulations and restrictions:

Shimai Toshi Garden Trails will be managed primarily via a staff of volunteers, and paid employees as donations and fundraising allows.

Attach a draft Trail Management Plan to include the following:

- a. A narrative description of the activities, operations, and scope of the proposal. Please include information on:
- Brief history of the organization, membership size, accomplishments, etc.
  - Summary of proposed activities: briefly describe the trail management elements that make up you management plan, including potential sources of funding.
  - Means and methods for maintenance, erosion control, and trash pick-up, etc.
  - Measures of performance, timeframes, ownership of improvements & reclamation
  - Estimated value of proposed structures and facilities, when applicable
  - Any short-term and long-range goals
- b. Conceptual Site Plan (if available include aerial photos, contour map, etc.). Please include the following information:
- Location of trail improvements and buffers
  - Property lines, right-of-ways, easement, access, etc.
  - Location of wetlands, water bodies, anadromous stream crossing and major topography
- c. Detailed Plans
- Plans for specific improvement including architectural or engineering designs, when applicable
  - Grant proposals, when applicable.



## **Shimai Toshi Garden Trails**

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### **History of Shimai Toshi Garden Trails**

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Complete the following applicant qualification statement for each individual applicant/agent or organization. Attach additional statements if needed.

### APPLICANT QUALIFICATION STATEMENT

Name of Applicant:

Sarah Pyhala

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 771, Soldotna, AK 99669

- I hereby affirm to the best of my knowledge:
- That I am eighteen years of age or older; and
- That I am a citizen of the United States or a permanent resident who has filed a declaration of intention to become a citizen or a representative of a group, association or corporation which is authorized to conduct business under the laws of Alaska; and
- That the above named applicant is not delinquent on any deposit or payment of any obligation to KPB; and
- That the above named applicant is not currently in breach or default on any contract or lease involving land in which KPB has an interest; and
- The above named applicant has not failed to perform under a contract or lease involving KPB land in the previous five years and KPB has not acted to terminate the contract or lease or to initiate legal action.

I hereby certify that the information contained herein is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.



Signature of Applicant or Agent

11.1.2019

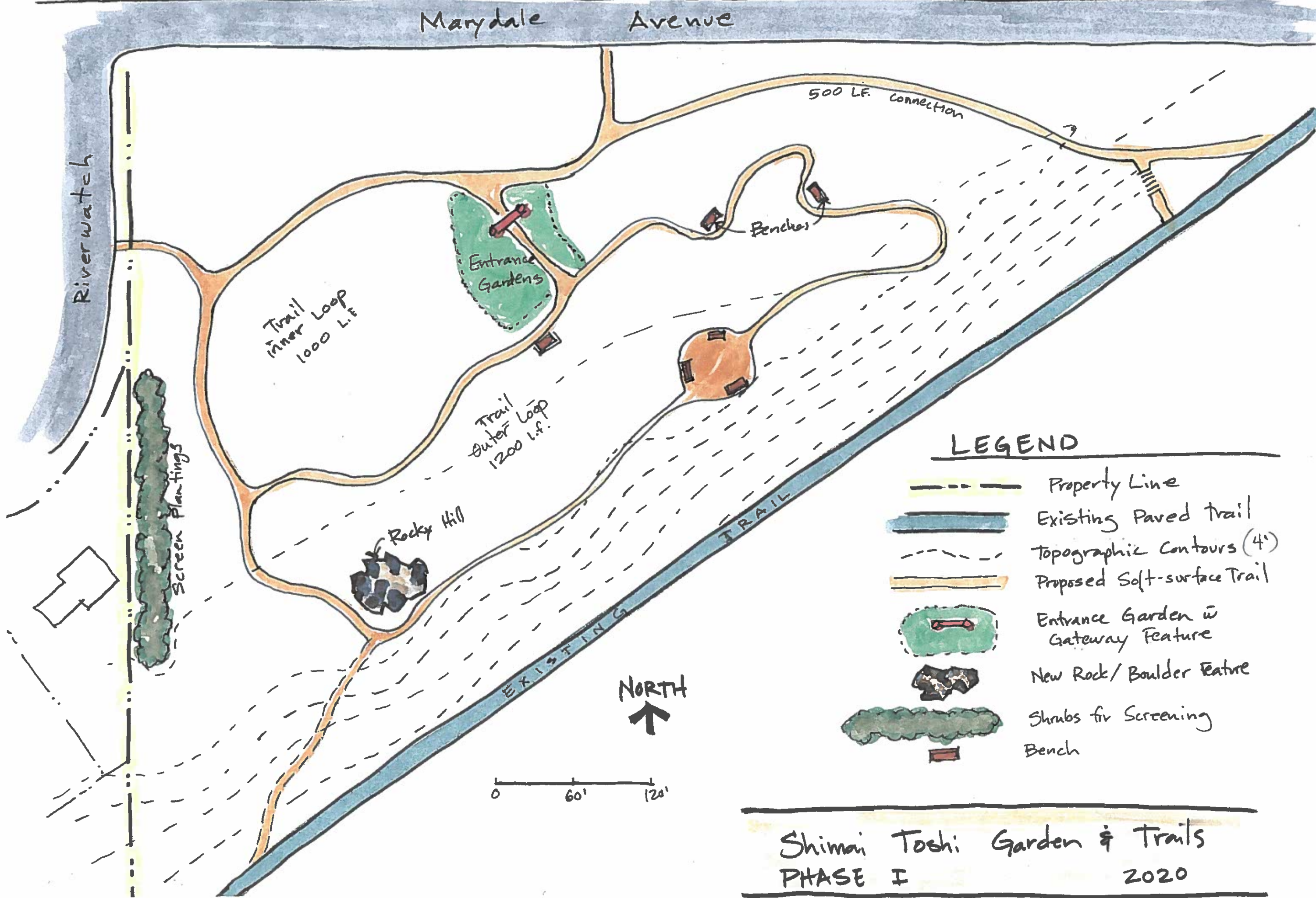
Date

Sarah Pyhala

Print Name







Marydale Avenue

500 LF. Connection

Riverwatch

Trail Inner Loop  
1000 L.F.

Entrance  
Gardens

Benches

Trail Outer Loop  
1200 L.F.

Rocky Hill

Screen Plantings

**LEGEND**

-  Property Line
-  Existing Paved trail
-  Topographic Contours (4')
-  Proposed Soft-surface Trail
-  Entrance Garden w Gateway Feature
-  New Rock/Boulder Feature
-  Shrubs for Screening
-  Bench

NORTH  
↑

0 60' 120'

Shimai Toshi Garden & Trails  
PHASE I 2020

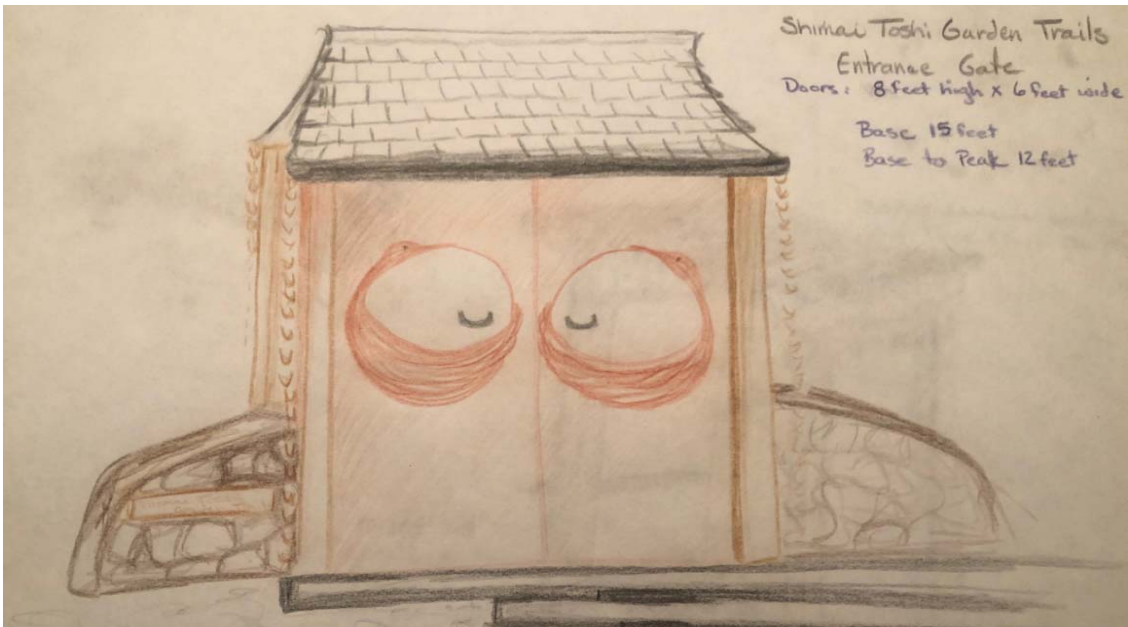
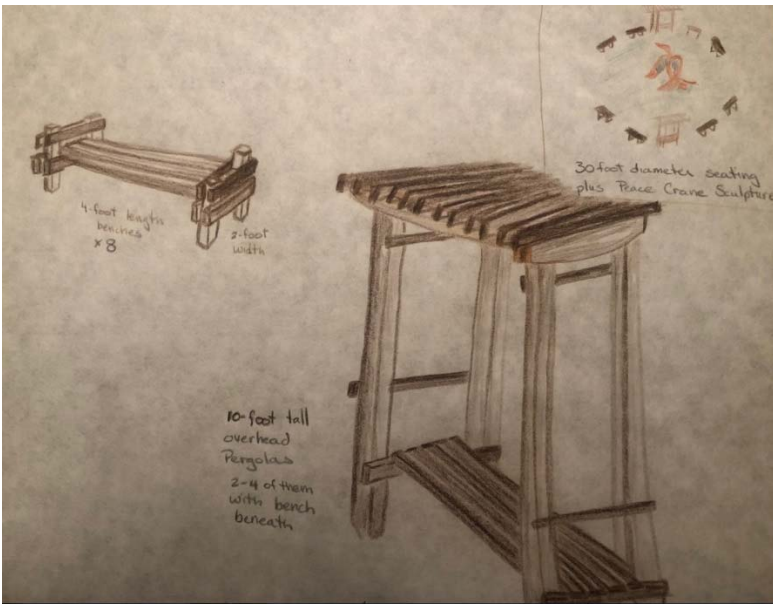
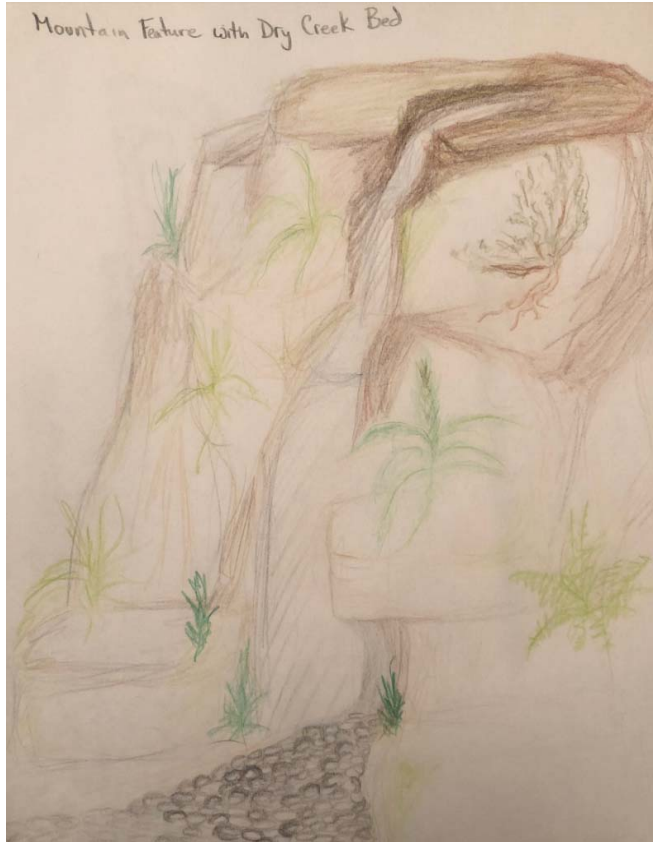
Peace Crane Sculpture by Christina Demetro. Xylophone in the underside of wings, and donation slot in the heart center of the chest. Donation box located at the base of the Sandhill Crane.



Plaque beneath Peace Crane Sculpture to read:

Shimai Toshi "Sister City" Garden Trails are to honor the KPB's sister city Akita-shi, Akita, Japan. This garden is a symbol of peace hope, and survivorship in remembrance of WWII. In that we hope this garden becomes a healing space for all veterans, and a place to foster harmony, peace, well-being, and education for all who visit. 100% of your donation supports future developments and maintenance of this space.







Peninsula Community  
Health Services of Alaska  
MEDICAL • DENTAL • BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

230 East Marydale Avenue • Soldotna, Alaska • 99669 • [www.pchsak.org](http://www.pchsak.org)  
We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Please consider a donation.

**ADMINISTRATION Soldotna** tel 907.260.7300 • fax 907.260.7301  
**MEDICAL Soldotna** tel 907.262.3119 • fax 907.262.9290  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH Soldotna** tel 907.260.3691 • fax 907.262.9290  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH Kenai** tel 907.283.3600 • fax 907.262.9290  
**MEDICAL Kenai** tel 907.283.3600 • fax 907.262.9290  
**DENTAL Kenai** tel 907.283.7759 • fax 907.283.4883

1/9/2019

Sarah Pyhala  
Re: Shimai Toshi Garden Trails, Inc.  
PO Box 771  
Soldotna, AK 99669

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Peninsula Community Health Services of Alaska, we are in support of the proposed Japanese garden, known as Shimai Toshi Garden Trails. The health benefits to those with stress-related disorders have been well documented. We envision this trail and garden space incorporated with retreats for those who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and being of great benefit to all community members with a need for a calming, healing, atmosphere.

Sincerely,



JC Rathje  
Interim Executive Officer

Central Peninsula Garden Club  
PO Box 767  
Kenai, AK 99611

To: Sarah Pyhala  
P.O. Box 771  
Soldotna, AK 99669

Re: Shimai Toshi Garden Trails, Inc

1/15/2019

To Whom It May Concern:

The Central Peninsula Garden Club is in support of the concept of a Japanese Garden within the Kenai Peninsula Borough, i.e. Shimai Toshi Garden Trails, Inc. We may be able to assist this garden with labeling plant species within, and as the majority of plants will be native to Alaska, a showcase of how environmental harmony can be achieved using non-invasive plants. This peaceful garden space will be a positive addition to our community.

Thank you,



Phyllis A Boskofsky

President

Central Peninsula Garden Club



250 Hospital Place, Soldotna, Alaska 99669 • ph: 907.714.4626, fax: 907.714.4926 • [www.givingheals.org](http://www.givingheals.org)

December 28, 2018

Sarah Pyhala

RE: Shimai Toshi Garden Trails project

To Whom It May Concern:

We at Central Peninsula Health Foundation are in support of the concept of serenity gardens and understand the benefits to the community members. As such, we have our own Peace Garden on the campus of Central Peninsula Hospital which serves the similar purpose of an area for reflection and meditation and have found it to be beneficial.

Good luck in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Gensel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Kathy Gensel  
Foundation Director  
Central Peninsula Health Foundation  
250 Hospital Place  
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

**JOSEPH L. KASHI**

**Attorney at Law**  
205 East Beluga Avenue  
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

Telephone (907) 260-7732  
Fax (907) 260-7739  
Email: [kashi@alaska.net](mailto:kashi@alaska.net)

January 15, 2020

Mr. Max Best  
Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Department  
144 North Binkley Street  
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

Re: Proposed garden park and trail near Soldotna High School

Dear Mr. Best:

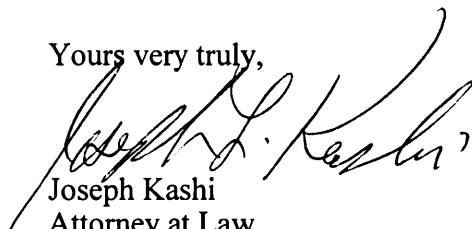
I write to express my strong support for the proposed Japanese Peace Garden on Borough property adjacent to Soldotna High School. This project promises many direct and also intangible benefits for the area. These would, I believe, include, enhancing currently unused Borough property in a manner which would not conflict with any potential future needs of Kenai Peninsula Borough, providing needed park space for the neighborhood and the Soldotna area generally, closer contact with our sister municipalities in Japan, and providing a trail system that is both peaceful and a safe facility to aid fitness.

The Tsalteshi trail system works very successfully, I understand, upon a similar volunteer model. As with Tsalteshi, I believe that the proposed trail system would become similarly well-known and improve the "amenities" of the Soldotna area in a manner that benefits property values and long-term economic development of a nature that fits with 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy trends.

This proposed system has already received a number of initial grants, demonstrating that others have seen the merit in the proposal. I strongly urge Kenai Peninsula Borough to allow these volunteers to put this currently unused land to a very positive and beneficial use. That, after all, is what Alaska is about, volunteers working to improve their communities.

I request that you bring this letter to the attention of the KPB Planning Commission when this project is considered as well as to the attention of Mayor Pierce and the Borough Assembly.

Yours very truly,



Joseph Kashi  
Attorney at Law,  
AK Bar #7811107