



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

Assembly Information Memorandum

AIM No. 37-2025

Meeting Date: February 25, 2025

1 **FROM: MAYOR**

2
3 **SUBJECT: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO AO 2024-114(S) OF THE**
4 **GIRDWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.**
5

6 This AIM transmits proposed amendments to the S-version of the *Girdwood*
7 *Comprehensive Plan*. The Planning Department has met with Imagine Girdwood!
8 team, members of the Girdwood community, and Assembly Members representing
9 Girdwood throughout the *Girdwood Comprehensive Plan* process. The S-version
10 resulted from this communication. Acknowledging the amount of work the
11 community has dedicated to this project, these suggested amendments are meant
12 to help implement the goals and policies in the *Girdwood Comprehensive Plan* to
13 construct the housing Girdwood needs.
14

15 Recommended amendments:

- 16
17 1. Update Implementation Action R4.2 to remove a specific distance
18 requirement for vegetative buffers.
19
- 20 2. Change land use designation from “Open Space” to “Mixed-use” for the
21 area northeast of the airport that is zoned GRST-2 and had a land use
22 designation of “Resort” in the 1995 *Girdwood Area Plan*, and is a portion of
23 Tract 4, Holtan Hills Subdivision - Parcel 075-311-09 (HLB Parcel 6-011B
24 and formerly HLB Parcel 6-011).
25
- 26 3. Change land use designation from “Open Space” to “Low-intensity
27 Residential” for 500 feet east of the Virgin Creek area that is zoned GCR-1
28 with a land use designation of “Commercial Recreation” in the 1995
29 *Girdwood Area Plan*, and is a portion of Tract 1, Glacier View Estates
30 Subdivision, Tracts 20A and 20B, T10N R2E SEC 20 – Parcels 075-062-
31 71, 075-201-01, 075-201-02 (HLB Parcel 6-036, 6-061, 6-062).
32
- 33 4. Change land use designation from “Low-intensity Residential” to “Moderate-
34 intensity Residential” in the area west of Alyeska View Avenue and east of
35 the greenbelt drainageways, and areas north and south of the Alyeska
36 Highway between greenbelt drainageways.
37
- 38 5. Change land use designation from both “Mixed-use” and “Commercial
39 Recreation” to “Mixed-use” for Alyeska Prince Addition, Tract C - Parcel

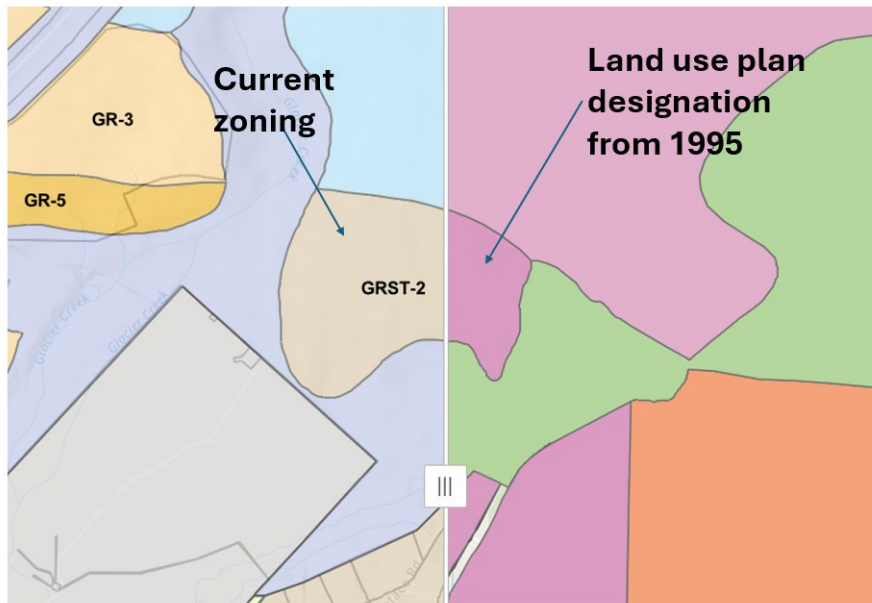
075-041-29.

A discussion of the rationale for these amendments follows:

1. The prescription for a specific distance requirement of the vegetative buffers is more appropriate in the municipal code or the HLB Work Plan than a comprehensive plan. This distance could also potentially be conflated with screening requirements when reviewing subdivision plats, which are a maximum of 30 feet in code. The intent is for these buffers to be created when HLB property is subdivided and for them to follow natural features. The Department recommends the intent be left in the plan, while a specific distance be removed.
2. This is the “mitten” property. The Department recommends the land use designation change from “Open Space” to “Mixed-use”. It was designated for resort development in the 1995 *Girdwood Land Use Plan*, and it is zoned GRST-2 (Girdwood New Base Resort). Alyeska Resort has development plans for housing, a community Nordic trailhead/center, new Nordic trails, trail access parking, a buffer between development and existing trails, and short-term rental restrictions. New development is required to follow existing adopted plans, including those for trails.

Regardless of any development plans for this parcel, it follows the best planning practices to build in this area. It is close to existing infrastructure, including water, sewer, and roads. The parcel is owned by Heritage Land Bank (HLB), but it has been identified for disposal in the 2024 *HLB Work Plan*. It is one of the 11 most developable parcels in Girdwood identified by HLB. The figure below shows this area.

Figure 1. “Mitten” parcel to change from “Open Space” to “Mixed-use” land use designation

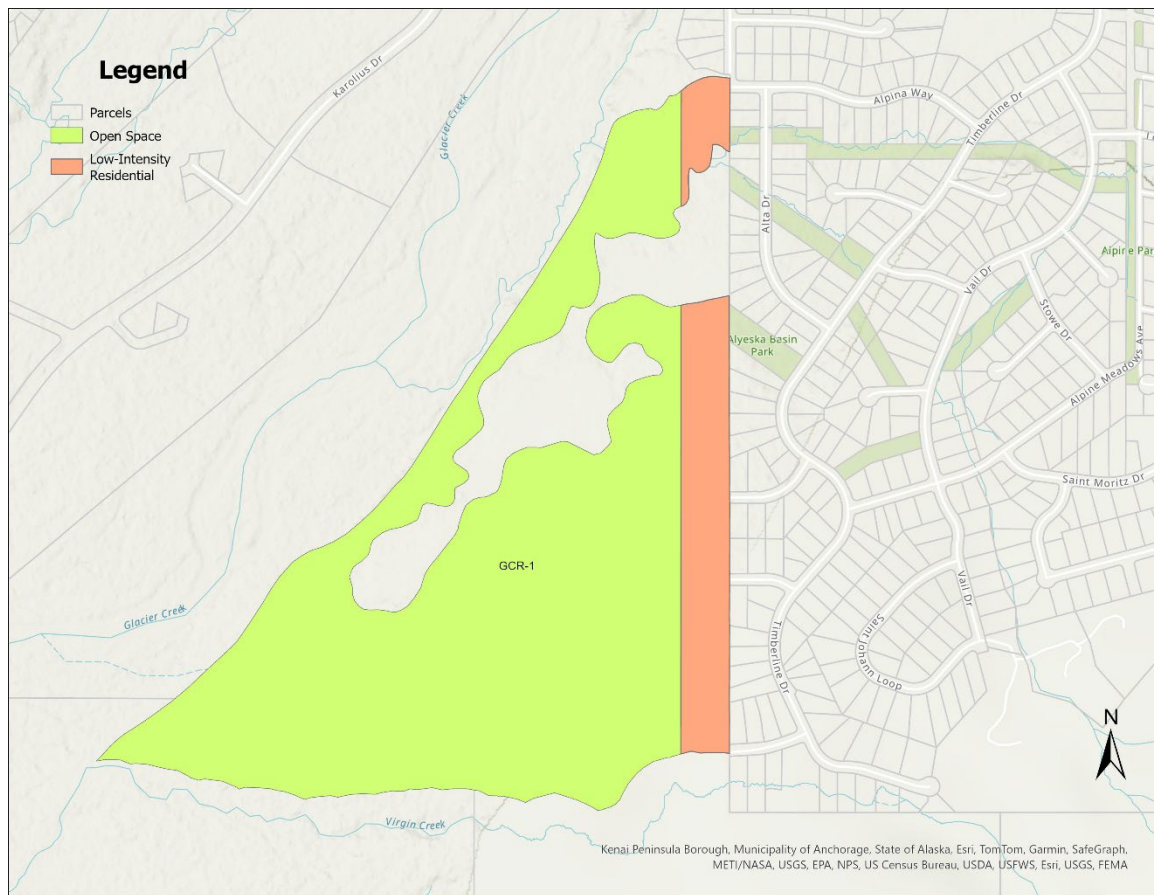


3. The draft plan calls for all the undeveloped property west of Timberline Drive

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15

in the Virgin Creek area to be designated as “Open Space”. In the *Girdwood Area Plan*, the property had a land use designation for commercial recreation and is currently zoned GCR-1 (Commercial Recreation (Golf Course/Nordic Ski Course) and GOS (Girdwood Open Space). Per the land suitability analysis in the *Girdwood Comprehensive Plan*, this area is generally suitable for development. In addition, several streets in the area (Alpina Way, Carlina Drive, Turin Drive, and Virgin Creek Road) appear to have been platted to continue for future development. The Department recommends 500 feet of the property currently designated as “Open Space” instead be designated as “Low-intensity Residential”. This distance is approximately the length of a cul-de-sac and aligns with the suitability analysis. Figure 2 below shows this amendment:

Figure 2. Area west of Timberline Drive in the Virgin Creek area to change from “Open Space” to “Low-intensity Residential” land use designation



16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

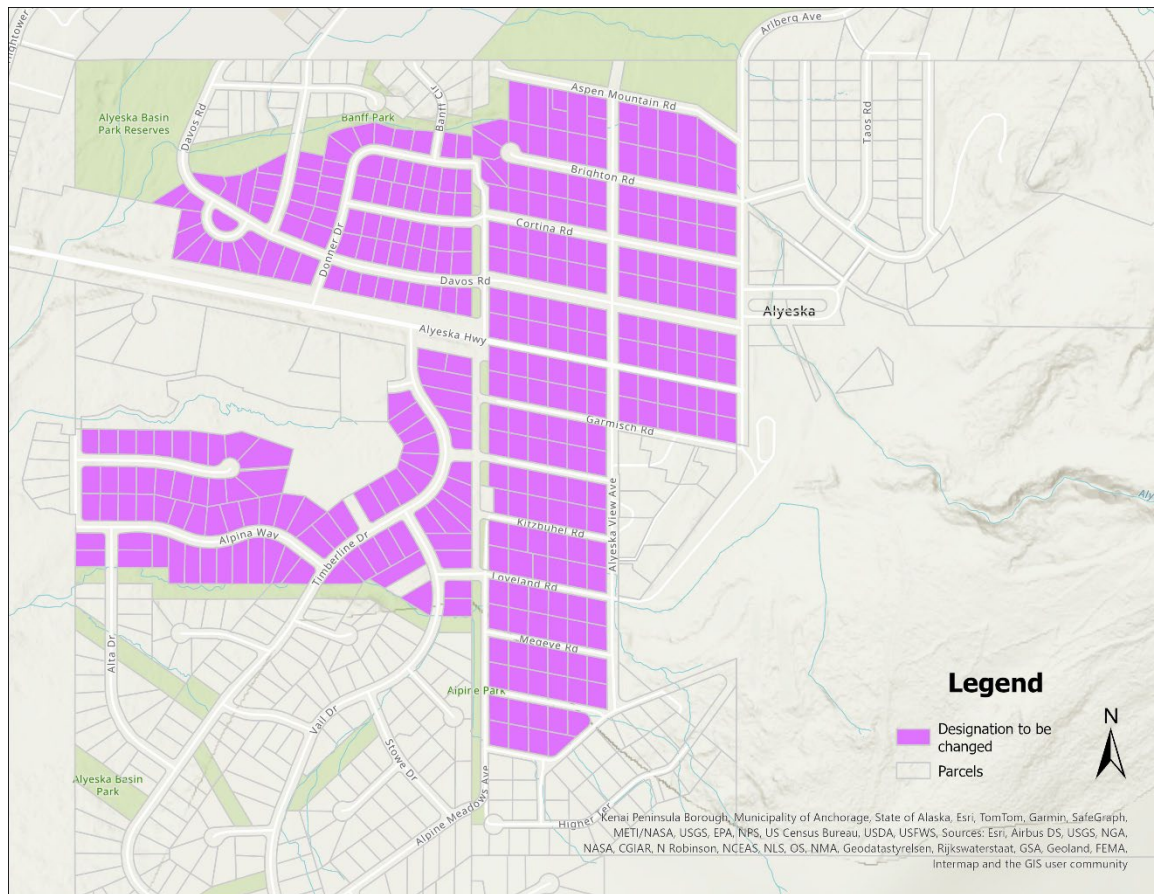
4. The Department recommends that areas of higher density or higher

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15

intensity be in central parts of Girdwood, away from natural hazard risk areas and with proximity to existing infrastructure. Building new infrastructure for higher-intensity development increases the cost of housing development and expands long-term maintenance burdens. Sometimes the cost of new infrastructure is so great for projects that it can prevent construction from happening at all. Focusing higher intensity where development already exists could lead to incremental change and would make the most of Girdwood's existing housing stock, as called for in the goals and policies of the *Girdwood Comprehensive Plan*. The area of proposed change in the land use designation is shown in the purple shading in

Figure 3 below:

Figure 3. Area to change from “Low-intensity Residential” to “Moderate-intensity Residential” land use designation

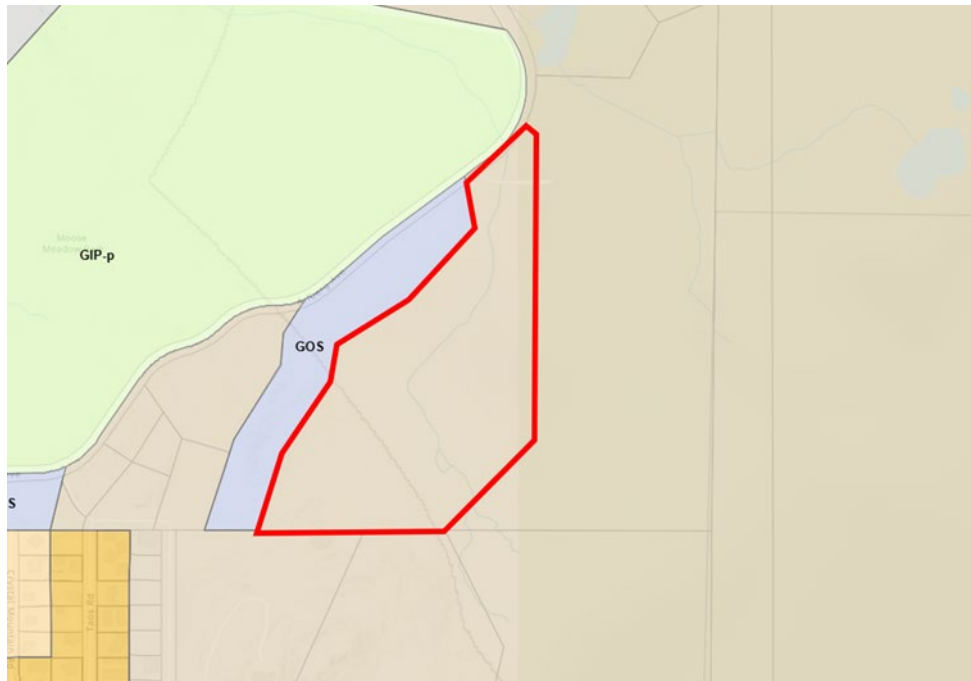


16
17

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

5. The Department recommends changing a tract with a split land use designation of “Mixed-use” and “Commercial Recreation” to become only one land use designation of “Mixed-use”. This tract is owned by Alyeska Resort and is outlined in red in Figure 4 below. In the *Girdwood Area Plan*, the entire parcel had a “Resort” land use designation. There did not seem to be objections to this change in conversations between Imagine! Girdwood and Planning Department staff.

Figure 4. Change the parcel outlined in red from split “Mixed-use” and “Commercial Recreation” to only “Mixed-use” Land Use Designation



11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

Thank you for your consideration of these five amendments. The Department looks forward to continuing communication with the Girdwood community to implement the goals and policies of the *Girdwood Comprehensive Plan*.

- Prepared by: Daniel Mckenna-Foster, Senior Planner, Planning Department
- Prepared by: Elizabeth Appleby, Manager & Platting Officer, Planning Department
- Approved by: Mélisa R.K. Babb, Planning Director
- Concur: Lance Wilber, Director, PDPW
- Concur: William D. Falsey, Chief Administrative Officer
- Concur: Rebecca A. Windt Pearson, Municipal Manager
- Respectfully submitted: Suzanne LaFrance, Mayor