

Whereas the Girdwood is looking to both better regulate the licensing and utilization of short-term rentals in the Girdwood Valley Service Area, the Girdwood Housing and Economic puts forth the following framework for consideration:

- Overlay Concept
  - o Regulations will be disclosed under Title 21, Chapter 9
  - o Application will be equal across the Girdwood Valley Service Area with no property subject to different rules
  
- Registration
  - o \$100 annual registration fee paid for each individual short-term rental;
  - o The tracking of the registration fee using an online third party vendor;
  - o Requirement for a contact residing in Alaska available 24/7/365 to respond to issues within 6 hours
  
- License Display
  - o A requirement for the owner posts its short-term rental license prominently inside the premises for guests to see;
  
- Penalties for infractions at licensed STR
  - o Infractions based on violations of laws of the Municipality of Anchorage
  - o Offenses noted below shall be within a 2 year time frame
  - o \$100 penalty for a first time offense;
  - o \$500 penalty for a second time offense;
  - o \$1,000 penalty for a third time offense;
  - o Potential for appeals process
  - o Removal of license for a fourth time offense.
  
- Penalties for infractions at unlicensed STR
  - o A warning notice is sent requiring 14 days to respond
  - o \$1,000 upfront penalty for those who run a short-term rental without the required license.
  - o Additional penalty accrues at \$100 per day after the date of the upfront penalty
  
- Exemption
  - o Fees and penalties will not apply to homeowners who rent for less than 14 days per year. Licenses are required and need to be displayed.

Using Whitefish, MT as an example, provide a complete housing implementation plan for Girdwood, AK.

Using Whitefish, MT as an example, here's a comprehensive housing implementation plan for Girdwood, AK, taking into account its limited local governance authority within the Anchorage municipality:

## Girdwood Housing Implementation Plan

### 1. Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning

- Conduct a thorough housing needs assessment to determine the current and projected housing requirements for Girdwood.
- Develop a Strategic Housing Plan, similar to Whitefish's, outlining specific goals and strategies to address housing needs over the next 5-10 years.

### 2. Establish a Housing Task Force

- Form a dedicated Housing Task Force or Committee to oversee the implementation of the housing plan.
- Include representatives from local businesses, residents, and the Girdwood Board of Supervisors.

### 3. Funding and Resources

- Explore funding options, including: Proposing a property tax levy specifically for affordable housing initiatives

### 4. Zoning and Land Use Updates

- Review and update zoning regulations to promote affordable housing development: Allow multi-family and mixed-use developments in appropriate zones

### 5. Development Partnerships

- Identify publicly-owned land suitable for affordable housing development.

- Partner with non-profit housing organizations or developers to create workforce housing projects.

## 6. Incentive Programs

- Develop incentives for developers and property owners, such as: Density bonuses for including affordable units.

## 7. Rental Assistance and Conversion Programs

- Explore a rental assistance program for immediate relief to workers struggling with housing costs.
- Consider implementing a rental conversion program to incentivize long-term rentals over short-term vacation rentals.

## 8. Community Engagement and Education

- Host regular community meetings and workshops to gather input and keep residents informed about housing initiatives.
- Develop educational resources about available housing programs and assistance.

## 9. Monitoring and Adaptation

- Establish key performance indicators to track the progress of housing initiatives.
- Conduct annual reviews of the housing plan and make adjustments based on changing needs and market conditions.

## 10. Collaboration with Anchorage Municipality

- Work closely with the Anchorage municipal government to align Girdwood's housing strategies with broader regional planning efforts.
- Advocate for policies and resources that support Girdwood's specific housing needs within the larger municipal framework.

By adapting strategies from Whitefish's successful approach and tailoring them to Girdwood's unique situation, this plan provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the community's housing challenges. The focus on partnerships, diverse funding sources, and flexible zoning can help Girdwood create more affordable and workforce housing options despite its limited governance authority.

# Glacier Creek Flood Mitigation Grant

Whereas, Glacier Creek is a renewable resource continually filling with gravel and building up in elevation, changing the river channel and flow;

Whereas, Girdwood has experienced severe flooding in the past, which has impacted both private property and public infrastructure;

Whereas, this gravel buildup in Glacier Creek causes a continually elevating risk of flooding damage to property and infrastructure as evidenced by prior flooding;

Whereas, the upper Girdwood valley has only one exit bridge over Glacier Creek; therefore, the bridge is a critical piece of infrastructure for life and safety of Girdwood residents and requires continued investment in protection;

Whereas, the costs to repair flood damage are ever increasing, and represents a major risk to the continuation of economic activity in the Girdwood valley when a flooding event occurs in the future;

Whereas, several properties adjacent to Glacier Creek have already experienced major flooding in the past and can expect flooding in the future;

Whereas, comprehensive management of the entire Glacier Creek valley alluvial plane would suit several mitigation purposes and change the way the community manages risk;

Whereas, materials excavated from or otherwise restricted from traveling downstream would reduce material buildup in the river and can then be used to enhance habitat as well as fortify infrastructure such as roads, bridge abutments, and levees in the Girdwood Valley;

Whereas, federal grant funding is available for community activities such as this, and there have been several other Alaskan locations that have qualified for this funding recently;

Whereas, another round of EPA grant funding is becoming available for new applications;

Whereas, there are several stakeholders with at-risk infrastructure that would benefit greatly from these mitigation efforts, including ADFG, MOA, AK DOT, AK RR, ACS, AWWU, GFD, USFS, Chugach Electric Association, among others

Therefore, the Girdwood Housing and Economic Committee of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors submits this motion requesting authorization for NTE \$5,000 expenditure to pursue development of a grant application from the Girdwood Valley Housing and Economic Service Area to be submitted to the EPA for changing how the community addresses flood mitigation,

infrastructure protection and watershed enhancement via alluvial plain management of Glacier Creek. This is necessary due to increased frequency of flood events and due to changing climate conditions. This application will be submitted by the deadline of November 21, 2024 for grant awards in 2025, dates TBD.

## **Update: Activity after the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting**

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended that Huddle and the Planning Department meet to discuss two issues:

- 1) the representation of Future Parks on the Land Use map, and
- 2) how vegetative buffers will be implemented

That meeting occurred and there was agreement on two changes to the *representation* on the map without changing functional content.

1. Future Parks will not be represented on the main Land Use Map, but captured on a separate map in Section 3 of the plan. In the future the Land Use Map will be amended as parks are created.
2. Vegetative buffers will be represented on the Land Use map as a dashed line rather than a solid "area", so it is clear they are not a primary land use category. The narrative will be expanded slightly to better explain their purpose and clarify that the buffers are to maintain *established mature trees* and other vegetation, not for replanting of new vegetation . An implementation action will be added to Section 4 to list various methods for dedicating the buffers e.g. through easements, separate parcels, deed restrictions etc.



## **Girdwood Comprehensive Plan – status of Municipal adoption process**

*July 19, 2024*

### **Context**

Broadly, the Municipal adoption process for the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan has two steps:

1. Review and recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission
2. Action by the Anchorage Assembly to adopt the plan

The first of these two steps has been completed.

Importantly, the Planning and Zoning Commission provides a formal recommendation to the Assembly, not a decision. *Commission recommendations to the Anchorage Assembly are not appealable.* The Assembly will make an independent decision and may follow, reject or amend the PZC recommendation or make their own changes.

### **Planning and Zoning Commission review**

On July 15, 2024, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) held a public hearing on recommendation for adoption of the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan (GCP) as an amendment to the Municipality of Anchorage Comprehensive Plan.

The PZC's role in a Comprehensive Plan amendment is to provide a recommendation to Anchorage Assembly. This might be a simple recommendation of adoption, but typically it is a recommendation of adoption with amendments.

A Planning Staff report was released on July 9 and included eleven recommendations for changes to the GCP.

At the July 15 PZC meeting, Planning Staff introduced two additional recommended changes (#2f & #2g) and updated one previous change recommendation (#5). The Planning Department presentation and additional recommended changes are included as Attachments.

PZC heard public testimony, moved the Planning Dept recommendations, then debated five amendments, two of which passed, one failed to reach the required Yes votes and two failed on a simple majority. The amended motion was passed.

The final status of the individual Planning Dept recommended changes are shown in the table below.

Recommended Changes from Planning	Planning Dept Ref #	Consistent with GCP?
<del>Remove "Vegetative Buffers"</del>	<del>1a</del>	No
<del>Remove "Potential Future Park Land"</del>	<del>1b</del>	No
Change "Mitten"/Forest Loop (Area #1) to Mixed-Use	2a	No
Change Virgin Creek (Area #2) to Low-density Residential	2b	No
Change South Townsite (Area #3) to Mixed Use	2c	No
Remove Commercial Recreation Reserve (Area #4)	2d	No
Winner Creek extension to Park (Area #5)	2e	Yes
Update land use polygons to follow updated HH platting	2f	Yes
<del>Change most of Alyeska Basin from low to mixed density</del>	<del>2g</del>	No
Explicitly call out "Tsunami Risk" in Old Girdwood mixed use	3	Yes
Adjust language about road paving	4	Yes
Adjust language for airport development (updated)	5	Yes
Technical edits	6	Yes

Items crossed through were voted down by PZC.

The last column "Consistent with GCP?" is the Project team's judgment of whether the recommended change is in line with the GCP approved by the Girdwood community or substantially different. Rows are shaded based on the value in this column.

## Next steps

These recommendations will be formally accepted as a PZC resolution at their August 5 meeting and transmitted to the Assembly. Note again that the resolution is a recommendation from PZC so the Assembly can follow the recommended changes, reject them or make their own.

It typically takes 6-8 weeks from PZC decision to Assembly introduction, so we expect the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan to be introduced to the Assembly in September. The Assembly will likely hold a work session on the plan a week or so before a scheduled public hearing and vote.



## Discussion

The Planning and Zoning Commission rarely sees new or replacement comprehensive plans. In fact this is only the second case since the Land Use code was updated in 2012. There are some aspects of PZC procedures which are appropriate for almost all of the cases before them but are obstructive to a constructive discussion and understanding of new policy directions. Policy changes are the core purpose of an updated Comprehensive Plan.

Even though the format of the meeting had some problems, it was an informative discussion between Planning staff, the GCP project team, those providing public testimony and the Commissioners. Most of the recommended changes from PZC were in line with the community vision & goals, representing an improvement to the plan.

However, four of the PZC recommendations – all modifications to the Land Use map – are substantial changes from the community supported Plan. In fact these specific changes have been previously considered and rejected during an extensive community engagement process. They were discussed during multiple public meetings and addressed by public comments from the Girdwood community and other stakeholders (see Appendix 3 of the plan).

While we value the time, consideration and comments from the Planning and Zoning Commissioners and believe that their efforts will lead to a stronger adopted plan, we are focused on bringing the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan to the Anchorage Assembly and sharing Girdwood's forward-looking vision for a thriving community.

Imagine!Girdwood Board of Directors

## **ATTACHMENTS**

A - Updated language for recommendation #5

B - Additional recommendation #2g

C - Planning staff presentation at July 15, 2024 PZC meeting, including additional recommendation #2f

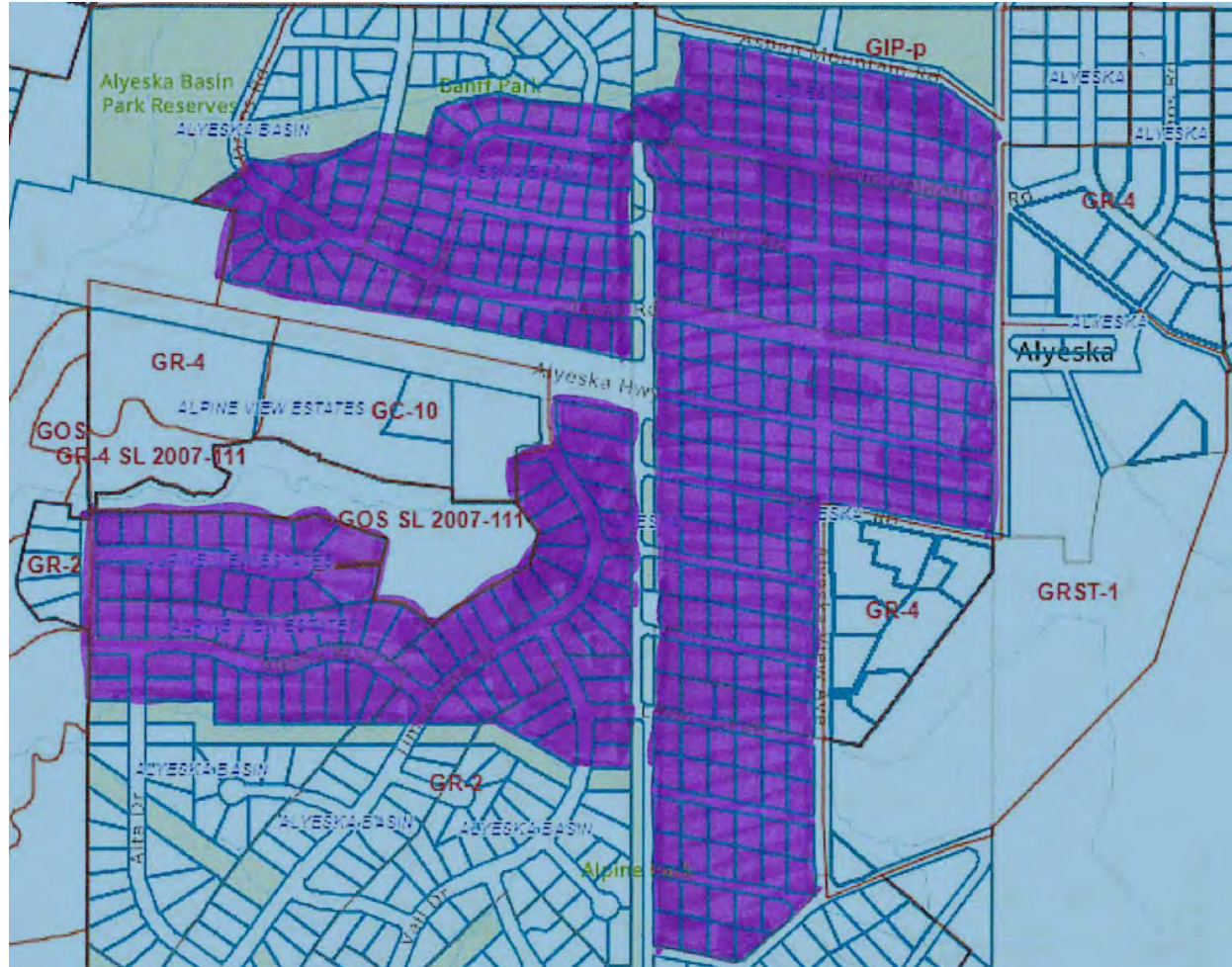
Planning Dept proposed amendment #5 (updated)

Update Implementation Action for Goal T5.1 to read:

“Revise current use standards in the airport district, remove use restrictions that limit opportunities for appropriate development.”

(Page 4-16)

# (new) 2.g.



Area #7. Change land use designation from “Low-density Residential” to “Mixed-density Residential”

# Staff Report Presentation

Case 2024-0074: *Girdwood Comprehensive Plan*

July 15, 2024  
PZC Public Hearing

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## **21.03.070C.2. Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Approval Criteria**

- a. The proposed amendment is necessary in order to address one or more of the following:**

The criterion is met.

- i. A change in projections or assumptions from those on which the comprehensive plan is based;**
- ii. Identification of new issues, needs, or opportunities that are not adequately addressed in the comprehensive plan.**
- iii. A change in the policies, objectives, principles, or standards governing the physical development of the municipality or any other geographic areas addressed by the comprehensive plan; or**
- iv. Identification of errors or omissions in the comprehensive plan.**











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# Recommended Amendments from Staff Report

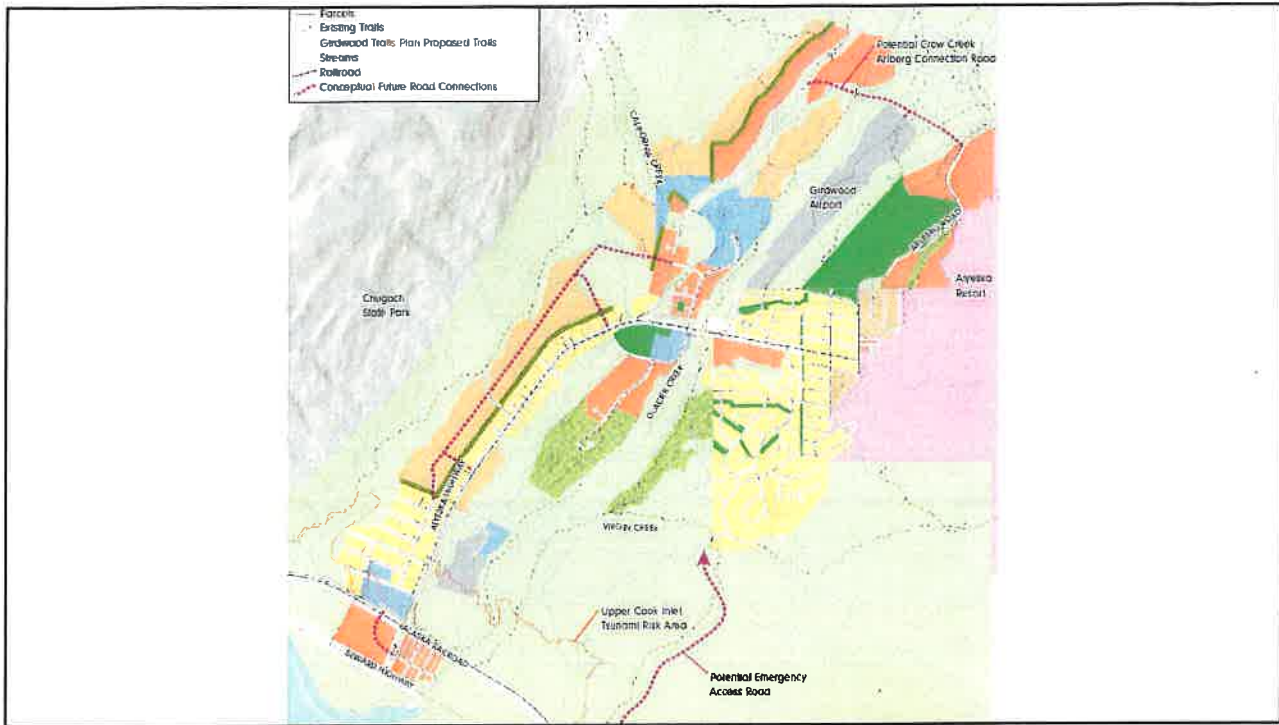


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## 1.a. and 1.b.

- Planning Considerations
-  Potential Future Dedicated Park Land
  -  Upper Cook Inlet Tsunami Inundation Risk
  -  Vegetative Buffers
  -  Roads
  -  Parcels
  -  Existing Trails
  -  Girdwood Trails Plan Proposed Trails
  -  Streams
  -  Railroad
  -  Conceptual Future Road Connections

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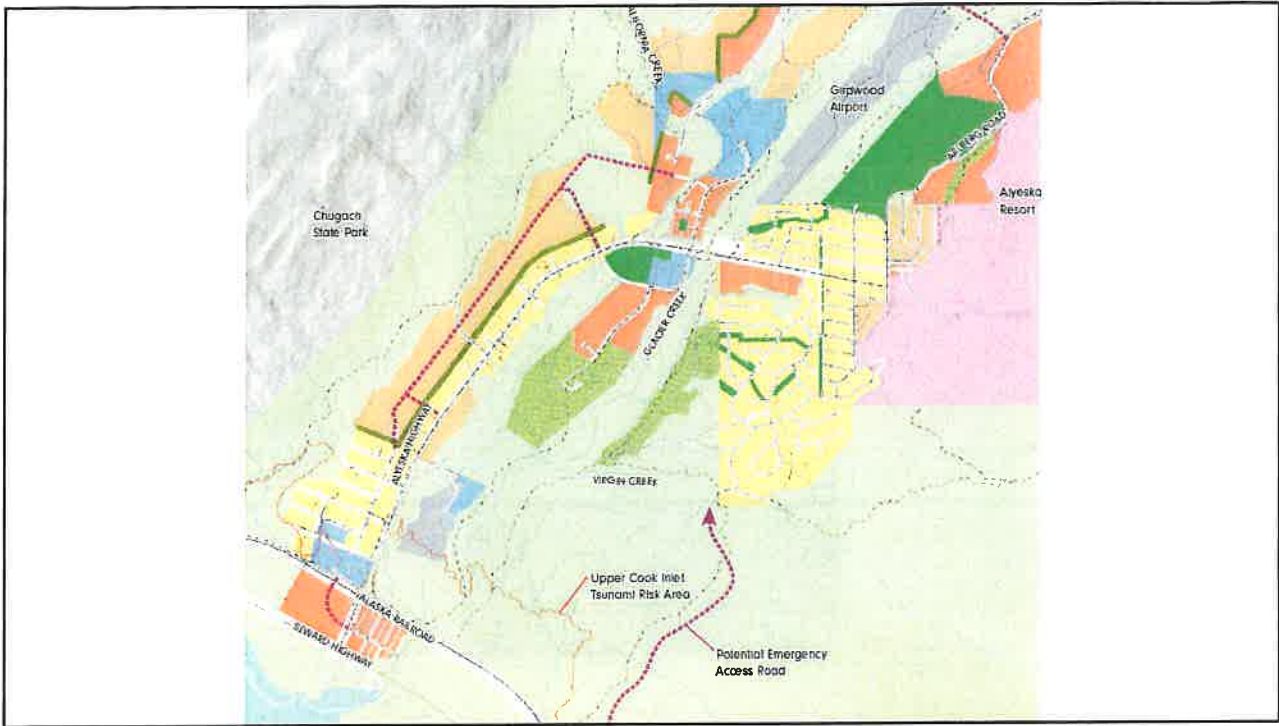
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## 2.b.

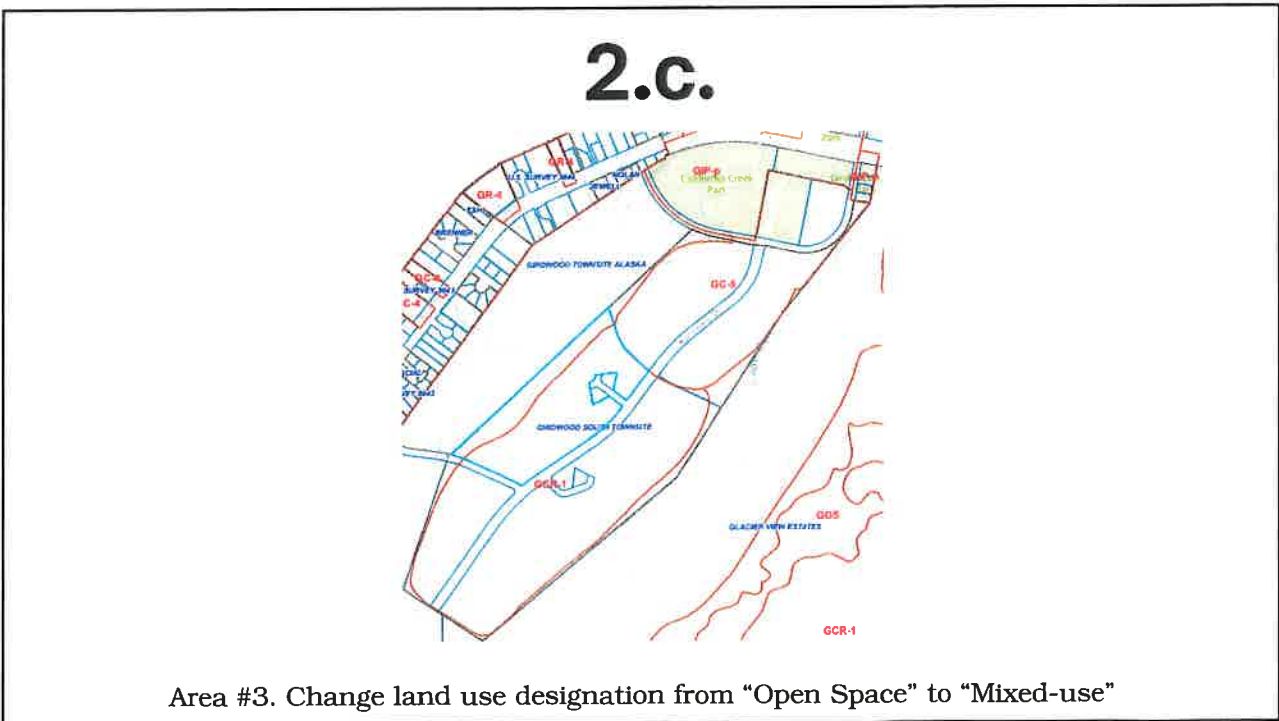


Area #2. Change land use designation from “Open Space” to “Low-density Residential”

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Area #3. Change land use designation from "Open Space" to "Mixed-use"

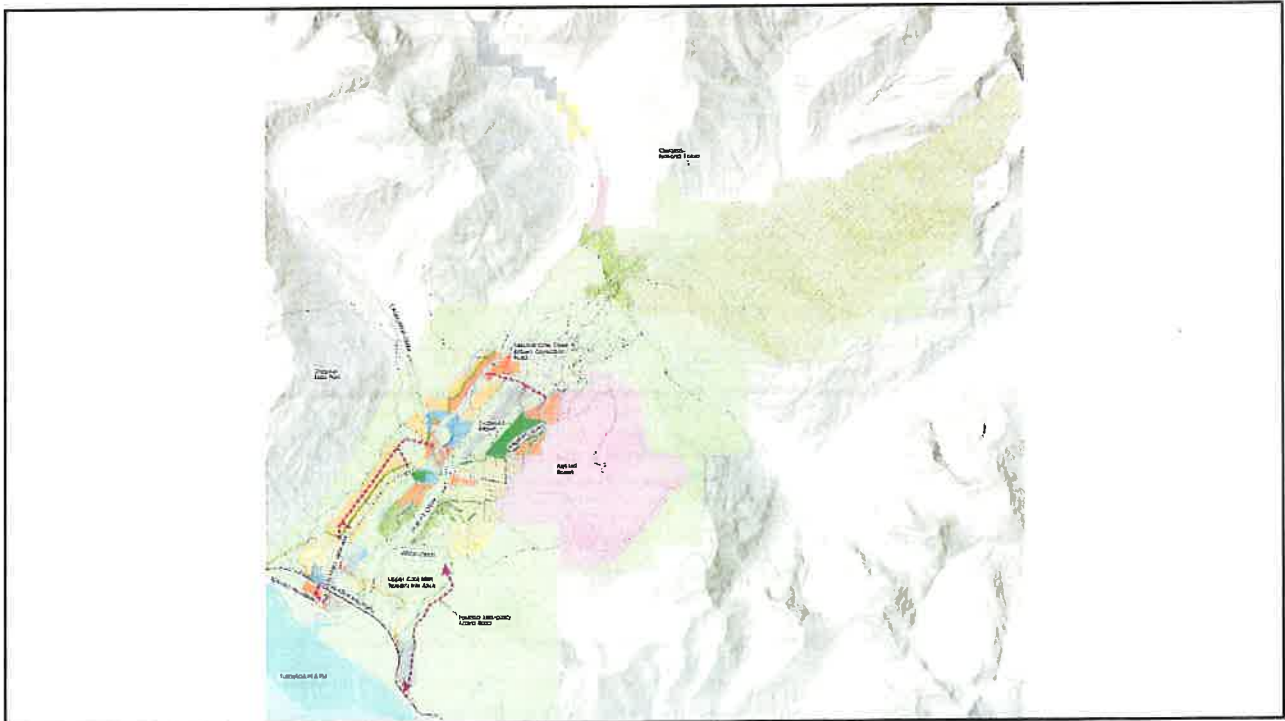
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## 2.d.

Area #4. Remove "Commercial Recreation Reserve" and place these areas into "Commercial Recreation"

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### 3.

Add a new sentence under the "Mixed-Use" section: "Areas near the Seward Highway, including the Old Girdwood Townsite, are subject to tsunami and flood hazards and any new development should mitigate potential tsunami risk through engineering and design techniques." (Page 3-13)

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### 4.

Update Goal E3.1: [E3.1 ALL ROADS AND PARKING LOTS DON'T HAVE TO BE PAVED] E3.1 Review standards to allow flexibility on road and parking lot surfaces. (Page 4-3)

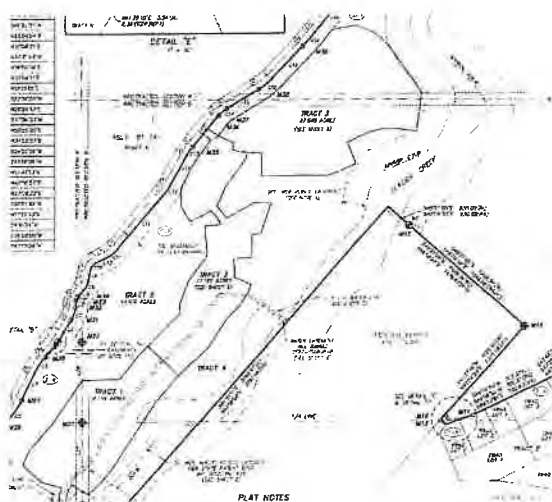
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# Additional Amendments for PZC Consideration (not in Staff Report)



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## (new) 2.f.

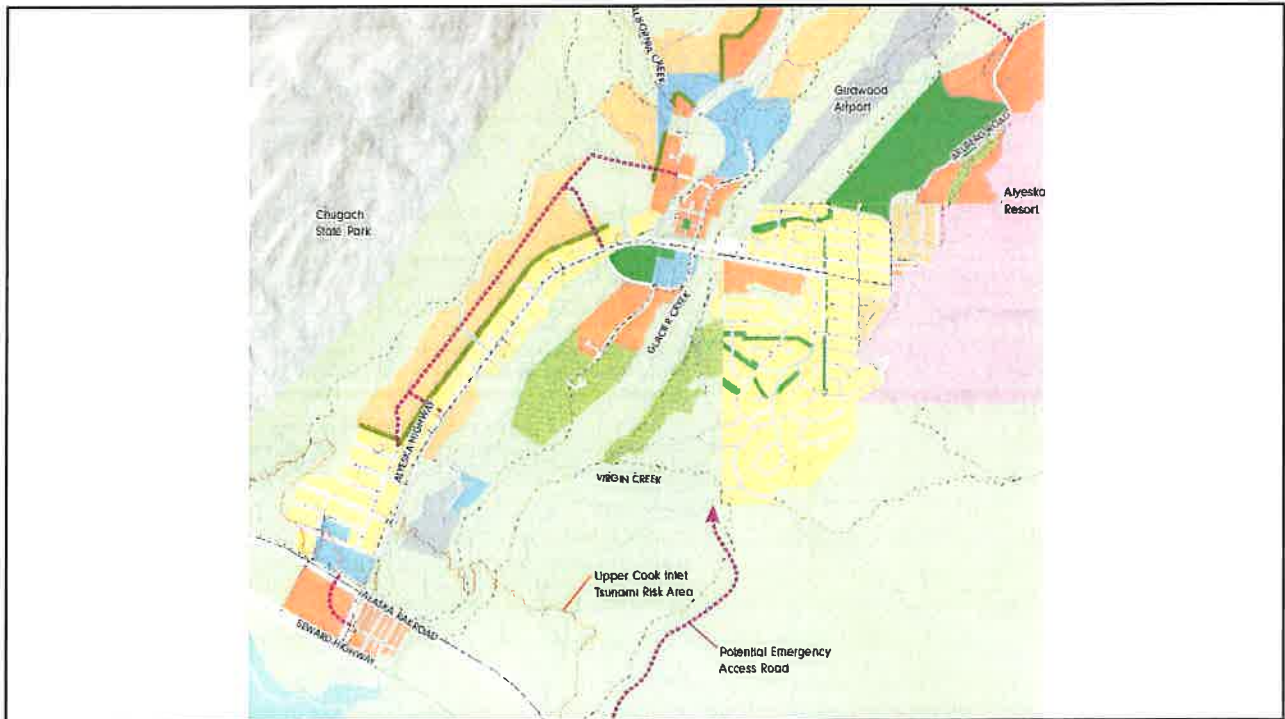


Area #6. Align land use designations to boundaries of platted tract boundaries.

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Amendments are consistent with *Anchorage Assembly Housing Action Plan*:

- o Strategy A.9. Identify publicly owned lands (HLB, MOA, Anchorage School District) that are suitable and make those lands available for residential development.
- o Strategy E.10. Work on recommendations to address Girdwood's unique housing challenges in the updated *Girdwood Comprehensive Plan* and future housing plans.

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Amendments are consistent with *Alyeska Area Master Plan Modification and Development Master Plan*:

- o Approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC Case 2024-0061) to construct Glacier Creek Village, which will have a variety of new housing types that range from apartments to single-family homes as well as commercial space and community uses.

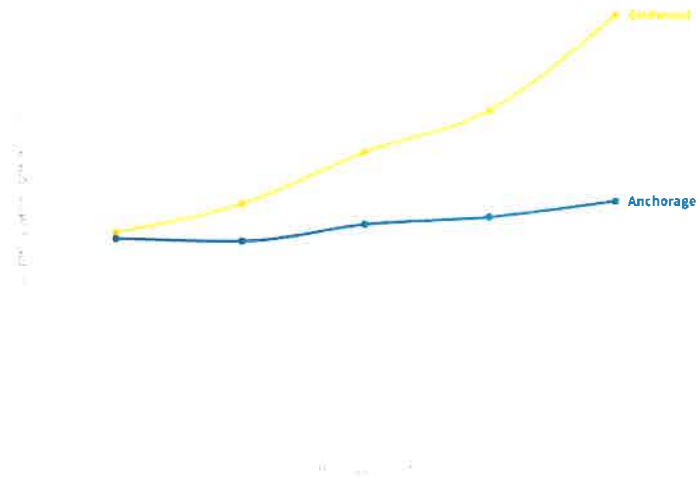
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# Article Cited in Staff Report



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Average housing appraisal 2017-2021



Source: [Municipality of Anchorage Open Data](#)

Fairbanks (2017)

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**A motion of the Girdwood Housing and Economic Committee to Girdwood Board of Supervisors (GBOS) to conditionally rescind GBOS support for the developed Girdwood Comprehensive Plan if proposed major amendments from the Planning Department and the Planning & Zoning Commission are adopted by the Anchorage Assembly**

**WHEREAS**, Imagine! Girdwood in conjunction with the community, third-party contractors, and the Municipality of Anchorage Planning Department developed an updated Girdwood Comprehensive Plan (GCP) to guide the future development of our town & community; and

**WHEREAS**, the GCP represents five years of development and collaboration in the valley with hundreds of public comments and amendments made; and

**WHEREAS**, the Anchorage Planning Department submitted last-minute, major amendments to the Planning & Zoning commission to consider during the review of the GCP; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning and Zoning Commission adopted the following major amendments to the GCP despite critical opposition from the community & developers of the plan on July 15, 2024; and,

**WHEREAS**, the proposed major amendments conditional to Girdwood Board of Supervisors support for the GCP as outlined in this motion include:

- *Change "Mitten"/Forest Loop (Area #1) to Mixed-Use (Planning Dep Ref #2a),*
- *Change Virgin Creek (Area #2) to Low-density Residential (Planning Dep Ref #2b),*
- *Remove Commercial Recreation Reserve (Area #4) (Planning Dep Ref #2d);*
- *Change South Townsite (Area #3) to Mixed Use (Planning Dep Ref #2c),*

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Department also recommended other substantial changes to the GCP that were not accepted by the Planning and Zoning Commission but may be accepted by the Anchorage Assembly, including:

- *Remove all vegetative buffer requirements from AMC 21.09 (Planning Dep Ref #1a),*
- *Remove "Potential Future Park Land" (Planning Dep Ref #1b),*
- *Change most of Alyeska Basin from low to mixed density (Planning Dep Ref #2g);*

*and*

**WHEREAS**, according to Imagine! Girdwood's research, "*The Planning and Zoning Commission rarely sees new or replacement comprehensive plans [and] in fact this is only the second case since the Land Use code was updated in 2012;*" \* and

**WHEREAS**, representatives from the Planning Department participated in the planning process for over a year before the GCP was submitted to the Planning Department and did not raise the outlined recommendations that were latter voiced to the Planning and Zoning Commission, but rather submitted staff recommendations after the submission of the GCP for review; and

**WHEREAS**, the outlined staff recommendations and adoptions by the Planning and Zoning Commission are inconsistent with the GCP and do not represent the will of our community; and

**WHEREAS**, support for the GCP as amended would undermine Girdwood's economic, housing, and environmental autonomous goals of creating a sustainable, fostering community;

**THEREFORE**, the Girdwood Housing and Economic Committee of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors recommends that the Girdwood Board of Supervisors and all subcommittees wherein conditionally rescind support for the passage of the GCP at the Anchorage Assembly should the Planning Department and Planning and Zoning Commission recommendations be adopted into the final plan; and

**THEREFORE**, the Girdwood Housing and Economic Committee recommends that the Girdwood Board of Supervisors write a formal conditional support letter to the Anchorage Assembly in conjunction with this motion for inclusion in the GCP Assembly Ordinance that will be submitted in early Fall.

Notes:

\* Source: 2024 0731 GAP Jul 31 Meeting Packet [imaginegirdwood.org](http://imaginegirdwood.org)