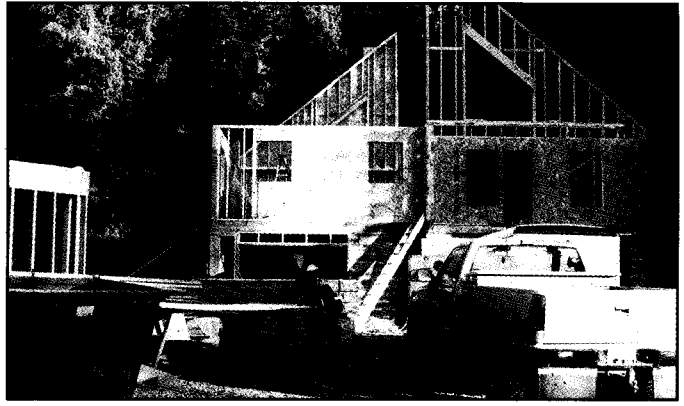


# Chapter 10 Implementation



CONCURRENT WITH RESORT EXPANSION HAS COME COMMUNITY GROWTH AND ITS ATTENDANT NEED FOR IMPROVED FACILITIES AND SERVICES. DESIGN HAS BEEN COMPLETED FOR A NEW PUBLIC FACILITY THAT WILL INCLUDE AN ADDITION TO THE GIRDWOOD FIRE STATION, A NEW LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY CENTER.



*New residential development on Taos Road.*

**T**he Girdwood Area Plan represents a policy guide for the management and development of lands in the Girdwood area. The Plan guides development but does not, by itself, actually control where, how and when it occurs. Other means are used to implement the Plan. In Girdwood, the most typical means to implement the Plan will include zoning and subdivision regulations, capital facilities programming, public land disposals, and development and implementation of related functional plans.

## *Zoning*

There are two zoning actions that will need to be accomplished. One will be the revision of the current zoning regulations. The other will be to change the zoning boundaries to include lands that are being transferred from federal ownership to state and municipal ownership.

Currently, the effective zoning regulations for the Girdwood area are the R-11 district regulations. The regulations were created in 1983 as a means of implementing the 1979 **Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan**. At that time, there were no land use regulations in effect for this area. The R-11 district was designed to be a single district to cover all of Turnagain Arm, including the Girdwood area.

Being a single areawide district, the permitted uses were controlled by the Comprehensive Plan Map. Any use that was properly designated on the Plan Map was permitted if under a certain size or scale. Proposed uses that were larger in scale or intensity, but in keeping with the Plan's land use classification required a conditional use approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission. This gave the community and Commission an opportunity to review the project for its impacts on the surrounding area and determine if it was appropriate development.

One of the stated objectives of the R-11 district was to provide flexibility in design and planning of land uses. Consequently, a key provision in the district regulations allowed for any use that was not in keeping with the Plan Map to be considered as a conditional use. Today,

this provision may no longer provide adequate control in preventing applications for uses which the Plan indicates as clearly being contrary to established public land use policy.

In light of the anticipated level of commercial, resort, and residential development likely to occur in the coming years, the R-II zone will need to be revised to modify and add design standards and guidelines. The design standards and guidelines are needed to better assure that there is a degree of continuity and compatibility between and among new and existing uses. The regulations should be structured to allow for design flexibility, but within acceptable limits that meet the objectives of protecting and preserving the various neighborhoods, small town community character, and natural aesthetic features of a destination mountain resort area.

Typical of many small towns, the Plan calls for some mixing of various uses and densities, rather than having a rigidly stratified land use pattern. However, mixing of uses and densities will require more stringent standards and guidelines be applied to development in order to be successfully integrated.

Development standards in the revised regulations should include the following:

- requirement to place underground all new telephone, cable and electrical distribution lines;
- requirement for all new development in the lower portion of the valley requiring wastewater disposal to connect to the municipal sewer system;
- limitation on the number of principal structures containing living units in the single-family residential areas to no more than two per lot, with the accessory unit having a maximum area equal to 30-50 percent of the primary unit (percent or size of accessory unit to be determined in the revision process);
- lot coverage requirement for landscaping (to encourage retention of existing vegetative cover);
- standards for continuity and compatibility which address mass/scale of structures on same or adjoining lots; and
- reassessment of building setbacks and buffer requirements to provide for privacy and adequate separation of incompatible uses.

This is not intended to be a conclusive list of guidelines. A comprehensive evaluation of siting and building design guidelines that are pertinent to Girdwood should be performed. The guidelines should be incorporated into the new land use regulations or used as an officially recognized supplement to the regulations. The guidelines would assist developers in the design of new projects. They could also be used by project reviewers in evaluating and deciding upon the appropriateness of new development.

In conjunction with the use of siting and design guidelines, establishment of an advisory design review board should be considered. The design review board could ensure that new development projects are consistent with the design guidelines. The board would be composed of design and construction professionals who would provide technical expertise to any public reviewing and decision-making body such as the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The scope of design review board purview would not need to take in all new development. Most residential development could be excluded. However, it should include multi-family, commercial, commercial recreational, and resort development.

Until the current R-11 zoning district regulations are revised to include expanded design guidelines and standards, the existing design criteria and development standards which are contained in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 (minus 4.2.1.1.5) of the **Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan**, adopted April 7, 1987, should remain in effect.

One other item that should be considered in the revision to the zoning regulations is the ability to accommodate new commercial lodging. At present, commercial lodging consists of the new luxury hotel at Alyeska Resort, a boarding house and a number of bed and breakfast establishments. The Plan also calls for an RV park/campground. However, there may also be demand or interest in other forms of commercial overnight lodging for visitors.

An example of such lodging typically found in destination resort areas are country inns, or lodges. They are similar to a hotel in that rooms share a common lobby (as opposed to motels), and they usually offer sit-down food and beverage service. Unlike hotels, many have fewer than 20 units. A country inn or lodge may also be located on a larger lot area in order to provide a different atmosphere to their guests than the more urban or compact setting of a resort area, or highway setting of a motel.

This Plan recommends consideration of a commercial accommodation "floating" zone, or overlay district in order to accommodate this potential land use. Design guidelines applicable to such a use would be included in the new regulations.

## *Subdivision Regulations*

The design standards for streets found in the municipal subdivision regulations should be revised to require paving, and adequate provision should be made for drainage and snow storage. Although initial costs for road construction may be higher, there will be fewer operational and maintenance problems in the future. Paving will also reduce the amount of dust, thus improving the local air quality.

## *Public Land Disposals*

In the long term, no other issue will likely influence the Girdwood area more than how, when, and where public lands are disposed. Past public land disposals created the pattern of community development we see today. Future land disposals will continue this process.

Inevitably, land disposals will be accomplished in different ways to serve different purposes. The two most obvious are those disposals that will be done through a professional solicitation process for the purpose of attracting major resort/recreational development, and those that will be done for the purpose of fostering or responding to community growth.

Approximately 80% of the land in the valley is owned by the Municipality of Anchorage. Nearly all of the vacant lands are under the management of the Heritage Land Bank. The Heritage Land Bank is a municipal agency given the responsibility for managing lands that may be needed for current or future public purpose, and disposing lands deemed to be surplus to municipal need.

To date, very little land from the Heritage Land Bank has been disposed. This is likely to change in the future. Disposal of land is viewed as a means of generating revenues for a variety of municipal needs. However, it is important that public land disposals be done in compliance with established community goals and objectives which are reflected in adopted municipal plans and policies.

The following actions should be taken as part of the implementation process for the Girdwood area:

- establish formal procedures, policies, phasing strategies and schedule for the disposal of land for community, resort and recreational development (including policies regarding the use of income generated from Girdwood area land disposals);
- complete the municipal selection of state lands and any necessary surveying that may be required as part of the land conveyance process; and
- prepare Requests for Proposals (RFP) for resort and commercial recreational area development.

Given the magnitude of municipal-owned land in the Girdwood area, it will be important for the Municipality to establish a strong public trust with the community in the use and disposal of public land. This can be done by ensuring that land disposals are made fairly, properly, and in compliance with established policies, procedures, phasing strategies and schedule. The disposal process, however, should be flexible enough to respond to changing market conditions and financial constraints.

It is suggested that re-evaluation be given to the **Girdwood Land Development and Disposal Study** that was done by local consultants for the Heritage Land Bank in 1987. The study contains useful information on the various ways land should be considered for disposal in the Girdwood area. It also addresses the level of participation, or role the Municipality could take in the development process.

All tracts of municipal lands greater than 20 acres should not be developed until master planning has been done, or required. The master planning process is intended to identify the type and intensity of land use, location of neighborhood parks, greenbelts and recreational trails, any significant historical resources, as well as the street circulation system. Community impact assessments would also be included in the master planning process. The assessments would evaluate impacts on public facilities as well as address the need for buffering of existing adjoining land uses.

Due to the anticipated dual ownership of land in the Glacier-Winner Creek area between the State and Municipality, there is presently a certain degree of uncertainty regarding governmental roles and responsibilities in the process of soliciting major new resort/recreational development. Ideally, it should be a single process, with close coordination between the two entities.

The resort/recreational development RFP for the Glacier-Winner Creek area should contain a clear description of the objectives being sought, siting and development guidelines, informational requirements that allow for an evaluation of the social, environmental and economic impacts of the proposed project and criteria that will be used in evaluating proposals. The goal should be to allow development of a ski area/four-season destination resort in a uniquely Alaskan setting, while maintaining a high quality natural environment and protecting the small-town character of Girdwood.

## *Capital Facilities Programming*

The municipal Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a planning and budgeting program that outlines the timing, location and cost of public facilities and improvements. The CIP identifies projects that are necessary to meet community needs and to accommodate new development.

Capital projects are generally expensive, and once constructed are permanently fixed. Consequently, short-term needs have to be weighed against longer-term community objectives.

Funding for capital projects typically comes from federal and state grants, municipal general obligation bonds or service area tax assessments. Because funding is usually limited, project needs must be prioritized. It is the intent of the Plan that all capital projects should be designed and located in compliance with the Land Use Plan Map and densities contained herein.

Table 12, Implementation Schedule, identifies a list of capital projects that are needed now, or will be needed in the future to implement the Plan. The list is not intended to be conclusive, but instead to give a general overview of the type of facilities that will be needed over the timeframe of the Plan.

## *Functional Plans*

The **Girdwood Area Plan** is intended to provide broad policy guidance toward management and development. However, there are certain functional areas that require more detailed study and policy direction than is established in this Plan.

### **ANCHORAGE TRAILS PLAN**

The **Anchorage Trails Plan** is the basic planning and policy document for the development of trails in the Municipality of Anchorage. The **Anchorage Trails Plan** is currently in the process of being revised. Included in the Plan will be the following:

- location of trail corridors,
- type and use of trails,
- design standards for construction and maintenance, and
- criteria and process for the siting of trails and related buffers.

When adopted by the Anchorage Assembly, the **Anchorage Trails Plan** will be a functional element of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Table 12**

**IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE**

ACTION	TIMEFRAME
<b>Zoning</b>	
• Revise District Regulations	Immediate
• Revise Zoning District Boundaries	Near Term*
<b>Subdivision Regulations</b>	
• Revise Street Improvement Standards	Immediate
<b>Public Land Disposal</b>	
• Establish Policies/Procedures and Phasing Strategies	Immediate
• Select and Survey Selected Lands from State	Immediate
• Prepare RFPs for Alpine Resort and Golf Course Development	Near Term
<b>Capital Facility Programming</b>	
<b>New Girdwood Townsite</b>	
• Parking Areas	Immediate
• Removal of Wellsite Reserve	Near Term
• Flood Control	Near-Intermediate Term
<b>Sewer</b>	
• Treatment Plant Expansion	Immediate
• Old Girdwood Townsite Trunk and Laterals	Immediate
• Crow Creek Road and Hightower Road Trunk Extensions	Intermediate Term
<b>Water</b>	
• New Lower Valley Water Source	Near Term
• Alyeska Basin Water Reservoir	Near Term
• Alyeska Highway Transmission Line Extension	Near - Intermediate Term
• Loop Transmission Line Extension	Intermediate - Far Term
<b>Schools</b>	
• Girdwood School Addition	Near - Intermediate Term
• High School	Undetermined
<b>Public Facilities</b>	
• Fire Station Expansion	Immediate
• Library Relocation	Immediate
• Community Center	Immediate
• Public Safety Center	Near - Intermediate Term
<b>Roads</b>	
• New Girdwood Access Road and Crow Creek-Arlberg Connector Corridor Studies	Near Term
• Crow Creek-Hightower Connector	Near - Intermediate Term
• Ruane-Glacier Creek Drive Connector	Near Term
• New Airport Access Road	Intermediate Term
• Arlberg-Winner Creek Extension	Near - Intermediate Term
• Upgrade Crow Creek Road	Near - Intermediate Term
<b>Functional Plans</b>	
• Revise <i>Anchorage Trails Plan</i>	Immediate
• Revise <i>Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan</i>	Immediate
• Revise <i>Official Streets &amp; Highways Plan</i>	Near Term
• Revise <i>Parks, Greenbelt &amp; Recreation Facilities Plan</i>	Near Term
<b>Other</b>	
• Institute Building Codes	Near Term
<b>Definitions:</b>	
Immediate	First year following adoption of <i>Girdwood Area Plan</i>
Near Term	2 - 5 years
Intermediate Term	6 - 15 years
Far Term	Beyond 15 years

\*New zoning district boundaries will occur immediately following adoption of new zoning regulations which include design guidelines.

**ANCHORAGE PARK, GREENBELT AND RECREATION FACILITY PLAN,  
VOLUME 3: TURNAGAIN ARM**

This park plan identifies trails, open spaces, and community and neighborhood parks for the small Turnagain Arm communities, including Girdwood. Even though the plan was adopted seven years ago, it is still germane for Girdwood. Generally speaking, the plan is consistent with the **Girdwood Area Plan**.

The park plan, however, should be modified to incorporate the expanded Moose Meadows Park. More importantly, the park plan will need to be revised to include a management plan for the area designated Recreation Reserve, along with its associated open space.

**OFFICIAL STREETS AND HIGHWAYS PLAN**

The **Official Streets and Highways Plan** establishes the general location, and functional classification of roadways. The Plan is used during land subdivision and development to ensure that right-of-way for planned roads is reserved and that the roads are adequately sized for the anticipated level of traffic. Roadway design details are not incorporated in the **Official Streets and Highways Plan**, but are decided during project design.

The current Plan was adopted in 1985 and does not reflect the current or proposed roadway network for the valley. Therefore, it should be revised to reflect the recommended roadway system in this Plan.

**ANCHORAGE WETLANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The **Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan** was adopted in 1982 to facilitate both orderly development of lower value wetlands and protection of higher value sites. The plan provided, for the first time, complete mapping of all freshwater wetlands within the municipality, and provided a detailed, site-specific management strategy for each site.

Based upon the development and adoption of the **Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan**, the Municipality was able to obtain authorization from the federal government to manage development of the lower valued wetlands. The authorization has since expired, and the Municipality has recently been revising the 1982 **Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan** in order to successfully apply for a renewal of authorization.

The reauthorization of management authority over low-value wetlands will facilitate development in areas so designated. In Girdwood, most of the low-value wetlands are located in existing subdivided areas, such as Alyeska Basin Subdivision, old Girdwood townsite, and a number of lots off Sproat Road.

*Other*

**BUILDING CODES**

Ultimately, there will be other measures needed to implement the **Girdwood Area Plan**. One final recommendation noted here is expanding the Building Safety Service Area to Girdwood in order to put new construction under the Uniform Building Code (UBC). The purpose for requiring new construction to conform to the UBC would be to better assure that buildings are soundly constructed, that utilities are installed properly, and that proper seismic safety standards are met.



The new Alyeska Prince Hotel was required to meet the UBC requirements as a condition of approval. The requirement should become standard for all new development, which may likely increase substantially over the coming years.

Expansion of the Building Safety Service Area would involve a ballot proposition where a majority of the registered voters in the valley must approve the service. Expansion of the service area would involve a small increase to the mill rate, and would add somewhat to the cost and time of new construction. However, the added assurance that structures are built properly may in the long run prove more beneficial to the community as well as individual property owners than the added cost.

## *Plan Review Process*

This Plan is intended to represent a broad policy toward land management and development within the Girdwood area. As such, it was influenced by identified community aspirations and economic and demographic data and trends. It is expected that these aspirations and trends may change over time. For this reason, it is necessary to have a process for plan review and re-evaluation. Because this review need not necessarily result in the complete revision of this Plan, two levels of study are identified:

- Plan Re-evaluation - A reevaluation of the major trends and/or policies of the **Girdwood Area Plan** should occur five years from the time of its adoption or revision. If major deviations from those trends anticipated in the Plan are not identified, a complete revision is not required. If major discrepancies are noted in this re-evaluation, a complete revision of the Plan is warranted.
- Plan Revision - The Plan should be reviewed and revised at least once every 10 years.

It is intended that the adoption of this Plan will indicate that the above processes are to be followed in study re-evaluation, to ensure that the basic framework for decision-making on land management/use issues remains current.