

Natural Environment Goal A: Ensure that natural systems are protected, maintained and enhanced.

Natural Environment Goal B: Ensure that development plans adequately address or offset impacts on the environment.

Natural Environment Goal C: Preserve natural drainage ways and ensure that area drainage needs are integrated into development plans.

- Natural Environment Objective A: Preserve and protect high-value wetlands, stream corridors, aquifer recharge areas and other important natural features.

Growth Goal B: Promote a range of urban, rural, and suburban lifestyles

Growth Goal F: Encourage the development of a continuous trail network throughout the area that serves both transportation and recreation needs.

Housing and Residential Development Goal A: Manage the supply of residential land in ways that meet the needs of present and future residents, preserve the community character and identity, and take into account community facilities and services.

- Housing and Residential Development Objective A: Provide areas of varying residential densities and housing types to meet needs for diverse housing opportunities throughout the community.
- Housing and Residential Development Objective B: Support the provision of higher density residential development convenient to employment, commercial centers and major transportation corridors, where such densities are considered appropriate.
- Housing and Residential Development Objective D: Ensure residential densities are compatible with current densities in immediate surrounding areas.

Parks, Open Space, Greenways and Recreation Facilities Goal A: Establish an integrated open space and greenways network which effectively links parks, recreational facilities, schools, residential and commercial areas, and which includes ecologically valuable open space lands and scenic vistas.

Transportation Goal A: Ensure development of a transportation network that provides an acceptable level of service, maximizes safety, minimizes environmental impacts, provides alternate transportation types and is compatible with planned land use patterns.

- Transportation Objective G: Provide connectivity to and between subdivisions where important to accommodate normal as well as emergency traffic, recognizing physical environmental constraints and the need to minimize cut-through traffic within residential neighborhoods.

Other Important Policies

This Site-Specific Plan is also taking place as Chugiak-Eagle River and the Municipality of Anchorage are working to update Title 21 – the ordinances which govern land use in the Municipality. Chugiak-Eagle River land use issues will be addressed in a separate chapter of Title 21.

Title 21 provides the directives that codify and implement the Comprehensive Plan. Title 21 may introduce new zoning codes and regulations that should be considered along with this Plan.

Other plans and documents considered through the planning process include: the Chugiak-Eagle River Long Range Transportation Plan Update, the 1997 Areawide Trails Plan, water and sewer master plans, and the Chugach State Park Access Inventory.

This chapter provides an overview of the four parcels included in the project area. The following photos were taken of the parcels during site visits in the summer and autumn of 2007. The images help to illuminate the characteristics of the sites.

North Knoll



North Knoll parcel from the Old Glenn

The North Knoll parcel (HLB #1-071) is the northernmost of the four parcels under consideration in this study. The parcel, which doesn't have road access, lies generally to the east of where a short driveway, New Market Drive, intersects with the Old Glenn Highway. The parcel is undeveloped and bounded by Chugach State Park to the south and east and by privately owned, undeveloped land to the north and west.

Muldrow Street Parcels



Looking west along Muldrow St. — Parcel on right

The Muldrow Street parcels (HLB #1-072 & 1-073) are directly adjacent to one another. The parcels are located in a well-established neighborhood accessed by Fish Hatchery Road. The parcels are generally bounded by Fish Hatchery Road on the North and Knob Hill Drive to the east; Muldrow Street is the southern border and an undeveloped portion of Fire Lake Elementary School's parcel is to the west. Together the parcels are 11.5 acres. Title to the eastern parcel (HLB 1-072) has not yet been officially acquired from the State of Alaska. The actual boundaries of the parcel will extend north of Fish Hatchery Road to encompass Fire Lake Creek. However, this study will only address the portion of the parcel located south of Fish Hatchery Road.



Fish Hatchery Rd. Parcel on the right

Carol Creek



Consisting of 92 acres, the Carol Creek parcel (HLB #1-074) is the largest of the four parcels under study. The parcel is located east of (behind) Fred Meyer. Its northern boundary is Harry McDonald Road, the Harry McDonald Recreation Center, and Mendenhall Street. South of the parcel is the Brandywine neighborhood and a portion of undeveloped land in the southeast. The site's eastern border is shared with undeveloped land owned by the Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM).



Carol Creek Parcel extends east behind Fred Meyer



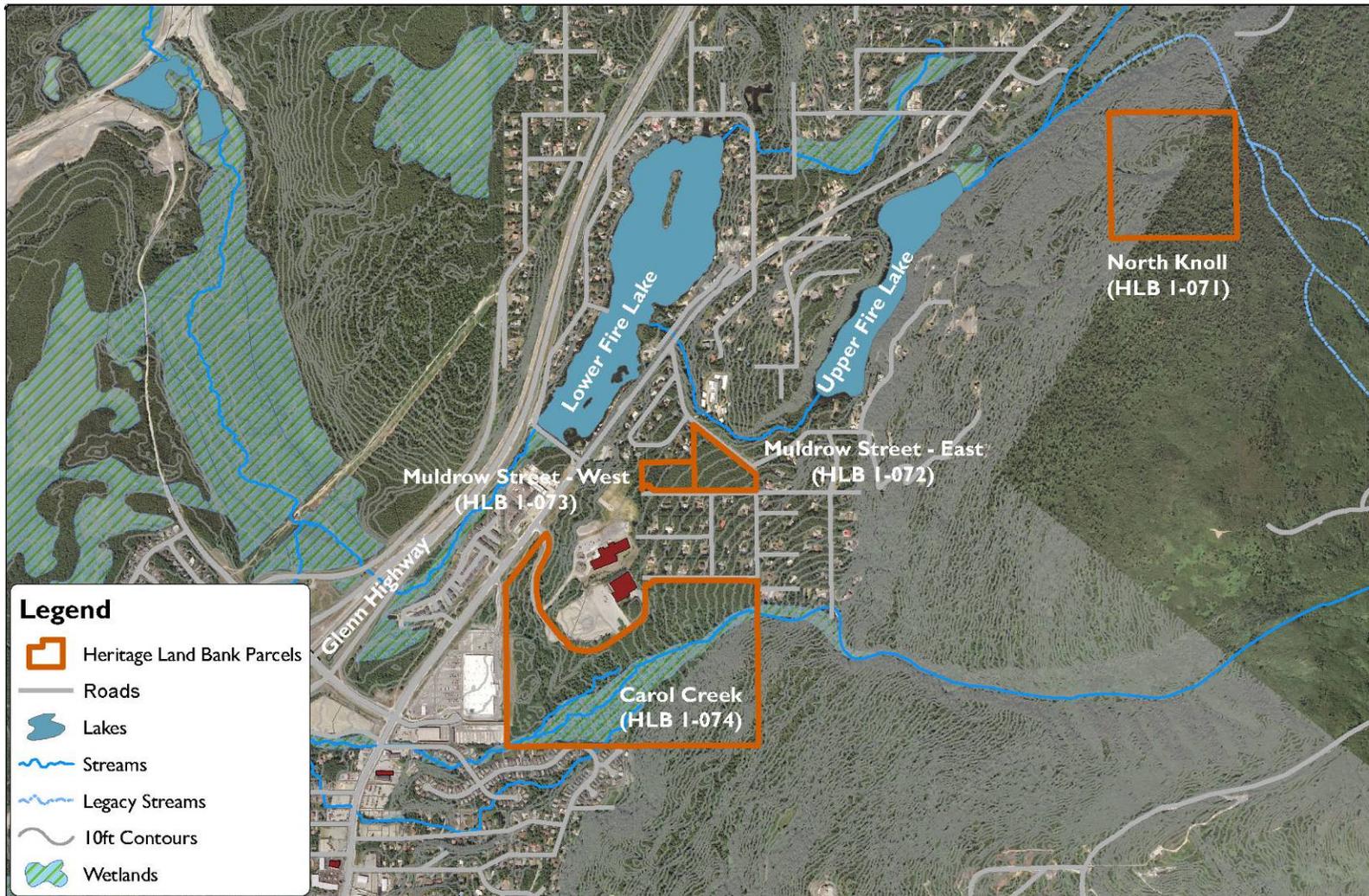
Southeast steep slope from Brandywine Neighborhood

Environment - Overview

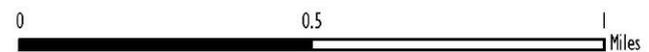
The area in which the four parcels are located features a mix of areas with good physical capability for development, and areas with constraints that limit land use. Portions of the 4 parcels include areas of steep slopes, wetlands and stream habitat. All of the parcels are forested and generally in a natural state. The HLB parcels accommodate the range of birds and wildlife commonly found in Southcentral Alaskan forested areas, which is corroborated by anecdotal stories by neighbors of moose and bear sightings.

The remainder of this section describes environmental features of the area in more details. Map 4: Environmental Features, on the following page, indicates the parcel's topography, streams, wetlands, and vegetation. Map 5: Development Suitability, illustrates the land's physical suitability for development. This analysis, conducted as part of the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update, took into account several environmental factors, specifically: slope, avalanche hazard, floodplains/coastal marshes, wetlands, and bedrock/soil characteristics, to develop a composite rating for Eagle River's land suitability. The suitability analysis indicates that the HLB parcels have a mix of areas well-suited for development with areas that present more constraints.

Environmental Features, Chugiak-Eagle River

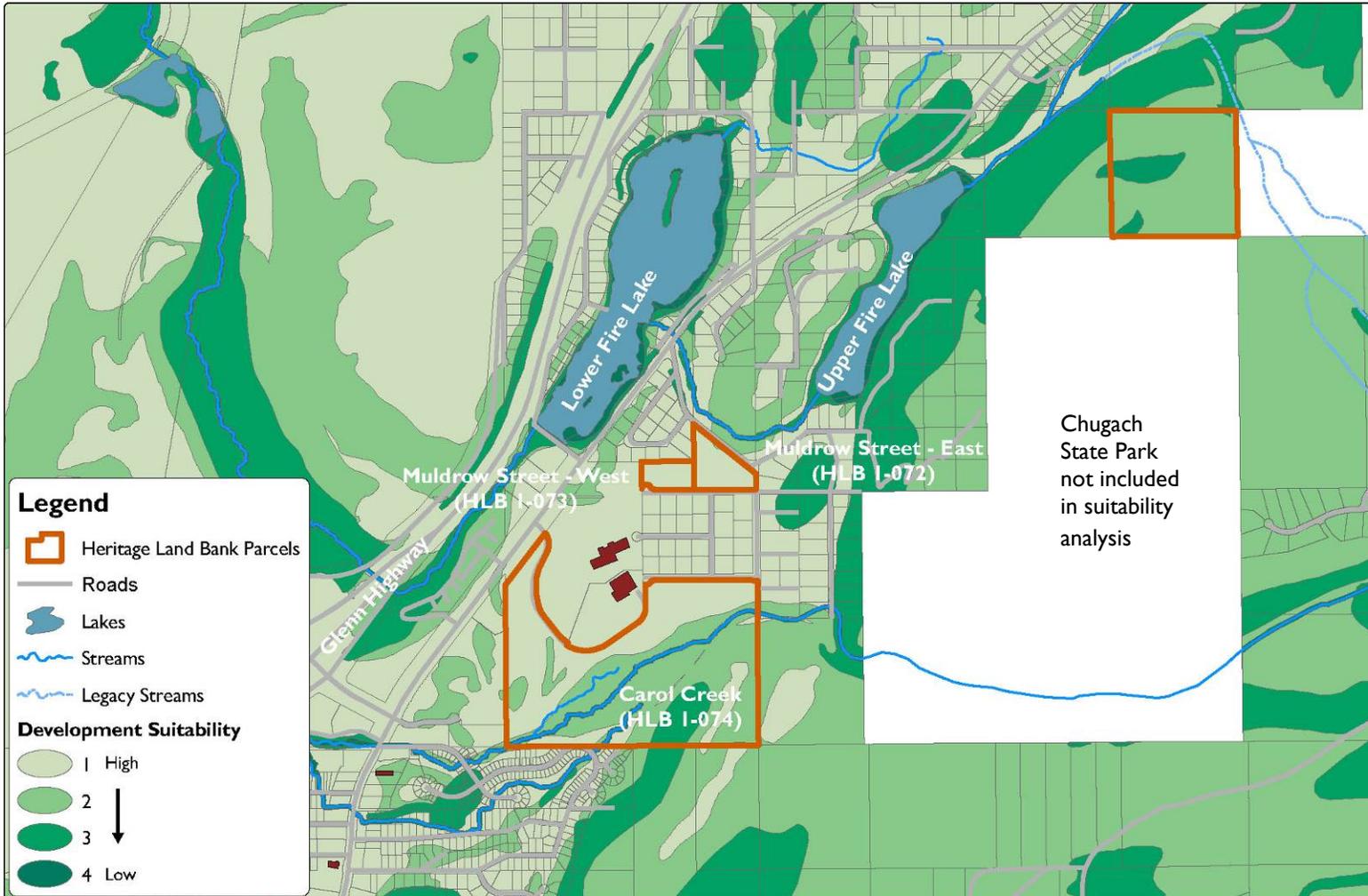



 Alaska State Plane, Zone 4, NAD 1983
 June 1, 2008
 Map by Agnew::Beck for Heritage Land Bank.

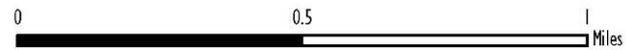


All data courtesy of Municipality of Anchorage.

Development Suitability, Chugiak-Eagle River



Alaska State Plane, Zone 4, NAD 1983
 June 1, 2008
 Map by Agnew::Beck for Heritage Land Bank.



All data courtesy of Municipality of Anchorage.

Topography

North Knoll

The North Knoll parcel is steep with slopes averaging between 30% and 45%. A deep gully runs through the lower portion of the parcel with slopes that exceed those on the rest of the site. The elevation ranges from 670 feet to approximately 1200 feet above sea level. While the North Knoll itself includes several areas with more moderate slopes, reaching these areas requires crossing through very steep areas on the site, and on lands adjoining the site to the west.

Muldrow Street Parcels

The Muldrow Street parcels are nearly flat. The terrain slopes gently to the northwest, with no significant terrain features. Slopes are comparable to the surrounding residential areas and range between 6 and 8% on average, making the area well-suited for development. The parcels are at an elevation of approximately 390 to 450 feet above sea level.

Carol Creek

The topography of the Carol Creek parcel varies broadly. The majority of the parcel is between 300 and 500 feet elevation; however, the southeast portion of the parcel climbs steeply to approximately 700 feet above sea level. Slopes vary considerably as well. The creek generally splits the parcel with mild slopes around 10% grade to the northwest and the steeper slopes on the southeast side of the creek.

The majority of the slopes on the southeast portion of the parcel are between 25-35% and, in some places approach 55%. An band of land with more moderate slopes extends north to south along this parcel, and is the area that is considered to be the most promising area for a handful of custom homes.

Vegetation, Soils & Geology

The Muldrow and the upper and western Carol Creek parcels have generally well drained soils, with vegetation typical of such areas in Southcentral Alaska, including spruce and birch trees. At slightly higher elevations – east of and uphill from these project parcels – bedrock is closer to the surface and soils are less well developed. This area, particularly above Knob Hill drive, is an area where residents report consistent challenges in finding well water.

Along portions of the Carol Creek open space corridor, and the northwestern tip of the western Muldrow parcel, is a slightly different vegetation and soil pattern. These areas appear to be areas where subsurface groundwater flows are closer to the surface. Soil drainage is not as good as areas at slightly higher elevations, spruce and birch are less common, and vegetation includes cottonwoods, willows, alders, devils club and similar vegetation associated with less well drained portions of Anchorage.

Land forms and vegetation in certain portions of the project area have been disturbed. This is most apparent immediately above the cut slope behind the Fred Meyer store. In this area there is evidence that soil was pushed around and piled in several berms. Original vegetation was cleared and a new thicket of alders has grown up in this area.

Wetlands

Wetland areas were identified for this site-specific study using previous wetland delineations and mapping done by the Municipality of Anchorage. The Municipality updated the wetland information for the area since the inception of project. The newest available data are reflected on Map 4 Environmental Features.

A 24 acre band of wetlands crosses the Carol Creek parcel generally following the creek drainage corridor. Wetlands are regulated by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Municipality and rated on a scale of Class A-C with A designating wetland areas of highest value and C being lowest value. The wetlands on the Carol Creek parcel are Class B – moderate to high value. Development can occur on wetlands within the Municipality of Anchorage; however, varying levels of permitting are required based on the class of wetlands. Class C wetlands may be developed according to an opinion of compliance

from the Anchorage Municipal Planning Department. Class A and B wetlands may only be developed with a permit from the Corps of Engineers.

While the Municipality allows development in Class B wetlands, Heritage Land Bank would rather pursue obtaining wetland mitigation credit for preserving and retaining the wetlands on this site. Specifically, the planning department outlines on their website that Class B wetlands “could possibly be marginally developed and/or disturbed. The intent of the B designation is to conserve and maintain a site's key functions and values primarily by limiting and minimizing fills and development to less critical zones while retaining higher value areas. Development could be permitted in the less valuable zones of a B site, provided avoidance and minimization and best management practices are applied to minimize disturbance and impacts to the higher value non-fill portions. All sites designated B in the Plan require an Individual Section 404 Permit from the Corps of Engineers prior to development.”

Hydrology

Carol Creek is the only significant surface water feature contained within the parcels. Upper and lower Fire Lake and Fire Creek lie between the North Knoll parcel and the Muldrow Street parcels. Carol Creek is very small, but is thought to run year round. The creek drains a small watershed extending several miles above the project area.

Throughout the planning process community members shared stories about their experiences with groundwater issues in the Knob Hill/Fish Hatchery neighborhood. Community members describe some areas as having much success with well drilling and substantial subsurface water availability (“geyser-like”), while nearby properties were unable to find well water. Anecdotal evidence suggests well water issues are more of a concern east of Knob Hill than below this road. Additionally residents mentioned that Carol Creek provides a surface water source to some houses on Savage Drive. Great concern was expressed about the importance of protecting the creek’s water quality.

Wildlife Species and Habitat

Wildlife found in this area is comparable to other parts of Anchorage. Terrestrial species found in the area include moose and less commonly, fox, lynx and bear. The area is used by the range of bird life commonly found in the Anchorage area, including grouse and ptarmigan.

Summary of Environmental Constraints

As shown on Map 4 Environmental Features and Map 5 Development Suitability, the most significant environmental constraints for the portions of Carol Creek parcel along Carol Creek, and steep areas in the southeastern portion of the parcel. Of the estimated combined total site area (142 acres) about 56% is physically suited for development. This percentage was derived by broadly considering the following areas as undevelopable – all of the North Knoll parcel (40 acres), all of the wetland area along Carol Creek (24 acres) and the steep slope area above Carol Creek (5.5 acres).

Land Use & Infrastructure

Presently the parcels are vacant and largely unused, with the exception of the Carol Creek parcel, which contains a fairly extensive network of informal trails. The parcels are located in a transitional area where denser residential and commercial development shifts to a more rural, large-lot pattern of development.

Map 6: Chugiak-Eagle River Generalized Land Use Map and Zoning (on page 24) indicates the existing land uses in the vicinity of the HLB parcels along with zoning classifications. The parcels fall within the Chugiak Community Council area; however, they are adjacent to both the Eagle River Valley and Eagle River Community Council areas. The Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update process updated the land use designations for Eagle River. The HLB parcels are designated as Special Study areas by the Comprehensive Plan. This designation acknowledges that site-specific studies need to be conducted for the parcels. The Comprehensive Plan states that any specific study should evaluate: a) public need, b) proposed impacts to uses on adjoining properties and public infrastructure, and c) community aspirations, as well as Heritage Land Bank goals and objectives.

The current zoning of the parcels includes both residential and public lands and institutions zoning. Table 3: Summary of Parcel Characteristics (on page 22) provides a summary of the zoning classifications for each parcel and for the surrounding areas.

Transportation and Trails

The roads surrounding the HLB parcels are classified as local streets, with the exception of the Old Glenn Highway which is an arterial. Local streets, according to the Chugiak/Eagle River Long Range Transportation Plan, “provide access to property abutting the public right-of-way. Moving traffic is a secondary function of the local street. Since land service is its primary purpose, the local street should not carry through traffic.” Meanwhile, the primary function of arterial streets is to move large volumes of traffic over relatively long distances from one part of the city to another. If development of the HLB parcels occurs, portions of the existing street network will require upgrades to “collector” status. A collector street collects traffic from local streets and then conducts it to arterials or to local traffic generators such as shopping centers, schools, community centers, or park and recreational facilities.

Currently, the Old Glenn Highway is being upgraded from the Fire Lake area to Peters Creek. Four-foot shoulders and new pavement will be added along with a paved pathway and truck climbing lane in certain areas. Through the planning process, residents of the rural residential Fish Hatchery neighborhood and officials at Fire Lake Elementary School have described traffic problems at the intersections of the Old Glenn with roadways in the project area, specifically Fish Hatchery Road and McDonald Center Drive. The planned upgrades to the Old Glenn Highway do not include any major improvements for these intersections.

Roadway maintenance in the Chugiak-Eagle River area is dealt with through the Chugiak, Birchwood, Eagle River Rural Road Service Area (CBERRRSA). CBERRRSA deals with more than 350 lane miles of roadway, including the roadways in the project area. A Service Area Board comprised of representatives from each community council in the area advises the Municipality on the level and type of road services desired by service area residents. Private contractors, which are scheduled and directed by Municipality of Anchorage personnel, provide the actual street maintenance services within the CBERRRSA.

There are informal trails and identified Chugach State Park Access points in the vicinity of and on the HLB parcels. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources has released the Chugach State Park Access Inventory, Analysis and Recommendations (CSPAI). This document is designed to assist planning efforts of the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Municipality of Anchorage as both work to meet goals of reserving and improving public access to Chugach State Park for present and future park users. The Chugach State Park Access Inventory describes where existing access to park lands is occurring, and where additional public access may be needed in the future. The Access Inventory identifies four access points on or adjacent to the Carol Creek Parcel. Map 7: Roads, Trails, Infrastructure & Public Facilities (on page 25) indicates the following access points described in the Access Inventory.

Access Point C1 – Carol Creek: This access point is on the South side of Carol Creek at a cul-de-sac at the end of Chardonay Circle. The access inventory recommends developing a cooperative relationship with Eagle River Parks and Recreation area manager and board to enter into discussions with HLB regarding access.

Access Point C38 – Savage Drive: This access point is located at the end of a street right of way near the northeast corner of the Carol Creek parcel. The access inventory states that: “due to its location relative to HLB lands this access should not be considered secure access until HLB lands have been designated PLI-parks.” The recommendation to work with Eagle River Parks and Recreation is consistent for this access point too.

Access Point C39 – Knob Hill Drive: This access point is a platted road leading toward the HLB Carol Creek parcel from the north. The site provides local neighborhood access to the HLB lands. Again, the inventory does not consider this access secure until the HLB parcel is dedicated PLI – park.

Access Point C40- Fire Lake Alaska Subdivision: The CSPAI shows this “point” is actually the entire length of Mendenhall Street, which runs along the north border of the Carol Creek parcel. The site

provides local neighborhood access. The Access Inventory recommends working with Eagle River Parks and Recreation to develop and manage a trail system in this area and work with HLB to ensure that access may continue should development occur.

The 1986 Chugach State Park Plan also indicates an important trail easement across the North Knoll parcel, specifically, a proposed trail crossing the southeast corner of the property. The “Chugiak Hillside Ski Trail” is described in the trail plan as a six-mile scenic ski trail and summer hiking trail.

Water and Sewer

Public water and sewer service does not extend to the HLB parcels. Map 7: Roads, Trails, Infrastructure & Public Facilities (on page 25) illustrates the extent of public water and sewer in the area. The Old Glenn corridor carries water and sewer service to just south of Fish Hatchery road. In addition, the Harry McDonald Center, Fred Meyer, and the Brandywine neighborhood are all served by public water and sewer. The Fish Hatchery rural residential neighborhood north of the Carol Creek parcel utilizes well and onsite wastewater systems. As previously mentioned, throughout the planning process community members have shared stories of water well issues in the Fish Hatchery neighborhood. Additionally, Carol Creek provides a surface water source to some houses on Savage Drive, which has led to concerns about protecting the creek’s water quality.

There have been discussions about extending public water and sewer further along the Old Glenn Highway corridor as well as to bringing service to the Harold Loop neighborhood just west of HLB’s Muldrow Street parcels. However, Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU) projects that these improvements will not happen for at least several more years.

Civic Use and Public Facilities

The parcels are located within the Fire Lake Elementary School attendance area, the Mirror Lake Middle School attendance area and the Chugiak High School attendance area. The new Eagle River High School has alleviated previous over enrollment issues at Chugiak High School. Fire Lake and Mirror Lake are not yet at enrollment capacity.

The Anchorage Fire Department staffs Station 11 in downtown Eagle River. The HLB parcels fall just outside of their jurisdiction and within the Chugiak Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) service area. The CVFD presently has a fire service area that extends from the Knik River Bridge on the New Glenn Highway in the north, to the North Eagle River overpass and access road to the south, and is bordered by the Cook Inlet to the west and the Chugach State Park and Chugach Mountains to the east. The Chugiak Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company service area provides for a mix of suburban and rural fire protection needs.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

The HLB parcels are within the vicinity of some of Eagle River’s prime park and recreation opportunities. Most notably, Chugach State Park lies just to the east of the parcels; however, access, as described in the Transportation and Trails section, can be a challenge. Additionally, the Harry J. McDonald Center is located just north of the Carol Creek parcel. This recreation facility primarily offers ice skating opportunities. However, plans for expansion include an indoor turf facility. For a detailed listing of Parks and Recreation opportunities in Chugiak-Eagle River see Appendix F Existing Field and Sports Facilities.

A brief summary of the basic site characteristics for each parcel is shown in Table 4 Summary of Parcel Characteristics on the following page.

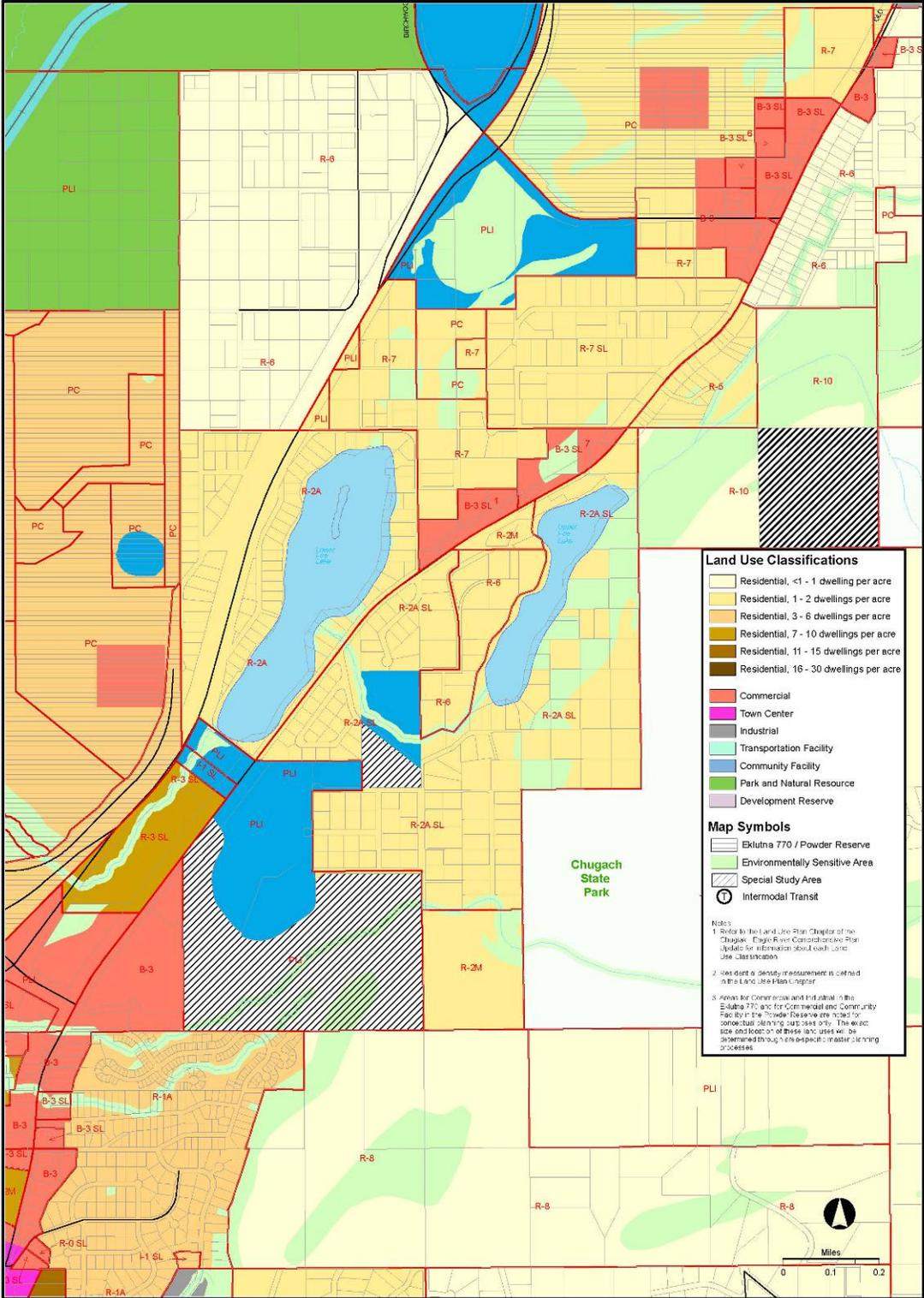
Table 4: Summary of Parcel Characteristics

	North Knoll	Muldrow Street	Carol Creek
Size	40 Acres	11.5 total acres (East: 7.8, West: 3.7)	90 acres
Level of Development	Undeveloped, vacant and very little development in the vicinity.	Undeveloped, vacant. Surrounded by large lot residential.	Undeveloped, vacant. This parcel is surrounded by a variety of uses including public facilities, rural residential, commercial, medium-density single family residential, and undeveloped land.
Zoning	R-10 residential alpine/slope district which allows for large lot residential that must consider the unique characteristics and innate challenges of development on steep slopes. Immediately north and west of the site the land remains in R-10 zoning. Northeast of the site the land is zoned PC – for planned community development. To the west, zoning is W for watershed protection. South of the site the zoning is T – transitional, for areas that are shifting from urban/suburban to more rural in nature.	East Parcel: R-2A SL Two-Family Residential District (large lot); West parcel PLI Public Lands & Institutions. R-2ASL in this location sets a minimum lot size of ½ acre in certain areas, and 1 acre in other areas, and allows for one single family home or duplex per lot, and on-site systems. PLI is generally intended for uses that serve the public. Most of the surrounding area is zoned R-2ASL, although the SL’s may differ on specific parcels.	PLI Public Lands and Institutions. PLI is generally intended for uses that serve the public. Surrounding zoning includes commercial, PLI, R-2A SL and R-1A (single family on approximately 1/5 acre).
Notable Features	Steep slopes and dense vegetation; remains in natural state.	Dense vegetation. These parcels generally remain in a natural state.	Carol Creek and a surrounding wetland cross the parcel from east to west. Steep slopes prevail in the southeast corner. Dense vegetation and informal trails are present throughout the parcel.
Water/Sewer & Onsite	Nearest water/sewer lines are located along the Old Glenn Highway. Surrounding area uses on-site systems.	Nearest water/sewer lines follow the Old Glenn Highway. Surrounding area uses on-site systems.	Water/sewer lines serve the surrounding areas including Fred Meyer, the Harry J. McDonald Center and the Brandywine neighborhood.

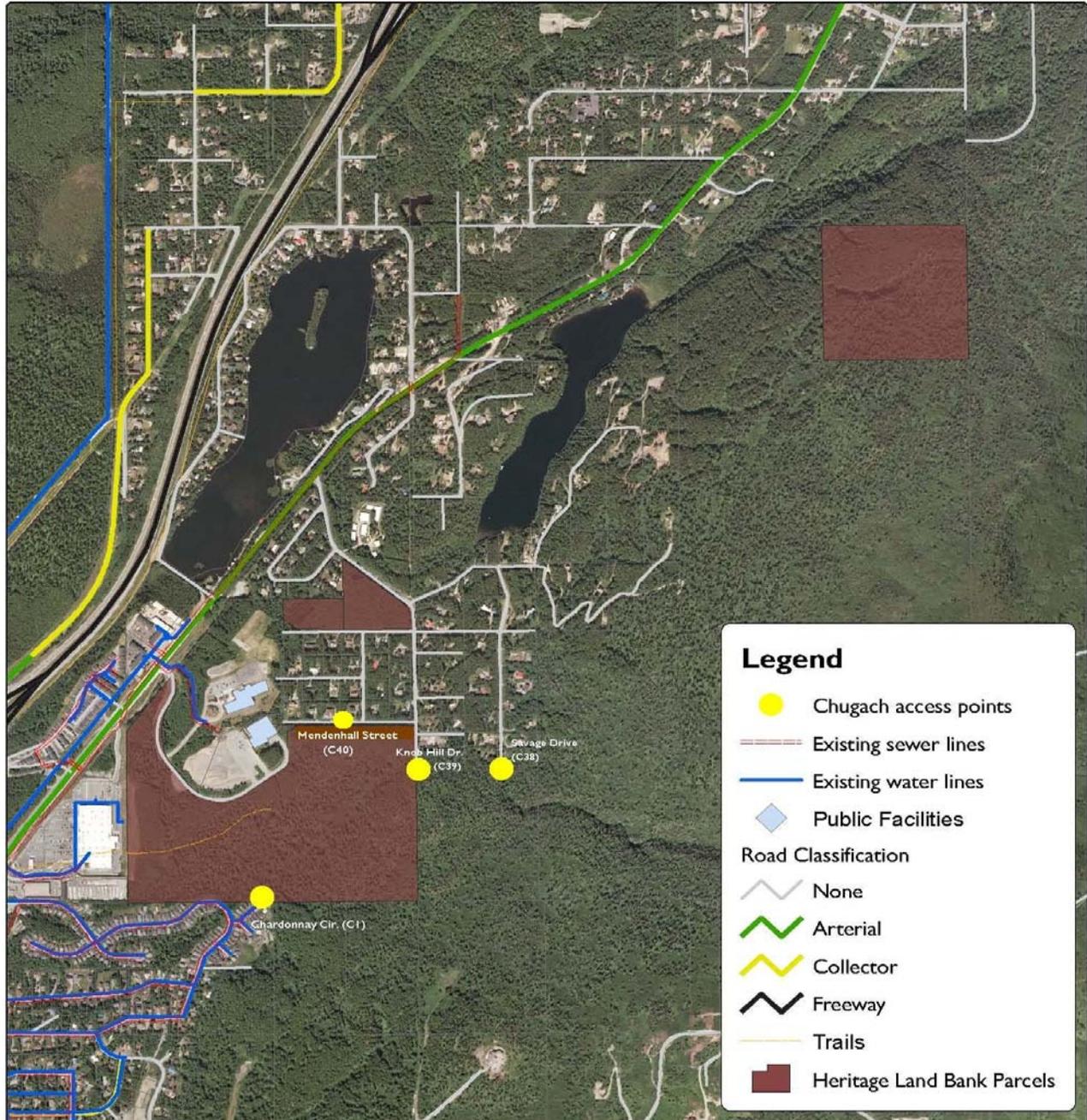
Table 4: Summary of Parcel Characteristics – (continued)

	North Knoll	Muldrow Street	Carol Creek
Roadways	No access road and no access easement preserved.	The parcels are surrounded by neighborhood roadways. Specifically, Fish Hatchery Road, Knob Hill Road, and Muldrow Street.	The driveway accessing the Harry J. McDonald Center follows a portion of the northern perimeter of the site. Knob Hill Drive ends at the north east corner of the site. The neighborhood roads associated with the Brandywine neighborhood (i.e., Beaujolais Drive and Chardonnay Circle) are adjacent to the site’s southern boundary. All of these roads are “local” streets.
Trails, Parks & Recreation	Proximity to Chugach State Park defines this HLB site. The 1986 Chugach State Park Trails plan indicates a proposed trail crossing the southeast corner of the property. Specifically, the “Chugiak Hillside Ski Trail” is described in the trails plan as a six-mile scenic ski trail and summer hiking trail	No known identified trail easements. Near to the Harry J. McDonald recreation facility and Fire Lake Elementary School.	A fairly vast informal trail network is found within the parcel. The Chugach State Park access inventory also identifies two locations within this parcel to preserve as potential access points to Chugach State Park. Other than the easement along Harry McDonald Drive, there are no other existing trail easements. The Harry J. McDonald recreation facility and Fire Lake Elementary School are two nearby public facilities.
Development Suitability	Generally unsuitable for development	High suitability for development.	Ranges from highly developable along the northern boundary of the site to less suitable for development in the wetland and steep slope areas of the site.

Map 6: Chugiak-Eagle River Generalized Land Use Map and Zoning (from Comprehensive Plan Update)



Infrastructure & Public Facilities, Chugiak-Eagle River



Alaska State Plane, Zone 4, NAD 1983
January 21, 2008



Map by Agnew::Beck Consulting for Heritage Land Bank.



0 650 1,300 2,600 Feet

All data courtesy of Municipality of Anchorage.

The population of Eagle River has been steadily increasing. While not expanding quite as fast as the booming Matanuska-Susitna Borough, growth in the Chugiak-Eagle River area has outpaced the Municipality of Anchorage as a whole. In 1990, 25,324 lived in the Chugiak-Eagle River area. In 2000, this population grew to 29,917 (or 11.5 percent of the total municipal population). ISER projections through 2027, used for the Chugiak-Eagle River Comp Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan, show Chugiak-Eagle River’s population continuing to grow at a rate faster than the Anchorage Bowl, increasing to almost 15 percent of the municipality’s population. Specifically, the projections cited in the 2007 Chugiak-Eagle River Long Range Transportation Plan conclude that the population in Chugiak-Eagle River will be 53,880 in 2027, with the Anchorage Bowl’s population projected to be 359,200. This reflects an annual average growth rate of 2% for Chugiak-Eagle River while Anchorage’s annual average growth rate is 1.5 percent.

Much of this growth has to do with available land in Eagle River which is quickly disappearing in the Anchorage Bowl. The overall area of Chugiak-Eagle River is approximately 40,000 acres. Around 40 percent of this land is developed or committed to use (Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update, 2006). The mix of land uses between different land classifications has changed little since the 1990’s and it is not expected that this mixture will change significantly in the foreseeable future (see tables below). Residential land dominates with 46 percent of the total area in the community. As in the past, the majority of residential land in the future will likely remain large-lot, single family residential. The central Eagle River area may expand to include smaller lot subdivisions with the potential for multi-family housing. The 2006 Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update notes that the community may, in the future, need to provide “more apartment or other multi-family housing to accommodate young, single people, and to create more affordable housing for low- to moderate-income families.”

Table 5: Land Use Allocation 1987 & 2005

Land Use, 1987		Land Use, 2005	
Land Use	Acreage	Land Use	Acreage
Residential	5,666	Residential	7,675
Commercial	265	Commercial	306
Industrial	165	Industrial	1,007
Institutional	1,077	Institutional	1,160
Parks	2,303	Parks	2,687
Transportation	3,181	Transportation	3,917
Total	12,657	Total	16,752

Source: Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update, 2006.

The growth of the housing supply also reflects this growing population. In the 2006 update to the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan, it was noted that while the housing growth between 1990 and 2000 was much slower than the previous decade, more recent numbers show an increase again. The Plan notes that about 1,600 units were built in between 2000 and 2005, more than were built in the previous 10 years. However, in the few years since the Comprehensive Plan Update was completed and in particular very recently, the housing market nationally and in Alaska has slowed significantly. In the future the area is likely to continue to experience pressure for continued growth, creating a more urban/suburban lifestyle; at the same time, there is likely to be continued strong community support for maintaining the area’s “rural” character.

Code Requirements

The Heritage Land Bank is required to develop a site specific land use study consistent with Anchorage Municipal Code 25.40.025 when the Municipal comprehensive plan is insufficient to guide land disposals and land use decisions. This Chapter addresses the following issues required in a site-specific study:

- a) Need for community facilities such as roads, parks, trails, schools, satellite municipal offices;
- b) Historical and natural landmarks, natural hazards, environmentally sensitive lands;
- c) Public utility needs;
- d) Potential residential, commercial, industrial areas;
- e) Land use compatibility with adjacent areas; and
- f) Consistency with uses defined in the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning for the area.

Analysis

Overview

In general, the uses proposed under this plan will create only limited demands on public services and facilities, which can readily be accommodated by existing services. The one exception is for improvements to the access road to the McDonald Center. New residential uses allowed under this plan, along with a planned expansion of the center, will trigger the need for improvements to the road.

a) Need for community facilities such as roads, parks, trails, schools, satellite municipal offices;

Roads:

The need for connectivity between neighborhoods is clearly documented by Objective G of the Transportation section of the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update. The plan makes recommendations, outlined in detail in the following chapter, consistent with this goal. Specifically, the plan would upgrade Harry McDonald Drive from a driveway to a collector road to improve access for the Elementary School and existing McDonald Recreation Center. This may also provide an opportunity to develop safety improvements for the intersection with the Old Glenn. The plan also calls for creating a new road connection from McDonald Drive into the Malaspina and Knob Hill neighborhood, to improve emergency access in and out of this area. The Municipal Traffic Department participated extensively in the planning process. Representatives from the Traffic Dept. attended community meetings, reviewed plan drafts, and helped to craft the recommendations made in the Plan.

Parks:

The Eagle River Parks and Recreation Department was involved throughout this site-specific planning process. The department is responsible to efficiently use their resources to create parks and recreation opportunities for all of the Chugiak-Eagle River area. With the help of the Eagle River Parks and Recreation Department a park and recreation inventory was completed for this Project. Appendix F outlines the extensive network of parks and recreational amenities in the area. The recommendations outlined in this plan reflect the input of the local Parks Department, that is, the plan should add greenbelt and trails to Eagle River's existing trail network, but that no additional park land is needed. The Carol Creek greenbelt will compliment the recreational opportunities available at the nearby Harry McDonald Center and support an integrated trail network in Eagle River. The decision on whether some portion of the Carol Creek parcel may become Municipal Parklands will be made in the future.

Schools, Satellite Municipal Offices:

The western Muldrow Street parcel is adjacent to the Fire Lake Elementary School. The Anchorage School District was consulted through this process and determined that they do not have a need for the land to expand Fire Lake Elementary School. Any expansion of Fire Lake could take place within the boundaries of their existing campus. In addition, the school is not at capacity.

Regarding Satellite Municipal offices, Eagle River is currently working to develop a one-stop municipal service center located in downtown Eagle River as part of the proposed Town Center development. The HLB parcels analyzed in this study are not needed for municipal offices.

In addition, request for municipal agencies and community councils to review and comment on the draft study was sent out by email on April 10, 2008, in advance of the May 2008 Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission meeting at which this site-specific land use plan was reviewed and approved. No municipal departments indicated a need for the subject parcels nor did they provide any comment on the plan during the review period prior to the HLBAC meeting. See Appendix G Facility Needs Review.

b) Historical and natural landmarks, natural hazards, environmentally sensitive lands;

Chapter 3 provides a summary of the parcel's environmentally sensitive lands and natural hazards. These include stream corridors and habitat, wetland and riparian environments, and steep terrain. The site has no formally recognized historical and natural landmarks. As made clear in Chapter 3, Carol Creek and the associated wetland is a valuable community resource, offering a range of hydrological, wildlife habitat and recreational values and ecological functions.

c) Public utility needs;

A range of public utilities run along the Old Glenn Highway corridor, with spur lines for power and communications extending into the neighborhoods to the east of the roadway where the parcels are located. Residential neighborhoods in the area are rural in character, and rely on on-site water wells and wastewater systems. As outlined in Chapter 3, the 4 parcels are not currently serviced by water and sewer, although such services are available immediately adjoining the Carol Creek parcel. Certain portions of the development will require water and sewer to be extended at the cost of the developer. AWWU was consulted throughout the planning process and provided information on water and sewer utility needs in the area.

d) Potential residential, commercial, industrial areas;

Summarized in the Executive Summary and outlined in more detail in Chapter 6, residential use is proposed as a future option for three of the four HLB parcels under study. Residential use is supported by several reasons:

- As Eagle River grows, land for residential use in close proximity to the Town Center is becoming more and more limited. By developing this area, HLB could serve an important community need identified by several goals in the Chugiak-Eagle River Comp Plan. Notably that moderate density residential development should provide convenient access to employment, commercial centers, and major transportation corridors.
- By selling property, HLB obtains income that can be used for other public purposes (e.g., acquisition of park land trails, or land for public facilities). In addition, selling land expands the community tax base.
- The Chugiak-Eagle River Comp Plan also identifies the need for well designed, attractive quality housing. It may be possible that Eagle River could lay the groundwork for creation of a model subdivision using strict design standards.

Very limited, accessory office or commercial uses are allowed in this plan as part of the medium density residential development, to serve nearby residential and recreation uses.

Industrial uses are not recommended due to the parcel's proximity to the environmentally sensitive Carol Creek and wetland as well as proximity to housing.

e) Land use compatibility with adjacent areas; and

As the following Chapter will detail, the proposed land uses have been carefully chosen and sited to minimize impacts to adjacent areas and blend well with existing uses. The residential uses directly adjacent to the existing rural residential neighborhood are proposed to match the 1 acre/dwelling unit of the neighborhood. The more intense use of medium density residential has been proposed near an existing commercial area and is buffered from the existing rural residential areas by a proposed 26 acre open space, greenbelt. The North Knoll parcel has been proposed to be added to the adjacent Chugach State Park for trade.

f) Consistency with uses defined in the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning for the area.

The conclusions presented in the draft plan are consistent with the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update and zoning for the area. This plan was prepared because the Comprehensive Plan does not give specific guidance regarding the future use of these HLB lands. However, as is outlined in Chapters 2, the recommendations of this site specific land use plan reflect careful consideration of, and consistency with, several plans and policies for the Chugiak-Eagle River area.