

Submitted by: Assembly Members Tesche  
and Taylor  
Prepared by: Assembly Office  
Amended by Clerk's Office  
For reading: 2/20/01

*Clerk's Note: Amendments incorporated from  
AO 00-124(S-1) are underlined. Bold text are additions  
in the original AO 00-124(S). Amendments made on the  
floor on 2-20-01 are also underlined.*

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA  
AO No. 2000-124(S) (as amended)

1 AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE GIRDWOOD COMMERCIAL AREAS AND TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN  
2 AS AN ELEMENT OF THE ANCHORAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND AMENDING CHAPTER 21.05 OF THE  
3 ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE.

4  
5 THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY ORDAINS

6  
7 **Section 1.** The Commercial Areas and Transportation Master Plan – Girdwood, Alaska, Draft dated November 1, 1999,  
8 is hereby adopted, with the recommended amendments by the Planning and Zoning Commission in Resolution No. 2000-032,  
9 as an element of the Municipality of Anchorage Comprehensive Plan, with the following additional amendments:

10  
11 Maps 7, 9, 10, and 11 are amended by adding the word "Potential" before "Transportation Corridor."

12  
13 **Map 8 is amended by deleting [preferred rail alternative and preferred alternative] and inserting the words:**  
14 **"potential transportation corridor."**

15  
16 Maps 10 and 11 are amended to show the East Valley Access roadway running up the west side of Alyeska Basin  
17 Subdivision, rather than tying into Timberline drive.

18  
19 Page 18, paragraph b., is hereby amended to read as follows.

20  
21 b. *Alaska Railroad Spur.* Extend a spur of the railroad into the Valley (several alignments were  
22 studied) connecting a station along the existing rail corridor with the Alyeska Prince Hotel/New Ski  
23 Base (with other intermediate stations also possible depending on alignment). Encourage the Alaska  
24 Railroad to use the most modern, environmentally friendly technology and passenger equipment  
25 possible.

26  
27 Page 18, the next to last paragraph of, paragraph e., is hereby amended to read as follows

28  
29 This Transportation Master Plan includes the following major transit elements:

30  
31 Local bus transit circulation within the Valley:

32  
33 Investigation of route alignment and feasibility, both physical and financial, of a rail  
34 spur into Girdwood Valley [IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAIL SPUR BY THE  
35 ALASKA RAILROAD]; and,"

36  
37 Development of a multimodal center[S] at the Valley Entry, and additional multimodal  
38 centers as needed, with or without a rail component [AND THE NEW RESORT  
39 BASE]  
40

Page 19, *Phase 1 – Core Area Shuttle*, is hereby amended as follows

This shuttle would serve all of the markets listed above. It would have particular value if rail service [THE RAIL SPUR] were implemented [AS A MEANS OF PROVIDING LOCAL MOBILITY FOR PEOPLE ARRIVING BY TRAIN].

Page 19, *Phase 2 – Intercept Connector*, is hereby amended as follows

During the second phase, shuttle service would be extended along Alyeska Highway to the Seward Highway. This service would interconnect with the rail service [SPUR] through multimodal centers (described below) located at the Valley Entry and also potentially at the New Resort Base [PRINCE HOTEL].

Page 20, *Implementation of a Rail Spur*, is hereby amended as follows:

As part of the process to develop this Transportation Master Plan, an effort was made to estimate the potential demand for rail service and to determine the general physical feasibility of a new rail spur extension into Girdwood. The system may [WOULD] include a spur from the Alaska Railroad mainline to an internal valley terminus and/or a commuter station at the Alaska mainline with shuttle service to internal valley locations. Extension of a rail line into Girdwood is not the current locally preferred alternative of many of those who live year round in Girdwood. Adoption of this plan by the Assembly is not intended to indicate that extension of a rail line into Girdwood is the locally preferred alternative of the Anchorage Assembly. Adoption of this plan only indicates that this option for future transportation should be preserved for additional study and analysis.

Page 23 is amended by deleting the following

Rail spur implementation will be controversial since opposition to it has been expressed by many Girdwood residents.

Page 25, at the first sentence in the first paragraph under the subheading *Guiding Principles for Rail Spur Implementation*, is amended to read as follows:

Based on these potential impacts and benefits, any [THE] recommended program for rail spur implementation should include [IS DESCRIBED BY] the following list of guiding principles. It is important to keep in mind that, if the Municipality and the Alaska Railroad decide[S] to implement the rail spur, it will be required to undertake an extensive environmental analysis and public involvement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), other Federal regulations and Alaska statutes.

Page 26, *Role of the Potential Rail Spur in Girdwood Valley*, is amended to read as follows:

Based on the available data to date, t[T]he best physical alignment for the rail spur appears to be [is] alignment 1A as shown on map 8 and map 11.

- 2 The actual implementation of a rail spur will require further environmental analysis and engineering development with extensive public review and involvement.
- 3 If developed, t[T]he rail spur may [WILL] play an important role in Girdwood Valley's future mobility."

Page 27, at the last paragraph at the end of the subsection *Potential Role of the Rail Spur in Girdwood Valley*, is amended to read as follows:

Eventually, as development of the valley continues, the railroad could [WILL] serve as a critically important transportation mode bringing people to Girdwood without the attendant impacts of motor vehicle traffic. The opportunity to develop a multimodal transit system with internal bus circulation connection to a rail spur may be [IS] one the most important elements of the Transportation Master Plan with [AND HAS] the potential to fundamentally shape the future of Girdwood Valley. There are few bold steps the Municipality can take to ensure the achievement of the objectives identified for Girdwood Valley. The rail spur may be [IS] one of them.

For this reason, the Transportation Master Plan adopts as part of its implementation elements the following policy:

The Municipality of Anchorage shall retain and preserve a potential Public Use Corridor along the '1A - Potential [RAIL] Transportation Corridor' route of sufficient width for various transportation alternatives. The conveyance, use or development of Municipal lands within the Corridor shall not be undertaken without further approval from the Assembly, in conformance with this Plan and any amendment to this Plan. Temporary, short-term uses of the Corridor may be permitted.

The actual construction of a rail spur or other transportation alternative to the resort base area will also require subsequent approvals by the Assembly. A final decision may happen only after further detailed study and design, including analysis of the environmental, economic and community impacts identified through the NEPA process, which ensures that the alignment, design, construction, and operation of rail service is consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan. Future Assembly approval for proceeding with any conveyance of any interest in lands for construction of a rail spur may not be requested until such time as all of the following have occurred:

1. The Alaska Railroad has constructed the valley entry multi-modal center.
2. The Alaska Railroad has completed a rail service feasibility assessment similar to that performed in 1994 and provided the results of that assessment together with detailed information on fares, proposed frequency of service and how operational costs would be financed to the Assembly.
3. The Board of Directors of the Alaska Railroad has approved a request for an interest in municipal land for construction of a rail spur.
4. The Assembly finds that growth within the Girdwood area, since adoption of this plan, as well as projected growth from proposed resort development, justifies extension of the rail spur.
5. The Alaska Railroad has completed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In conjunction with the EIS the Alaska Railroad shall include: traffic volumes at the Seward Highway-Alyeska Highway; traffic at the Glacier Creek bridge; the resident full-time population of Girdwood; the number of summer and winter visitors to the Alyeska Resort; and, the volume of passenger traffic on the Alaska Railroad between Anchorage and Seward.
6. The Heritage Land Bank has completed an economic feasibility assessment of future resort expansion in the Winner Creek area.

The Municipality of Anchorage has conducted an advisory vote on the rail spur extension under terms set by the Anchorage Assembly.

1  
2 The Assembly may approve any conveyance of any interest in lands for construction of a rail spur or other  
3 motorized transportation alternative, only after finding that all applicable requirements of this plan for  
4 requesting such a conveyance have been met and that the alignment, design, construction and operation of [rail]  
5 such service is consistent with the goals and objectives of this plan and is feasible. At the time of any such  
6 conveyance the MOA Assembly shall also consider land use regulations intended to limit the number of tour buses  
7 that may cross Glacier Creek bridge.

8  
9 Page 77, at the caption for Figure 10-5, is amended to read as follows:

10 Valley Entry Multimodal Concept Design [CENTER] with highway oriented commercial and  
11 commuter parking.

12  
13 Page 86, *Recommended Circulation Improvements*, is amended to read as follows:

14 [CONTINGENT ON THE EXTENSION OF THE RAIL SPUR,] Alyeska Resort is encourage to:

15  
16 Page 87, at *Alaska Railroad Corporation*, is amended to read as follow:

17 Internal transit service and the valley entry multimodal center may be dependent on the support of  
18 the Alaska Railroad for the transit objectives expressed by the community of Girdwood as reflected  
19 in this plan [THE RAIL SPUR].

20  
21 Page 88, under subheading 2, *Resort Base Multimodal Center*, is amended to read as follows:

22 If the Girdwood Rail Spur is determined to be feasible, and is approved by the Municipality of  
23 Anchorage, t[T]his facility should be built through a cooperative effort of Alyeska Resort, the  
24 Municipality, and the Alaska Railroad Corporation. Otherwise, this facility shall be designed and  
25 built with the potential addition of future rail service in mind. It is assumed that funding will be  
26 provided in part through a federal grant for development of a multimodal transportation system for  
27 Girdwood Valley and in part through a partnership with the Resort.”

28  
29 Page 88, under subheading 3, *Alaska Railroad Girdwood Valley Spur*, is amended to read as follows:

30 This project may [SHOULD] be implemented by the Alaska Railroad Corporation, if approved by  
31 the appropriate regulatory agencies, including the Municipality of Anchorage, after public hearing  
32 and comment [IN COOPERATION WITH THE MUNICIPALITY].

33  
34 Page 91, under *To Do Immediately, Transportation Planning*, is amended to read as follows:

35 Rail Spur. Subject to appropriation, the Municipality shall facilitate site investigation of Municipal  
36 lands within Girdwood Valley. The Municipality shall not convey any interest in lands in Girdwood  
37 Valley for a proposed rail spur without Assembly approval.

38 [LAUNCH THE NEPA-REQUIRED ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND PUBLIC PROCESS  
39 FOR THE PROPOSED RAIL SPUR. IDENTIFY AND PRESERVE THE RAIL CORRIDOR  
40 BASED ON THE OUTCOME OF THE NEPA PROCESS. BEGIN PRELIMINARY DESIGN  
41 WHEN THE NEPA PROCESS HAS RESOLVED THE CHOICE OF ALTERNATIVE. MOVE  
42 INTO FINAL DESIGN.]

43  
44 Page 92, *To Do Soon, Transportation Planning*, is amended by deleting the following:

45 *Rail Spur.* Construct the spur and initiate service.  
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50  
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53

Page 92, second bullet under *Commercial Areas Planning*, is amended as following language:

Connect the Girdwood School and New Townsite to the municipal water service.

Appendix A – Prior Studies and Plans, is amended to include in its list the Areawide Trails Plan (1997) and the Girdwood Iditarod Trail Route Study (1996) Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan (1996).

**Section 2.** Anchorage Municipal Code section 21.05.030 is hereby amended by adding a new subsection W to read as follows:

W. Girdwood Commercial Areas and Transportation Master Plan dated [effect date of this ordinance].

**Section 3.** This ordinance shall become effective immediately upon its passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 20 day of Feb, 2001.

  
Chair of the Assembly

ATTEST:

  
Municipal Clerk

Clerk's Office:vmc

**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE**  
**Summary of Economic Effects - General Government**

AO Number: 2000-124 Title: Girdwood Commercial Areas and Transportation Master Plan

Sponsor:

Preparing Agency Planning Department

Others Affected None

**CHANGES IN EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES** (Thousands of Dollars)

Operating Expenditures	FY2000	FY2001	FY2001	FY2001	FY2004
1000 Personal Services					
2000 Supplies					
3000 Other Services					
4000 Debt Services					
5000 Capital Outlay					
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS					
ADD: 6000 Charge from Others					
LESS: 7000 Charge to Others					
FUNCTION COST:					
REVENUES:					
CAPITAL:					
POSITIONS: FT/PT and Temp.					

**Public Sector Economic Effects:**

Public facilities and services will be provided more efficiently and cost-effectively as a result of this Master Plan. The Master Plan also provides general direction for the disposal of certain municipal properties.

A number of public improvements will be necessary to implement the Master Plan and to allow for new private development. Such improvements will include trails, parking areas, new and improved roads, and drainage facilities. In addition, upgrading electric and water utility facilities will be necessary as well. A number of these improvements are on-going, while some are in the planning, engineering and design stages. Still others are anticipated to occur in future years as new development and activities warrant them.

Funding for these projects currently come from a variety of sources and will likely continue to do so in the future. For instance, trail improvements are being made with funding from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program of the U. S. National Park Service as well as volunteer efforts in the community. Water improvements are being designed and planned for construction based upon funds from federal grants, AWWU revenues, and anticipated water improvement district assessments in the affected area.

The proposed rail spur would primarily be funded through federal grants, which would also include funding for buses to support internal transit service. Bus transit is a municipal areawide service to which Girdwood currently contributes approximately

If further explanation is necessary, a separate page may be attached

Form ECON2

**\$100,000 even though it currently has no bus service. These funds could be channeled to operation and maintenance of the recommended internal bus transit, which could be increased to provide expanded service. Expanded service could be paid through increased tax revenues derived from greater valuation of the tax base as a result of new development.**

**New road improvements will likely be funded through a combination of grants, local assessment districts (RIDs), and private development, much as is currently done in Anchorage.**

**Beyond what is supplemented from federal and state sources, funding for these improvements will come from local (Girdwood area) sources (e.g., general obligation bonds, increases in mill rates and/or assessed value of Girdwood property, or special assessments). With the exception of Girdwood area property owners, Anchorage residents will not pay for Girdwood improvements unless it is for an areawide service, such as libraries, transit, or emergency medical services (EMS).**

**Most of the undeveloped land in Girdwood is in the Heritage Land Bank. Implementation of these improvements will increase the land's value and could possibly create an indirect benefit to Anchorage residents when Girdwood land disposals create HLB revenue. which in turn, is used for land acquisition in Anchorage.**

## Private Sector Economic Effects:

The Master Plan will provide more certainty to private investors, developers, and local residents regarding the pattern of community development for the commercial areas.

Implementation of the recommended public improvements will also encourage further private investment in Girdwood.

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Validated by OMB:

Date:

Cheryl Frasca

19 Dec 00

Approved By:

Date:

Sam R. Fein  
Director, Preparing Agency

12-19-00

Concurred By

N/A  
Director, Affected Agency

Approved By:

Date:

[Signature]  
Executive Manager

12-19-00



# Municipality of Anchorage



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George P. Wuerch, Mayor



*Mayer*  
*Ref. AD 2001-124(S)*

November 13, 2001

RE: ***Girdwood Commercial Areas and Transportation Master Plan***

Enclosed is your copy of the adopted ***Girdwood Commercial Areas and Transportation Master Plan***.

Copies are being sent to each municipal library, and the document is available for sale for \$10 each at the Planning Department's public counter in City Hall, Room 210, 632 West Sixth Avenue, Anchorage.

The ***Girdwood Commercial Areas and Transportation Master Plan*** is also available free on the Planning Department's website <http://www.muni.org/planning>. Click on *Planning Activities in Your Neighborhood*.

Please call the Physical Planning Division at 343-4224 for further information.