



*Photo: Chugiak-Eagle River Star*

## IMPLEMENTATION

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This Plan is a revision of the first comprehensive plan for the area, adopted in 1979. It is based upon the most current economic and demographic trends and projections, land ownership/management status information, and community aspirations. To a very large degree, however, it is also built upon actions previously taken to implement the earlier plan.

It is intended that this Plan will be implemented through a variety of measures, including regulatory controls, capital facilities programming, more specific studies, and decision-making which considers community goals, objectives and policies. Such measures are designed to support and carry out the recommendations of this Plan and will be administered by the Municipality. Other government agencies exercise land management controls that are not under the Municipality's direct jurisdiction. Nevertheless, adoption of this Plan constitutes the Municipality's declared public policy as to how State and federal land management systems can best be applied in this area.

### I. REGULATORY CONTROLS

Zoning and platting are the most common and familiar forms of regulatory control over land use. They have traditionally been used to regulate the location and development of commercial, industrial and residential uses, as well as residential densities. Thus, they establish the basic land use pattern of the community.

The Chugiak-Eagle River area was zoned "Unrestricted" in 1964, prior to adoption of the original comprehensive plan in 1979. The exception was the town of Eagle River and small portions of Birchwood and Chugiak around Fire Lake, which had been zoned several years earlier. Beginning in 1983, however, the Chugiak-Eagle River area underwent a major areawide zoning process that took about four years to complete.

The areawide zoning considered historical development patterns, as well as land use designations and policies called for in the 1979 plan. Zoning districts were generally applied to the area accordingly.

Major portions of Chugiak-Eagle River were not zoned during the areawide zoning process. At that time, much of this land was still in federal ownership, or was the subject of land ownership disputes among competing entities. (The large area west of Fire Lake, known as the powder reserve, is one such example.) Other lands omitted included certain large, State park in-holdings.

A new areawide zoning is not recommended by this Plan, although some corrective rezoning will be undertaken. For example, certain privately held lands which are currently zoned PLI will be rezoned. Nevertheless, decisions on future zoning petitions will be guided by the recommendations contained in this Plan.

## II. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The capital improvement program is a short-term, planning and budgeting program that identifies the timing and cost of public facilities to be provided over a six-year period. Capital projects are generally expensive and, once constructed, are permanently fixed.

For many years, funding for capital projects in both Chugiak-Eagle River and Anchorage came primarily from State and federal sources. However, during the 1980's, the federal government cut back significantly on funds provided to states and local communities. Reflecting declining revenues, the State has recently also begun to cut back on capital subsidies to local communities. These trends are expected to continue at both the State and federal levels. Thus, Chugiak-Eagle River and the Municipality as a whole will be forced to contribute a greater share of funds for local public facilities and services needs.

In recent years, Chugiak-Eagle River has supported increased investment in public facilities and services. This has been reflected in higher local mill levies approved for roads, for example. However, many areas still have substandard roads, poor drainage, overcrowded schools and inadequate water supplies for fire protection. The challenge for Chugiak-Eagle River will be to meet the dual needs of upgrading existing facilities and extending services to support development in new areas.

Capital improvement programming is the process used to identify needed capital projects, their cost, their timing or priority, and the source of funding. It is the intent of the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan that all capital improvement projects comply with the Recommended Land Use Plan and Recommended Residential Density maps unless findings of fact are provided that justify non-compliance.

Through proper capital improvement programming, new development will be encouraged to locate in or near existing service districts where existing infrastructure with excess capacity exists, rather than in areas where new infrastructure would have to be extended at considerable public cost. An expansive pattern of development would commit the Municipality to needlessly expensive service demands. On the other hand, with future growth concentrated within or near existing service areas, public service delivery systems will be made more efficient, capital facilities requirements will be lessened, and per capita costs reduced.

During the life of this Plan, it is anticipated that a full range of public facilities and services will be extended to the powder reserve area west of the Glenn Highway, the lower Hiland Road area on the south side of Eagle River, and to the 770 acres located in Chugiak between the old and new Glenn Highways. The extension of public services to these areas should be coordinated among the service providers and done in a phased manner. Timing of improvements should be based on the ability of the local government to finance the improvements and the demand for the service, as well as approval from affected property owners.

### **III. FUNCTIONAL PLANS AND STUDIES**

This Plan addresses the pattern and density of growth which is projected to take place in the Chugiak-Eagle River area during the next twenty years. It identifies the range of public facilities and services that will be needed, highlighting some current and anticipated major issues and concerns. However, the Plan does not address how, when or where all of the various public facilities and services will be provided. Those more specific elements will be identified through separate detailed functional plans and studies.

The Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan is important. It is the basis for future estimates of the area's needs for schools, roads, drainage, sewer, water, recreation facilities and other public facilities. In the Community Overview chapter, the various public facilities and services were described, major issues and concerns were identified and projected needs were addressed. However, each of those facility and service functions needs to be evaluated in more detail. Consequently, a series of special studies or plan updates will need to be undertaken and these are described below. It is hoped that the recommended combination of regulatory controls, management policies, and studies will help to further guide development in Chugiak-Eagle River, and also help to promote local employment and protect the area's natural beauty.

#### **A. LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

A long range transportation plan is needed for the Chugiak-Eagle River area in order to plan for long term needs of the major road network. It is also needed so that the area will remain eligible to receive federal funds for future road projects.

The long range transportation plan will include analyses of roadway and transit alternatives, based on anticipated population and land use patterns identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The plan will recommend a transportation system designed to meet national ambient air quality standards, and will present a recommended level of transit service, outline future major roadway needs and provide an implementation schedule.

#### **B. UPDATED OFFICIAL STREETS AND HIGHWAYS PLAN**

The Official Streets and Highways Plan establishes the location, classification and minimum right-of-way widths of streets and highways required to accommodate future transportation needs of the area. The focus of the Chugiak-Eagle River area update will be on local and collector streets, rather than on the arterials and freeway. Working with the Eagle River Rural Road Service Board, the plan update will include street reclassifications by current or anticipated function, based upon criteria appropriate for this area.

### **C. AREA DRAINAGE PLAN**

Many portions of the Chugiak-Eagle River area lack proper surface drainage. This is a continuing problem which affects environmental quality, public safety and aesthetics. Unless action is taken to address the treatment and discharge of surface drainage, the problem will be further exacerbated by new development.

Compounding the need for an area drainage plan is a federal requirement that the Municipality obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit for surface drainage systems associated with community development. According to federal regulations, Chugiak-Eagle River is included within the required permit area. However, the Municipality lacks the authority to address drainage problems in Chugiak-Eagle River as it is not in any drainage service area.

This Plan recommends that a comprehensive drainage planning process be undertaken which includes an evaluation of jurisdictional management, engineering and environmental analyses, and cost alternatives.

### **D. SCHOOL FACILITIES PLAN**

A school facilities plan is needed to address immediate needs for both elementary and secondary schools throughout the Municipality. The plan should also address future school site needs, based on projected population growth and recommended land use patterns as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the school facilities plan should include a determination of when and how the sites are to be reserved or acquired.

### **E. UPDATED PARKS AND TRAILS PLAN**

Chugiak-Eagle River is gifted with many natural areas within large designated parks such as Chugach State Park, and Beach Lake and Edmonds Lake Regional Parks. However, there is a need to establish a system of smaller parks and recreational facilities which are more immediately accessible to the area's various neighborhoods.

Recreational pursuits in the Chugiak-Eagle River area also involve a variety of trail uses. An updated parks and trails plan is needed to address the location and the methods of implementation to best meet these needs. This plan should continue recent citizen-led efforts which outlined a proposed conceptual trails plan for the area. (See Appendix C.)

### **F. UPDATED SEWER AND WATER MASTER PLANS**

Updated sewer and water master plans are needed to determine the most efficient means of providing these two critical services in order to accommodate projected growth. The phasing of planned expansions of the sewer and water systems to serve new growth areas should

be coordinated under these planning processes, whether the provider is a public or private entity.

#### **G. PEDESTRIAN AND CIRCULATION PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN EAGLE RIVER**

The land use concept presented in this plan envisions downtown Eagle River as the major employment and retail center of the Chugiak-Eagle River area. Within the downtown area, a strong office and retail core has begun to develop. However, if the downtown area is to achieve its economic potential and to retain its pleasant character, good access for both vehicles and pedestrians is needed. A pedestrian and circulation plan should identify pedestrian amenities, as well as parking and traffic management activities, which will be needed to accommodate future growth.

#### **H. STREET AND HIGHWAY LANDSCAPE PLAN**

The visual character of a community's street and roadway system can strongly impact the extent to which an area remains an attractive place for people to live and work. A street and highway landscape plan will preserve and enhance the natural aesthetic quality of life in Chugiak-Eagle River through improvements to the street landscape. The plan would establish design guidelines to encourage the preservation of existing woodlands within public road rights-of-way and would enhance the aesthetic qualities of the area's roadways by incorporating various landscape elements.

#### **I. POLICE/FIRE PROTECTION/HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES PLANS**

As the Chugiak-Eagle River area continues to grow, greater demands will be placed on local government to provide additional and more extensive public safety and social services. The provision of such services should be based upon master plans which incorporate factual data, community concerns, projected growth and development, cost and efficiency, and a thoughtful consideration of service alternatives.

### **III. HERITAGE LAND BANK**

The Heritage Land Bank manages large land holdings in the Chugiak-Eagle River area. These lands were selected by the Municipality as part of its State land entitlement and are currently uncommitted to any specific use. However, support has periodically been voiced locally for utilizing some of these lands for specific purposes. For example, the Birchwood and Eagle River Community Councils have requested that the northwest quarter of Section 25 be reserved for park use.

Land placed in the Heritage Land Bank is generally land that is reserved for future public purposes, land that is excess to municipal needs but unsuitable for disposal or development,

or land that is excess to municipal needs that may be disposed through sale or lease to the private sector. Revenues generated from land disposals are used for acquiring land that is well located and is suited for public purposes.

It is the intent of this Plan that specific studies be done for large Heritage Land Bank land holdings before any disposals take place. Such studies should include an evaluation of public need, an evaluation of impacts of proposed uses on adjoining properties and public infrastructure, community aspirations, and Land Bank goals and objectives. Revised land use designations for these properties may then be appropriate.





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## PLAN REVISION PROCESS



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This plan is intended to provide broad policies for land development and land management within the Chugiak-Eagle River area. It is based on a given set of community aspirations, demographic data and trends, environmental features, and land ownership and land management agreements. In the future, it is expected that some of these factors may change. For this reason, a process for plan review and re-evaluation is needed.

A re-evaluation of the major trends and/or policies of the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan (including the Recommended Land Use Plan and Recommended Residential Density maps) should be undertaken five years following its initial adoption. If there are no significant deviations from major trends or policies anticipated in the initial plan, a complete revision of the Plan is not required. However, if major changes are noted in this re-evaluation, a complete revision of the Plan is warranted.

Within the effective life of this Plan, major changes to certain land ownership/management agreements affecting the Chugiak-Eagle River area may take place. The results of such changes may warrant a new land use study, which may be adopted as a revision or as an additional element of the Comprehensive Plan following a formal public review process.

Certain land exchanges between the Municipality and Eklutna, Inc. may become necessary and may be mutually beneficial. The merit of such exchanges will be assessed at that time on a case by case basis. This Plan neither endorses, nor precludes such land exchanges from taking place. If any land exchange results in a change in land use that is different from that depicted on the Recommended Land Use Plan map, the map may be amended accordingly.

There is also a possibility that Fort Richardson may be closed within the time period covered by this plan. If that occurs, the North Anchorage Land Agreement (NALA) would guide the disposition of surplus military land. Such an action would have major economic and land use ramifications for both the Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River areas, and would thus warrant the revision of comprehensive plans for both areas.

Adoption of this plan indicates that the above processes are to be followed in plan review and re-evaluation, in order to ensure that the basic framework for decision-making on land management/use issues remains current.