

# **GIRDWOOD AREA PLAN REVIEW 2007 SURVEY RESULTS**

Results from March 2007 survey sent to all Girdwood post office boxes and to Girdwood property owners with an address other than a Girdwood post office box.

2031 surveys distributed with 564 returned

**SURVEY RETURN RATE: 27.8%**

*(Nineteen more surveys were received well after the March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline and are not included in the survey results.)*

**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**



**Question #1 – What is your main affiliation with the Girdwood area?**

Main Affiliation	Number	Percentage
Primary Resident	330	58.5%
Secondary/Other Resident	234	41.5%

The 234 “Secondary/Other” category actual breaks down as 189 secondary residents, 13 who identify themselves as both primary and secondary residents, and 32 as other. Other usually represents either a landlord who rents out his or her Girdwood property or a person who owns a lot in Girdwood but hasn’t built on it yet.

**Question #2 – Where do you work?**

Place	Number	Percentage* (Percentage of the 564 surveys that had at least one household member working in this location)
Girdwood/Portage	199	35.3%
Anchorage	280	49.6%
Elsewhere in Alaska	61	9.3%
Elsewhere in USA	17	3.0%
Retired or Not Employed	59	10.5%
Work Abroad	4	0.7%

\*Percentages add to more than 100%, because respondents often give two work locations (self and spouse’s location) rather than just one location. Each percentage is calculated by dividing number of responses for a given work location by 564 as the total number of returned surveys.

Several survey respondents list more than one place of work. For example, forty-six respondents have one household member working in Girdwood while another household member works in Anchorage, or have someone in the household who splits his or her working time between Girdwood and Anchorage.

**Question #3 – What do you most like about the Girdwood area?**

Most respondents list more than one thing that they like.

Number of Respondents	Like the Most (table lists only items cited by 10 or more respondents)
228	<b>Small town</b> – like the small town feel, its rural character, lack of traffic lights, etc. Also, includes persons who are glad that Girdwood is not Anchorage: that it is a world apart from an urban environment.
223	<b>Environment/Views</b> – express liking the mountains, the trees, the great views, the pristine environment, the wilderness setting, the clean air, the open meadows, unspoiled environment, the glaciers, the setting, etc.

Number of Respondents	Like the Most (table lists only items cited by 10 or more respondents)
189	<b>Outdoor Recreation</b> – appreciate the immediate access to winter and summer recreation. Persons who like the area’s hiking, biking, Nordic skiing, backcountry, trails, fishing, paragliding, etc. Persons who like Girdwood’s active lifestyle.
161	<b>Alpine Ski Resort</b> – like skiing best or the resort itself.
130	<b>People</b> – see Girdwood as a friendly place with nice people, good neighbors, or as a thoughtful, caring place. Also includes responses indicating that Girdwood is a good place for families or to raise a child.
110	<b>Quiet/Relaxing</b> – enjoy Girdwood as a quiet, relaxing or secluded place.
87	<b>Community</b> – like that Girdwood is a close-knit community, has a strong sense of community and/or high level of civic involvement. Note that “small town” and “community” categories are close, and there is likely some overlap between the two.
61	<b>Accessibility</b> – like the fact that Girdwood is close to Anchorage, the Kenai Peninsula, or Whittier/Prince William Sound.
24	<b>Safe</b> – appreciate the lack of crime or feel that the community is safe.
24	<b>Unique</b> – like that Girdwood is different, that the houses don’t look alike, that the place has its own character, or that there are no chain stores.
14	<b>Restaurants</b> – enjoy the Double Musky, the Bake Shop, Maxine’s, etc. --- or the area’s restaurants in general.
13	<b>Wildlife</b> – like the area for its wildlife - bears, moose, etc.

Respondents also list a good local school (8), the Forest Fair (7), the local library (3), nightlife/bars (2), among other items as things that they like best about Girdwood.

**Question #4 – What do you think is the most important problem in the Girdwood area?**

Note that most respondents list multiple problems rather than a sole problem. The table reflects all answers, so please keep in mind that one respondent may have four “most important” problems in the below table while his or her neighbor may list only one. Thus, the results differ from what results would be if everyone chooses only one, “most important,” problem.

Number of Respondents	Most Important Problem (table lists only problems cited by 10 or more respondents)
115	<b>Local Roads</b> – want roads to be paved, widened, or otherwise improved. Others want better maintenance, citing potholes, dust, snow removal, and other issues.
95	<b>Affordability/Becoming Community for the Wealthy</b> - overwhelming concern (84) is affordable housing. However, some respondents say that they do not want Girdwood to become a community only for the wealthy or feel that the community is becoming too upscale with newcomers demanding full city services and amenities.
56	<b>More Shops and Services</b> - want a better grocery store (25), more of a shopping area in general (12), a local bank branch (9), a hardware store (8), or improved health care facilities (5). Other respondents express desires for a veterinary clinic, a pharmacy, a local plumber, local electrician, local mechanic/garage, more daycare options and more restaurants. <i>Note that the “56” respondents is tabulated by counting a person <u>only once</u> even if he/she lists two or more types of retail or services needed. For example, if a person wants both a bank and a pharmacy, the person is counted only once rather than twice. However, the further breakdown provided in this narrative regarding # of persons wanting a grocery store, wanting a bank, etc., <u>does count each mention</u> of those items.</i>
41	<b>Planned Development/Better Design</b> – assert that development needs to follow a plan and not just happen. Also, includes responses citing the need for more attractive developments or the need for stronger building and land design standards and codes. (In counterpoint, three respondents feel that building and land design standards and codes should be less strict; these three obviously are not counted in the “41” tally for persons favoring more planning and design/standards.)
37	<b>More Recreational Facilities</b> – want: a community recreation center (15); a local community pool (12); expanded ski terrain (8); more hiking or Nordic trails (7); a local gym/fitness facility (3); indoor ice rink (3); indoor track (2); more paragliding facilities (1); etc. <i>Note that the “37” respondents is tabulated by counting a person <u>only once</u> even if he/she lists two or more types of facilities desired. For example, if a person wants both a pool and more trails, the person is counted only once rather than twice. However, the further breakdown provided in this narrative regarding # of persons wanting a pool, more trails, a gym, etc., <u>does count each mention</u> of those items.</i>
34	<b>Public Transportation</b> – express the need for a taxi, local bus or shuttle, and/or a need for train or bus transport to Anchorage.
33	<b>High Property Taxes</b> – feel that taxes are too high or that taxes are too high relative to the services actually received.
31	<b>High School</b> – view the need for a local high school in Girdwood as a most important problem.
31	<b>Infrastructure</b> – worry that more development will stress the existing infrastructure. Others simply point out that infrastructure improvements are essential for development. Some question whether infrastructure to support new development should be built before existing infrastructure problems are addressed. At least ten persons specifically

<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Most Important Problem (table lists only problems cited by 10 or more respondents)</b>
	cite water lines as an issue, and at least five persons specifically list sewer service as an issue. Some persons also comment about frequent power outages.
30	<b>Maintaining Girdwood Character/Small Town</b> - want Girdwood to maintain its unique character or small town feeling. Some fear that the unique character or small town feeling will be lost as development proceeds.
23	<b>Nonresidents' Influence</b> – feel that nonresidents have too much influence over Girdwood's development. Some talk about outside developers who are pursuing profits without much regard for local residents' wishes. A few talk about how weekenders/second-home owners have too much influence. Others cite HLB's efforts to develop its lands as not adequately taking into account local desires. <i>Note that the "23" does not include comments about the resort's influence, since the resort is an existing part of the community. Thus, the "23" excludes the three persons who express concern that the resort will eventually overpower and dominate the local community and the person who's concerned that the new owner is making too many changes.</i>
21	<b>Loose Dogs</b> – think that there are too many loose dogs. Others comment about dog poop being everywhere.
18	<b>Environmental Impacts</b> – express concern about the environmental impacts of development.
16	<b>Jobs</b> – Some want more jobs, but others (10) comment about the quality (better paying) rather than the quantity of jobs available.
16	<b>Over-Development</b> – believe that over-development is or will become Girdwood's most important problem.
16	<b>Lack of Activities</b> – feel that Girdwood needs more activities for nonskiers, senior citizens, and teenagers (such as a movie theater.) Some also cite the need for more activities to do at night or during the summer.
14	<b>Concerned About Development</b> - comment that development: is occurring too quickly; is not controlled; or is impacting the quality of life, etc.
11	<b>Congestion</b> – express concern about existing traffic or that development will increase traffic on local roads.
13	<b>Municipality's Governance</b> - believe that being part of the Municipality does not benefit Girdwood or may even hinder getting things done. Others feel that Anchorage has too much say in Girdwood's affairs and want Girdwood to be independent.
11	<b>Persons Opposing Development</b> – believe that persons opposing any development are the most important problem.

**Some other comments about most important problems:**

Nine persons comment about division over development being the community's most important problem.

Another nine persons feel that the lack of land is the community's most important problem.

Nine respondents cite the need for a golf course, while six cite the need to oppose golf as the most important problem.

Six want to avoid becoming just a bedroom community of Anchorage.

Four believe that the need to grow is Girdwood's most important problem.

Four persons cite the resort's decision to restrict locals' access to the hotel's swimming pool and fitness facilities as the most important problem.

Three persons think that the need to develop the Upper Valley is the most important problem; conversely, another three believe the opposite.

Two persons believe that the need to become a world-class resort is the community's most pressing need, while two others believe the opposite.

**Other most important problems include:** parking (8); need a second valley access route (8); drug abuse (7); need a full-time Fire/EMS department (7); need for recycling (5); need to balance growth with community needs (5); need more troopers/patrols (4); need more code enforcement/junk removed (3); need to cluster development and prevent sprawl (2); need to modernize outdated facilities (1); and need an Olympics facility (1).

Twenty-four respondents do not answer this question. Four say that there is no most important problem, while another four say that they do not know what the most important problem is.

Of course, there are also some unique, not easily-categorized responses – so please read through all the survey responses if you're curious to learn of other important problems not included in this summary.

**Question #5 – Do you have favorable, unfavorable, or mixed feelings about proposals to expand resort development in the Girdwood area?**

<b>Feelings Towards Resort Development</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Favorable	313	55.5%
Mixed	202	35.8%
Unfavorable	43	7.6%
Don't Know/Blank	6	1.1%

<b>Feelings towards Resort Development Comparing Primary to Secondary/Other Residents</b>		
<b>Feelings toward Development</b>	<b>Primary Residents</b>	<b>Secondary/Other* Residents</b>
<b>Favorable</b>	44.2%	72.8%
<b>Mixed</b>	46.6%	21.6%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	9.2%	5.6%

**#5 Continued: Explain why you have favorable, unfavorable, or mixed feelings about development:**

Note that most respondents share a variety of feelings rather than just one thought. For example, a person may feel that development is beneficial and yet still worry that Girdwood will lose its small town character. The table summarizes all feelings shared --- rather than just one feeling per person.

<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Feelings Explanations/Comments</b>
<b>165</b>	<b>Development Has Benefits</b> - express that development has some positive impacts such as more jobs, improved facilities, a better economy, more shopping and local services, or more recreational options, etc.
<b>71</b>	<b>More Ski Terrain</b> - comment specifically about the benefits of expanded ski terrain and/or better skiing areas for beginner and intermediate skiers.
<b>46</b>	<b>Maintain the Small Town Feel/Character</b> - express concern that Girdwood not lose its small town feeling or that Girdwood retain its unique character or Alaskan attributes.
<b>45</b>	<b>Affordability</b> - want to ensure that development does not price out locals, expressing a need for the community to remain affordable for locals and resort employees.
<b>43</b>	<b>Environmental Impacts</b> - voice concerns about development's environmental impacts or want to ensure that development is done in a way that protects the environment, open spaces, and existing natural attributes.
<b>39</b>	<b>Need <u>Planned</u> Development</b> - want development to be planned and carefully done in an aesthetically-pleasing way. Some persons comment on how growth has just happened in Girdwood or express fear that trees will just be cleared away with some cheap developments thrown up.
⇒	<b>38 No Golf/27 Pro Golf:</b> 38 respondents do not want golf or say that golf is inappropriate for the Girdwood area. In contrast, 27 persons comment that golf should be offered in the area or that golf is needed for the resort to become a true, four-season resort.
<b>33</b>	<b>Over-Development</b> - express concern that Girdwood may become too big or too crowded, that too much of the valley will be developed, or that congestion will become a problem.
<b>23</b>	<b>Local Input</b> - comment about the importance of taking local views into account, that the resort development not proceed without adequately taking into account locals' desires.

Number of Respondents	Feelings Explanations/Comments
⇒	<b>22 Pro Destination or World Class Resort/11 Against.</b> About 22 persons express the view that Alyeska should not aspire to become a destination/world class resort. In contrast, 11 persons want Alyeska to become such a resort.
⇒	<b>18 Pro Winner Creek Development /12 Against.</b> Eighteen persons want some development in the Winner Creek area, but six specifically qualify their support as being for the development of ski facilities in the area and oppose roads, condos or commercial development in the area. In contrast, about twelve respondents comment that Winner Creek should not be developed.
<b>18</b>	<b>Proceed Slowly, Gradually</b> - say that change should occur incrementally, that going slow will help to ensure that development proceeds in the right direction.
<b>16</b>	<b>Grow Alyeska, not Girdwood</b> - want Alyeska to develop further as a resort but without impacting the local community of Girdwood.
<b>14</b>	<b>Higher Property Valuations</b> - express the view that development will lead to higher property valuations, benefiting property owners. In contrast, four persons express worry about higher valuations.

Tabulating respondents' feelings about resort development is challenging, as it is difficult to clearly capture a person's views with a short label. Overlap between categories/labels is another issue. For example, should a response be categorized as being primarily interested in ski terrain expansion, being favorable towards development in general, or do both categories clearly apply to a given person's answer?

In addition to feelings and concerns outlined in the table, some other common themes are:

- Development benefits outsiders more than locals;
- Infrastructure is needed for development and/or development might help to bring about needed infrastructure improvements;
- Girdwood is better off as a resort community than as a bedroom community of Anchorage;
- Pushing for further development of the resort is not economically viable;
- Current level of development is fine – no more is needed;
- More information is necessary in order to form an opinion about proposed development;
- No rail spur should be built;
- Development will help to create more of a tax base and could actually help to reduce local tax rates; and
- Development should not disrupt the system of trails crisscrossing the valley.



Of course, as always, one should read through the full tabulation of answers to see the full range of opinions offered, as this summary cannot capture everything stated.

**Question #6. Where would you propose commercial development in the Girdwood area? (If none, state so.) Explain where and why.**

<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Where Should Commercial Development Occur? (Areas/issues cited by 10 or more persons)</b>
264	<b>New Town Site Area</b>
148	<b>Resort, Hotel, and/or Day Lodge Area</b>
129	<b>Seward/Alyeska Highways Intersection and/or Old Girdwood Town site Area</b>
44	<b>None</b> – do not want further commercial development to occur in the Girdwood area.
43	<b>Winner Creek/Upper Valley</b> – list Winner Creek or the Upper Valley, but several of these persons indicate ski facilities as the type of desired commercial development. Some persons say that they only want ski facilities to be built without any housing or other commercial facilities. In contrast to the 43 persons favoring Winner Creek development, five persons oppose any development in the Winner Creek area.
38	<b>Concentrate Commercial Development and/or Minimize Environmental Impacts</b> - want commercial development to be clustered or concentrated to allow more land to remain in its natural state or to limit the need for residents to drive. Some also voice other environmental concerns such as wanting development to be concentrated to protect wetlands. However, in contrast, two respondents specifically say that commercial development should be widely dispersed throughout the valley.
29	<b>Alyeska Highway</b> – state that commercial development should occur along Alyeska Highway. Some favor Alyeska Highway as a commercial location due to its high traffic volumes and visibility for local merchants. Note that respondents often list, “highway,” as a favored commercial location, making it difficult to know whether the person means Alyeska Highway or Seward Highway. Thus, there are likely some tabulation errors.
27	<b>Fire Station/Little Bears/Glacier City Hall/Squirrel Cages/Glacier Creek Area.</b> In contrast, three respondents say that land located near the fire station/ball fields/Forest Fair Park should remain as public/community land.
24	<b>Existing Areas</b> - say that further commercial development should occur in existing commercial areas.
19	<b>Crow Creek Road Area.</b> In contrast to the 19 in favor, one person opposes commercial development in the Crow Creek Road Area.

18	<b>Keep Commercial and Residential Areas Separate</b> - ask that commercial activities be kept away from residential areas.
17	<b>Pedestrian Focus</b> - want commercial areas to be located within walking distance for most residents or who want their commercial areas to be pedestrian friendly. One person proposes that the Olympic Circle area be made into a pedestrians-only area while another person proposes a pedestrians-only area within the new town square.
14	<b>Focus on Aesthetics/Planned Development</b> - ask that new commercial developments be built with more of an emphasis on quality and aesthetics/design/planning.
13	<b>No Franchises/Big Boxes</b> - do not want franchise stores/restaurants and/or oppose the opening of any big box stores in Girdwood.
12	<b>Golf Course</b> - want golf to be developed. Some cite no location for the golf course, but of those that do cite a location, lower valley locations appear more frequently than upper valley locations. In contrast to proponents, two persons say that they do not want a golf course to be built. A third person says that the area previously proposed for golf should be used for other commercial development.
11	<b>Per Current Plans/Zoning</b> - say that commercial development should occur as presently zoned and/or as detailed in the Girdwood Area Plan and Commercial Areas and Transportation Master Plan.
11	<b>Revitalize</b> - express that some effort should be made to renovate or upgrade existing commercial developments.

**Question #7. Where would you propose residential development in the Girdwood area? (If none, state so.) Explain where and why.**

***Responses Regarding Density and/or Multi-Family Housing***

Low Density

- 23 express some desire for lower-density housing.
  - 9 of the 23 want lower density development for the Crow Creek area than has been proposed;
  - 4 of the 23 wish for low-density housing without expressly saying where;
  - 3 of the 23 want only single family housing developments while another person wants the Crow Creek and Winner Creek areas to be limited to single family housing; and
  - 2 of the 23 want minimum one-half acre lots for residential developments while another person wants a one-acre minimum.

- 1 asks for a clear plan for housing densities.
- 1 asks for the size of multi-family developments to be limited.
- Others do not want multi-family housing to be built in single family housing areas.

High Density/Multi-Family:

- 5 want higher density developments in the town center or commercial areas.
- 3 support higher density near the ski resort.
- 3 suggest higher density in the Crow Creek area.
- 2 support higher density along Alyeska Highway.

Some respondents also suggest clustered, higher-density developments as a way to help preserve more natural areas and greenbelts.

***Responses Regarding Affordability/Employee Housing***

About twenty-three persons comment on the need to make sure residential development provides for affordable housing. Some comment further about the need for resort employee housing.

Comments about where residential development should be located are summarized in the following table:

Number of Respondents	<b>Where Should Residential Development Occur?</b> (Table shows responses cited by 10 or more persons)
191	<b>Crow Creek Area</b> – indicate Crow Creek area without expressly saying where in most cases. However, 11 of 191 specify the Lower Crow Creek area, one specifies the east side of Crow Creek Road while another specifies the west side. Seven persons oppose residential development in the Crow Creek area (the 7 opponents are not counted in the 191 total).
60	<b>None</b> – do not want any further residential development in Girdwood.
55	<b>No Response</b> – left question blank/no answer.
54	<b>By Hotel, Day Lodge, and/or Resort Area in General.</b> (However, there are also some respondents who indicate that further residential development should not occur along the road to the hotel or by the resort.)
42	<b>Alyeska Highway/Lower Valley/Seward Highway</b> (24 indicate in areas near Alyeska Hwy, 10 indicate the Lower Valley area in general, 4 say along the mining roads in the Lower Valley such as Hottentot, and another 4 say near the Seward Highway)
34	<b>Don't Know</b> – say that more information is needed before offering an opinion.
34	<b>Minimize Environmental Impacts/Preserve Natural Areas</b> - want residential development to occur while minimizing impacts on the environment. Many mention the need to preserve as many natural areas as possible or to provide for greenbelts and/or trail &

Number of Respondents	<b>Where Should Residential Development Occur?</b> (Table shows responses cited by 10 or more persons)
	wildlife corridors.
30	<b>Glacier Creek/Squirrel Cages/California Creek</b> (17 Glacier Creek, 11 Squirrel Cages, 2 California Creek.) In contrast, 3 respondents oppose the Glacier Creek area and one opposes the California Creek area for residential development.
24	<b>New Town Site Area</b> (includes responses that say near the post office or school)
16	<b>Current Areas</b> – think that residential development should occur in areas where residential development already exists.
15	<b>Anywhere</b> – indicate that residential development should occur anywhere or anywhere accessible.
14	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Valley Access Route</b> – see residential development occurring when a 2 <sup>nd</sup> valley access route is constructed.
13	<b>Alyeska Basin Area</b>
11	<b>As Proposed</b> – want residential development to proceed per plans that have already been proposed.
10	<b>Old Town Site Area</b>

*Some other responses about housing include:*

- Eight voice concern that residential housing be constructed in safe areas, outside avalanche zones.
- Seven suggest residential housing be built in commercial areas while another three ask that commercial and residential areas not be mixed together.
- Five respondents suggest near the Meadows while seven specifically say not near the Meadows.
- Four suggest that housing be built somewhere else such as Indian or Anchorage – outside of Girdwood.
- Four ask that residential development proceed gradually rather than be rushed.
- At least two ask for stricter codes/covenants to govern what is built.

**Question #8. What types of recreation do you support in the Girdwood area, and where should they take place? (If none, state so.) Explain where and why.**

Most respondents list a myriad of activities. Note that tabulation counts are not exact in that someone who supports an expanded Nordic trails system probably also favors Nordic skiing. In some cases, a respondent lists both such as, “more x-country trails into Upper Valley,” and “skiing, both alpine and Nordic,” and thus is counted under both categories. However, if a person only lists, “build more Nordic trails,” then the person is listed only under, “expand Nordic trails.” The same thing happens with alpine skiing and desiring expanded terrain or expansion into Winner creek.

### Winner Creek Comments

Respondents list the types of recreation that they favor but often are only very general regarding location. Thus, information about “where” is lacking, but 41 respondents do indicate alpine skiing in Winner Creek. Of course, even though a person may want to alpine ski in the Winner Creek area does not necessarily mean that he/she also favors roads and other facilities in the Winner Creek area.

### Comments about Golf

In regards to golf, 146 respondents want golf, while 43 oppose golf. Of the golf supporters, most do not indicate a location, but 21 do mention a location somewhere in the lower or middle valley areas.

### ***Responses Regarding Skiing and Ski Facilities***

Number of Respondents	Types of Skiing
295	Alpine skiing
232	Nordic skiing
21	Heli-skiing
17	Snowcat skiing
12	Telemark/backcountry skiing
Number of Respondents	Skiing Facilities
41	Expand alpine skiing to Winner Creek area
41	Expand Nordic trail system
37	Expand alpine terrain (around Alyeska – or not specific as to where)
6	Improved Nordic trail grooming

Number of Respondents	Activities Other Than Skiing and Golf
216	Hiking
86	Biking
76	Mountain biking
51	Snow machining (but note that 21 other respondents specifically oppose snow machining and another 8 want to limit areas where snow machines may operate)
48	All types of recreation
29	Fishing
25	Gliding (paragliding, parasailing, hang gliding)
24	Walking

Number of Respondents	Activities Other Than Skiing and Golf
22	Camping (some want a campground, others want camping but want to limit it to over-night, summer-only, or fee-paid camping. Some want walk-in only camping, while others want RV camping.)
18	Dog sledding
17	Tennis
17	Winter sports of all types
14	Climbing (ice, rock, mountain)
13	Running
13	Snowshoeing
12	Like Girdwood's current recreational mix
12	Skateboarding
11	Gym/fitness

Other activities that respondents mention are: horseback riding, sledding, rafting, flightseeing, hockey, tubing, hunting, kayaking, bird watching, racquetball, skijoring, aviation/flying, basketball, berry picking, bowling, gold panning, and motorcycling. People mostly list activities that are already available in the Girdwood area, but other answers list activities such as bowling that are not presently available.

### ***Desired Facilities (Other than Skiing and Golf)***

Number of Respondents	Desired Facilities (only shows facilities listed by 10 or more respondents)
55	More trails or trail improvements
44	Community swimming pool
34	Ice Rink
19	Community Recreation Center
13	Soccer fields
12	Bike path repairs, improvements, or extensions

Other respondents express a desire for more ballfields, an indoor track, a dog park, another spa, or bobsled/luge runs.

### ***Recreational Prohibitions***

Fifty-two respondents want to prohibit motorized recreation in the Valley, while nine want to prohibit activities that generate noise. Five persons want to limit or reduce the number of flights operating in the area, while two want to completely prohibit helicopters. Also, as noted above, twenty-one persons want to prohibit snow machines while another eight want to limit, rather than ban, snow machines. Also, forty-three persons oppose a golf course in the Girdwood Valley. About sixteen persons indicate that they support all forms of recreation that minimally impact the environment.

-----

Twenty-five persons left blank the question about recreation.

**Question #9 – What are Girdwood’s most important transportation issues? What should be done to solve these issues?**

Number of Respondents	Most Important Transportation Issues
224	<p><b>Commuter service</b> – express some desire for commuter service of some sort between Girdwood and Anchorage. Some persons indicate train service, others bus service, and others favor either train or bus. Some persons are willing to have service on only select days of the week while others want daily service. Some persons think just one morning run and one evening run will suffice, while others want more frequent service. Some persons indicate that a van or smaller bus will work, while others want full Peplemover buses. Some persons express opinions about who should pay (should Anchorage subsidize it?) and whether it should be fully self-supporting or not. Others want commuter service but are skeptical that it will work because of economics. Persons who expressly indicate that there should be no public subsidy for commuter service are not counted as wanting “commuter service.”</p>
102  108 (including the 6 wanting free local shuttle)	<p><b>Local bus service</b> – want local shuttle, bus or van service. Note that it is not always easy to discern whether a person wants local bus service, commuter service to Anchorage, or both, so there may be some tabulation errors. Some persons want only shuttle service between the Seward Highway/Alyeska Highway intersection to the resort, while others want more extensive service throughout the valley. Some persons comment as to whether the resort should help pay for a shuttle. Five persons want a free local shuttle</p>
99	<p><b>Local road maintenance</b> – voice a need to: fix potholes, control dust, improve snow removal, or improve drainage. Others indicate that one or more local roads should be paved. Others do not necessarily say that local roads are poorly maintained but rather express a desire that one or more local roads be widened or extended or otherwise improved.</p>
93	<p><b>Seward Highway Safety</b> – express concern over the safety of the highway and what needs to be done. Some want more enforcement by troopers. Others want more curves straightened and passing lanes. Others want better lighting or more reflector strips. Many express a desire that it become a divided highway with a divider/barrier separating the traffic lanes. Others feel that the entire highway should be four lanes, etc.</p>
55	<p><b>Taxi</b> – want a local taxi service. Many comment that taxi service will make local roads safer by providing a safe way home for persons leaving the bars at night. Several persons comment that Anchorage’s taxi permitting system works against Girdwood and want Girdwood to have some taxi permits that are independent of the Anchorage taxi system.</p>
36	<p><b>Second Route Out of Girdwood Valley</b> - want a second route constructed to the Seward Highway as an alternative to Alyeska Highway. Often, respondents cite safety during fires, earthquakes, or avalanches as the reason for needing a second route. Others say that Alyeska Highway will become too congested as development proceeds, making a second route necessary. Still others point out that a second route will open up more of the valley to development – that residential housing could be constructed along a second</p>

Number of Respondents	Most Important Transportation Issues
	route.
32	<b>Emphasize Walking/Improve Trails/Bike Paths.</b> About thirteen persons comment about walking: walking is healthy; people in Girdwood like to walk; more sidewalks are needed; keep things within walking distance; or keep pedestrians safe. Another thirteen persons comment about trails/bike paths: want improved maintenance, new trails, or extensions of existing trails.
22	<b>No problems</b> - state that there are no major transportation problems. Still, while some persons indicate, “none,” as their answer, several still offer one or more transportation suggestions.
20	<b>Light Rail</b> - mention light rail.
16 pro 14 con	<b>Local Rail Spur.</b> Sixteen respondents favor a local rail spur while fourteen oppose a spur.
14	<b>Parking.</b> Number of persons mentioning parking as an issue. Some persons express a need for more parking; others want more parking if more development occurs. Some want new parking to be built underground, out-of-sight.
8	<b>High School Activity Bus</b> - want an activity bus or comment more generally on the need for bus service for teens.
8	<b>Don't know</b> - say that they do not know or need more information to comment.

**Some other comments about transportation:**

Six persons comment about the need for infrastructure to precede development or question how transportation improvements will be funded (or if they would be funded) as growth proceeds.

About six persons indicate a need for one or more traffic roundabouts to help with traffic control.

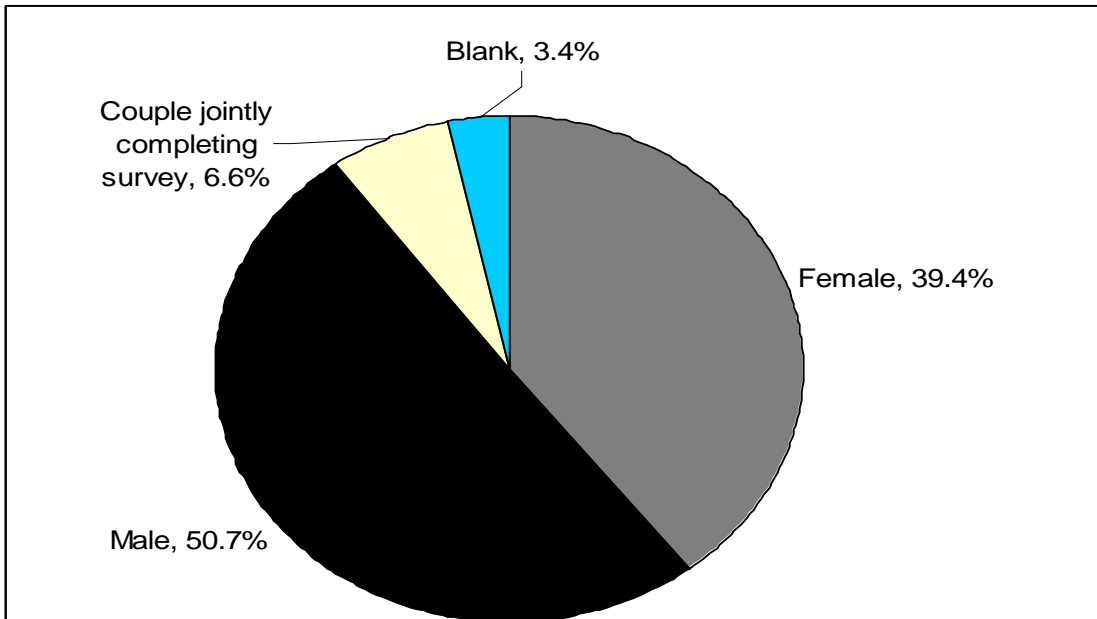
About three persons comment on air pollution from tour buses, indicating that clean-burning fuel buses are needed or that light rail will fix the problem by eliminating the buses.

Traffic lights: Two persons want a light at Alyeska and Seward Highways, another person wants a light at the “T” intersection, and another person opines that Girdwood should remain free of any traffic lights.

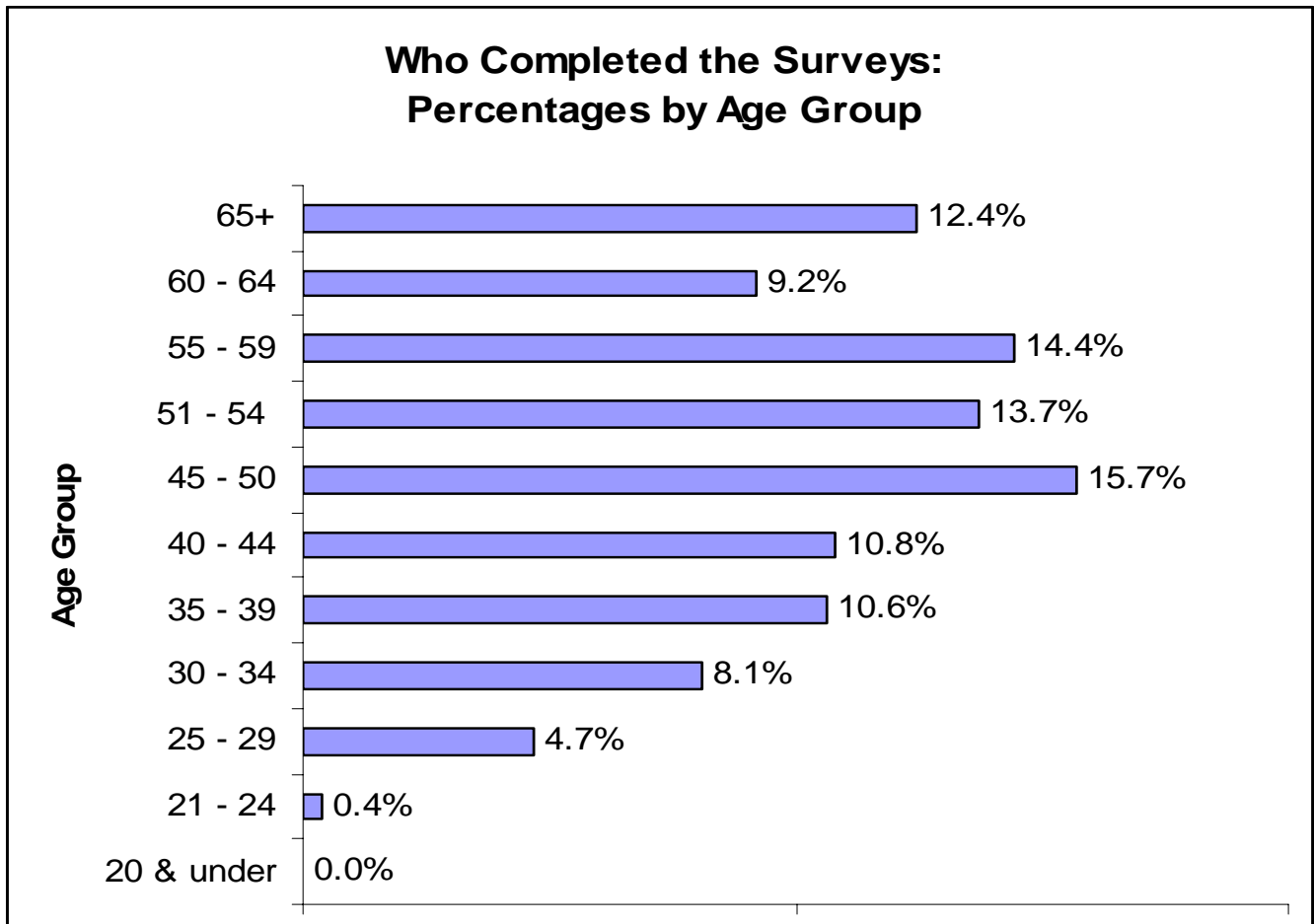
Of course, there are also some unique, not easily-categorized responses – so please read through all the survey responses if you’re curious to learn of other issues raised that are not included in this summary.



**Question #10 – What is your gender?**



**Question #11 – What is your age?**



Note that couples completing the surveys sometimes mark two different age groups, but for survey tabulation purposes only one age group per survey is counted. Also, some respondents do not answer this question.

**Question #12 – What is your main occupation?**

Main Occupation	
241	<b>Professional/Managerial</b> – Educators, accountants, executives, biologists, medical workers, attorneys, engineers, bankers, realtors/real estate sales, artists, consultants, pilots, surveyors . . .
62	<b>Retired</b>
53	<b>Business Owner/Self-Employed</b> – Business owners, general contractors, real estate brokers/investors, B&B owners, self-employed persons
52	<b>Construction/Skilled Trades</b> – Laborers, tug boat/merchant marine workers, railroad workers, mechanics, electricians, technicians, North Slope workers, airline agents, firemen . . .
43	<b>Resort/Tourism</b> – Ski patrol, tram workers, gift shop workers, travel agents, chefs, outdoors adventure operators . . .
43	<b>Sales/Services</b> – Salesmen, restaurant workers, building managers, building maintenance, barista . . .
15	<b>Agriculture/Fish/Forestry</b> – Commercial fishing, forestry worker, mining
12	<b>Office</b> - Administrative assistant, office manager, bookkeeper . . .

Respondents also cite not employed, federal worker, civil servant, ski bum, parent, homemaker, etc., as main occupations.

Note that it is not always clear where a particular occupation should be tabulated. For example, bed & breakfast owners are listed under, “Business Owners/Self-Employed,” but, “Resort/Tourism,” may be the better category. Similarly, perhaps restaurant workers should be listed under, “Resort/Tourism,” rather than, “Sales/Services.”

## **GIRDWOOD AREA PLAN REVIEW 2007**

The Girdwood Area Plan was adopted in 1995. The Girdwood Area Plan serves as a plan for the area's growth, addressing issues such as where different types of development (i.e., single family, multi-family, commercial, institutional, etc.) should be located, densities, transportation needs, areas to be left as open space, etc. Given that the plan is now more than ten years old, the plan needs review to determine whether any updating is needed.

The Girdwood Land Use Committee created the Girdwood Area Plan Review Subcommittee in April of 2006 to coordinate a public review process for the plan. The subcommittee has been meeting monthly, and the review process so far has included a town hall meeting with Mayor Begich as well as two community forums. The following survey is another important tool in gathering information from Girdwood residents for the plan review process.

---

### **GIRDWOOD AREA SURVEY**

To help make the review process accurately reflect community opinions, your answers to the following questions about the area and its future development are needed. Questions about residence, age, gender, and occupation are asked to assess whether different groups of people respond to the remaining questions in different ways.

To the extent possible, the survey replicates questions from a 1993 survey that was conducted during the development of the original Girdwood Area Plan. The reason for asking the same questions is to gauge public opinion changes that may have occurred during the intervening fourteen years.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Please complete the survey and return it in the enclosed envelope. No stamp is needed as postage has been prepaid.

Your survey must be postmarked by March 15, 2007, to be counted.

The information collected from this survey will become available to the entire Girdwood community. Survey results will serve as an advisory tool in helping to assess whether the Girdwood Area Plan needs updating.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

**APPENDIX – TEXT OF INSTRUCTIONS & SURVEY DISTRIBUTED**

**1. What is your main affiliation in the Girdwood area? (Circle only one answer)**

- 1. Primary residence, if primary, for how many years\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Secondary residence, if secondary, for how many years\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Visitor to the area
- 4. Other (explain)\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Where do you work?**

- 1. Girdwood
- 2. Anchorage
- 3. Other (list)\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Not employed at this time

**3. What do you like most about the Girdwood area?**

---

---

---

---

**4. What do you think is the most important problem in the Girdwood area today?**

---

---

---

---

**5. Do you have favorable, unfavorable, or mixed feelings about proposals to expand resort development in the Girdwood area? Circle one & explain why.**

- 1. Favorable
- 2. Unfavorable
- 3. Mixed
- 4. Don't know

**APPENDIX – TEXT OF INSTRUCTIONS & SURVEY DISTRIBUTED**

---

---

---

---

6. Where would you propose commercial development in the Girdwood area? (If none, state so.) Explain where and why.

---

---

---

---

7. Where would you propose residential development in the Girdwood area? (If none, state so.) Explain where and why.

---

---

---

---

8. What types of recreation do you support in the Girdwood area, and where should they take place? (If none, state so.) Explain where and why.

---

---

---

---

9. What are Girdwood's most important transportation issues? What should be done to solve these issues?

---

---

---

---

10. What is your gender?       Male                       Female

**APPENDIX – TEXT OF INSTRUCTIONS & SURVEY DISTRIBUTED**

**11. What is your age? Check one**

<input type="checkbox"/>	20 or younger	<input type="checkbox"/>	35 to 39	<input type="checkbox"/>	55 to 59
<input type="checkbox"/>	21 to 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	40 to 44	<input type="checkbox"/>	60 to 64
<input type="checkbox"/>	25 to 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	45 to 50	<input type="checkbox"/>	65 or older
<input type="checkbox"/>	30 to 34	<input type="checkbox"/>	51 to 54	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**12. What is your main occupation?**

\_\_\_\_\_