

## APPENDIX A

### PRIOR STUDIES AND PLANS

Documents and references considered in development of the Transportation Master Plan included:

#### **Girdwood Community Impact Study**

*Prepared for Department of Community Planning and Development of the Municipality of Anchorage, August 1993.*

The Girdwood Community Impact Study assesses four community land-use scenarios based on population growth (ranging from 0.5% to 2.8% between 1993 and 2013) in relation to resort development. Major development impacts are assessed for each land-use scenario and possible mitigation measures are suggested. Of identified potential impacts, the extension of roads and utilities stands out. Mitigation measures focus on accommodating additional traffic, extending and upgrading utilities systems, and maintaining Girdwood's small-town character by retaining greenbelts along major traffic corridors. This study was part of the comprehensive planning effort for the Girdwood Valley, including revision of the 1987 Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Girdwood Rail Service Feasibility Assessment**

*Prepared for Department of Community Planning and Development of the Municipality of Anchorage, February 1994.*

The *Girdwood Rail Feasibility Assessment* was performed as part of the Girdwood Community Impact Study: a component of the comprehensive planning effort for the Girdwood Valley, including revision of the 1987 Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan. The proposed rail service would operate from the Alaska Railroad depot on First Avenue in Anchorage to a station location in Girdwood near Alyeska Highway, with intermediate stops at the Dimond Center and in the vicinity of Huffman Road and Old Seward Highway. One or two Rail Diesel Cars (RDCs), depending on the season, would provide service. The study concluded that sizable government support would be required in the near term; however, growth over the twenty-year planning period would improve financial feasibility.

#### **Girdwood Area Plan**

*Prepared by the Physical Planning Division, Department of Community Planning and Development, Municipality of Anchorage. Adopted by the Municipality on February 28, 1995.*

The Girdwood Area Plan is a revision of the Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 1987), superseding it only as it pertains to the Girdwood Valley. The primary impetus for the development of the plan is the transfer of major land holdings from the U.S. Forest Service to the State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage. Accompanying the land transfer is an increased interest in additional major destination resort development.

The transportation element of the plan calls for easy access to the resort/recreational area while preserving Girdwood's small-town character. Three factors are stated as key to establishing a successful circulation system. First, redundancy and connectivity will balance the traffic flow and reduce the need for wider and more extensive roadway arterials that are contrary to small-town character. Second is the need for a multimodal circulation system, including pedestrian accommodations and a transit system that provides a convenient all-season alternative mode of travel. The third key factor is to create the proper land use and site design for properties that adjoin major roadways.

## **Supplemental Parking Areas for New Girdwood Townsite**

*Assembly Memorandum prepared by Department of Community Planning and Development of the Municipality of Anchorage, June 20, 1995.*

## **Girdwood-Iditarod Trail Route Study**

*A cooperative trail planning effort between the Girdwood community and local, state and federal agencies; adopted by the Anchorage Municipal Assembly, May 20, 1997.*

The purpose of the Girdwood Iditarod Trail Route Study is to determine a route for a commemorative Iditarod Trail linking Turnagain Arm and Girdwood to the Crow Pass-Iditarod Trailhead. The project was initiated by the Girdwood Trails Committee and the Girdwood Board of Supervisors after the discovery of a four mile-long abandoned historic trail, believed to be a long-lost section of the Iditarod Trail. The project participants studied the feasibility, preferred route, and development standards for restoring the historic trail and linking it through Girdwood to the lower valley entry, in order to create a “backbone” pedestrian trail in the valley. The Study estimates development costs, identifies funding sources, and establishes directions for implementation. The trail is expected to be popular, and to have a positive impact on Girdwood’s four-season visitor-based economy.

### Recommended Route:

- The lower valley route should be along the west side of Glacier Creek valley, mostly on an existing trail. The route provides continuous auto-free connection between the Old Girdwood Townsite to the New Girdwood Townsite and the Girdwood school. The route is least costly to develop and is preferred by the local community;
- The route in the upper valley should continue along the west side of Glacier Creek and follow the route of the historic trail to Crow Creek Mine, where a segment connecting to the Crow Pass Trailhead would be located on the upper-most portion of Crow Creek Road.
- Recommended Improvements and Design Standards:
- The Study recommends that the trail in the lower valley be characterized by easy access, continuous auto-free connections including underpasses, and shared parking with/connections to the Turnagain Arm bicycle trail;
- The trail in the upper valley should include a 3-foot wide hiking trail from Girdwood school that connects up to a 6-foot wide, universally accessible trail on the historic trail roadbed.
- Funding/Implementation Recommendations:
- The establishment of an Iditarod Trail corridor easement or ROW on Municipal and USDA Forest Service lands;
- The establishment of sources of matching funding, including public revenue initiatives, and/or private construction of segments of the trail on Municipal lands disposed for development.

## **Girdwood Transportation Study**

*Prepared for the Municipality of Anchorage, April 1997.*

The *Girdwood Transportation Study* was intended to present options to address unpopular transportation consequences while meeting community goals and objectives for the future. The primary objective is to reduce future vehicle traffic in the Girdwood area. A set of alternatives was prepared based on public input, travel information and technical data. A recommendation was made to implement disincentive programs that force travelers form their private vehicles. To ease the burden of these programs a phased implementation plan is proposed.

Other recommendations include:

- Implementation of a transit shuttle as soon as there exists a critical mass of potential riders.
- Connection of the trail system with the rest of the transportation system.
- Clustered, high density land use along the main roadways, particularly Alyeska Highway.
- Lowering of parking requirements.
- Construction of new roadways only to serve new development and modification of currently proposed roadways to improve future transit circulation and reduce overall traffic.
- Reservation of an alignment for a future rail line from west of the Alyeska Highway to the vicinity of the Alyeska Prince Resort.
- An intercept lot in the vicinity of the New Girdwood Townsite.
- A recreational vehicle campground south of the New Girdwood Townsite.
- Immediate implementation of a transportation management program focusing on employee work trips and school trips.

## **Areawide Trails Plan**

*Prepared by the Transportation Planning Division, Department of Community Planning and Development, Municipality of Anchorage. Adopted by the Municipality, 1997.*

The Areawide Trails Plan is the basic planning and policy document for the development of trails in the Municipality. The purpose of the Plan is to achieve an integrated trail system that encourages travel by many means in addition to motorized vehicles, and that offers a variety of recreational opportunities.

The Areawide Trails Plan serves as the trails implementation tool of the Girdwood Area Plan. Chapter 4 (Turnagain Arm Trails) and Chapter 5 (Regional Trails) of the Areawide Trails Plan make recommendations for the development of trails system in the Girdwood Valley. Specific recommendations for the Girdwood Valley include:

- Development of the Iditarod Trail through the Girdwood Valley
- Sidewalks along commercial developments and along arterials and collectors
- Separated trails along all arterials and collectors
- Interpretive facilities on protected nature trails: Girdwood Beaver Pond, Winner Creek, and Girdwood Coastal Wetlands

- Managed/protected cross-country skiing, skijoring, and dog mushing trails in Moose Meadows
- An area in the Girdwood area for competitive cross-country skiing
- Nature trails should be left unimproved, aside from clearing and brushing of timber, and drainage improvements to avoid trail damage.
- The Municipality, in cooperation with other federal, state, local, and private agencies, should acquire easements to enable the reconstruction of the Iditarod Trail.

### **Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan**

*Prepared by the Physical Planning Division, Department of Community Planning and Development, Municipality of Anchorage. Adopted by the Municipality, 1996.*

In 1996 the Physical Planning Division updated the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan which had been approved in 1982. This plan describes the diverse system of freshwater wetlands within the Municipality, lists the functions they provide in local environmental quality and presents management policies and guidelines. Anchorage's wetlands are invaluable components in local water quality and flood control issues and provide fish and wildlife migratory, breeding and winter habitats. For local management and permitting purposes, wetlands are designated "A", "B", or "C" in the wetlands plan. Each wetland area has its own site-specific management strategy. "A" wetlands are considered of highest value.

### **Rail Corridor Feasibility Assessment (Draft)**

*Prepared for the Municipality by HDR Alaska, Inc., July 1999*

This plan evaluated the physical feasibility of a rail system that would include a spur from the Alaska Railroad mainline to an internal valley terminus and/or commuter station at the Alaska mainline with shuttle service to internal valley locations.

Five study corridors were identified and a conceptual-level engineering and environmental analysis was prepared for each. Based on that analysis, as well as public workshops in Girdwood, the alternative that runs along the far west side of the valley from the existing rail line to the Alyeska Prince Hotel appears to be the most promising. All information in this document is based on available mapping and other available information.