

Appendix B

GIRDWOOD COMMERCIAL AREA and TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLANS

FIRST SET OF PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Week of March 29, 1999

The first round of public workshops, advisory committee meetings, and technical information sessions was held in Girdwood March 29 through April 2, 1999. These initial gatherings were very well attended and productive, with over 60 people taking part in both public workshops. Discussion items, points of consensus, and comments are summarized below.

PART 1

COMPONENTS OF A COMMON VISION FOR GIRDWOOD'S FUTURE

- Pedestrian-oriented community
- Natural environment prevails - a community in a forest
- Convenient public transit
- Phasing (reasonable/realistic implementation strategies)
- Reliance on a recreation based economy
- Natural environment prevails
- Not auto-dominated, slower traffic
- Girdwood experience begins at the entrance to the valley
- Balance between resort and community
- Clean air, dark skies and quiet
- New Girdwood Townsite is the center of the community
- Natural environment is our identity

Discussion/Issues/Concerns

General consensus that this is a good summary of overall goals

PART 2

GUIDING VISION FOR RECREATION & TOURISM

Vision

1. Low impact, non-intrusive activities that derive value from the rich natural resources of the valley without diminishing them
2. The valley's economic health is linked to environmental health and to the community's quality of life.
3. Base camp tourism - residents and visitors can find "wilderness out the back door", with easy access to diverse recreational pursuits both within the Girdwood Valley and beyond.

Components of Girdwood's recreation-based economy include:

<i>Winter/Spring</i>	<i>Year Round</i>	<i>Summer/Fall</i>
Downhill Skiing: day skier, destination skier, heli-snocat skier	Pedestrian Village: shopping, crafts, dining, local services, gathering places, people, strolling, events	Hiking: day trips, back-packing, hut to hut
Nordic Skiing: day skier, destination skier, hut to hut	Tram Rides	Mountain Climbing
Winter Mountaineering, Ice Climbing	Cruise/Tour, Guided Sightseeing	Kayaking, Rafting
Snowshoeing	Backcountry Lodge, Retreat, Spa Parasailing	Camping
Dark skies, Northern Lights & stars	Car, RV Touring	Golf
Dog Sledding	Flightseeing	Fishing
Ski-Joring	Covered Indoor/Outdoor Ice Rink	Weddings
	Natural History/"Ecotourism": flora, fauna & natural phenomena (bears, belugas, bore tides), ecology of natural systems, environmental science, interpretive centers	Trail Connections to: Eagle River, Anchorage, Eklutna Glaciers
	Cultural History/"Ecotourism": Native History, Gold Mining, Iditarod	Recreational Gold Mining
	Special Events: Forest Fair, art, concerts, races, festivals...	Biking, In-line Skating
		Glacier Skiing
		Great gardens: begonias, dahlias...

Discussion: Issues/Concerns

General support for vision statements
Lighting: ordinance, standards, night skiing, trails, etc.
Helicopter noise-airplane makes more noise
Helicopter available for emergency response
Amount of business helicopter company brings in
Forest service permitting process going on
Smaller businesses that are not tourism-based (live here full-time, richer place, mortgage company, etc.)
Air recreation, flightseeing, etc.
Cottage industry
Where is space for local businesses
Lighting standards in plan
Relationship between snow and light pollution
Someday, one of every kind of business in Girdwood
Expand airport, yes or no?

PART 3
CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMERCIAL CENTERS

1. THE VALLEY ENTRY

OLD GIRWOOD TOWNSITE AND MENTAL HEALTH LAND TRUST SITE

Activities (existing and potential)

Road-serving commercial: gas, convenience foods, video, liquor
USFS and tourist info, central reservations
Intercept parking: park 'n ride/bike/hike
RV and tour bus parking
Inter-modal transit center
Remote ski ticketing
Highway lodging
Clinic
Live/work residential: restore a sense of old Girdwood Mail St.
Entry landmark
Nordic/bike/hike trailhead
Activity center
 Summer: indoor running track, tennis courts, skate park, BMX bike park
 Winter: speed skating track, hockey , figure skating, curling rink

Advantages

Location, highway visibility
Opportunity to create a first impression of Girdwood character
Gas-partial; Power-partial; Water-wells? Sewer-yes

Obstacles

Small lots
Wetlands
Flooding
Electrical substation (move it!)

Discussion/Issues/Concerns

Substation should be moved to a better location, storage of poles, etc.

2. THE VILLAGE CENTER

NEW GIRWOOD TOWNSITE - "THE HEART OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY"

Activities (existing and potential)

Locally oriented retail and commercial

Bank branch
Books
Groceries
Arts and crafts
Coffee shop

Hair/skin care
Sports equipment
Outfitters
Travel agency
Office space

Community activities and services

Post office
School
Fire station
Recreation facilities (park, tennis courts, ballfields)
Indoor recreation/community center
Museum, radio station, clinic, church
Child care

Library
Restaurants, bars, apres-ski
Parking
Multifamily housing
Small lodgings
Trailheads (nordic, hike/bike)
Interpretive center
Transit center

Advantages

Visibility from highway at curve
Platted town square park
Proximity to river; scenic views
The “real” Girdwood

Obstacles

Flood hazard: The new townsite needs a planned flood-control system that protects property and maintains/restored the riparian ecosystem along these salmon-spawning streams; current efforts are ad hoc, ineffective, and destructive.
Site divided by highway
No identity
Small lots, fragmented ownership
Lack of adequate parking
Future congestion at intersections

Discussion/Issues/Concerns

Not enough space for commercial?
Girdwood area plan zoning - R11 in effect, no new buildings have been built
Do we have enough; not enough retail?
Lot size and parking requirements in new townsite
Snow removal and storage, do we haul it?
Church: move where? AK law sets rules regarding distance to bars. 100% agree that new mountain base isn't a good site
Remember H.S. site
“Drive right by”
Flip park and commercial site?

- alternative-come in from south side, new road
- “good idea”
- flip ‘em-then have two 7-8 acre pods of commercial within walking distance

Control signs
Mix of ages is important to big goal: small town atmosphere; consider mixed housing in commercial districts, walking
Consider moving Squirrel Cage commercial, e.g. Up above Double Musky. response: existing roads, infrastructure drives focus on existing general pattern

3. OLD SKI BASE

“THE SEAM BETWEEN MOUNTAIN AND TOWN”

Activities (existing and potential)

Day skier parking and access to ski mountain
Skier services
Bars, restaurants, apres-ski
Lodging
Vacation services: central reservations, outfitters, property rentals and management
Limited tourist retail

Advantages

Location
View terminus, visibility
Access to the mountain
Challenge Alaska

Obstacles

Avalanche hazard
Slope gradient
Flood hazard
Traffic, access and congestion at intersections
Fragmented ownership
Condition of existing buildings
Small site
Winter shade
Skier parking setup is poor (not big enough for busy days and built on 3 tiers)

Discussion/Issues/Concerns

Density: 2-story, 3 story
What to do with existing condo at base? Move, park underground
Needs density/smaller footprint to generate demand and also protect land
Mixed use: housing low cost with retail downstairs
Density can be OK if designed well
Consensus: keep general use the same
Challenge Alaska - an advantage

4. NEW RESORT BASE *DESTINATION TOURIST CENTER*

Activities (existing and potential)

Upscale hotel rooms
Restaurants, bars
Meeting space and conferences
Fitness center/pool
Tram/scenic views
Day skier parking
Retail: gifts, souvenirs, sundries, Alaska arts and crafts
Recreational activities booking
Trailheads/wilderness access

Advantages

World-class scenery
Proximity to Anchorage
Sea-level
Long summer days

Obstacles

Remote location/cost
Short days Nov.-Jan.
Small size of local market
No adjacent synergistic uses
Outsiders' perception of an Alaska winter

Discussion/Issues/Concerns

Lower parking standards (less required)
Remember airport flight restrictions
Consider "Pacific Rim Class" conference center

PART 4 **TRAVEL MARKETS**

Components of Girdwood Travel Markets

1. Access to/from Girdwood

Winter Recreation

- Day skier, destination skier, etc.

Summer Recreation

- Ecotourist, base camper, etc.

Commuter

- Girdwood resident
- Anchorage resident

High school students

Others

2. Local Circulation within Girdwood

Visitor Circulation

Resident Circulation

Adults & Children

Remote Parking

- Commuter
- Day skier
- Other

Discussion/Issues/Concerns

“On-site ski storage”!!

“Smart” buses-GPS locators

Noise from rail a problem in a small valley

What is status of RR proposal? Decision already made? Don't want rail. Need to use rail to come to valley entrance. Don't like rail that bypasses town only to benefit big business.

Buses: dust, exhaust

Forest fair – important event; area prone to flooding

Cables for communication

Real good transfer (level, comfortable, not wait)

Checking baggage through, checkout option

Trail: ¼ mile too tight. Don't under estimate people's willingness to walk/ride longer distance

Maintain focus on transit to/from Anchorage

Consider short distance tram for moving people (later phases)

Need clarity of vision or other people decide what community will become. If you don't come together, you don't get what you want.

Make Girdwood model for accessibility, e.g. all terrain chairs for rent

Divided roads with grade, separated trails and walks