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ACTION PLAN

ESSENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Girdwood may be a small town in a spectacular wilderness setting, but it is not isolated. Situated centrally in Alaska's primary growth and tourism corridor and increasingly accessible by road and rail, it is already experiencing growth in year-round population and volume of visitors. Growth is inevitable; *quality* growth is not. Alone, the community does not have the resources to fund capital improvements of the magnitude that will be necessary to accommodate growth in ways that preserve its unique qualities. To accomplish the improvements envisioned in the Master Plan, it will be essential that the community engage the potentially powerful resources at its disposal:

Alyeska Resort. The resort's support for (and participation in) community transit services is crucial. Alyeska would contribute dollars to construct the multimodal center at the resort, connecting the tram and the hotel's facilities to the New Townsite. The resort will also be instrumental in developing new resort activity programs that take advantage of Girdwood's natural assets ("strategic tourism"). Finally, the resort's ability to successfully attract and host conferences will be a key factor in Girdwood's off-season business.

Alaska Railroad Corporation. Internal transit service and the valley entry multimodal center may be dependent on the support of the Alaska Railroad for the transit objectives expressed by the community of Girdwood as reflected in this plan.

Glacier Valley Development Corp. New roads and sidewalks in the south townsite

area are largely dependent on this group's success in launching its golf-related development project.

The Municipality. The inclusion of some infrastructure improvements in the Municipality's annual capital improvement budget process will be an important strategy for implementation of some recommended improvements. The continued support and involvement by the MOA Department of Community Planning & Development will be extremely helpful.

People Mover (Anchorage Transit). A municipal agency, People Mover has expressed willingness to discuss providing transit service between Girdwood and Anchorage.

The Heritage Land Bank. No longer forced to operate in a vacuum, this municipal land management agency can proceed with development planning for HLB lands in Girdwood in a way that is supportive of the concepts recommended in the Master Plan.

The Mental Health Trust. Similarly, this state land management agency can proceed with development planning on its tract at the valley entry in concert with community goals for improvements in transportation infrastructure.

Alaska DOT-PF (Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities). This agency's support for recommended highway modifications is essential to Girdwood becoming a small-town place where people can enjoy walking.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENTS IN THE TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

1. *Valley Entry Multimodal Center.* This facility should be built through a cooperative effort of the Municipality, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, the Alaska Railroad Corporation, and the Mental Health Trust. It is assumed that partial funding will be provided through a Federal grant for the development of a multimodal transportation system for Girdwood Valley. There may be a significant private sector development component at this site which could provide some offset to capital costs. An early implementation step will be development of a site plan by the Mental Health Trust in cooperation with the other entities listed above.
2. *Resort Base Multimodal Center.* If the Girdwood Rail Spur is determined to be feasible, and is approved by the Municipality of Anchorage, this facility should be built through a cooperative effort of Alyeska Resort, the Municipality, and the Alaska Railroad Corporation. Otherwise, this facility shall be designed and built with the potential addition of future rail service in mind. It is assumed that funding will be provided in part through a Federal grant for development of a multimodal transportation system for Girdwood Valley and in part through a partnership with the Resort.
3. *Alaska Railroad Girdwood Valley Spur.* This project may be implemented by the Alaska Railroad Corporation, if approved by the appropriate regulatory agencies, including the Municipality of Anchorage, after public hearing and comment.
4. *Internal Transit Circulation Phase I (Core Area Shuttle).* The development of an internal transit system in the Valley should be a cooperative effort of the Municipality (including the Girdwood Board of Supervisors and People Mover), the Alaska Railroad Corporation, and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. Funding has been assumed to be provided in part through a Federal grant for development of a multimodal transportation system for Girdwood Valley. It would be appropriate to seek private sector participation in funding and potentially in service delivery.
5. *Internal Transit Circulation Phase II (Intercept Connector).* The continued development of an internal transit system in the Valley should be a cooperative effort of the Municipality (including GBOS and People Mover), the Alaska Railroad Corporation, and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.
6. *Internal Transit Circulation Phase III (Community Circulator).* Like the previous phases, the development of the final phase of an internal transit system in the Valley will continue to be a cooperative effort of the Municipality (including GBOS and People Mover), the Alaska Railroad Corporation, and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.
7. *Valley Trails.* Further development of the Valley trail network should be a high priority for valley residents, for the valley's tourism industry, and for the Municipality. The Transportation Master Plan identifies a number of major trails which will be especially important, both as recreational features and as utilitarian transportation facilities. Certain of these trails (e.g., the Iditarod Trail) should have alignment and conceptual design completed prior to further valley development to ensure that needed rights of way and buffers are preserved. The involvement and financial participation of Glacier Valley Development Corp. will be important in implementing the segment of the Iditarod south of Alyeska Highway.

8. *Boardwalks and Arcades in New Townsite.* If pedestrian circulation is to be encouraged in the New Townsite (a necessary precondition for economic viability), provision must be made for lateral circulation along the retail and restaurant frontages in all seasons. The Transportation Master Plan recommends a system of arcaded boardwalks be built in phases as private development and redevelopment occur.
9. *New Townsite Street Improvements.* The Transportation Master Plan identifies paving of the New Townsite streets as an important step in defining an on-street parking supply, improving traffic circulation, making pedestrian circulation safer, and promoting further commercial development. One means of accomplishing this would be to establish a local improvement district for the New Townsite to provide revenues for the gradual improvement of these streets.
10. *New Townsite Commercial Parking.* The Transportation Master Plan and the Commercial Areas Master Plan recommend developing clearly defined on-street parking and providing one or more off-street public parking lots. The Municipality should amend Title 22 Girdwood Land Use Regulations to exempt developments that are participating in the New Townsite improvement district from on-site parking requirements. Payments in lieu of on-site parking should be required in an amount equivalent to the average cost per space for providing parking spaces on-street and in surface lots times the number of spaces the development project would otherwise be responsible for under Section 22.100.160. Revenues from payments-in-lieu should be deposited to a dedicated account (managed by the Municipality) for purposes of building parking supply in the New Townsite. These revenues, plus proceeds from the improvement district, should be managed to provide adequate parking supply as the New Townsite builds out.
11. *Pedestrian Underpass -- Alyeska Highway.* A pedestrian underpass of Alyeska Highway, joining the north and south sides of the New Townsite, will eventually become an important link in the core area pedestrian network (and could perhaps also be an important mechanism for flood control). This capital project should be a joint effort of the Municipality (including the GBOS), and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.
12. *Traffic Calming -- Alyeska Highway.* This capital project should be a joint effort of the Municipality (including the GBOS) and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. Possible sources of funding for the project are Federal highway safety and TEA-21 enhancement funds, coupled with local matching funds.
13. *Local Street Connectivity and Continuity.* Implementation of the Transportation Master Plan will require amendment of Title 22 of the Land Use Regulations to:
- limit local streets to no more than 150 feet in length unless connected to other roadways at additional points beyond the originating intersection;
 - require developers to provide local street grids with intersection spacing of no fewer than 14 intersections per mile.
14. *New Collector Streets.* The collector street network shown on Map 9 should be incorporated into Anchorage's Official Streets and Highways Plan and implemented as development occurs in the valley.

KEY PUBLIC SECTOR IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENTS IN THE COMMERCIAL AREAS MASTER PLAN

New Townsite

1. *Hightower as Main Street.* Some public improvements (i.e. sidewalks at the street edge, street lighting, etc.) may be implemented through the Municipality's annual capital improvements budget. Others (covered boardwalks and arcades attached to commercial buildings) will require the participation of private property owners. Pedestrian amenities such as seasonal flower planting, benches and gazebos, may also be funded through a special improvement district and built in phases as private development proceeds. Modification of Title 22 draft regulations have been recommended to control setbacks, on-site parking, landscaping and signage. These improvements go hand in hand with street and parking improvements recommended in the Transportation Master Plan.
2. *Municipal Water Service for the New Townsite.* Commercial expansion of any significance will necessitate connection to the municipal water supply. Funding is most likely to come from a combination of Federal matching grant money and municipal funds.
3. *Improved (and Relocated) Downtown Post Office.* A project to replace the post office with a larger, more efficient one on a site in the same general vicinity would be implemented by the Federal postal authority in cooperation with the Municipality.
4. *Southside Commercial Development.* Commercial development and the infrastructure to support it will be largely (if not totally) a privately funded undertaking. However, several actions by the Municipality will be prerequisites, including

revising the boundaries of the commercial area in the golf course lease, defining the south Hightower right-of-way, and releasing the Little Bears and tennis court sites from dedicated parkland (which requires a municipal-wide vote). Improvements recommended in the Transportation Master Plan to connect the southside commercial area to the town square (the pedestrian underpass, improvements at the Hightower intersection with the highway, and the new collector roadway) will also be instrumental in promoting commercial development in the townsite.

5. *Forest Fair Park Improvements.* The tennis courts and skateboard park will need to be relocated in the scenario recommended in the Master Plan. A survey of potential sites for these facilities should be part of an overall study of public open space and recreational needs. Additionally, a new home for Little Bears daycare will have to be found; the new chapel building has been recommended, but an interim site may be needed, depending upon timing of development.
6. *Town Square Park and Alyeska Highway Park Strip.* Improvement of these parcels of dedicated parkland could be a community enterprise, a special district undertaking, or a joint project with municipal public works. Design of the parks should be done cooperatively to calibrate the improvements to the funds available.

Valley Entry and Original Girdwood Townsite

7. *Commercial Development.* In conjunction with the development of a multimodal transit facility at the valley entry, it is anticipated that there could be as much as 50,000 sq. ft. of highway-oriented commercial and retail space in the same complex and that these businesses would share the commuter parking lot. The development program and site plan could be a cooperative effort of the

Municipality, the Mental Health Trust, the Alaska Railroad, and Alaska DOT-PF. Implementation of recommendations in the Transportation Master Plan regarding the multimodal center and the Gold Avenue intersection will be essential prerequisites to commercial growth at this location.

Resort Bases

In the old and new resort bases, it is anticipated that all recommended commercial improvements will be private sector initiatives; no public sector capital improvements were identified as priorities other than transportation related initiatives.

PRIORITIZED SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

Because the timing of private development will be driven by market conditions and cannot be controlled, a phasing schedule is not the best way to lay out action steps for implementation of the Master Plan. Instead, this chapter outlines a sequence of actions, decisions and public sector improvements grouped roughly into sections labeled “*Immediate*,” “*Soon*,” and “*Important, but not Urgent*.” These designations reflect several considerations: (1) the relative priority of recommended improvements, (2) relationships between recommended improvements (i.e. some actions cannot be taken until previous steps have been accomplished), and (3) likelihood of funding in the near term. Within each section, action items listed below are categorized as political/ administrative/ regulatory actions, transportation planning items, and commercial area planning items.

To Do Immediately

Policy/ Administrative/ Regulatory Actions

- Adopt the Master Plans.
- Review and adopt the Title 22 Land Use Regulations for Girdwood, with modifications in the draft as recommended in the Master Plans.
- Solicit municipal-wide support for an affirmative vote on funding the community center.
- Vote to establish a special improvement district for the New Townsite (north side only).
- Initiate a flood management study to identify comprehensive flood control measures for the New Townsite (north and south).
- Develop a composite order of magnitude cost estimate and long-range financial plan for recommended public sector improvements.

Transportation Planning

- *Multimodal Centers*. Initiate conceptual site planning and layout of the Valley Entry and Resort Base multimodal facilities. Incorporate plans for a State Trooper facility at the Valley Entry if no other plans have been concluded for a new location.
- *Rail Spur*. Subject to appropriation, the Municipality shall facilitate site investigation of municipal lands within Girdwood Valley. The Municipality shall not convey any interest in lands in Girdwood Valley for a proposed rail spur without Assembly approval.
- *Internal Transit, Phase 1(Core Area Shuttle)*. Begin system planning and identify capital needs.
- *Trails*. Begin planning and alignment of primary trails and associated

facilities (trailhead parking, signage, etc.). Identify possible sources of funding. Concentrate on the Iditarod trail corridor.

- *New Townsite Streets and Parking.* Develop a conceptual plan, long-range financial plan and preliminary cost estimate for improving streets and parking in the New Townsite (north side). Amend Title 22 to exempt property owners who participate in the improvement district from on-site parking requirements. Implement an improvement district.
- *Local Streets.* Modify the Title 22 regulations to include provisions mandating standards for local street connectivity and continuity.
- *Collector Streets.* Amend the Official Streets and Highways Plan (OSHP) as shown on Map 9 of the Transportation Master Plan. Based on the OSHP, Modify the Title 22 draft regulations to require the dedication of collector street rights of way as part of development projects and the construction of such collectors by the developer as a condition of permit approval.
- *Alyeska Highway Traffic Calming.* Discuss proposed Alyeska Highway modifications with Alaska DOT-PF; obtain the agency's consent to move forward with planning.

Commercial Areas Planning

- *Boardwalks, Arcades, and Sidewalks in the New Townsite.* Include a provision in the Title 22 Land Use Regulations requiring these in all new and redeveloped buildings in the New Townsite.
- *Water.* Connect the Girdwood School and New Townsite to the municipal water service. (Water lines should be installed before streets are paved.)

To Do Soon

Policy/ Administrative/ Regulatory Actions

- *Parks and Recreation Plan.* Begin a community process to identify recreational and park needs; combine it with a survey of municipal-owned parkland and open space in the valley to identify areas suitable for passive and active recreation and opportunities for expansion of Forest Fair Park.
- *Park Boundaries.* Initiate a process to modify the parkland boundaries in the south townsite. Schedule a municipal-wide vote to undedicate the Little Bears, tennis and skateboard sites and replace them elsewhere, based on the study above.
- *Flood Control.* Secure funding source for any public improvements recommended in the flood management plan to protect commercial areas.

Transportation Planning

- *Multimodal Centers.* Prepare grant applications and secure funding. Coordinate with private sector development and the rail spur, if it is proceeding forward.
- *Internal Transit, Phase I (Core Area Shuttle).* Prepare a grant application and secure funding for first phase service.
- *Internal Transit, Phase II (Intercept Connector).* Initiate system planning and identify capital needs for second phase.
- *Trails.* Complete construction of primary trails and associated facilities.
- *New Townsite Streets and Parking.* Pave the townsite streets, incorporating on-street diagonal and parallel parking into the street cross-section. (If the community prefers not

to pave the streets in an early phase, then at least one off-street public parking lot should be considered at this time. Otherwise, the new on-street parking may suffice, and the public parking lots could be deferred until a later phase.)

- *South Hightower Extension.* Initiate a schematic design and engineering study of the new Hightower alignment (south NTS) and the Hightower connector road from the highway. Establish the revised right-of-way for the south Hightower extension so that site planning for the community center can proceed if the municipal-wide vote is affirmative and state matching funds are confirmed in 2001.
- *Alyeska Highway Modifications.* Develop a conceptual design for traffic calming improvements and intersection reconstruction for Alyeska Highway from just west of the Crow Creek Road intersection to the Glacier Creek Bridge, including reconfiguration of the two intersections (Crow Creek and Hightower Roads). Use the conceptual design and preliminary cost estimates to seek funding and get the project programmed.
- *Gold Avenue.* Initiate a conceptual design and engineering study of highway modifications for the Gold Ave intersection at the valley entry. Coordinate with plans for the Valley Entry multimodal center.

Commercial Areas Planning

- *The Old Base Area.* Encourage Alyeska Resort Corp. to accelerate its master planning to upgrade the old resort base.
- *The New Base Area.* Work with Alyeska Resort to develop a master plan integrating new retail space and destination resort activities into the plan for the Resort Base multimodal center.

- *Golf Lease Area.* Modify the boundary of the commercial development area in the golf lease.
- *North Townsite.* Initiate discussions with the post office about relocating to a better facility on a nearby site.
- *Town Square Park.* Work with merchants and property owners in the GC-7 district (New Townsite) to develop a design plan for improvements in the interior park.
- *South Townsite Commercial Development.* Work with Glacier Valley Development Corp. to develop a preliminary parcelization plan for commercial and mixed-use development areas south of Alyeska Highway.

To Do Later (Important, but not Urgent)

Administrative Actions

- *Little Bears.* Assemble a volunteer group responsible for developing a building program and funding strategy for a new chapel/daycare building. (The ability to replace Little Bears is contingent on finding another home for daycare.)
- *Community Center.* Proceed with construction of the community center, library, and associated parking.
- *Alyeska Highway Park Strip.* Undertake a community effort to decide on what and how much should be done to make this strip of parkland at the entry to the New Townsite visually accessible and usable.

Transportation Planning

- *Transit, Later Phases.* When appropriate, initiate phase II intercept connector service to the New Townsite and the New Resort Base from the Valley Entry multimodal center.

- *Trails.* Complete the full network of trails shown on Map 9 in the Transportation Master Plan.
- *Alyeska Highway.* Rebuild the section of highway from Crow Creek Road to the Glacier Creek bridge. Rename it.
- *Alyeska Highway Pedestrian Underpass.* Build the underpass in conjunction with the reconstruction of the highway, above.
- *Local Streets and Collectors.* Review master plans and development applications to ensure that the standards for connectivity are being met.

Commercial Areas Planning

- *Private Commercial Development.* Continue to work with private developers and property owners in the evolution of new plans for commercial development that conform to the intent of the master plan.