Land Use Alternative 1: All Regional Park

Natural Open Space and Trails	(131.5 acres[2])
Chalet / Trailhead Warm-up Facility	(5 acres)
Collector / Chalet Access Street	(8.5 acres)

In *Land Use Alternative 1*, the entire NW¼ Section 25 is zoned PLI-p (park), and added to Beach Lake Regional Park. The Study Area becomes a 145-acre expansion area for Chugiak-Eagle River's central multi-use trail system, maximizing the acreage of natural open space and diversity of terrain for trails.

Community aspirations have long favored the addition of the NW¼ Section 25 to Beach Lake Regional Park. Beach Lake Park is the site of Chugiak–Eagle River's 220-acre, 15-km multi-use and nordic ski trail system. The Study Area represents an opportunity to expand the area and improve trailhead access. It promises a greater diversity of terrain and forest, including a major hill climb and a mature birch forest on the southeast ridge.

A warm-up chalet facility could be sited on the flat central plain of the Study Area, proximate to the Beach Lake Park trail system. Its trailhead, parking, park maintenance facility, and picnic areas would improve park access without consuming trail system acreage in the existing park. Surrounding the chalet area, approximately 7 km of multi-use and nordic ski trails would loop through the NW¼ Section 25, connecting to the Beach Lake Park trail system to the north, and the ridge climb to the southeast. In southwest, a regional open space corridor and trail would link Beach Lake Park to the beaver dams and Fire Creek Greenbelt in the Powder Reserve.

The ridge crest in the southeast offers scenic views across the rolling forests of Beach Lake Park to the Knik Arm, Mt. Denali, and the Talkeetna Mountains. The distant scenery could be matched in beauty by the mature birch and spruce forest on the ridge top itself. The ridge may also have potential for a lighted sledding hill and serve as a neighborhood trailhead access for the Powder Reserve.

A two-lane collector with a separated paved trail through the Study Area would provide chalet access for Birchwood including the Powder Reserve neighborhood. It would also provide north-south connectivity in Birchwood. It could use transmission line easement as an alignment and connect to Hillcrest Drive.

Following the map is the evaluation table for this alternative. The evaluation table illustrates how well the key land use issues are addressed, and the implications.

[2] The 131.5 acres includes the approximate 4.5-acre AWWU water pipeline easement as a trail.

NW 1/4 SECTION 25 Land Use Study

Land Use Alternative 1 - Regional Park

Planning Department
Municipality of Anchorage

Regional Park
Natural Open Space and Trails (127 acres)

Study Area Boundary

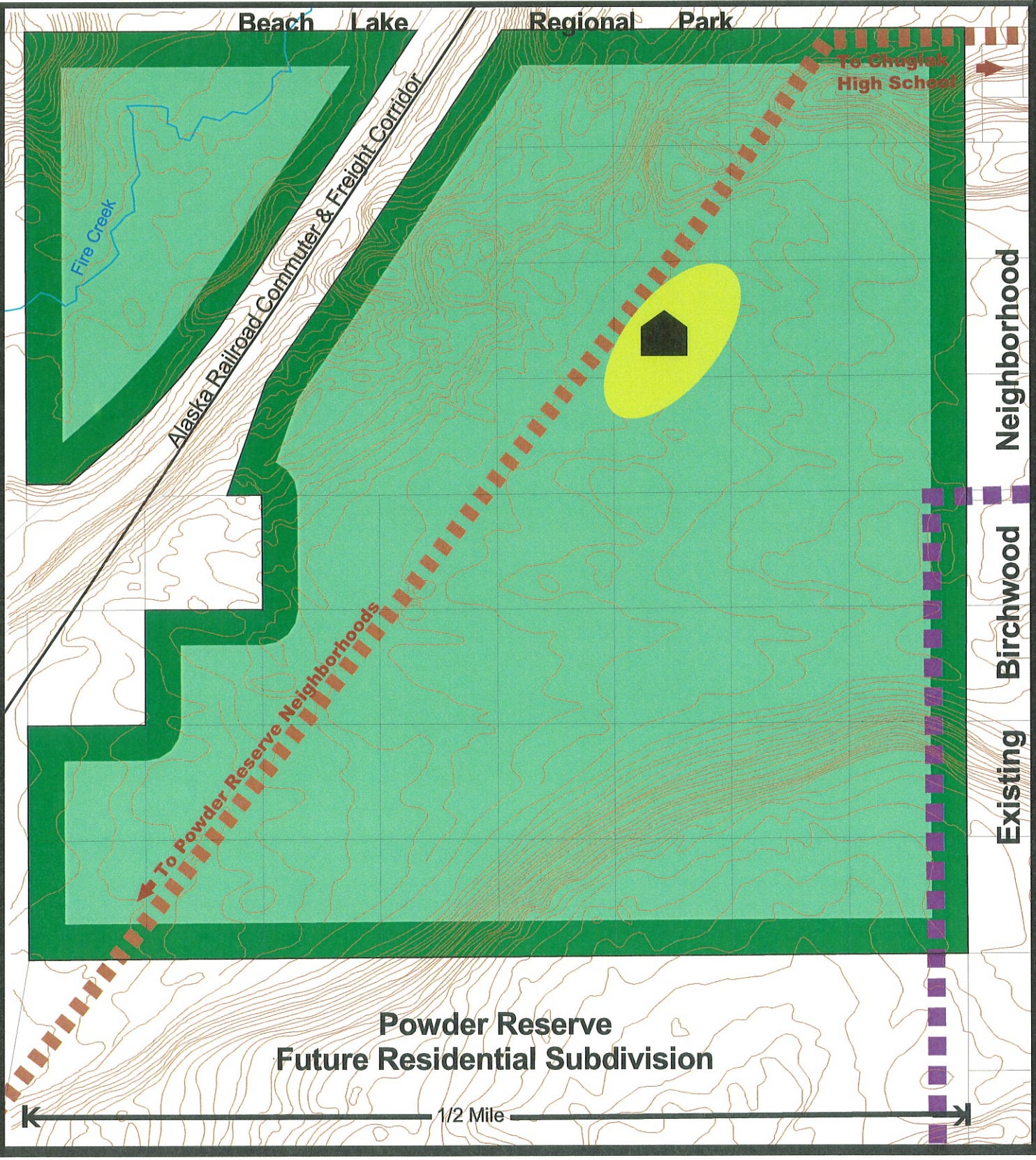
Chalet Warm-up Facility
with Parking, Trailhead, and Picnic Area
exact location not yet determined (5 acres)

Neighborhood Collector / Chalet Access Street
(100' Easement) connecting Powder Reserve
and Chugiak High School (8.5 acres)

AWWU Eklutna Water Pipeline Easement
(4.5 acres)

N

100 0 100 Feet



Land Use Alternative 1 Evaluation Sheet

	Key Issues	Evaluation	Implications
Site Planning Issues	*Site suitability and environmental constraints - slope, wetlands, soils*	Trails may cause soil instability on the ridge in the southeast. Chalet access road will cut through a hill in the northeast.	Locate and design trails and sled hills to avoid ridge slope erosion. A road to Hillcrest should use the existing pass through the NE hills.
	Conservation of unique site features - trees, scenic views, terrain	Nearly the entire Study Area is preserved for trail facilities.	Other needs may be addressed while preserving unique terrain for trails.
	Optimum site locations for proposed land uses	The central plain is not a scenic or central chalet site for the main park.	Consider alternative chalet sites in a *Beach Lake Park Master Plan*.
Land Use Compatibility	*Compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods*	Chalet and access road can impact residential neighborhood.	Buffer residences with forest. Use Hillcrest, not Pioneer, for access.
	Compatibility with Beach Lake Regional Park	There is greater access, acreage, and terrain for skiers, but access to main regional park is not improved.	Add key terrain from Study Area to the park, and update the *Beach Lake Park Master Plan*.
	Compatibility with other land uses proposed in the NW1/4 Section 25	Access road and parking benefit the trail uses. Collector street brings through traffic and noise.	Use park-sensitive road design with grade-separated crossings. Consider *Land Use Alternative 1-a* or traffic calming road design.
	Compatibility with available road infrastructure and water and wastewater	On-site well and septic is practical. Hillcrest is underdeveloped and is on a Section Line Easement.	Facilities can use onsite water/septic. Use the Section Line Easement as north half of Hillcrest ROW.
Community Facility Needs	*Need for regional park open space, multi-use trails, chalet and trailhead*	There is a 40% expansion of the ski trail system and improved terrain. Public access to 1450 acres of regional park is left unimproved.	Location of any non-trail uses should minimize impacts on trails. Locate park facilities through a *Beach Lake Park Master Plan*.
	Need for community park with sports fields	The need for 35 or more acres in Birchwood is not addressed.	Reserve an appropriate portion of the Study Area for sports fields.
	Need for an elementary school	The need for 15 or more acres is not addressed.	Reserve an appropriate portion of the Study Area for a school.
	Need for north-south collector system and site access road for park facilities	Connectivity is improved; chalet and trailhead facilities receive access from north and south.	Reserve a collector corridor through the Study Area from the southwest to Hillcrest Drive.

Land Use Alternative 1-a: Regional Park without a Collector Street

Natural Open Space and Trails (140 acres[3])
Chalet / Trailhead Warm-up Facility (5 acres)

Participants of the public discussion regarding the Land Use Alternatives requested inclusion of an alternative without a collector street in order to consider a less intrusive road access. *Land Use Alternative 1-a* illustrates the implications of maximum regional park expansion without a through collector street.

As with the previous alternative, the emphasis is expansion of regional park. The multi-use trail system gains acreage, unique terrain, and especially a chalet and trailhead site to improve user access. However, in *Alternative 1-a*, Hillcrest Drive extended is a dead-end access road to the chalet site the central Study Area. The single-entry access into the park keeps through-traffic out of the natural open space area. It also reduces the physical presence of a roadway through the nordic trail system. In this way it might be similar in function to Raspberry Road which winds through Kincaid Park.

Future Powder Reserve residents would access the trailhead via a circuitous route through Almdale and Shims to Hillcrest. A chalet site on the southeast ridge top off Almdale Avenue could offer dual access to the Powder Reserve and Birchwood. However, the ridge is isolated from the Beach Lake Park multi-use trail system. Trail users and event spectators would also have to negotiate the 110-foot high, 30 percent slope to get to the main system. By comparison, the slope from the Kincaid chalet to its trailhead area is a 27-foot, 10 percent slope.

Future Powder Reserve residents will generate north-south traffic to Chugiak High School. The lack of a new, more direct collector system will increase traffic impacts on Almdale Avenue and Shims Street and its surrounding residential neighborhood. These roads are not constructed to collector standards to accommodate the traffic load between a 1,500-acre Powder Reserve and Chugiak High School. The Glenn Highway would also be more impacted by Birchwood area traffic between the Powder Reserve and Chugiak High School. The impacts may warrant eventual reconstruction and upgrade of the zig-zag Almdale-Shims-Hillcrest route.

Following the map is the evaluation table for this alternative. The evaluation table illustrates how well the key land use issues are addressed, and the implications.

[3] The 140 acres includes the approximate 4.5-acre AWWU water pipeline easement as a trail.

NW 1/4 SECTION 25 Land Use Study

Land Use Alternative 1-a - Regional Park without Collector Street

Planning Department
Municipality of Anchorage

Regional Park
Natural Open Space and Trails (135.5 acres)

Study Area Boundary

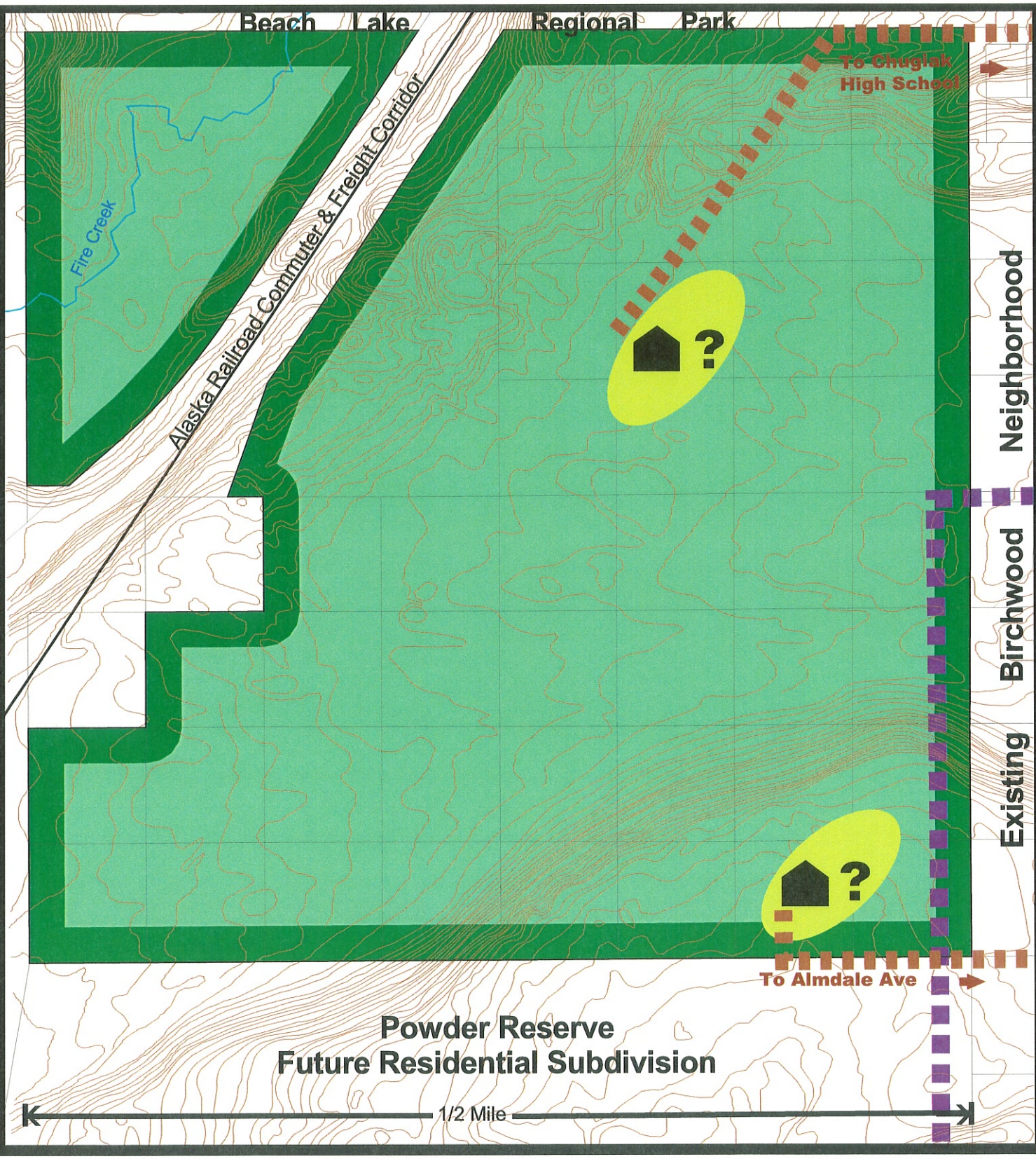
Chalet Warm-up Facility
with Parking, Trailhead, and Picnic Area
exact location not yet determined (5 acres)

Chalet Access Road

AWWU Eklutna Water Pipeline Easement
(4.5 acres)

N

100 0 100 Feet



Land Use Alternative 1-a Evaluation Sheet

	Key Issues	Evaluation	Implications
Site Planning Issues	*Site suitability and environmental constraints - slope, wetlands, soils*	Chalet access road will cut through the hills in the NE Study Area even if it is just a dead-end chalet access.	Concern for the NE hills is not a factor in the choice between a collector street or a dead-end chalet access road.
	Conservation of unique site features - trees, scenic views, terrain	A chalet on the SE ridge would remove mature birch woods. NE chalet access road would cut through strategic trail terrain.	Locate chalet facilities through a *Beach Lake Park Master Plan* . Use park sensitive road design, alignment, grade separated trails.
	Optimum site locations for proposed land uses	SE ridge is next to residential and isolated from the main trail system.	Avoid the SE ridge as a chalet site.
Land Use Compatibility	*Compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods*	Powder Reserve loses direct access to the park and CHS; the existing neighborhood gets increased traffic.	Reserve a collector corridor through the Study Area from the southwest to Hillcrest Drive.
	Compatibility with Beach Lake Regional Park	Reduced traffic near the trail system comes at the cost of a circuitous, single-access route to the chalet.	Potential to reduce traffic impacts on the park must be weighed against improved trailhead access.
	Compatibility with other land uses proposed in the NW1/4 Section 25	The road impacts trail development, but its traffic is limited to park users.	Concern for trail crossings is not a factor in the choice between a collector and a dead-end street. Traffic is.
	Compatibility with available road infrastructure and water and wastewater	Shims is not intended to be a collector; New Glenn is not meant for local area traffic.	Consider a two-lane collector, in order to avoid traffic impacts on the existing road system.
Community Facility Needs	*Need for regional park open space, multi-use trails, chalet and trailhead*	This alternative offers the least possible improvement in public access to Beach Lake Park.	Increase open space, trails, and public *access* for Beach Lake Park, as per the facility need.
	Need for community park with sports fields	Dead-end access is incompatible with accessible sports fields.	A community park will need road access to the south.
	Need for north-south collector system and site access road for park facilities	Poor connectivity lengthens trips from Powder Reserve, increases traffic on Shims and New Glenn.	Reserve a collector street corridor to avoid circuitous trips, impacts on the existing neighborhood and roads.

Land Use Alternative 2&3: Regional and Community Park with School Reserve

Natural Open Space and Trails	(98.5 acres[4])
Community Sports Fields	(20 acres)
Neighborhood Park Facilities	(5 acres)
Multi-use Chalet / Recreation Center	(5 acres)
Neighborhood Collector Street	(8.5 acres)
School Reserve Lands:	(9 acres)
Elementary School Site, or	
R-7 Urban Residential	

Participants of the public discussion regarding the Land Use Alternatives pointed out that *Land Use Alternatives 2* and *3* seemed to represent the same set of choices. *Alternative 2* showed school reserve lands in blue, implying a future school site, while *Alternative 3* showed the school reserve lands in orange, implying the land would be zoned residential and traded for another school site. Based on public comment, *Alternatives 2* and *3* were merged into a single alternative to simplify the evaluation.

Land Use Alternative 2&3 introduces a balance between the multiple legitimate community facility needs that are appropriate for the Study Area. While providing most of the *Alternative 1* expansion of natural open space and trails, *Alternative 2&3* also designates a portion of the property to satisfy needs for community sports field facilities and an elementary school.

The Hill Loop Trail area west of the power line easement, and the rugged northeastern corner of the Study Area, are priority areas for natural open space acquisition. Trail corridors connect the Hill Loop Trail to the southeast ridge and southward toward Fire Creek. A warm-up chalet and maintenance facility with a parking lot and a trailhead is located in the northeasterly plain of the Study Area. A trail runs along the southeastern ridge crest, offering scenic views to the region.

An area adjacent to the chalet is designated for community sports fields. Centrally located in Chugiak-Birchwood, the community sports fields co-locate with the chalet and trailhead staging area, and serve central Chugiak-Eagle River. In addition, five acres near Pioneer Drive provide a neighborhood trailhead and park.

[The narrative continues following the map and evaluation table]

[4] The 98.5 acres includes the approximate 4.5-acre AWWU water pipeline easement as a trail.

NW 1/4 SECTION 25 Land Use Study

Land Use Alternative 2 & 3 Combined - Regional / Community Park with School Reserve

Planning Department
Municipality of Anchorage

Regional Park
Natural Open Space and Trails
(94 acres)

Community Park
Sports Fields and Neighborhood Park
(25 acres)

School Reserve Land
Elementary School Site or R-7 Residential
(8 acres)

Chalet Warm-up / Multi-use Recreation Facility
exact location not yet determined (5 acres)

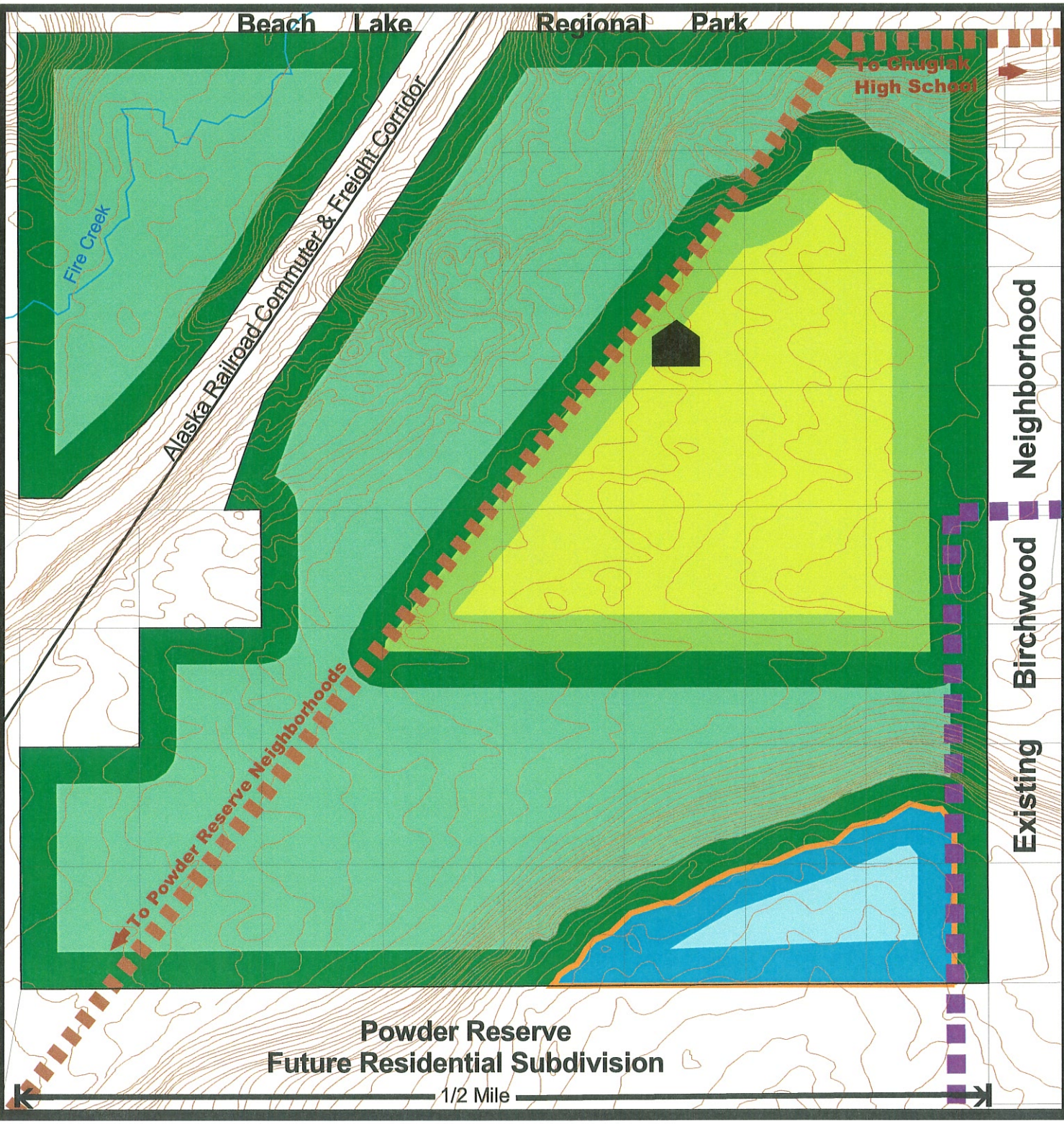
Neighborhood Collector / Chalet Access Street
(100' Easement) connecting Powder Reserve and Chugiak High School (8.5 acres)

AWWU Eklutna Water Pipeline Easement
(4.5 acres)

Study Area Boundary

N

100 0 100 Feet



Land Use Alternative 2 and 3 Evaluation Sheet

	Key Issues	Evaluation	Implications
Site Planning Issues	*Site suitability and environmental constraints - slope, wetlands, soils*	Development may cause soil instability on southeast ridge.	Preserve a natural vegetation buffer along ridge top.
	Conservation of unique site features - trees, scenic views, terrain	Development blocks trail access to SE ridge and its scenic views.	Annex a buffer for trail access along the ridge crest.
	Optimum site locations for proposed land uses	This co-locates the chalet, trailhead and sports fields. Elementary school is accessible to the Powder Reserve.	Co-locate chalet and sports fields if practical. The southeast ridge meets some of basic school site criteria.
Land Use Compatibility	*Compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods*	Community park generates traffic from Powder Reserve. Community sports fields may impact adjacent residential.	South access road will reduce traffic in Shims St. neighborhood. Preserve natural open space buffer east of community park.
	Compatibility with Beach Lake Regional Park	Concentration of facilities here leaves the main park underdeveloped.	Consider location of multi-use trailhead and chalet facilities further north into the park.
	Compatibility with other land uses proposed in the NW1/4 Section 25	Sports fields can impact the multi-use trail system. Sports fields can co-locate with trailhead and chalet.	Locate sports fields to the SW; preserve key areas with a master plan. Maximize efficient use of land and facilities through co-location.
	Compatibility with available road infrastructure and water and wastewater	Powder Reserve access to sports fields reduces traffic impacts on Shims and New Glenn. School is adjacent to planned water/sewer service area.	Provide equal road access for Birchwood and Powder Reserve to the community park. Southeast ridge meets a basic criteria for school site selection.
Community Facility Needs	*Need for regional park open space, multi-use trails, chalet and trailhead*	Concentration of multi-use facilities SE of railroad avoids greater access to most of park.	Locate park facilities through a *Beach Lake Park Master Plan* .
	Need for community park with sports fields	Twenty of thirty-five needed acres is reserved.	Increase the acreage; locate facilities to avoid impacts to trails or residential.
	Need for an elementary school	Nine of fifteen needed acres are reserved.	Acquire more land just to the south.
	Need for north-south collector system and site access road for park	The collector street also serves as Powder Reserve access to sports fields.	Reserve a collector corridor if there will be community sports fields.

[This narrative continues from before the map and evaluation table]

Also in *Alternative 2 & 3*, a north-south collector and chalet access street increases in importance because of the community sports fields. Automobile access is required because, unlike a neighborhood park, a community park-type facility generally serves 10,000 or more residents within a ½- to 3-mile radius. A large share of users will also come from the future Powder Reserve neighborhoods, warranting road access to the south as well as to Birchwood Loop Road.

The southeast ridge top, an area of nine (9) acres, is favored as an elementary school site. With additional acres to the south, it could accomplish the 15-acre elementary school site standard. The elementary school shares the ridge with its neighborhood to the south, providing a walking-distance school, civic center, library, and playground.

If this site is not selected for an elementary school, it would be rezoned R-7 Suburban Residential, disposed of, and developed for approximately 15 homes.

Land Use Alternative 2-a: School Reserve in the Southwest Corner

School Reserve Lands: (15 acres)
? Elementary School Site, or
? R-6 Suburban Residential

Members of the public suggested reconsideration of a school reservation in the southwest rather than the ridge top in the southeast corner of the Study Area, in order to preserve the forested ridge top and provide a full 15 acre school site. *Land Use Alternative 2-a* examines a school reservation in the southwest corner.

Alternative 2-a is similar to *Alternative 2 & 3*, however in this case the southwesterly plain becomes the elementary school site serving the Powder Reserve. If this site is not selected for an elementary school, it is rezoned R-6 Suburban Residential, disposed of, and developed for 15 homes or less. The collector street alignment would accommodate the school site and serve as neighborhood access to the school. Meanwhile, the southeastern ridge is added to Beach Lake Park.

The evaluation and implications of *Land Use Alternative 2-a* appear in the table following the map.

NW 1/4 SECTION 25 Land Use Study

Land Use Alternative 2-a - School Reserve in the Southwest Corner

Planning Department
Municipality of Anchorage

Regional Park
Natural Open Space and Trails
(87 acres)

Community Park
Sports Fields and Neighborhood Park
(25 acres)

School Reserve Land
Elementary School Site or R-6 Suburban Residential (Large Lot) (15 acres)

Chalet Warm-up / Multi-use Recreation Facility
exact location not yet determined (5 acres)

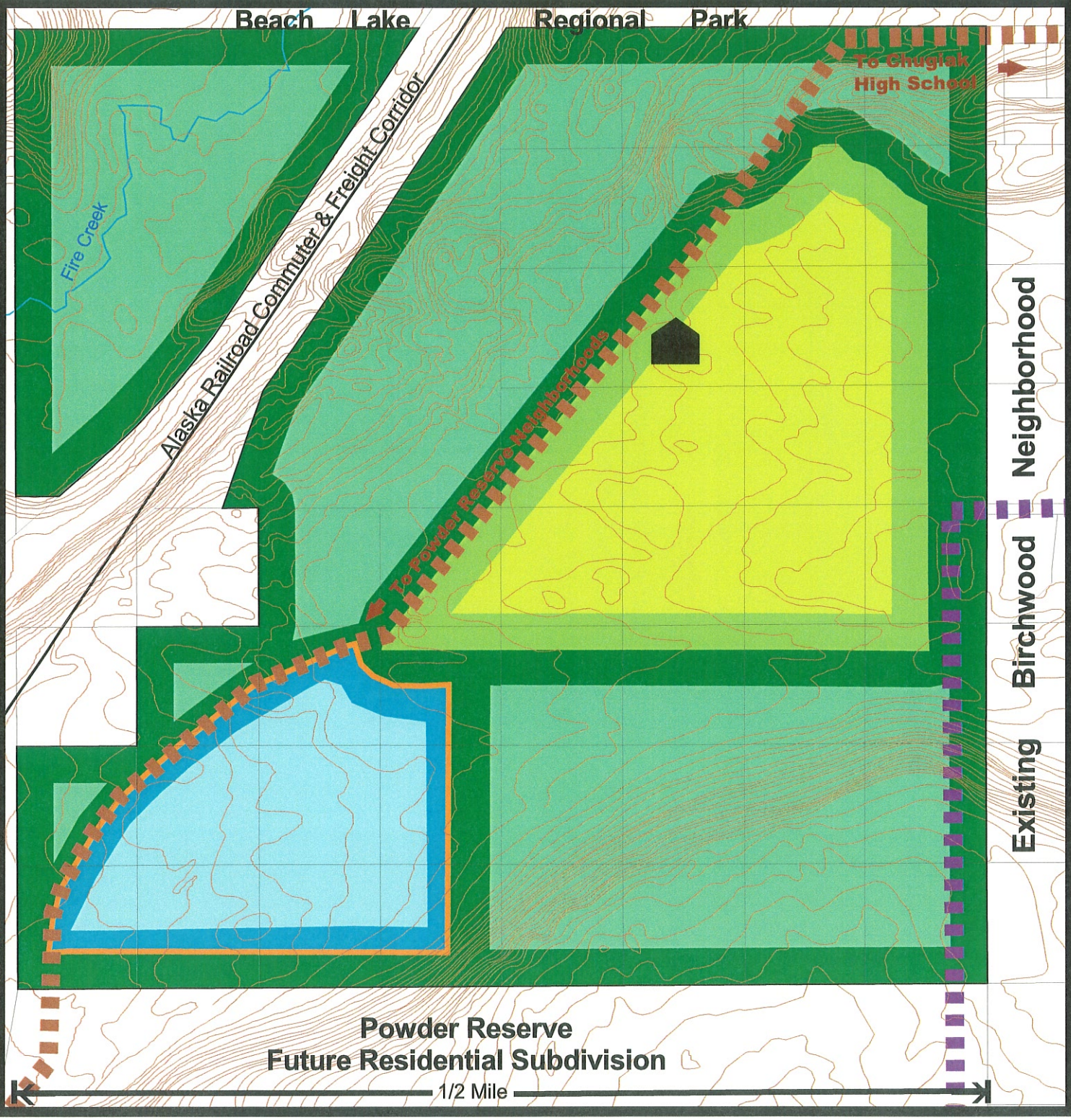
Neighborhood Collector / Chalet Access Street
(100' Easement) connecting Powder Reserve and Chugiak High School (8.5 acres)

AWWU Eklutna Water Pipeline Easement
(4.5 acres)

Study Area Boundary

N

100 0 100 Feet



Land Use Alternative 2-a Evaluation Sheet

	Key Issues	Evaluation	Implications
Community Facility Needs	*Need for an elementary school*	The need for a full 15-acre school site is addressed.	Determine whether the southwestern Study Area meets the basic school site selection criteria.
Site Planning Issues	*Conservation of unique site features - trees, scenic views, terrain*	The southeast ridge top with the mature birch forest and scenic views is preserved as parkland.	Annex a buffer for trail access along the ridge crest.
	Optimum site locations for proposed land uses	The SW Study Area is isolated from the neighborhood by a 100-foot high ridge and .2 mile walk through a forest.	The southwestern Study Area is not accessible enough to be a central neighborhood school, civic center, library, and playground.
Land Use Compatibility	*Compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods*	The school and neighborhood are physically isolated from one another.	The neighborhood school loses some of its potential to serve the neighborhood as a civic center, central library, and playground.
	Compatibility with other land uses proposed in the NW1/4 Section 25	Community sports park and neighborhood school co-locate, but are out of scale with each other.	The opportunity to co-locate with the community park is less important than the need to co-locate with the school's neighborhood.
	Compatibility with available road infrastructure and water and wastewater.	Public water and sewer is unlikely from the east and uncertain from the south.	School site selection standards would likely find this site to be inappropriate.