

Municipality of Anchorage



P.O. Box 390
Girdwood, Alaska 99587
<http://www.muni.org/gbos>

David Bronson, Mayor

GIRDWOOD VALLEY SERVICE AREA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

*Mike Edgington & Briana Sullivan, Co-Chairs
Jennifer Wingard, Amanda Sassi, Guy Wade*

November 12, 2021

Via Email: Dave.Bronson@anchorageak.gov

Dear Mayor Bronson,

Request for an Emergency Declaration due to the Oct-29 to Nov-2 flooding event in Girdwood

On behalf of Girdwood Board of Supervisors (GBOS) and the Girdwood Valley Service Area (GVSA), thank you for your support during and in the immediate aftermath of the record-breaking rainstorm and flooding event here in Girdwood.

In the week or so since, it has become clear that the damage was more extensive, and the repairs more expensive, than was initially anticipated. Current estimates are \$700-800k for emergency repairs, based on the damage we are aware of, to neighborhood roads and Ruane Road, which accesses the Girdwood Industrial Park, Anchorage Water and Wastewater plant, and Girdwood Transfer Station.

Although the completed repairs to the neighborhood roads damaged by the rainfall and runoff will work long-term, MOA contracted HDR hydrologist, Bill Spencer, advises that the emergency repairs to Ruane Road are inadequate to withstand another large storm. It is estimated an additional \$1.5-2m is needed to reconstruct this critical piece of Girdwood infrastructure. The immediate costs of temporary repair will exhaust GVSA emergency reserves and deplete resources that have been put aside for urgent road and drainage projects. The permanent repair to Ruane Road is beyond the financial capability of the service area. Accepting this financial burden would put the GVSA in a precarious situation for many years, halting planned projects and requiring an additional tax burden on our community if reimbursement funding is not secured.

Due to these new circumstances, the GBOS held a special meeting on November 10, 2021 and by a unanimous vote urges you to request the Governor to issue an Emergency Declaration for the flooding damage in Girdwood.

To provide some additional background to explain how Girdwood manages its finances and why this request is being made:

As a Service Area board, the GBOS has a history of developing creative solutions which fit the independent spirit and unique circumstances of our community. For example, in 2016 when the Alaska State Troopers withdrew from Turnagain Arm communities, GBOS proposed a solution to contract with the neighboring City of Whittier for police services; a unique arrangement which has served both communities well over the intervening years.

Girdwood funds and provides its own services for Roads & Drainage, Parks & Rec, Fire and Police. Taxes are raised locally and provide those services at higher efficiency by right-sizing them for our needs. With the one-time exception of adding police service, the GVSA budget has remained essentially flat for a decade and the mill rate is well below the locally approved tax cap.

Girdwood also funds capital projects in an atypical way; the GVSA saves for capital projects rather than bonding for them. This is in part by necessity since Girdwood-only bonds have historically been unsuccessful as propositions in municipal-wide votes. The most recent example of this is the 2020 Proposition 10, a bond to construct a new community childcare building, which passed by a large margin (79%-21%) in Girdwood but failed by a vote of 47%-53% in the rest of the Municipality, despite the costs falling entirely on Girdwood tax payers.

Finally, in anticipation of future reimbursement, Girdwood Valley Service Area staff and our road contractor are keeping careful records of precisely which areas emergency repair costs are being expended.

After examining the situation at Ruane Road over the last week, our understanding of the storm damage and what it will take to repair it has evolved significantly. Thank you for considering this request. Please reach out to the Girdwood Service Area Manager or either of the GBOS co-chairs if you need any additional information.

Respectfully,



Mike Edgington

Briana Sullivan

Co-Chairs, Girdwood Board of Supervisors

CC: Municipal Manager Amy Demboski: Amy.Demboski@anchorageak.gov
Assembly Member John Weddleton: john.weddleton@anchorageak.gov
Assembly Member Suzanne LaFrance: suzanne.lafrance@anchorageak.gov
Director of Public Works, Lance Wilbur: lance.wilber@anchorageak.gov
Anchorage Office of Emergency Management: woem@muni.org

Governor Mike Dunleavy: via input form

Representative James Kaufman: rep.james.kaufman@akleg.gov

Senator Roger Holland: sen.roger.holland@akleg.gov

State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Bryan Fisher:
bfisher@alaska.gov