

APPENDIX A: Land Ownership, and the HLB Mission

Section Summary

This section includes a brief history of private and public lands in the Girdwood Valley. This section also describes the Heritage Land Bank, its mission, its policies, and how these impact HLB land in the Crow Creek area.

The majority of the Heritage Land Bank's total land base (approximately 5,000 acres) is located in the Girdwood Valley. Originally federal lands, these multiple parcels were transferred to the Municipality of Anchorage with the intent of balancing land available for public and private purposes, and promoting community development and quality of life. In the current HLB operating plan, the Crow Creek parcels in this study area are planned for primarily residential development “in a manner consistent with the Girdwood Area Plan and Commercial Areas and Transportation Plan for this resort community.” Although the sale of land or developed property will generate revenue for the Municipality, the long term tax revenues, quality of life, and costs for serving residents in the new area are also important considerations in determining the details of the land disposal.

Sources for this Section: *Conceptual Heritage Land Bank Five Year Work Plan*, 2004-2008; *Heritage Land Bank Policies* 1996; <http://www.muni.org/hlb/>; *Anchorage Municipal Code*, Title 25 Public Lands, Chapter 40, Heritage Land Bank; Girdwood Area Plan.

Heritage Land Bank

Since James E. Girdwood staked a claim at Crow Creek in 1896, Girdwood’s development has been dependent on public lands becoming available for private use. Today, just over 15% of the valley’s 14,097 acre land base is in private ownership. This figure excludes the extensive public landholdings of Chugach State Park and Chugach National Forest that surround the Girdwood Valley.

The large percentage of publicly-owned land within the Girdwood Valley, around eighty-four percent, is primarily owned by the State of Alaska (6,390 acres) and the Municipality of Anchorage (5,182 acres). These lands were transferred to the abovementioned entities from the federal

government through: statehood; ANILCA; the National Forest Community Grant Land entitlement; the Municipal Entitlement Act and other legal acts.

The State of Alaska lands in the Girdwood Valley include portions of the Glacier, Winner, and Crow Creek Drainages and Mount Alyeska. State of Alaska lands are subject to the Turnagain Arm Management Plan. For now, this plan designates recreation, tourism, and wildlife habitat as the primary uses, recognizing the value of these lands’ spectacular scenery, easy access, and close proximity to Alaska’s major population center.

Girdwood’s Land Use and Vacant Land - 1995	
Developed Land	Land Area (acres)
Residential (1- 2 family: 236 acres; multi-family:15 acres; mobile home park: 2 acres)	253
Commercial	64
Commercial Recreation	1,494
Industrial	154
Transportation	174
Utilities	10
Public Lands and Institutions	47
Parks	41
TOTAL	2,237
Undeveloped Land	Acres
Municipal	5,182
State	6,390
Private	288
TOTAL	11,860
TOTAL LAND (Developed & Undeveloped)	14,097

Source: *Girdwood Area Plan*, Table 8, page 38.

Given the large amount of public land in and surrounding Girdwood dedicated to recreation, wildlife, and scenic uses, and the determination that much of its acreage is “in excess of municipal need,” the Heritage Land Bank (HLB), the entity managing the uncommitted municipal land

holdings in the Girdwood Valley, intends to periodically dispose of land in the area for residential and compatible development to expand the private land base.

The Heritage Land Bank Mission: The mission of the Heritage Land Bank is to manage uncommitted municipal land and the Heritage Land Bank Fund in a manner designed to benefit the present and future citizens of Anchorage, promote orderly development, and achieve the goals of the *Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan*.

Heritage Land Bank Policies:

- **Management Authority:** The HLB manages all Municipal land not formally dedicated to specific Municipal uses, such as schools, fire stations or dedicated parks.
- **Oversight and Public Notice Procedures:** The Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission serves as an advisor to HLB staff regarding the operation of the Heritage Land Bank and the HLB Fund. Public notices and hearings before the HLB Advisory Commission must be made prior to making any recommendations to the Mayor and Assembly.
- **Land Management, Planning and Disposal Policies:** The HLB has specific guidelines for keeping land records and monitoring the use and lease of its public parcels. It also has policies requiring advance planning to help meet broader community objectives and needs consistent with community plans. Finally, HLB has specific policies for initiating the sale of lands not needed for municipal use if the land and market conditions are determined to be favorable.

HLB uses its legally-defined public process for making land use decisions to serve broader community goals including:

- Quality of Life;
- Community Pride;
- Public Safety;
- Economic Development; and
- Improved Range of Services.