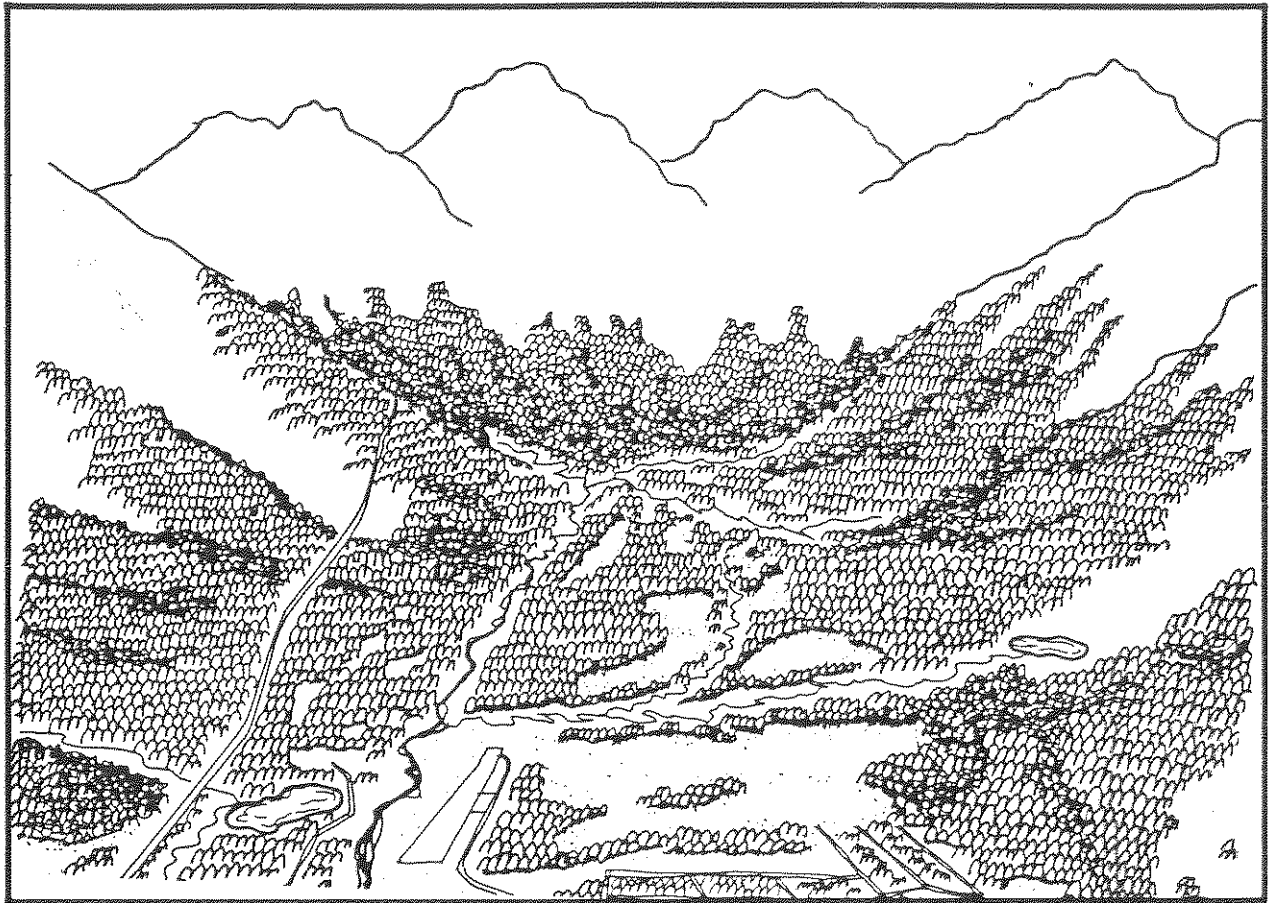


Anchorage Park, Greenbelt and Recreation Facility Plan

Volume 3 of 4: "Turnagain Arm"



Municipality of Anchorage
Tony Knowles, Mayor

ANCHORAGE PARK, GREENBELT AND RECREATION FACILITY PLAN

VOLUME 3: "TURNAGAIN ARM"

Note: This volume is one component of a four-part set. The other volumes are as follows:

Volume 1: "The Anchorage Bowl"

Volume 2: "Eagle River-Chugiak-Eklutna"

Volume 4: "Executive Summary"

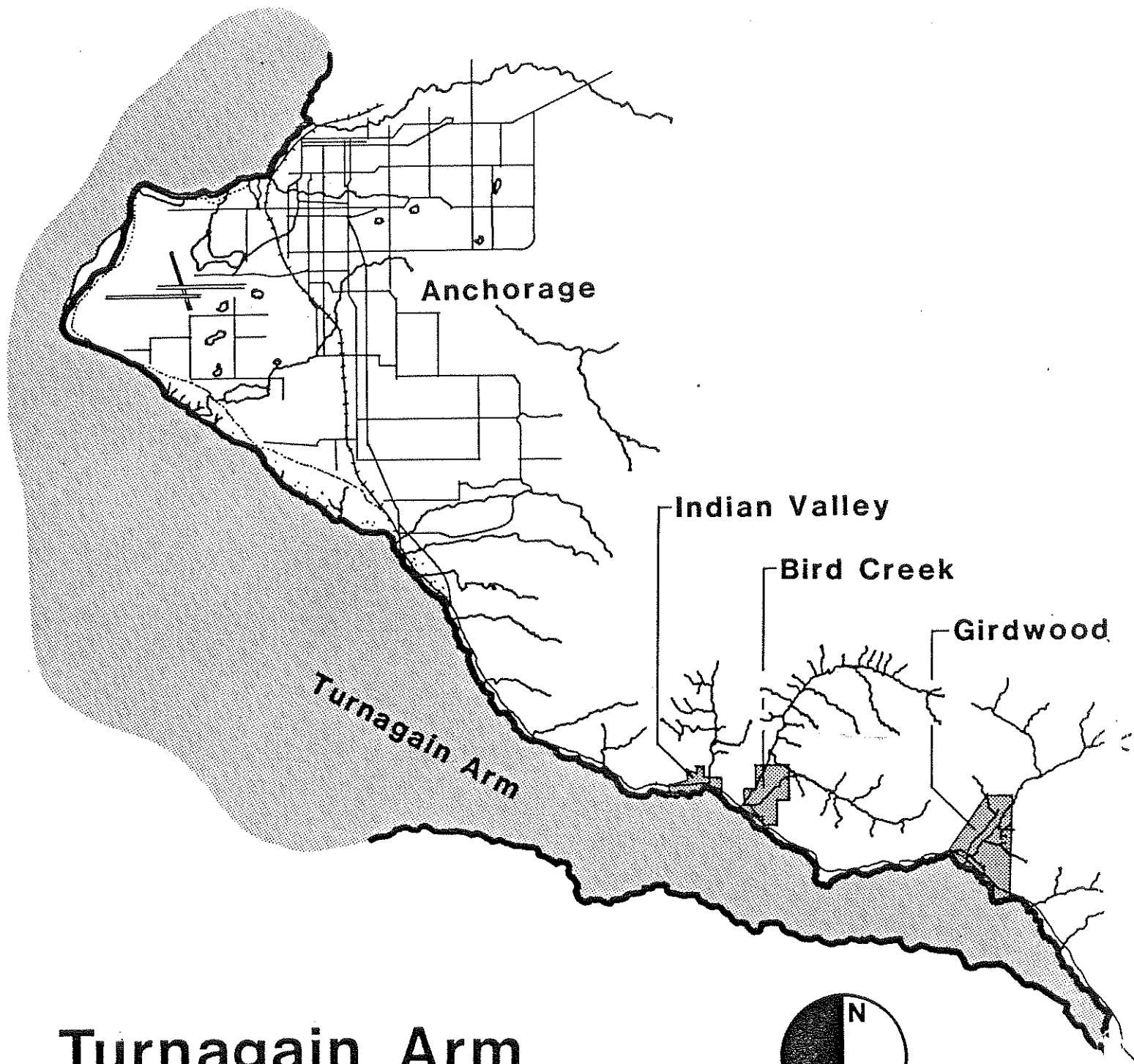
ADOPTED BY ORDINANCE NO. AO 85-188
December 17, 1985

AND
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February 17, 1987

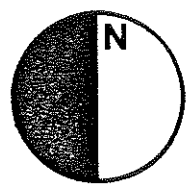
Prepared by the
Comprehensive Planning Division
Community Planning Department

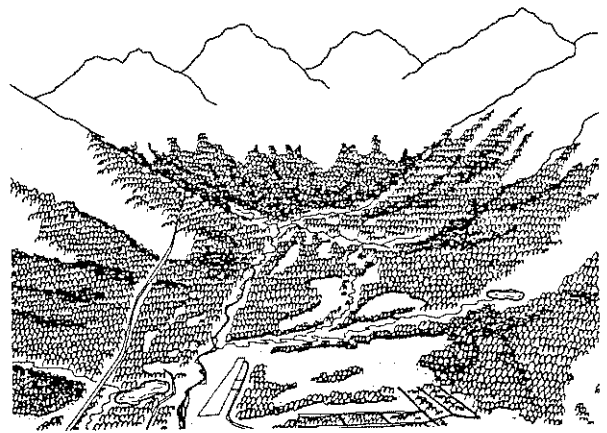
TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
SUMMARY FINDINGS	3
CATEGORIES AND POLICY STATEMENTS	6
PARK AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN	
Introduction	12
Girdwood:	
Park and Open Space Master Plan	13
Site Descriptions	14
Indian	
Park and Open Space Master Plan	36
Site Descriptions	37
Bird Creek	
Park and Open Space Master Plan	42
Site Descriptions	43
SCENIC HIGHWAY CORRIDOR PLAN	55
RECOMMENDATIONS	57
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Municipal Park Standards	A-1
Appendix B: Snowmobiling and ATV Facilities ..	B-1



**Turnagain Arm
Vicinity Map**





Introduction

INTRODUCTION

In December 1979, the Municipal Assembly adopted by ordinance (AO 79-208) the Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan. The plan is the result of various efforts which began in the early 1970's to identify and establish guidelines for the orderly development of communities along Turnagain Arm, south of the Anchorage Bowl. The land use patterns embodied in the plan reflect a community development goal based on values held by residents residing within the planning area. In general these values can be described as the desire to insure and enhance a rural (in the case of Portage, Indian and Bird) or rural to suburban (in the case of Girdwood Valley) life style set in an environment retaining aesthetic values. Parcels within each community recommended for development (responding to projected demand) were selected on the basis of their suitability and to a large extent on their compatibility with existing land use patterns and densities.

Land use categories included in the Land Use Plan consisted of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, park and marginal. For the Girdwood Valley, a road and trail plan was also adopted as an integral element of the Land Use Plan. The principal objective of this current park planning effort is to develop a park and open space element, indicating in precise terms both short-term and long-range park and open space requirements.

The park and open space plan was developed with considerable citizen participation at each phase. This citizen participation component of the planning process included extensive interviews with individuals and families, community workshops and public review through the Turnagain Arm Community Council and Girdwood Board of Supervisors. Given the amount and level of citizen participation throughout each phase of work the final document truly reflects community interests and as such is a plan of the community.

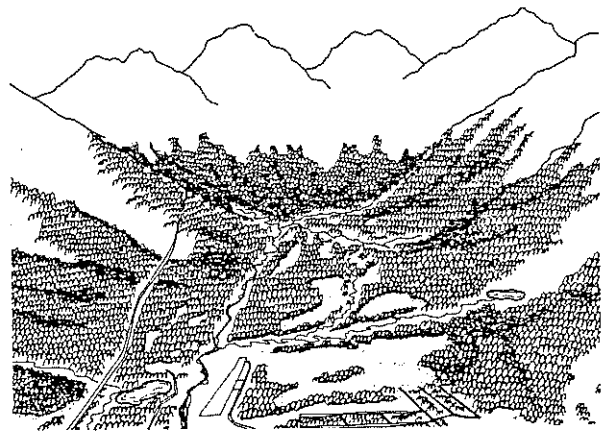
Additionally, the Turnagain Arm Park and Open Space Plan is more than a planning document. Rather, the plan is a tool to assist the valley communities in shaping the way their neighborhoods look and fit their unique lifestyle by providing buffers of woodlands between adjacent developed land parcels; maintaining stream corridors and reserves to preserve wildlife values while affording opportunities of an integrated trail system; and in maintaining rural and open space values. The plan identifies visual corridors, stream floodplains, greenbelts and park areas and makes specific outdoor recreation recommendations for these areas while limiting certain actions associated with non-park and open space land uses.

The preparation of the park and open space element was carried out as part of the normal process of refining the Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan. This process was initiated in November 1981 and involved several steps carried out over a six (6) month period that included:

1. Land status inventory
2. Park and open space needs assessment/analysis
3. Data analysis identifying park and open space
4. Master Plan and recommendations
5. Site Plans of selected park sites

In carrying out these five (5) steps, several planning factors integral to the development of the Park and Open Space Master Plan were incorporated. These factors were (1) community values, (2) community priorities, and (3) park and open space categories and policies. Each is discussed in the following section.

The Turnagain Arm Park and Open Space Plan represents an effort towards advancing outdoor recreation opportunities in the valleys of Bird, Indian and Girdwood by identifying specific areas and trail locations for intended neighborhood and community-wide uses. The Plan also addresses maintaining the aesthetic qualities of each valley by reserving certain woodland, stream corridor and open space resources identified by community residents. By reserving these resources, the advancement of a life style based on environmental, education, community and recreational values would be feasible.



Summary Findings

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Introduction

As used in this document, park and open space are defined in a broad sense emphasizing not only the setting aside of areas for outdoor recreation but also conservation. The concept of open space includes several functions or values, important both to the individual valley communities of Bird, Indian and Girdwood and the greater Anchorage region. The basis for assigning land use status to particular tracts of land reflects an attempt to maintain scenic and resource conservation values, to maintain community identity while shaping future development and to maximize outdoor recreation opportunities. With respect to open space, the term applies to any undeveloped or predominantly undeveloped land or water based area, principally on publicly-owned lands that are set aside for specific uses. Lands designated for open space use are assigned this status based on their intrinsic physical suitability for serving community held values.

The development of the Turnagain Arm Park and Open Space Plan involved the direct participation of many community citizens of Bird, Indian, and Girdwood. This participation was manifested in several forms and contributed in a direct way towards the development of the Park and Open Space Master Plan recommendations.

Citizen involvement focused on the identification of park and open space needs, establishing implementation priorities and identifying specific locations for accommodating projected park and open space requirements (see Figure 1).

Community Priorities

Community priorities were assessed through the implementation of a three (3) step data collection process designed to involve community residents in development of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The three (3) methods utilized to assess the recreation needs and wants of the residents were:

1. Key community leader interviews
2. Door-to-door random surveys
3. Public workshops

Each method provided information useful in the design and conduct of the other methods. Together, the three (3) methods provided an accurate indication of the current needs and desires of the communities with respect to park and open space.

This process helped to establish the recreational priorities and issues important to each community. Girdwood residents, for example, felt that the following recreation concepts were the most important:

1. System of trails combined with open space and greenbelts.
2. Neighborhood parks to serve each major residential area in the valley.
3. Centralized community parks to provide structured facilities for group activities.

The communities of Bird Creek and Indian Valley felt that the most important recreation issues were:

1. Baseball diamonds at Boulder Stadium.
2. Bike Path connecting Bird-Indian
3. Greenbelts
4. Tennis courts combined with a park/play area.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the issues, needs and priorities as they were expressed in the interviews, surveys and workshops conducted in the three (3) communities.

Park and Open Space Values

Land parcels considered for park and open space designation included flood plains, upland woodlands, and a diverse blend of wetland and existing parkland areas. In the process of assessing the best use of these areas it was assumed that each parcel exhibits a variety of physical qualities which, in turn, possess certain values. These values include:

1. Environmental
2. Community
3. Recreational
4. Educational

Lands possessing Environmental Values have physical characteristics that support diverse populations of wildlife and accommodate the natural processes associated with seasonal flooding and climatic extremes (excessive winds).

Lands assessed as having Community Values provide the basis of maintaining the quality of life of the three valley communities. Qualities such as views, woodland setting, privacy and rural lifestyle describe the key elements of lands having community value.

Girdwood Community Comments

Key Interviews

Surveys

Workshops

	Key Interviews	Surveys	Workshops
Preserve Sites	<p>Preserve Moose Meadows, don't want to see access roads here</p> <p>Preserve small streams</p> <p>Preserve beaver ponds</p> <p>Dedicate bird sanctuary (near railroad)</p> <p>Preserve as much natural habitat as possible</p> <p>Dedicate Iditarod Trail</p> <p>Dedicate Winner Creek Trail</p> <p>Old library renovated into Visitor Center, Museum</p> <p>Dedicate old Girdwood townsite</p> <p>Preserve Erickson's Gold Mine</p>	<p>Reserve:</p> <p>Old Girdwood library</p> <p>Old Girdwood townsite</p> <p>Old firehouse</p> <p>Crow Creek mine</p> <p>Cottonwoods by firehall</p> <p>Beaver ponds</p> <p>Moose Meadows</p> <p>Estuary behind old school</p> <p>Virgin Creek area toward Turnagain arm, south of Glacier Creek</p> <p>Virgin Creek Trail to Crow Creek Trail</p> <p>Crow Creek Road area</p> <p>California Creek</p> <p>Crow Pass Trail</p>	<p>Protect small streams</p>
Facilities	<p>Expand children's playground at Community Hall</p> <p>Park/play areas in Alyeska Basin</p> <p>Area designated for ATU Hire Center should be park</p> <p>Picnic areas/multi-purpose field</p> <p>Provide water activities by diverting Tiny Creek into stagnant pond near school</p> <p>Remote cabins/shelters in mountains</p> <p>Tennis Courts: upgrade/cover/expand to indoor courts</p> <p>Need:</p> <p>Increase racquetball facilities</p> <p>Increase ice skating facilities</p> <p>Swimming pool</p> <p>Baseball Diamond</p> <p>Soccer field</p> <p>Volleyball courts</p> <p>Indoor sports facility</p>	<p>Horse riding arena</p> <p>Shooting area</p> <p>Playground at Arlberg & Aspen Road area</p> <p>Leave organized sports complexes to higher density populated areas - not in Girdwood</p> <p>Ski jumping facilities</p> <p>Locations for cultural activities</p>	<p>Lease out part of Moose Meadows for golf course - some opposition because not economical; would it inhibit winter sports in that area?</p> <p>Suggested RR track (shuttle) to transport people from the gravel pit through Girdwood</p> <p>Maybe 9 hole golf course along Glacier Creek</p> <p>Swimming pool: expensive, locate at new school</p> <p>Baseball field: develop small rec area in each subdivision</p> <p>Rec areas should be concentrated around new school and Community Hall areas</p> <p>Strongly favor covered tennis courts</p> <p>Existing skating rink is sufficient</p> <p>Park/play areas - Timberline/Vail area, Mt. Hood area</p> <p>Covered picnic areas proposed in Community Hall</p> <p>Scatter park/play areas/ decentralize some rec areas/satellite parks</p> <p>Mini parks in subdivision (priority)</p> <p>Multi purpose field: with pool (at school)</p> <p>Warming huts in remote areas of valley</p> <p>Recreation area with public restrooms</p>
Forest Fair	<p>Develop to community gathering place</p> <p>Alder trees cleared all the way to California Creek</p> <p>Stage coverings</p> <p>Paved walkways - but keep unstructured wild look</p>	<p>Pavillion with electricity</p> <p>Benches around trees</p> <p>Additional parking</p> <p>Improve drainage</p> <p>Toilets</p> <p>Boardwalk</p> <p>Permanent booths</p> <p>Should be larger area</p> <p>Save the trees</p> <p>Cut back some alders</p> <p>Footpaths</p>	
Community Hall	<p>Community hall & fire hall should be combined</p> <p>Improved to include dance rooms; locker rooms; pool; office space; play room; day care</p> <p>Public toilets needed</p>		
Townsquare	<p>Leave as general open space for now</p> <p>Develop parks around this area</p> <p>Townsquare development for commercial reasons</p>	<p>Landscape with benches, gravel or paved walkways, lighting, flowers, trees & shrubs</p> <p>Control dogs, provide parking and a picnic area</p> <p>Interpretive center of sorts with Girdwood's history</p> <p>Dislikes unkempt houses, wandering dogs</p> <p>Improved road and parking maintenance</p>	<p>Toilets</p> <p>Covered picnic area</p> <p>Greenbelt in Townsquare</p> <p>Possible volleyball court</p> <p>Doesn't want to see things in this area that need lots of maintenance such as lawns mowed</p>
Campground	<p>California Creek camper park</p> <p>Campground by Seward Highway; keep it away from Girdwood</p> <p>Campground along Glacier Creek</p> <p>Campground should be supervised to prevent squatters.</p>		<p>Locate campground up Crow Creek Road; need caretaker/supervisor.</p> <p>Don't want squatters; need location where facilities can be erected.</p> <p>Leave responsibility of campground to State Park/ National Forest.</p>
Parking	<p>Shuttle parking between Squirrel Cage development & Alyeska</p> <p>Parking near town square</p> <p>Community parking lot next to old townsite</p> <p>Parking is Alyeska's responsibility</p>		<p>Should be parking near lodge next to greenbelt where skiers need to park</p> <p>Parking should include cul-de-sac for 3 to 4 cars on subdivision roads</p> <p>Parking should not be a recreation concern except for the Moose Meadows</p>
Greenbelts	<p>Greenspaces as part of planned development</p> <p>Easement along Crow Creek Road</p> <p>Greenbelt along Glacier Creek</p> <p>Greenbelt along California Creek</p> <p>Squirrel cage area should not be developed</p>		<p>Greenbelts:</p> <p>Moose Meadows (snowmobiles prohibited)</p> <p>Near Community Hall</p> <p>Along Crow Creek Road</p> <p>Along Glacier Creek; continue all the way to Seward Highway</p> <p>In Town Square</p> <p>Greenbelts should be set aside for each sub-division tract.</p>
Trails	<p>Trails should connect valley</p> <p>Perimeter trail system</p> <p>Bike Trails</p> <p>Bike path along Alyeska Highway</p> <p>Designate snow machine trails</p> <p>Horseback trails</p> <p>Footpaths needed</p> <p>Don't want marked trails</p> <p>Trail system should include fitness trail</p> <p>Multi-purpose trail around school</p> <p>Completed footpath from Alyeska to Hinner Creek trail</p> <p>Trail connecting old townsite to Glacier Creek</p> <p>California Creek Trail</p> <p>Bridges across Virgin and Glacier Creeks</p>	<p>Trails along Virgin Creek</p> <p>Trail from Glacier Creek north to Hinner Creek</p> <p>Trail up Glacier Creek and Moose Meadows</p> <p>Crow Pass Trail Tributaries</p> <p>Footbridge across Glacier Creek</p> <p>Preserve trails; leave unmarked; not a maintained "Santa Monica Highway".</p>	<p>Separate areas for cross-country skiing and snow-machining</p> <p>Trail along California Creek</p> <p>Some trails shown on comprehensive plan would be difficult to build</p> <p>Iditarod Trail</p> <p>Beaver Pond Trail</p> <p>Hinner Creek Trail</p> <p>Use trail system as buffer zone for developable area</p> <p>Bridges over Glacier Creek to connect both sides of valley</p> <p>Horse trails separated from Walk/Ski trails</p> <p>Link up trails to form system of protected trails in the valley.</p>

Table 1

Bird Creek and Indian Valley Community Comments

Key Interviews

Surveys

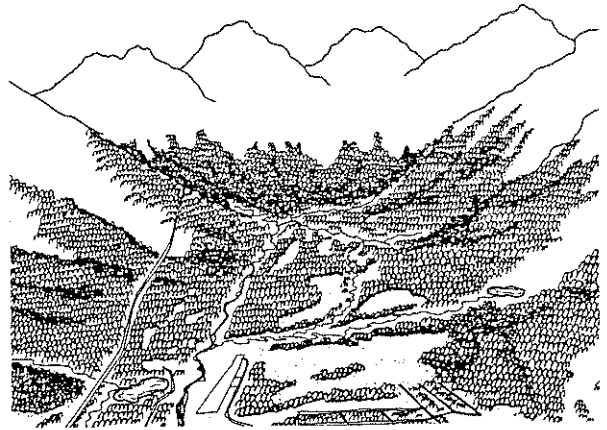
Workshops

	Key Interviews	Surveys	Workshops
Preserve Sites	Shoreline along arm should be protected Bird Creek Lagoon Preserve Forest - all groves of large spruce and cottonwood Birdhouse Bar Waterfalls along Bird Creek All land within several yards of creeks and streams	The Grotto Memorial baseball diamond across from Diamond Jim's Bird Creek Old log cabins in the valley Preserve all of Bird Creek/Indian Valley by <u>not</u> adding any more campsites, access trails, parking areas Waterfalls down around Grove from Indianhouse on Seward Highway Areas between Seward Highway and the Railroad Birdhouse Bar	
Facilities	Possible ballfield along with tennis courts, ice rink, volleyball at Bird Creek dumpsite Park/play areas Airstrip suggested in Bird Creek Regional Park Improve Indian ballpark		Park/play - high priority Tennis courts Upgrade baseball diamond (bleachers, bats and ball; location: Boulder Stadium Dumpsite (Bird Creek) for ice skating, tennis courts, basketball - part - needs supervision Airstrip and boatramp Tennis courts coordinate as volleyball, basketball/hockey Swimming pool - not a priority
Community Hall		Facilities which should be included: Volleyball Aerobic exercise floor Hot Tub Height room Swimming pool Boxing Gymnastics Young people's dances Racquetball Playing field Rooms for classes Passive recreation names Basketball Sauna Shower facility Table tennis Tennis Marshal Arts Dancing Hockey rink Park area Locker rooms Meetings Fund raisers Need volunteer fire department in both areas; this would take care of a Community Hall Nice, but maintenance costs too high	Priority would be a fire hall
Campground	Expand Bird Creek campground along highway	Indian needs a picnic/camping area which would be good to incorporate with a playground for the kids	Public campground farther up into Bird Creek Regional Park - local use closer to residential areas
Parking	Parking lot with access to State Park where powerline and highway meet Dumpsite used as parking lot Parking should be as close to Seward Highway as possible		50 car parking lot at Bird Creek 30 car parking at ballfield (Indian) 15 car parking for Bird Ridge and Indian powerline
Greenbelts	Greenbelt along Penguin Creek		Greenbelts high priority Greenbelts along streams/powerline road - follow contour around existing residential Placement of greenbelts along 25 year floodplain (150')
Trails	Hiking/biking trail following but separate from highway Maintain existing logging roads as trails/vehicle use Indian Valley Trail (Ship Creek) maintained and improved Designated areas for snowmachines Footbridge across Penguin Creek	Johnson Trail south of rainbow Bird Point by Bird Creek Grotto - 1 1/2 miles north of Indian Road Indian Trail needs better maintenance Interest in proposed bike pathway (along Seward Highway) improvements to both bridges (Bird Creek and Indian Valley)	Bikepath between Bird-Indian <u>very</u> important Bikepath needs tubes Already a number of trails; don't need more - however, need to designate especially in the Regional Park Maintain logging roads which connect trails Improve Indian Valley Trail Snowmachines and skiers should be separate

Table 2

Lands having Recreational Value provide opportunities for accommodating traditional park and outdoor recreation activities and facilities. Activities such as hiking and skiing, field and court games, picnicking, community events and structured park activities would be accommodated best in lands determined to have recreational values.

Finally, lands determined to possess Educational Values would meet a growing need of the communities along Turnagain Arm. Lands identified as having educational value to the community contain physical elements that demonstrate in a dramatic way the geologic history of the area, vegetation and wildlife populations and natural phenomena characteristic of the surrounding environment. Analysis of these values in combination with community priorities and current land use designations led to the formulation of six (6) park and open space categories described in the following section of this Plan.



Categories and Policy Statements

PARK AND OPEN SPACE CATEGORIES

The Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan contains land use plans for the communities of Bird, Indian and Girdwood. Various parcels of land within each community are designated for park use, marginal lands and trails. These land use designations have been expanded in the Park and Open Space Plan to accommodate the previously described values. The categories include:

1. Open space reserves
2. Parks (neighborhood, community, and regional)
3. Greenbelts
4. Stream corridors
5. Trails
6. Marginal lands

The Parks and Open Space Plan makes recommendations concerning which outdoor recreation activities and facilities are appropriate under each park category. The following policy statements summarize the use objectives for each park and open space category based on community held values. The aerial perspective on the following page visually explains the role of the different categories and how they are integrated into a cohesive system.

Greenbelts

Greenbelts are identified to separate neighborhoods, act as wind buffers and wildlife habitats, and protect woodland edges adjacent to reserves.

Parks

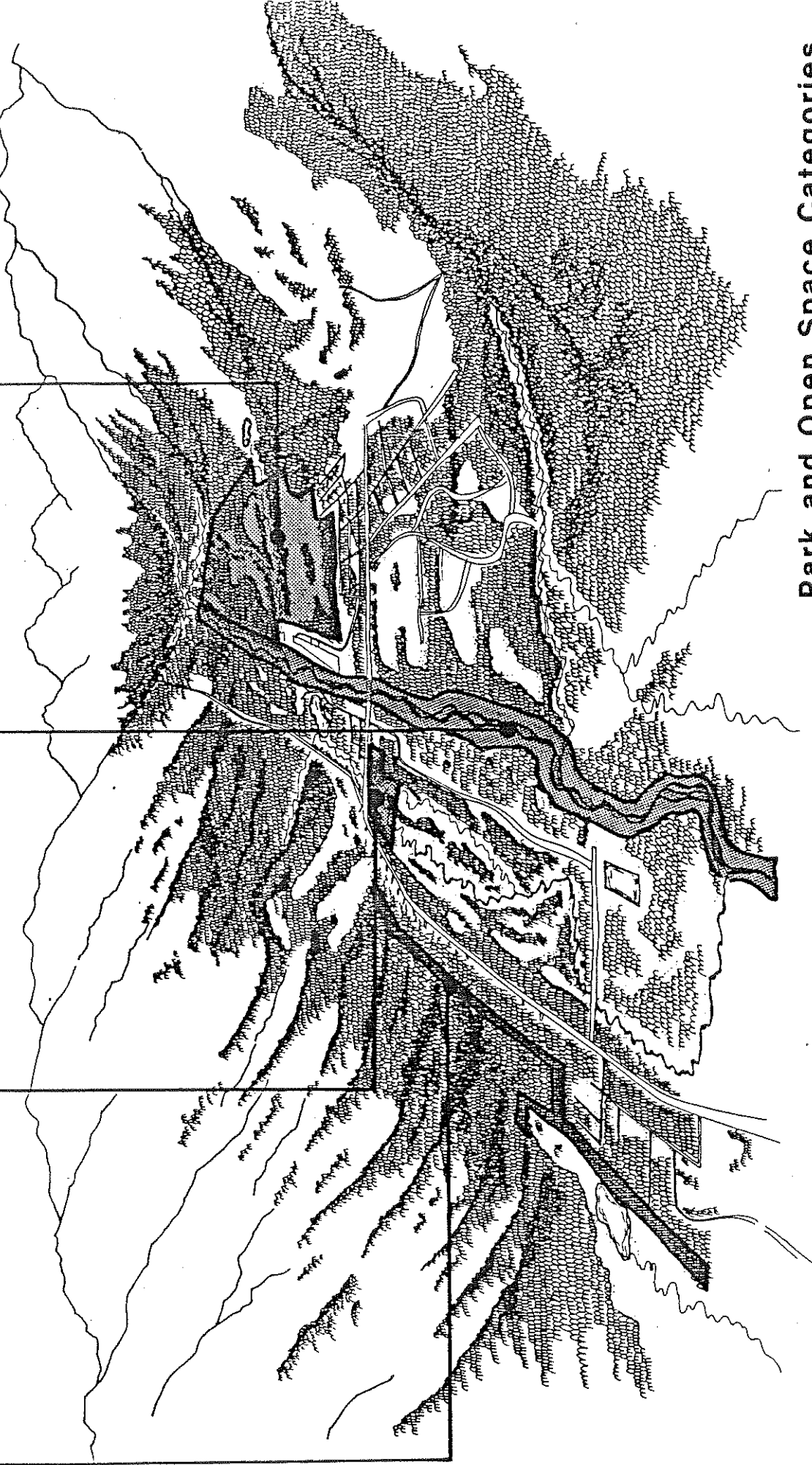
There are three levels of parks to accommodate the active recreational activities of the community. These are neighborhood, community, and regional parks.

Stream Corridor

Stream Corridors are identified to protect and maintain existing water quality and stream character.

Reserves

Reserves are valued for their environmental, educational, recreational, and scenic qualities. Activities should include skiing, hiking, and interpretive walks.



POLICY STATEMENTS

Policies for the size, location and function of various park spaces are discussed in the following section. Existing Anchorage standards are depicted in Appendix A.

RESERVES

1. Limits: Are defined by their unique physical characteristics and community held values. The boundaries of the reserved shall be defined as indicated on the Plan.
2. Use: Environmental, educational, recreational and scenic.
3. Development: Includes skiing and hiking trails, passive recreation, and interpretive facilities. Development activities such as removal of vegetation, grading or building of structures will be kept to a minimum and only performed to support education and recreation activities while maintaining the natural quality of the land.

PARKS: Neighborhood and Mini-Parks (or Satellite Parks as referred to by citizens)

1. Limits: 5 to 20 acres in size as identified in the individual descriptions of the Park and Open Space Plan. Mini-parks are smaller parks (1-5 acres) which are provided when the neighborhood's population is not great or when land resources limit the area which can be set aside for park purposes.
2. Use: Supplies facilities for limited, active pursuit of recreation. Provides children's playground, open grassy area for use as informal sportsfield, picnic tables. Parking as specified.
3. Development: Located so that it serves residents no further than $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away.

Should not cross arterial roads in accessing residential areas; located at center of residential areas.

Proximity to open space corridors and bike paths should be considered in locating neighborhood parks.

PARKS: Community Parks

1. Limits: 20 to 100 acres as identified in site descriptions of the Parks and Open Space Plan.

2. Use: Provides an opportunity for contact with the natural environment, as well as furnishing facilities for active recreation pursuits.

Typically includes playground, open play area, tennis/basketball/volleyball courts, skating facilities. Provides setting for musical and theatrical presentations by equipping park with stage facilities. Picnic shelters/pavillion also provided. Parking is specified.

3. Development: Should serve several neighborhoods on year-round basis.

Appropriate pedestrian and non-vehicular access routes should be considered in locating community parks.

PARKS: Regional Parks

1. Limits: Minimum of 160 acres. The Bird Creek Regional Park, contained in the Parks and Open Space Plan, is a very large and scenic regional park with 2,265 acres.

2. Use: Provides facilities that enhance the enjoyment of the natural setting such as trails, swimming, boating, fishing, and camping facilities.

3. Development: Large areas preserved for the recreational uses of the community and residents within one hour's drive. Development activities such as the removal of vegetation, grading, or building of structures will be kept to a minimum and only performed to support recreation activities. All efforts should be made to maintain environmental quality and natural character. Located

within one hour's drive of large population center.

PARKS: State Parks and National Forests

1. Limits: Chugach State Park, with nearly 500,000 acres, is located adjacent to Anchorage. Chugach National Forest, located on the northeastern quarter of the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William South and part of Turnagain Arm contains six million acres.
2. Use: Although managed by other jurisdictions, the proximity of the Chugach State Park and Chugach National Forest provides the Turnagain Arm communities with vast recreation opportunities, including hiking, fishing, camping, cross-country skiing, berry picking and wildlife viewing.
3. Development: Management and development plans for the State Park and National Forest are handled by the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service - Alaska Region, respectively. To date these agencies have been very sensitive to the needs and desires of the Turnagain Arm communities. It is hoped this relationship will be maintained.

GREENBELTS

1. Limits: With the exception of the 300 foot width along the northern boundary of the Bird Creek residential area and the minimum 200 feet of greenbelt space along either side of Glacier Creek, all other greenbelts along the creek shall be set aside at a minimum 100' width measured from outside the top of the banks associated with the stream corridor (see p. 10 and Figure 1.) Other greenbelts, those along roads or those used as buffers, are described individually in the text.
2. Use: Serves to provide physical and visual separation between neighborhoods, provides wind buffers, protects wildlife habitats and woodland edges adjacent to

reserves and other designated open space areas.

3. Development: Where greenbelts fall within publicly or privately held parcels, there will be no removal of vegetation, grading or the building of structures, except where access is required to private parcels. The number and width of access drives should be kept to a minimum.

STREAM CORRIDORS

1. Limits: Defined by:
- a. Stream corridors include the water course, gravel bars (if any) and banks leading down to the stream. Greenbelts are provided outside of the defined corridors. (See p. 9 and Figure 1)
 - b. All other continuous flowing and intermittent flowing streams, not mentioned in the text, which support stands of established trees, shall be protected by a corridor measured 65 feet on either side of drainage centerline per the Municipality Wetlands Plan.
2. Uses: Water quality, wildlife habitat, public safety, public trails, recreation and preservation of scenic values. Gravel extraction is permitted by guidelines contained in the Municipal Code and through the public review process.
3. Development:
- a. Where stream corridors pass through publicly held lands there will be no removal of vegetation, grading or building of structures except where access is required to private parcels. The number and width of access drives should be kept to a minimum.
 - b. Where lesser drainages occur within privately held parcels, there will be restrictions regarding removal of

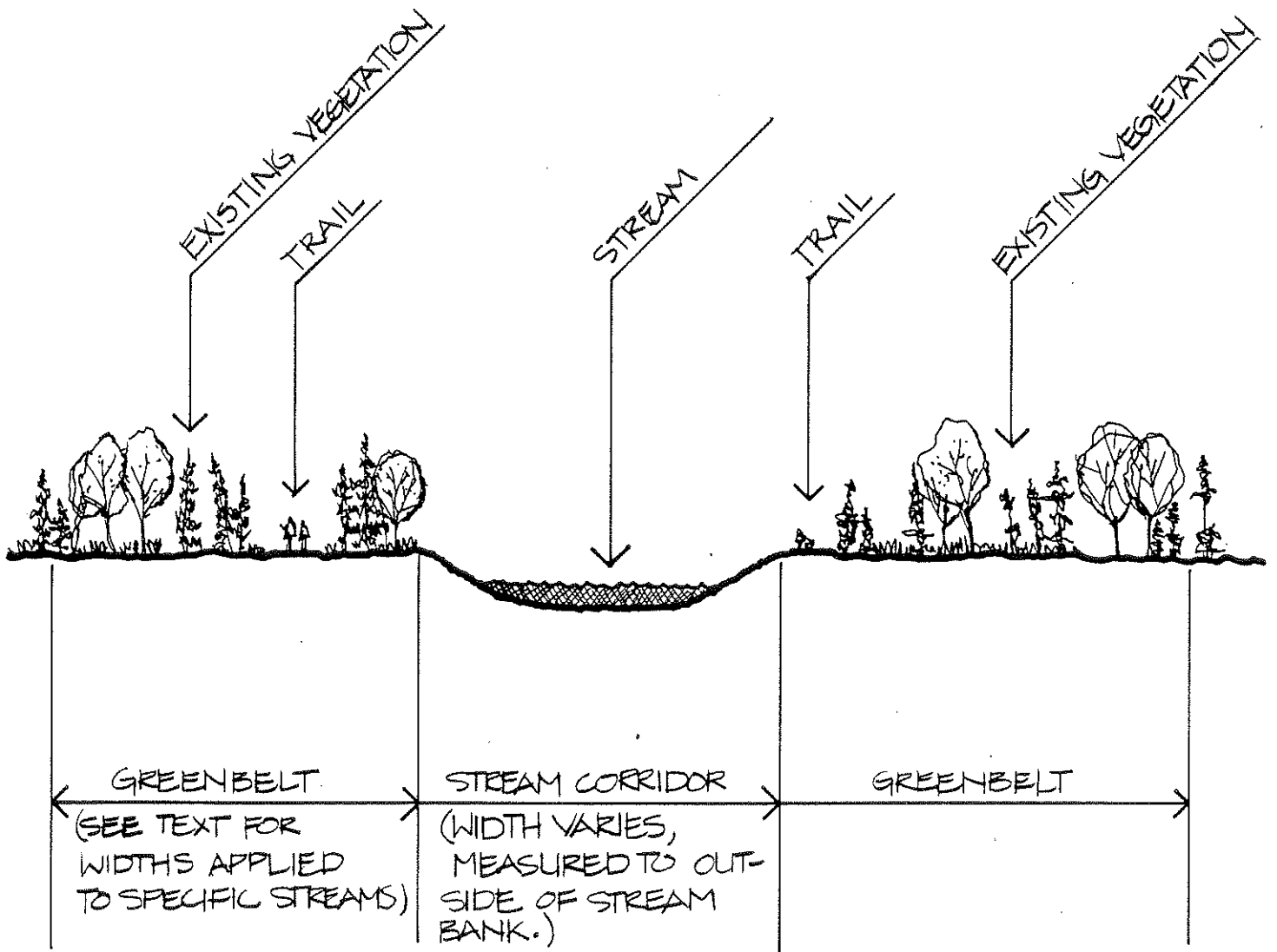


Figure 1 - Stream Corridor & Greenbelt Concepts

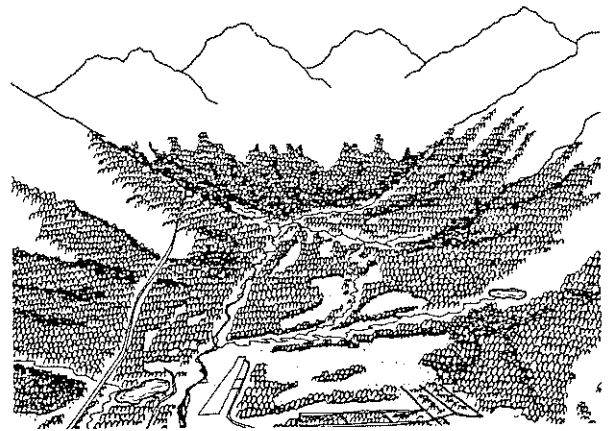
vegetation, grading, and the building of structures designed to maintain existing water quality and stream character.

TRAILS

1. Limits: Trail location as shown on the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
2. Use: Pursuits such as pedestrian usage, skiing, and non-vehicular traffic.
3. Development: Provide a forty foot right-of-way width to maintain sense of vegetation and terrain. Trails to be 6 feet to 8 feet wide, with a 10 to 12 foot clearance.

MARGINAL LANDS

1. Limits: Areas identified as marginal land in the Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan excluding those redesignated in the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
2. Use: Areas of moderately high environmental and visual sensitivity. These areas should not be used for facility development.
3. Development: According to the policies established in the Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan, development on marginal land is restricted due to poor soil and drainage conditions and generally should not occur, or should be limited to open space of passive recreational use.



The Park and Open Space Master Plan

PARK AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan contains two land use classifications (i.e. park and marginal lands) which are designated for parks and open spaces. The Parks and Open Space Master Plan further refines those two categories into six park and open space classifications based on community input and tailored to actual use recommendations. Those classifications are:

- 1) Reserves
- 2) Parks
- 3) Greenbelts
- 4) Stream Corridors
- 5) Trails
- 6) Marginal Lands

On the following pages, a recommended park and open space system is described using these six classifications. The park land described in this text should be set aside whenever the Municipality replats or takes similar action to create new tracts or parcels within the area. At that time the reservation of the land for the purposes contained in this report should be made and recorded as part of the plat. The intent is to plat the park land at the time other action is being contemplated; separate surveying and platting is not intended. Following the reservation of the land for park and open space, steps should be taken to dedicate these areas for park use. All lands identified for Parks and Open Space are publicly owned with the exception of the proposed "Delaney Neighborhood Park" in Indian Valley.

GIRDWOOD

PARK AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

The Girdwood Park and Open Space component of this Plan attempted to incorporate the comments as expressed by the community members during the various community meetings.

Many residents expressed a concern for protecting large significant areas considered to possess recreational, scenic, environmental, or educational values. These areas, such as Moose Meadows, and the coastal wetland are identified in the Master Plan as reserves.

During the first workshop, a park concept was developed that would encourage community parks to be located in central locations such as the elementary school or community hall area. Satellite neighborhood parks, such as Alyeska Basin Park and West Side Neighborhood Park would also fulfill this role. It was felt that these parks encourage community cohesiveness while providing nearby recreation opportunities.

Greenbelts serve to visually separate the neighborhoods while helping to retain woodland edges. In some areas the tree stands also provide essential windbreaks. Along roads, such as Crow Creek Road, the greenbelt helps preserve the wooded scenic drive.

Streams and creeks are plentiful and integral elements of the Girdwood valley. The stream corridors will help to protect the existing water quality as well as preserve the natural beauty of the area's waterways.

A strong desire to achieve a unified system of trails connecting the recreational and residential parts of the valley was also expressed by the community. Several of the trails presently exist, but require much upgrading while others have had no clearing. These trails should help enhance the pedestrian character of the Girdwood Valley. New residential development should incorporate trails which serve the new housing and connect with existing trails.

Girdwood Park and Open Space Master Plan

Legend

OPEN SPACE RESERVE

- 1 Moose Meadows
- 2 Tree Stand
- 3 California Creek Floodplain
- 4 Girdwood Coastal Wetland
- 5 Beaver Ponds and Preservation Wetlands
- 18 Glacier Creek - Virgin Creek Reserve
- 19 Wetland/Marginal Land Reserve

PARK

- 6 Central Community Park
- 7 Moose Meadows Park
- 8 Girdwood Elementary School / Community Park
- 9 Crow Creek Neighborhood Park
- 10 West Side Neighborhood Park
- 11 Old Girdwood School
- 12 Alyeska Basin Neighborhood Park
- 13 Virgin Creek Neighborhood Park
- 14 PLI Reserve

GREENBELT

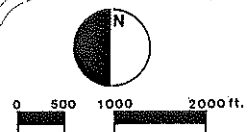
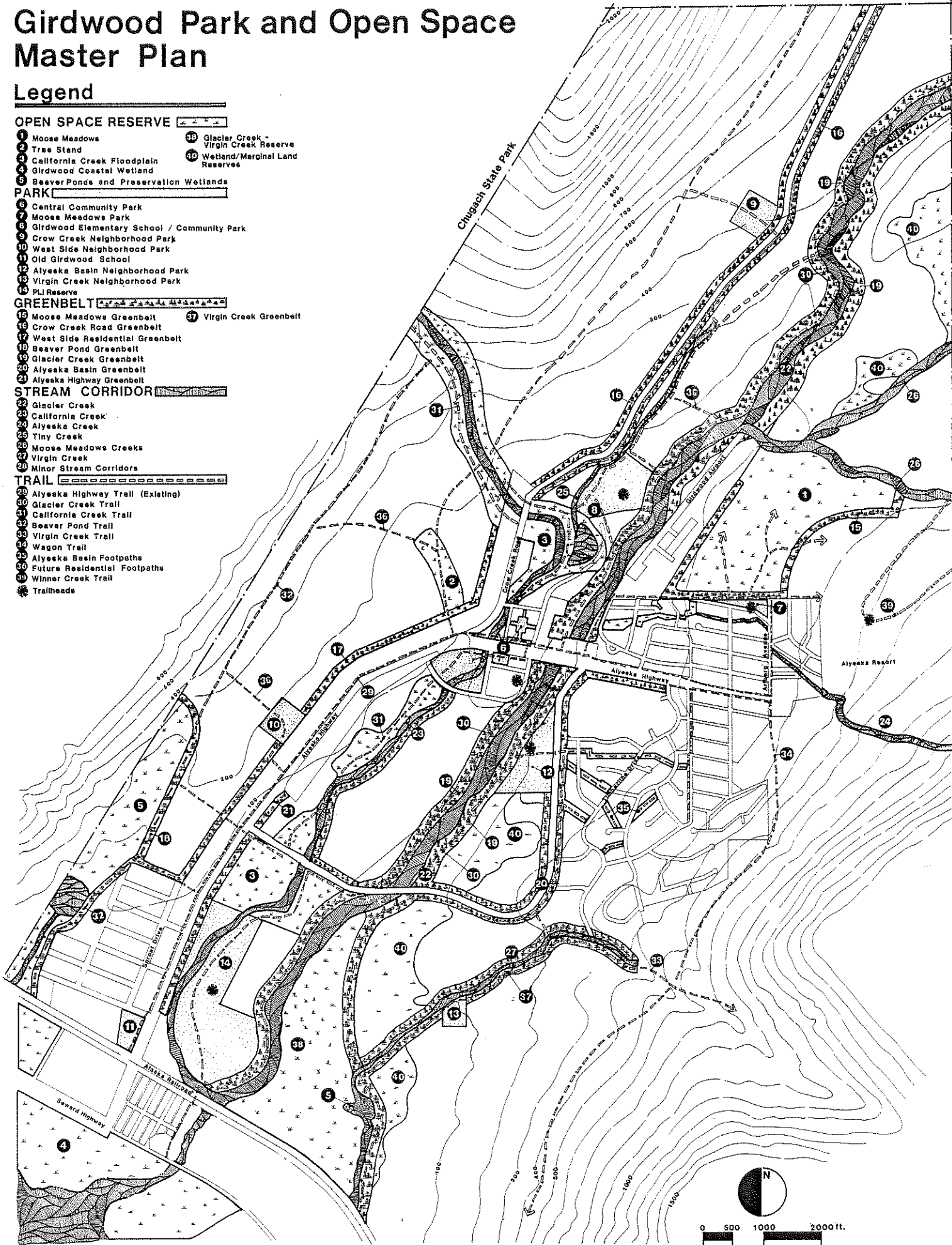
- 15 Moose Meadows Greenbelt
- 16 Crow Creek Road Greenbelt
- 17 West Side Residential Greenbelt
- 18 Beaver Pond Greenbelt
- 19 Glacier Creek Greenbelt
- 20 Alyeska Basin Greenbelt
- 21 Alyeska Highway Greenbelt
- 27 Virgin Creek Greenbelt

STREAM CORRIDOR

- 22 Glacier Creek
- 23 California Creek
- 24 Alyeska Creek
- 25 Tiny Creek
- 26 Moose Meadows Creeks
- 27 Virgin Creek
- 28 Minor Stream Corridors

TRAIL

- 29 Alyeska Highway Trail (Existing)
- 30 Glacier Creek Trail
- 31 California Creek Trail
- 32 Beaver Pond Trail
- 33 Virgin Creek Trail
- 34 Wagon Trail
- 35 Alyeska Basin Footpaths
- 36 Future Residential Footpaths
- 37 Winner Creek Trail
- Trailheads



GIRDWOOD

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

RESERVES

1. MOOSE MEADOWS

LOCATION: Northeast region of the Girdwood Valley from the east bank of Glacier Creek to the Chugach National Forest boundary.

VALUE: Moose Meadows is presently a major winter recreation area for the community and visitors. Its uses include cross-country skiing, dog mushing, and snow shoeing in the winter; hiking and berry picking in the summer and fall. Also, the meadows/wetlands have environmental significances with great interpretive potential.

SCOPE: Designate Moose Meadows for strictly recreational and educational use. Development could include limited walking trails while maintaining the extensive cross-country ski system. Consideration should be given to developing a short interpretive loop to connect to the Winner Creek Trail. Preliminary development plans, expanding ski resort facilities, have been approved by the Girdwood Board of Supervisors. These plans include a drive across a small portion of the Meadows, then along the eastern woodland edge. Every effort should be made to minimize the visibility of the development in order to maintain the woodland edge while providing public access to the Meadows.

2. "TREE STAND" AND ASSOCIATED MEADOWS

LOCATION: West of the intersection of Alyeska Highway and Crow Creek Road, between two meadows/wetlands.

VALUE: This is a scenic stand of trees presently serving as a trail corridor from the Alyeska Highway to the mountains. The wetlands surrounding this largely spruce

vegetated stand are classified as conservation wetlands. As such, portions of these wetlands, as well as the tree stand, should be retained.

SCOPE: The tree stand should be preserved to as great a degree as possible; only trail clearing should be allowed for improved access. Retention of the conservation wetlands should be implemented through the platting and development process (see #151 Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan).

Two options exist: (1) set the "Tree Stand and Meadows" aside when a plat is developed for the area; or (2) have it noted on future plats that there will be development restrictions to conserve the area as part of housing design. This second option would retain overall housing densities for the area.

3. CALIFORNIA CREEK RESERVE

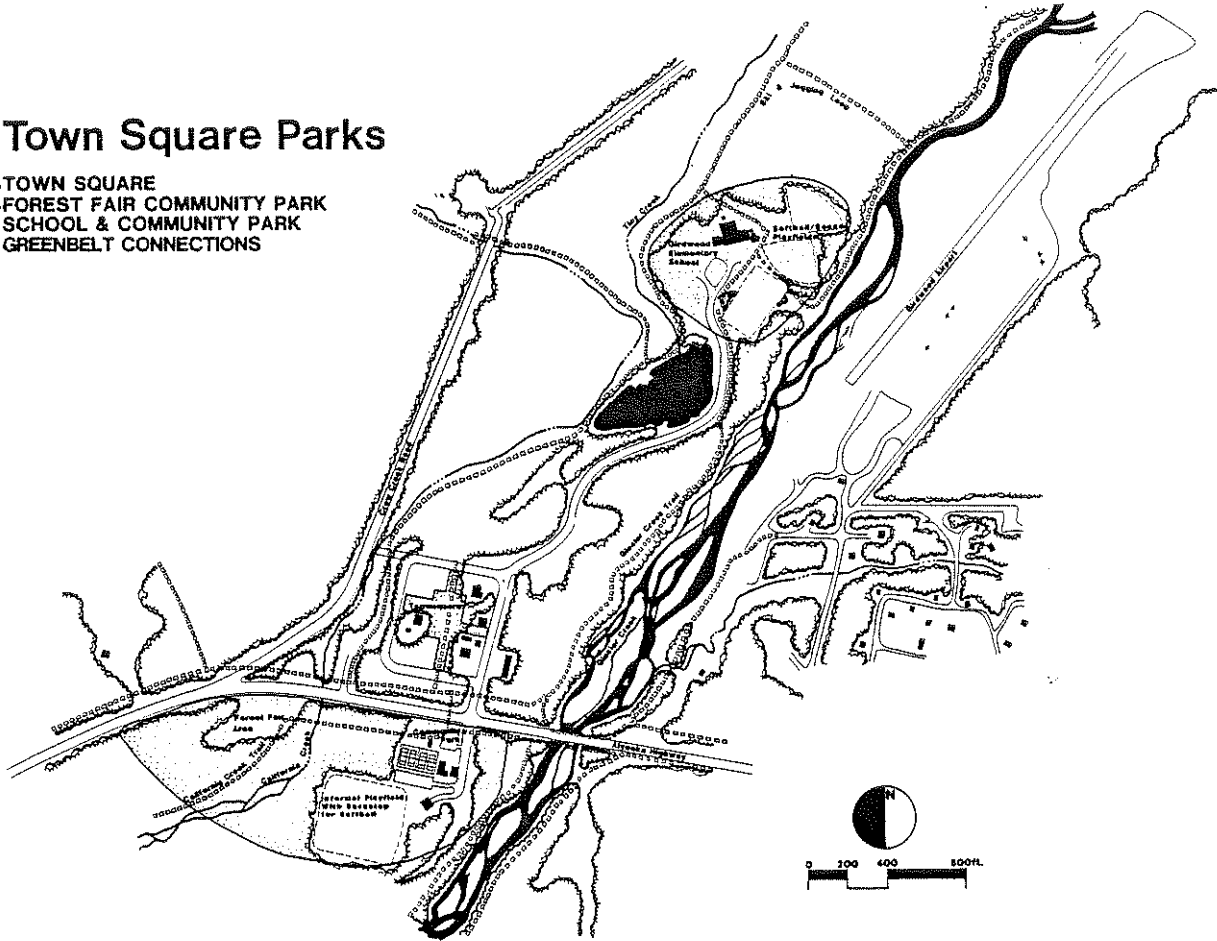
LOCATION: This reserve runs along much of the length of California Creek. Easement provisions were established for portions of the reserve when these and other lands were transferred from the State to the Municipality.

VALUE: These areas possess recreational, environmental and scenic value. The floodplain is designated for preservation in the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan.

SCOPE: Designate floodplain for recreational use including hiking/skiing trails. The floodplain also serves important wildlife habitat functions. Development should be limited to trail installation and accommodation of informal uses such as picnicking and wildlife observation. The trail should be located on the west side of California Creek where the state has reserved an easement for a 300 foot wide corridor. Only 100 feet have been set aside on the east side of the creek. A site plan for the community park should be prepared which incorporates the lakes

Town Square Parks

- TOWN SQUARE
- FOREST FAIR COMMUNITY PARK
- SCHOOL & COMMUNITY PARK
- GREENBELT CONNECTIONS



near the school and lower portions of the creek.

4. GIRDWOOD COASTAL WETLAND

LOCATION: Tidal flats along the Turnagain Arm at the mouth of Girdwood Valley.

VALUE: This is an unusual historic and natural wetland that is identified by the Anchorage Coastal Management Plan as an Area Meriting Special Attention. The location is the original townsite of Girdwood which was completely inundated by floods during the earthquake of 1964. Presently the site is a critical feeding and resting area for thousands of birds.

SCOPE: A master plan entitle Girdwood Coastal Wetland: Natural and Historic Interpretive Area (Land Design North, 1981) has been prepared for that area. The plan includes parking, trail, boardwalk and interpretive facilities, and should be used as a guideline at that time when capital improvements are programmed for this area and site planning is undertaken.

5. BEAVER PONDS AND PRESERVATION WETLANDS

LOCATION: Beaver ponds and associated wetlands are located west of the old school along the base of the mountains and along Virgin Creek north of the railroad.

VALUE: These areas are primarily valued as a beaver habitat providing educational and interpretive opportunities. Ski trials presently provide access.

SCOPE: Designate area for preservation, restricting development to minimal recreation elements such as limited trail preparation for improved public access. The Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan classifies these areas as preservation wetlands.

PARKS

6. TOWN SQUARE CENTRAL COMMUNITY PARK

LOCATION: Comprised of several parcels totaling approximately 15 acres all in close proximity to each other, including the Townsquare, Tract A, Community Hall/Old Library area, tennis courts, and Forest Fair area. These segments should be connected as an extended linear park which joins the school to the forest fair area via Glacier and California Creeks.

VALUE: Because of the central location and proximity to the Post Office and Mercantile, this is an ideal area for a community park, providing a central outdoor space for community members to meet and socialize. At the time of platting the intended purpose was to create a traditional town square similar to those found in mid-American cities. This idea has merit as a focal point of open space within the community. However, formalized plans should be prepared in order to ensure that such a square is incorporated as part of Girdwood's long-term growth.

SCOPE: The area is already developed with children's play equipment, four (4) tennis courts, the Community Hall, and the Old Library. The portion of the park south of Alyeska Highway should be limited to that area which is zoned PLI. Preferred improvements as expressed by the community include:

Townsquare - boardwalk footpath, sitting area and flower plantings. This area was set aside following the 1964 earthquake as part of the replat of the area. More formalized development should be considered as the community grows.

Tract A - sitting area and possible volleyball area.

Community Hall/Children's Play - upgrade parking, add more play

equipment, landscape, picnic facilities.

Tennis Courts - upgrade small courts to standard, devise a removable cover for two (2) courts to facilitate use during inclement weather play, add two courts in future.

Forest Fair Area - develop for year round community use with ski trails, boardwalks, benches and a permanent stage.

Old Library- a committee has been designated to determine renovation efforts.

Trailhead - to be located near parking for access to greenbelt trails.

A master site plan should be developed so that improvements can be programmed over time. Future planning for these sites should take into consideration the need to link the various parcels, the school, and the nearby greenbelts.

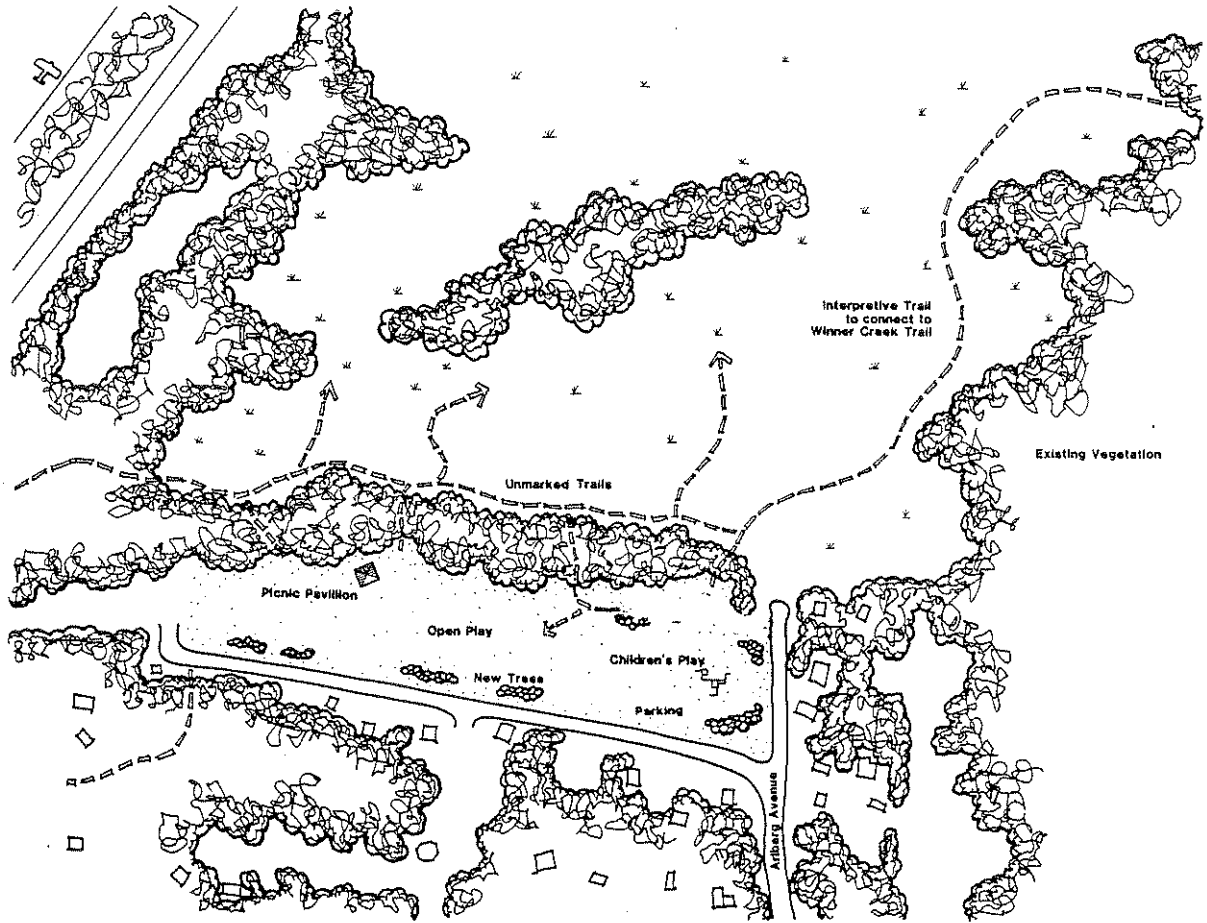
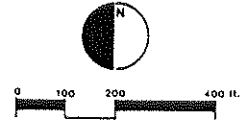
7. MOOSE MEADOWS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

LOCATION: South of Moose Meadows, in a Municipal parcel which is identified in this Master Plan as a neighborhood park. The trail itself should be located in vegetated areas to accommodate both winter and summer use.

VALUE: Development of the Access Park would alleviate the present conflicts between cross-country skiers and dog mushers, both of which park their vehicles along Arlberg Avenue and provide neighborhood park facilities for the nearby residents.

SCOPE: Development of this 5-10 acre park would incorporate parking (initially for 15-20 cars), picnic facilities, play equipment, playfields, trailhead for a one mile interpretive loop to connect with Winner Creek Trail and trailheads to the Moose Meadows reserve.

Moose Meadows Access Park



8. GIRDWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARK

- LOCATION:** Fifteen acres adjacent to the school site and Glacier Creek. This site is identified as the location for a community park because much of the infrastructure for community park facilities (such as the school rooms and playfields) are already in place. The school is the logical focus for sports field development. As Girdwood develops, enough space should be reserved for softball and soccer fields, and related community park facilities. Space for the expansion of the elementary school is also needed. Fifteen acres, in addition to the present size, should accommodate a small community park in this area.
- VALUE:** The school facilities presently accommodates many community functions as a result of the community schools program and the community library. These services can be expanded with outdoor facilities.
- SCOPE:** The school grounds need not be designated park land, however, the development of facilities could accommodate park values. Plans for the school include a multi-purpose play field (soccer and baseball), fitness trails, and a trailhead for cross-country ski trails. It is suggested that additional acreage be acquired to accommodate a community park with more extensive outdoor recreation facilities. To the extent that the size of the Girdwood Elementary School and associated community park is a matter of concern, the school site and park should be surveyed and platted. This community park should be linked to the Central Community Park (6) via California and Glacier Creek Greenbelts. A master plan should be prepared to coordinate and program development, and should incorporate the school site, the lake connecting trails, the town square, the creeks, the tennis court area, and the Forest Fair area.

9. CROW CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

LOCATION: This should be conceptualized as a "floating park", that is, its location will be determined as plans for residential development of the area are prepared. The park should be centrally located for the residents of Crow Creek Road and accessible by trails. The location shown on the map is only a possible location for the park.

VALUE: The park would provide neighborhood recreation opportunities within an area designated for future residential development.

SCOPE: This 5-10 acre park should retain an unstructured layout with unmowed grassy play areas, possibly a picnic facility and childrens' play equipment. Natural groupings of trees and shrubs would maintain aesthetic quality. Parking should be provided for ten (10) cars.

10. WEST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

LOCATION: West side of Alyeska Highway (Crow Creek Highway).

VALUE: As the area west of Alyeska Highway (Crow Creek Highway) develops, this site should be developed to provide neighborhood recreation opportunities.

SCOPE: Facilities for this 5-10 acre park should include children's play equipment, picnic, and open play areas. The retention of wooded areas would serve as a buffer between residential areas and provide a location for trails.

11. CALIFORNIA CREEK - GLACIER CREEK RESERVE

LOCATION: To the southwest of the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

VALUE: Potential public or institutional use, not necessarily a park use.

SCOPE: To be further considered with the update of Comprehensive Plan.

12. ALYESKA BASIN PARK

LOCATION: Adjacent to Glacier Creek floodplain along the western boundary of Alyeska Basin subdivision, south of Alyeska Highway.

VALUE: This park would provide neighborhood recreation opportunities for an existing but growing residential area.

SCOPE: Facilities in this 5-10 acre park should include play equipment, a picnic area, and an open play area large enough for softball, touch football or frisbee, and natural stands of trees and shrubs. A trailhead should be set up for access to the greenbelt trails.

13. VIRGIN CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

LOCATION: This park should be laid out along the south fork of Virgin Creek. A specific location should be reserved as plans for residential development of the area are prepared.

VALUE: This park would provide neighborhood recreation opportunities for an area designated for future development. The Virgin Creek area is greatly valued by the community for its scenic and environmental qualities.

SCOPE: This 5-10 acre park should retain an unstructured theme with unmowed grassy play areas, possibly a picnic area, groupings of trees and shrubs, and play equipment.

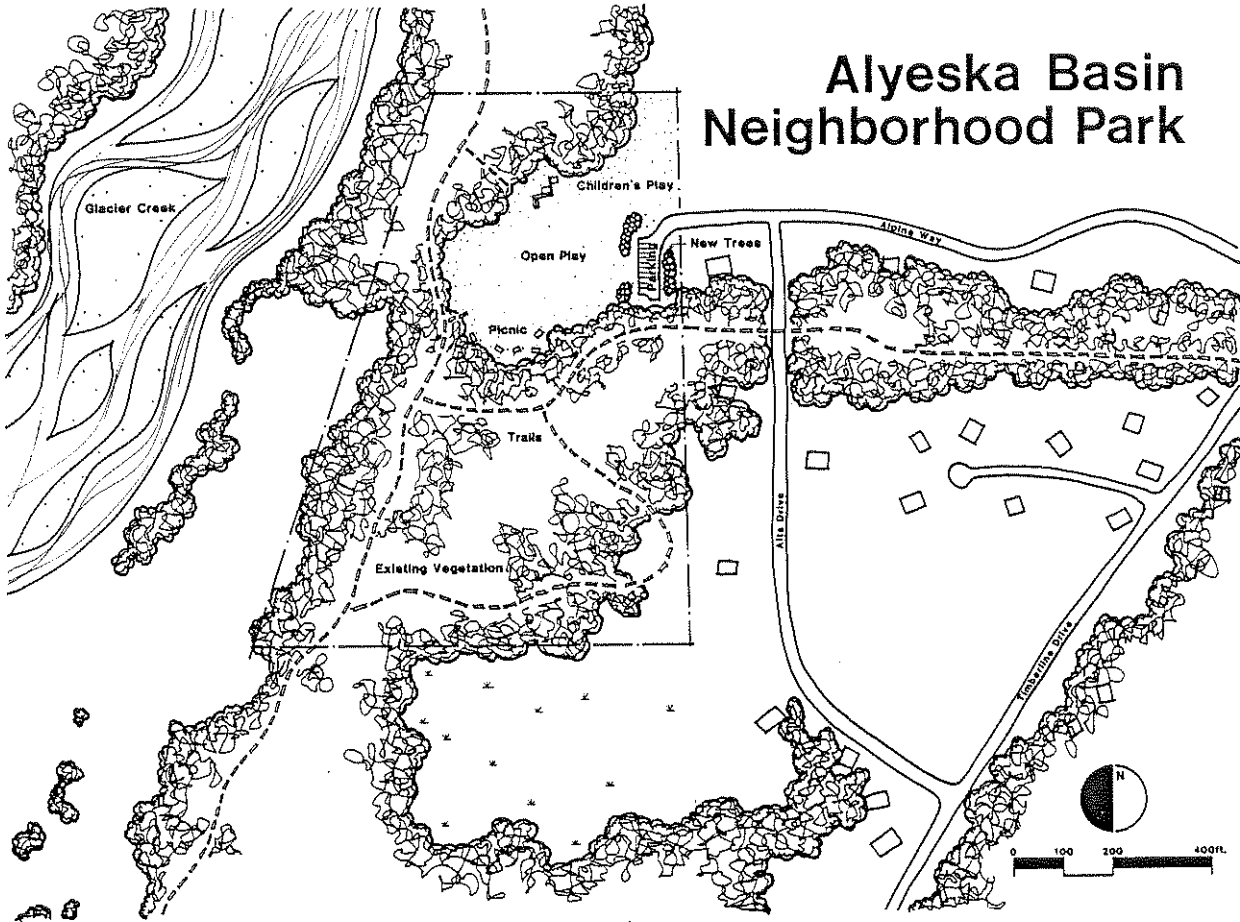
14. GIRDWOOD CAMPGROUND

LOCATION: Unspecified.

VALUE: The campground, with proper supervision, would help alleviate the existing squater problems while satisfying the demand for camping spaces in the Girdwood Valley.

SCOPE: The 10-20 acre campground should accommodate 20-30 camper vehicles and 10-20 tents, to be expanded as demand

Alyeska Basin Neighborhood Park



increases. Facilities should include picnic tables, firepits, restrooms, and running water. It could be operated as a concession or through an operation/management agreement with the State of Alaska. A trailhead should be set up for year-round access to the greenbelt trail system.

GREENBELTS

15. MOOSE MEADOWS GREENBELT

LOCATION: Woodlands edges along the lower portion of Moose Meadows.

VALUE: The wooded edge of the Moose Meadows serves as a scenic border giving the meadow its definition. Preservation of the edge is necessary to maintain the character of Moose Meadows. Along with scenic values the greenbelt provides wind protection.

SCOPE: Because of the jagged nature of the tree line, the need for a trail to access Winner Creek, and the varied topography, a width of 200 feet will be necessary to provide an adequate greenbelt. If less than the full tree line is set aside, the remaining buffer will be adversely affected by wind and the aesthetics of the greenbelt will be undermined. The trail corridor should be reserved for hiking and cross-country skiing.

Future plans may include a drive across a small portion of the Meadows, then along the eastern woodland edge. Every effort should be made to minimize the visibility of the development and encroachment of roadway in order to maintain the woodland edge while providing public access to the Meadows.

The 200 foot greenbelt can be set aside as part of open space reserve within the overall tract. In doing so, there could be a transfer of development potential of the 200 foot corridor to the other forested area, realizing overall development potential and preserving the economic value of the tract.

16. CROW CREEK ROAD GREENBELT

- LOCATION: Along both sides of Crow Creek Road from California Creek to the National Forest boundary.
- VALUE: The Crow Creek Road area has exceptional scenic and recreation value. The greenbelt would serve to preserve the character along Crow Creek Road while providing a visual buffer from future residential development.
- SCOPE: Within the 100' wide greenbelt on either side of the road no vegetation will be removed except for trail clearings and access drives to private property. The current alignment should be used in road design to minimize the amount of new vegetation which could have to be cleared. Roadways and driveways off Crow Creek Road across the greenbelt should occur no more frequently than every $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to minimize disturbance of, and conflicts with, the trail and greenbelt. Driveway and roadway widths should be minimized where they cross the greenbelt. There has been some discussion of relocating Crow Creek Road. The community has expressed the desire to upgrade the existing road rather than clear more vegetation for a new road.

17. WEST SIDE RESIDENTIAL GREENBELT

- LOCATION: Western boundary behind private property bordering Alyeska Highway (Crow Creek Highway).
- VALUE: This greenbelt would provide a visual and physical separation between existing and future residential development. The greenbelt, as shown on the map, is conceptual. The intent is to buffer different types of residential development and provide a pedestrian and ski trail to link West Side Neighborhood Park (10), residences along the greenbelt, California Creek Tree Stand (2) and Crow Creek Neighborhood Park. The greenbelt should be set aside as part of any plats for the area.

SCOPE: The width of this greenbelt should vary; however, a minimum of 100' should be set aside to provide a buffer and space for a footpath/ski trail.

18. BEAVER POND GREENBELT

LOCATION: Southwestern edge of Girdwood Valley, surrounding Beaver Pond's Reserve.

VALUE: The wooded edge of the Beaver Pond Reserve serves as a visual and wind barrier between residential areas and the reserve, while preserving the character of the beaver habitat.

SCOPE: Within this 100' wide greenbelt no vegetation will be removed except for trail clearing.

19. GLACIER CREEK GREENBELT

LOCATION: This greenbelt should be set aside along eastern and western edge of Glacier Creek between the Alyeska Highway and the railroad tracks.

VALUE: Glacier Creek has much scenic, recreational and environmental value. The wooded edges are an important element of the creek's character. The greenbelt would help preserve this character, buffering residential development, while providing trail corridors.

SCOPE: Because of the extensive width of the braided creek, a wider greenbelt should be reserved particularly south of the bridge. A 200 foot greenbelt space on either side running the length of the creek will be needed: (1) to protect the stands of large cottonwoods on the west side of the creek and stands of spruce and nearby lake on the east side of the creek; (2) to provide adequate space for trail development; and (3) to maintain the sense of place - the natural setting - which the greenbelt should evoke to its users.

20. ALYESKA BASIN GREENBELT

- LOCATION: This should be set aside to the west of the existing Alyeska Subdivision. The location on the map is conceptual. The actual greenbelt should be set aside at the time of platting.
- VALUE: This greenbelt includes access to the stream corridor, trails, and the neighborhood park while providing a visual and physical separation between existing and future residential development. Again, the Master Plan map shows greenbelt conceptually. The greenbelt will ultimately provide open space and recreation opportunities as development occurs. Roadways and driveways across the greenbelt should occur no more frequently than every $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to minimize disturbance of, and conflicts with, the trail and greenbelt. Driveway and roadway widths should be minimized where they cross the greenbelt.
- SCOPE: This greenbelt should have a minimum width of 100 feet on those sections where it crosses public land. No vegetation will be removed except for trail clearing and access to private property. The number and width of access drives should be kept to a minimum.

21. ALYESKA HIGHWAY GREENBELT

- LOCATION: Along the Alyeska Highway on publicly owned lands.
- VALUE: Maintain a scenic entrance to the Girdwood Valley.
- SCOPE: Within this 100' wide greenbelt as measured from R.O.W., no vegetation will be removed except for the purpose of accessing private property. The number and width of access drives should be kept to a minimum. Roadway and driveways off Alyeska Highway across the greenbelt should occur no more frequently than every $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to minimize disturbance of, and conflicts with, the trail and greenbelt. Driveway and roadway widths should be minimized where they cross the greenbelt.

STREAM CORRIDORS

22. GLACIER CREEK

LOCATION: Flows through the middle of Girdwood Valley, starting from the upper end of the valley and emptying into the Turnagain Arm.

VALUE: Glacier Creek, one of three major creeks in Girdwood, is of great scenic, recreation and environmental value. The creek bed also serves as a valuable source of gravel. Designating the creek as a stream corridor should maintain and improve water quality, fish resources and wildlife habitat, in compliance with the Coastal Management and the Wetlands plans.

SCOPE: The stream corridor is defined as that area within the outside banks of the creek, including both the water and braided gravel bed. Development and improvements are limited to recreational purposes including clearing of fallen timber to encourage white water boating. Every effort should be made to keep the number and width of vehicular bridges to a minimum; trail crossings should be designed as part of new bridge construction.

23. CALIFORNIA CREEK

LOCATION: Flowing from Chugach Mountains in Chugach State Park to the west beneath the Crow Creek Road bridge to just west of Glacier Creek then on to the Turnagain Arm.

VALUE: As the second major creek in Girdwood, California Creek has much recreational, scenic and historic significance. When combined with proposed reserves, parks, trails, and a campground, the Glacier Creek stream corridor will become a focus of recreational activities. There are numerous artifacts and remnants along its banks from the gold mining days of the turn-of-the-century.

SCOPE: The stream corridor is defined as that area between the edge of the banks on either side of the creek. A 100 foot greenbelt shall adjoin the stream corridor on either side of California Creek along its entire length. Development is to be restricted to recreational uses. No grading or building of structures is allowed within the corridor. Every effort should be taken to keep the number and width of vehicular bridges to a minimum.

24. ALYESKA CREEK

LOCATION: Running in an east-west direction through the Alyeska Basin section north of Alyeska Highway.

VALUE: Although of lesser significance than any of the stream corridors mentioned above, it has important value in providing buffer space and as a pleasing natural amenity to those residing in the area.

SCOPE: There is an existing 15-25' easement along either side of the creek that should be maintained.

25. TINY CREEK

LOCATION: Near Girdwood Elementary School

VALUE: Girdwood Elementary School has plans for utilizing this creek for educational purposes as a medium for creating an aquaculture study area.

SCOPE: Development is limited to recreation related facilities and trails. Since this creek was realigned during the construction of the school, additional realignment, to suit the aquaculture study needs would be acceptable. Limits of the corridor are defined by the 65' easement from either side of the drainage centerline.

26. NORTH WOODS MEADOWS CREEKS

LOCATION: Tributaries of Glacier Creek flowing through the Moose Meadows.

VALUE: Moose Meadows is of major recreational and scenic value to residents of Girdwood. It is essential that these streams are protected.

SCOPE: Development is limited to recreation related facilities and trails. Limits of the corridor are defined by the 65 foot easement from either side of the drainage centerline.

27. VIRGIN CREEK

LOCATION: Flowing from the southeastern mountains of the Girdwood Valley, splitting into two major forks at the southern edge of Alyeska Basin, and meeting with Glacier Creek.

VALUE: The Virgin Creek area is noted for its historical value and signs of the old wagon trail can still be seen in the vicinity. The creek is also valued as a wildlife habitat for beaver and as a berry picking area.

SCOPE: The stream corridor is considered to be that area between the edge of banks on either side of the creek. Greenbelts, measuring at least 100 feet, should be set aside on both sides of the creek at the time of platting. Development within the corridor is restricted to recreational uses. No removal of vegetation, grading or building of structures is allowable within the easement. Should residential areas be developed around Virgin Creek, the number and width of roadway crossings of the Creek should be kept to a minimum. All beaver ponds located in this area of the Virgin creek drainage must not be disturbed.

28. MINOR STREAM CORRIDORS

- LOCATION:** These are not identified on the Park Open Space Master Plan but are found throughout the valley.
- VALUE:** These plentiful creeks, though small individually, are large in the importance to the character of Girdwood. Additionally, many of the creeks passing through private property supply the residents with their water source.
- SCOPE:** The natural water channels should be retained. Removal of vegetation, grading building of structures or any other activity that would alter the quality or character of the corridor should not be permitted.

TRAILS

Trails were originally major transportation links in this area. The Iditarod Trail ran along Turnagain Arm, through the tiny Girdwood community, and crossed into the Eagle River drainage at Crow Pass. While the Iditarod Trail was cleared and maintained by the Territorial government around 1910, there are few distinct remnants of the trail known today. Still, those trails that head to the northeast follow a similar route. These include the Wagon Trail, Glacier Creek Greenbelt trails and those trails which run parallel to Alyeska Highway. The use of Crow Pass as an Iditarod branch was brief, lasting only a season or two because of avalanche danger. The most clearly visible segments of the trail lie in the vicinity of Monarch Mine near Crow Pass.

The use of trails has become largely recreational over time. However, the trail system which is outlined below provides a means to get around the community within a greenbelt setting and with a minimum of road crossings.

29. ALYESKA HIGHWAY TRAIL

LOCATION: Runs along upper side of Alyeska Highway from the Seward Highway to the resort.

VALUE: The ability to walk, bicycle, and ski from point to point in the Girdwood Valley is critical to the lifestyle of the community. The proposed bike path will alleviate the serious safety problems of pedestrian and bicyclists that travel along the highway.

SCOPE: A paved trail was constructed along the west side of the Alyeska Highway during the summers of 1982 and 1983. The trail extends north along the Highway approximately 3.1 miles. It begins at the old Girdwood Elementary School site and extends to the Alyeska Resort parking area. Another offshoot of the bike trail extends along the access to the New Girdwood School site.

30. GLACIER CREEK TRAIL

LOCATION: Runs along eastern banks of the Glacier Creek Stream Corridor from the railroad to the new Girdwood School. Segments on

the western bank trail run from the sewer plant to the Community Hall and become part of a network of measured trails north of the school.

VALUE: These trails will form the central vein of the trail system connecting the north and south regions of the valley.

SCOPE: The trail should be developed according to Municipal and State trail standards. Some signage may be necessary at trailhead to identify these as non-vehicular trails. Two pedestrian bridges, one by the school and one by the sewer plant, would unify the network of trails.

31. CALIFORNIA CREEK TRAIL

LOCATION: Extends the length of California Creek crossing Alyeska Highway and provides pedestrian access to the elementary school and State Park's California Creek trailhead.

VALUE: This trail provides access to many recreation areas; such as the campground, the central community park, stream corridor and reserves, along California Creek while providing space for running, cross-country skiing and hiking.

SCOPE: The trail should be developed according to Municipal standards. Some signage may be necessary at trailheads to identify these as non-vehicular trails.

32. BEAVER POND TRAIL

LOCATION: Western edge of Girdwood, running north from the Seward Highway and connecting with California Creek.

VALUE: This trail would provide pedestrian access along the base of the western mountains from the beaver ponds to the valley. As this area west of Alyeska Highway (Crow Creek Highway) develops, this trail will greatly increase in use.

SCOPE: This trail should be developed according to Municipal standards. Some signage may be necessary at trailheads to identify it for non-vehicular use.

33. VIRGIN CREEK TRAIL

LOCATION: Extends along both forks of Virgin Creek Stream Corridor.

VALUE: In addition to access to the Virgin Creek Stream Corridor, it also accesses the region's neighborhood park system with extensions of the trail to the west.

SCOPE: Some signage may be necessary at trailheads to identify it for non-vehicular use. Municipal standards should be used in trail development.

34. WAGON TRAIL

LOCATION: Extends north from the southern tip of Girdwood Valley along the eastern edge.

VALUE: This trail follows the historic old wagon trail along the eastern mountain face, passing through natural scenic areas to the resort connecting with the Winner Creek Trail.

SCOPE: Develop according to Municipal trail standards. Some signage may be necessary at trailheads to identify it for non-vehicular use.

35. ALYESKA BASIN FOOTPATHS

LOCATION: Series of intermittent paths accessed from Glacier Creek and Alyeska Highway trails located on existing park reserves throughout the Alyeska Basin.

VALUE: Provides access to major trails, one of which is the proposed bikepath and also to Alyeska Basin Community Park and the adjacent reserve.

SCOPE: These neighborhood trails may receive extensive use which would suggest the need to pave an 8' width with a 2' width clearance on either side. As unpaved

trails, these footpaths will require a clearing 4-6 feet wide, according to standards set by the Areawide Trails Plan.

36. FUTURE RESIDENTIAL FOOTPATHS

- LOCATION: As residential areas develop, footpaths should be planned to provide a continuous network connecting all major trails, local neighborhood parks, reserves and stream corridors. Such elements should be shown on the development plans for site plan review.
- VALUE: These neighborhood trails are essential for providing safe pedestrian access throughout the valley, while maintaining the lifestyle established by the Girdwood Community.
- SCOPE: These trails should be designed so as to avoid crossing arterial roadways, yet easily accessible to all members of the neighborhood. Ideally, the trails would not parallel roads but pass through easements of adjoining back yards. In areas of extensive use, these trails should be paved to an 8' width with a 2' clearance on either side. Where footpaths remain unpaved, 4-6 feet is sufficient.

37. VIRGIN CREEK GREENBELT

- LOCATION: This greenbelt runs along the outside bank of the creek as it flows from the National Forest area to the wetlands in the lower portion of the valley.
- VALUE: The greenbelt will serve as a buffer space between residential areas, as a scenic amenity for future residents and as a trail corridor for Girdwood citizens.
- SCOPE: A minimum of 100 feet from each bank of the creek should be set aside. Trail development should be accommodated in that space.

38. GLACIER CREEK - VIRGIN CREEK RESERVE

LOCATION: These wetlands lie along the drainages of Glacier and Virgin Creeks, north of the Seward Highway.

VALUE: This reserve is classified as a preservation wetland under the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan. Its values include wildlife habitat, open space in the context of community development, and limited recreation purposes such as trail use. A series of ponds within the area serve as beaver habitats.

SCOPE: The wetlands and streams of the area as defined in the Wetlands Plan (to be further mapped by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

39. WINNER CREEK TRAILS

LOCATION: Two branches can be potentially established. The existing trail starts near the north end of the ski resort. The Moose Meadows Greenbelt provides another access corridor to Winner Creek.

VALUE: To provide access on a year-round basis to the Winner Creek area and to serve as a separated trail from the roadways which will be developed in the vicinity, these tracts are platted by the Municipality for development.

SCOPE: At least 50 feet on either side of the existing trail at the time of the platting. Footpath/ski trail development should be the extent of improvements in this area.

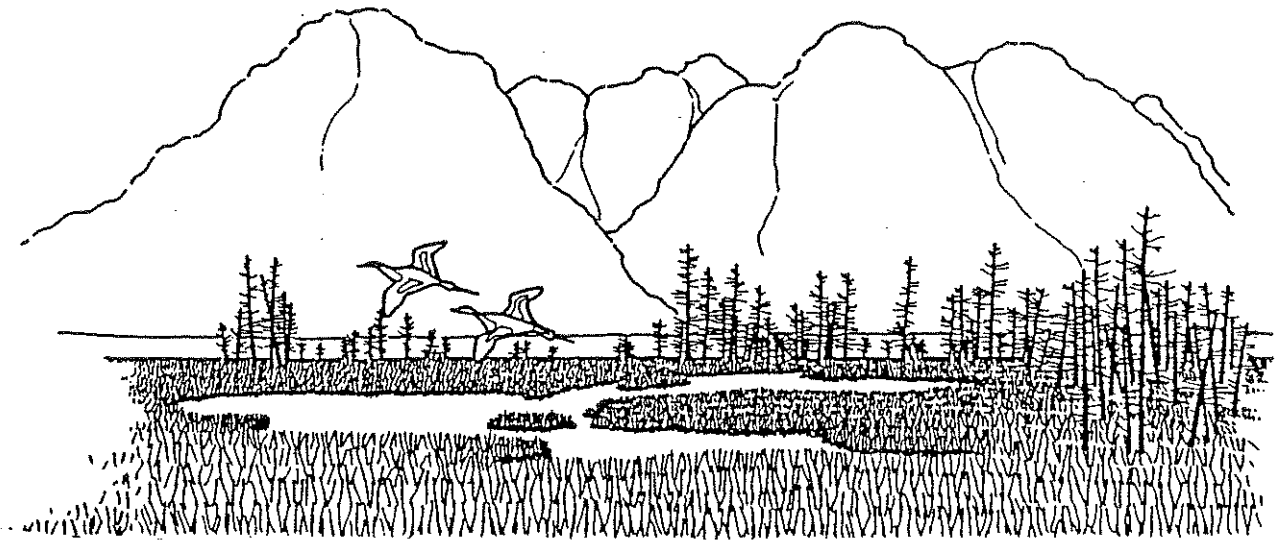
40. WETLAND/MARGINAL LAND RESERVES

LOCATION: These wetlands, located east of Glacier Creek, were identified in the Comprehensive Plan as marginal lands.

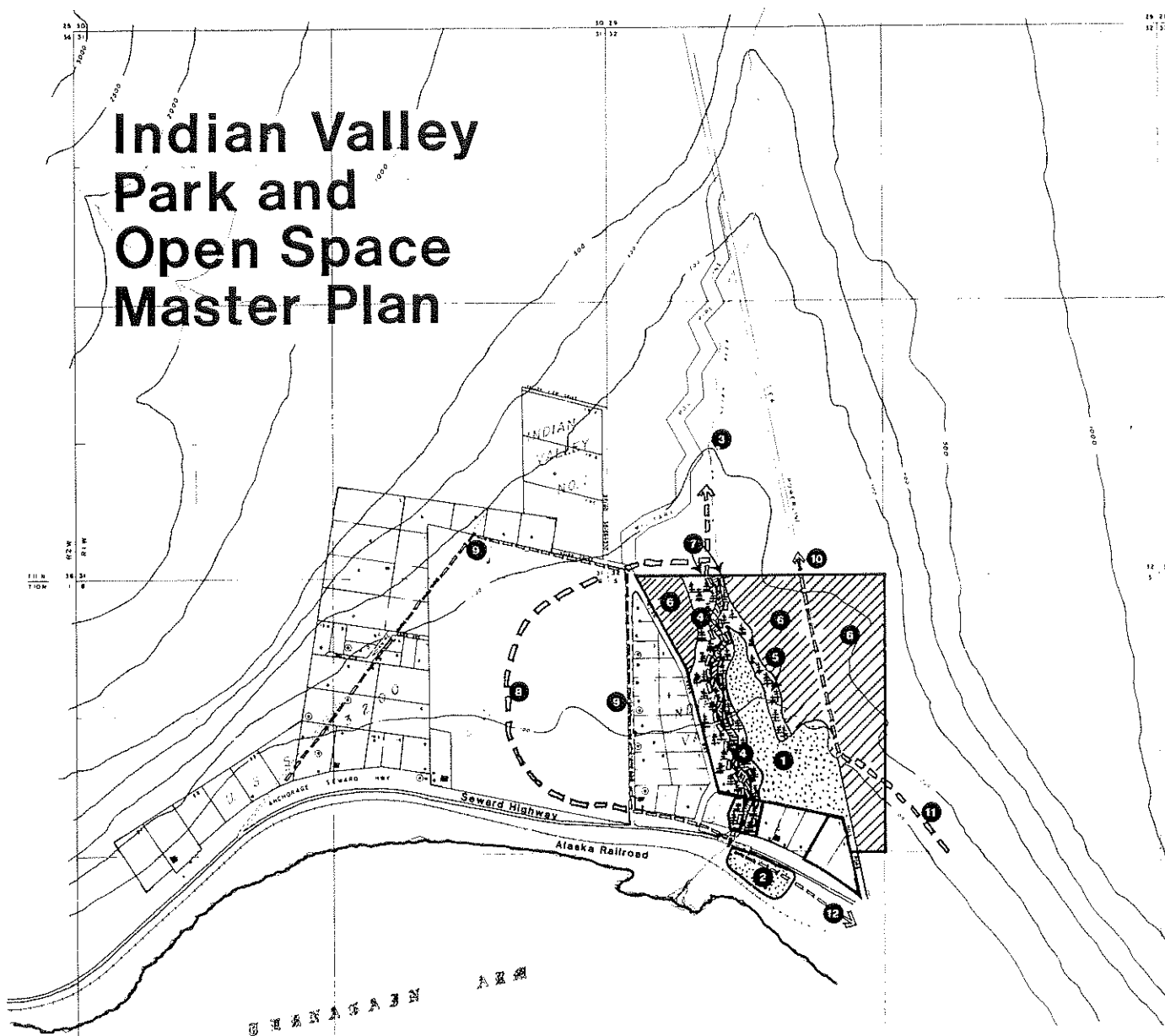
VALUE: As noted in the Comprehensive Plan this area has value as part of the greenbelt system, serving to promote passive recreation opportunities and environmental protection (i.e., wetland protection).

SCOPE:

The areas due east of the creek should be treated as an extension of the Glacier Creek Greenbelt to the extent that they coincide with the area designated as marginal land in the Comprehensive Plan.

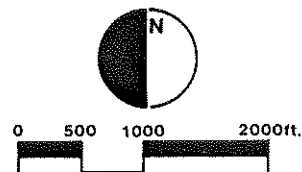


Indian Valley Park and Open Space Master Plan



Legend

- PARK**
- ① Indian Creek Neighborhood Park
 - ② Boulder Stadium Community Park
- STREAM CORRIDOR**
- ③ Indian Creek
- GREENBELTS**
- ④ Indian Creek Greenbelt
 - ⑤ Hillside Greenbelt
- RESERVES**
- ⑥ Environmental Reserves
- TRAIL**
- ⑦ Indian Creek Trails
 - ⑧ Delaney Neighborhood Trail
 - ⑨ Collector Trail
 - ⑩ Powerline Pass Trail
 - ⑪ Auxillary Trail to Bird Ridge, Indian Pass
 - ⑫ Indian-Bird Trail



INDIAN VALLEY
PARK AND OPEN SPACE

The Indian Valley Park and Open Space Plan identifies three significant components. "Boulder Stadium," the site of the softball field and trail head to the south of the highway is the major existing local park. The Indian Creek greenbelt and neighborhood park are the other potential assets which are highly recommended.

Of great importance to both Bird Creek and Indian Valley has been the development of the Indian-Bird Trail along the Seward Highway, providing safe bicycle and pedestrian access between the communities. Grade separated trail crossings still need to be programmed for development.

Much of the future Indian Valley park system will be carved from a Municipal land selection. Within that 105 acre parcel, the focus of the park system should be the greenbelt along the creek and neighborhood park. Open space reserves from this Municipal parcel should include the conservation of the steep slope running southeast to northwest and the high avalanche area east of the powerline. Approximate acreages extracted for these purposes would be: 18.25 acres of greenbelt land, 15 acres for the neighborhood park, 4 acres of hillside greenbelt and 5.5 acres of avalanche zone, east of the powerline.

The current population of Indian is approximately 140 persons. With subdivision and development of vacant parcels it can be expected that the population could grow to a few hundred persons. The Indian Creek greenbelt, neighborhood park and "Boulder Stadium" provide over 35 acres of park and open space. In view of the standard of 2.5 acres of neighborhood parkland per thousand people and the fact that Chugach State Park surrounds the community, Indian Valley residents will be well served with the implementation of this plan. Should the allowable densities be changed to a higher level in a future reevaluation of the Comprehensive Plan, there should be a concurrent reevaluation to the park elements to examine the need for mini-parks in the community.

The realization of the park system would have to await a series of decisions and procedures. First, the whole tract would have to be surveyed to allow the Municipality to receive patent to the land. Second, the areas which are to be extracted for various uses (for example, the park areas, the environmental reserves) should be surveyed and the park-related tracts dedicated for that use.

INDIAN VALLEY
SITE DESCRIPTIONS

PARKS

1. INDIAN CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

LOCATION: To the east of Indian Creek, adjoining proposed greenbelt.

VALUE: Borders stream corridor of Indian Creek. The relative proximity to residences and its advantages in relation to the creek and hillside provide a good location for this type of park.

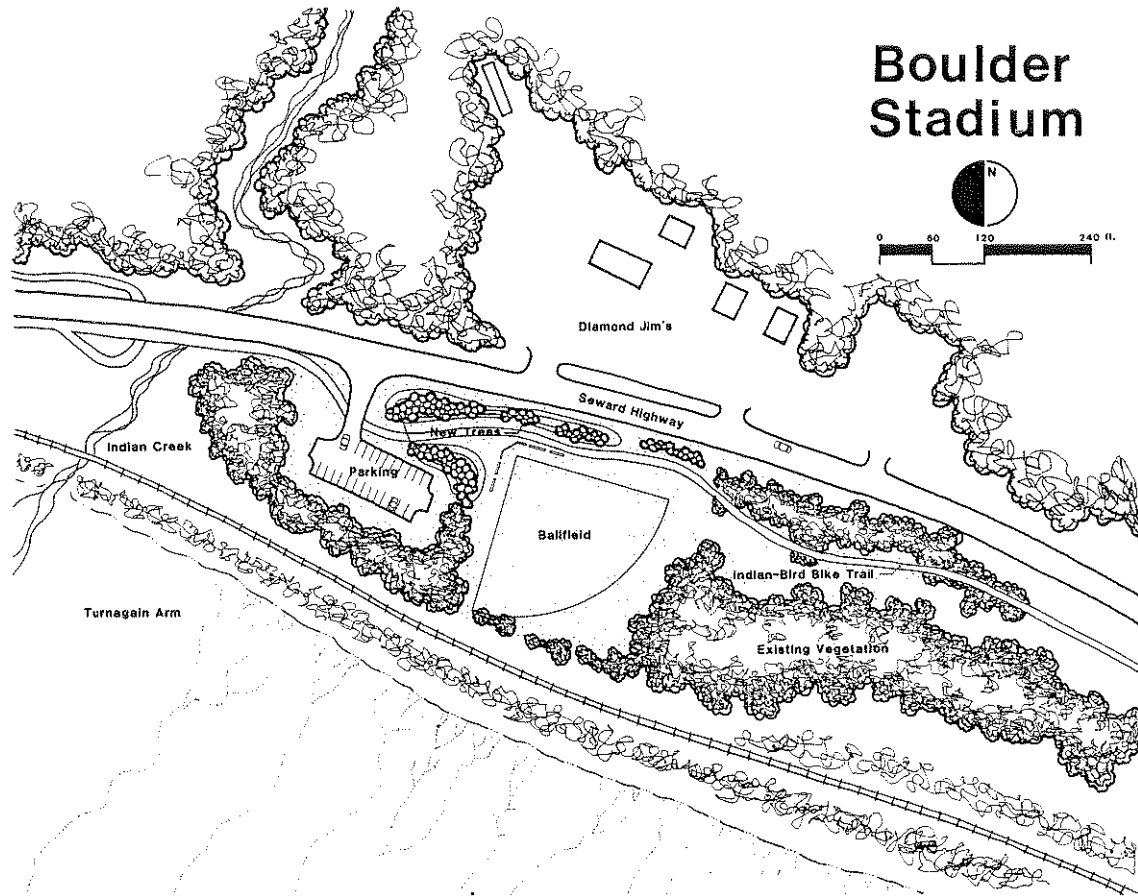
SCOPE: This site, in excess of fifteen acres, would make this the primary local park for Indian residents. It should include a children's playground, picnic shelters and open play areas. Its location, next to the greenbelt, will provide trail access from other points in Indian Valley. This park should be extracted from the Municipal land selection in this area. A portion of the park should include the slope located on its northeast side: that slope can serve local residents as a sledding hill in winter. An open play area ("play meadow") should be created down slope from the sledding hill, serving as a picnic site, frisbee-throwing area and related summer pastimes. The park should include a children's playground and picnic shelter. This location and type of development have been identified by Indian residents. The need for parking should be assessed at that time when a site plan is prepared for the park.

2. "BOULDER STADIUM" COMMUNITY PARK

LOCATION: South of the Seward Highway to the east of Indian Creek.

VALUE: This area serves as the current location for softball games for both Indian and Bird and is presently maintained locally for this purpose.

Boulder Stadium



SCOPE: Access to the Indian-Bird bike trail, and latrine and parking facilities are available at the park.

STREAM CORRIDOR

3. INDIAN CREEK

LOCATION: Eastern portion of Indian, running from the Indian Valley under Seward Highway, to Turnagain Arm.

VALUE: Area valued for scenic, recreational and wildlife values. Access to the potential Indian Creek neighborhood park.

SCOPE: The stream corridor includes that area between the outside banks of the creek. There will be no removal of vegetation, grading, building of structures (except the upgrading of bridges), or any other activity having adverse impacts on the water quality or stream character other than existing mining claims and homes.

4. INDIAN CREEK GREENBELT

LOCATION: Along both sides of Indian Creek from the south edge of the Municipal selection to Chugach State Park. Presently reserved as part of the greenbelt is the two-acre, Municipal lot adjoining Seward Highway.

VALUE: Indian Creek is a beautiful stream, running through a spruce-birch forest. This greenbelt should be set aside to protect water quality and wildlife habitat. A footpath/ski trail should be the extent of improvements, providing local access near the creek.

SCOPE: 150 feet of greenbelt space should be set aside on the west side of the creek. The existing alignment of Indian Creek Way should be used as the western boundary of the greenbelt. That area, between the creek and Indian Creek Way, should be reserved as a greenbelt as part of the plan for this Municipal land selection. (The area beyond 150 feet in the northwest corner of the municipal selection

should be retained as a reserve within Heritage Land Bank until the disposition of the total 105 acre area has been determined. (See 7, Environmental Reserves.) The proposed Indian Creek neighborhood park should adjoin the greenbelt to the east side of the creek.

NOTE: There are two potential mining claims along the creek within the Municipal land selection. The validity of the claims is being contested at this point in time via the U.S. Bureau of Land Management appeal process.

5. INDIAN CREEK HILLSIDE GREENBELT

LOCATION: A steep hillside running southeast to northwest to the east of the creek. Generally along the 125 foot contour.

VALUE: The hillside is richly vegetated, protecting the slopes which are typically in excess of 40 percent. The change in elevation varies from 50 to 75 feet in a relatively short space.

SCOPE: This area should be maintained in its natural state. It will serve as the eastern edge of the neighborhood.

The change in elevation provides very favorable views from the top of the bluff.

OPEN SPACE RESERVES

6. ENVIRONMENTAL RESERVES

LOCATION: Two areas are identified in the plan. One area, approximately four acres in size, lies between the proposed Indian Creek Greenbelt (i.e. west of the line 150' away from the west bank of the creek) and the right-of-way of Indian Creek way.

The other environmental reserve, over thirty acres in size, lies east of the hillside greenbelt (that is, that area generally of 40 percent or greater slope,

lying generally along the 125 foot contour). This area includes a high risk avalanche run-out which originates on Bird Ridge.

VALUE: The environmental reserve status is placed on this land because its long term assets to Indian and the Municipality cannot be determined at this point in time. This is further discussed below.

SCOPE: The areas labeled "Environmental Reserve" are designated as such in view of a number of factors. First, approximately six acres of the area east of the powerline is a high risk avalanche zone and should not be developed. Secondly, there are potential mining claims along the creek which are unresolved at this time. If the claims are recognized during the appeal process, the scope of the neighborhood park and greenbelts may be reduced. This would warrant extensive areas within these reserves being set aside for park purposes. Finally, the patent to the 105 acre Municipal selection is yet to be issued and entails surveying before coming into Municipal ownership. In view of these factors, the most appropriate classification of this land at this time is "environmental reserve." Should the greenbelt and neighborhood park be realized and dedicated as depicted in this plan, then analyses of the land for residential purposes should be undertaken in conjunction with the Heritage Land Bank. Analyses should include capability of land to sustain on-site water and sewer systems, access, lot size and location relative to the avalanche run-out and greenbelts. Such an evaluation should be made during the next updating, projected to be the early 1990s.

TRAILS

7. INDIAN CREEK TRAILS

- LOCATION: Running parallel to Indian Creek as part of greenbelt and neighborhood park.
- VALUE: A trail system along the creek would be a major means to enjoy the creek and greenbelt and provide access to Chugach State Park as well as the Indian Neighborhood Park.
- SCOPE: There are existing trails in place along or near the creek. A footpath/ski trail system would have to be located and better defined as part of site planning.

8. TRAIL PROVISIONS FOR "DELANEY NEIGHBORHOOD"

- LOCATION: This centrally-located tract, which is roughly 100 acres in size, is the only private land of appreciable size in Indian which is unsubdivided.
- VALUE: The tract itself could provide sites someday for 40 or more households. As part of development, a trail should be provided.
- SCOPE: The density of development called for in the 1979 Comprehensive Plan is one unit per 2.5 acres. At such a low density, the large lot owners will have a significant sense of open space. The only provision which should be made under such density would be an off-road trail, providing a connection to Indian Creek Greenbelt and neighborhood park.

9. COLLECTOR TRAILS

- LOCATION: This series of trails would follow Indian Road, Indian Drive, and Oceanview Road. The trails should be constructed within existing rights-of-way.
- VALUE: Their primary value would be in providing safe pedestrian access in the community.
- SCOPE: These trails should be located off the roadway to avoid traffic-pedestrian mishaps.

10. POWERLINE PASS TRAIL

LOCATION: Along existing powerline (Chugach Electric Association) passing through Municipality owned land.

VALUE: The lower portion of the Powerline Pass Trail is currently used for cross-country skiing/hiking and should be preserved for existing use.

SCOPE: Allow continued use of powerline easement.

11. AUXILIARY TRAIL TO POWERLINE PASS TRAIL, INDIAN PASS AND BIRD RIDGE

LOCATION: Roughly between the 100 to 200 foot contour of the municipal selected parcel, and Chugach State Park, leading southeast to the Bird Ridge trailhead, and northwest to the Powerline and Indian Pass Trails.

VALUE: This trail would provide additional means for trail users to reach nearby trails.

SCOPE: A footpath/ski trail should be cleared and identified in cooperation with State Park officials.

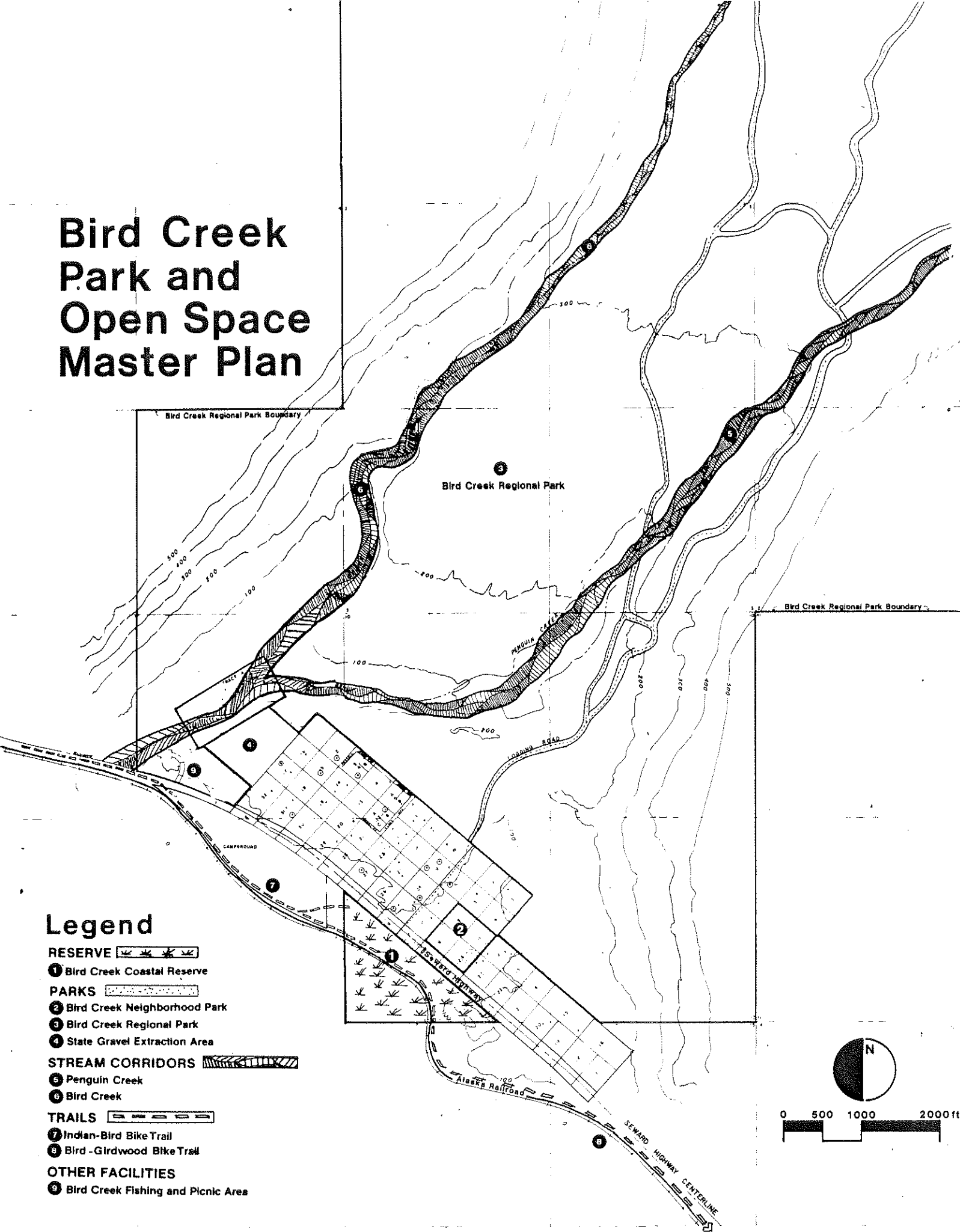
12. INDIAN-BIRD TRAIL

LOCATION: Beginning at intersection of Oceanview Road and Seward Highway, running along Seward Highway to the Bird Creek Community Hall/Park.


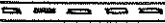
VALUE: The primary consideration in developing this trail is for safety reasons. It connects Indian to Bird, and facilitates communication between the two communities.

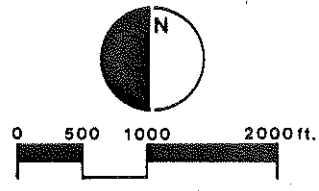
SCOPE: The trail has been constructed in upgrading Seward Highway. The installation of the pedestrian underpass at Bird Creek would be desirable.

Bird Creek Park and Open Space Master Plan



Legend

- RESERVE** 
 - ① Bird Creek Coastal Reserve
- PARKS** 
 - ② Bird Creek Neighborhood Park
 - ③ Bird Creek Regional Park
 - ④ State Gravel Extraction Area
- STREAM CORRIDORS** 
 - ⑤ Penguin Creek
 - ⑥ Bird Creek
- TRAILS** 
 - ⑦ Indian-Bird Bike Trail
 - ⑧ Bird - Girdwood Bike Trail
- OTHER FACILITIES**
 - ⑨ Bird Creek Fishing and Picnic Area



BIRD CREEK

PARK AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

Bird Creek with its 1985 population of 183 residents is surrounded by Bird Creek Regional Park and Chugach State Park. Consequently, the small, low density community maintains a rural character, particularly as one gravitates from the highway. The objectives of this section of the park plan are three-fold: (1) to maintain the rural, residential quality of Bird Creek, (2) to provide for local parks; and (3) to provide for the conservation of Bird Creek Regional Park.

To meet the first objective, a series of local park and trail facilities are identified, including a 10 acre neighborhood park to be created on Municipal land, community park facilities following the reclamation of the state gravel pit, and a bike trail connecting Bird and Indian.

There are three park and recreation areas which currently serve or have potential to serve regional interests: the Chugach State Park campground, located south of the highway, the day use/fishing access area near the mouth of Bird Creek, and Bird Creek Regional Park. For intent and purposes of Municipal and State law, Bird Creek Regional Park has been "dedicated" in that a brief master plan was adopted by a resolution of the Greater Anchorage Borough Assembly in 1973. Formal dedication generally occurs after a survey of the tract has been completed, enabling the land to be patented. A new master plan for Bird Creek Regional Park will be needed in the future; the emphasis of that plan should be the conservation of the park's wilderness.

BIRD CREEK
SITE DESCRIPTIONS

1. BIRD CREEK COASTAL RESERVE

LOCATION: Bordering the south side of the Seward Highway across from the Bird House and adjacent to the Bird Creek campground.

VALUE: This area adjoins Turnagain Arm. A substantial bluff rises above the railroad. The Bird-Indian trail should be located sufficiently back from the bluff to safely enable trail users to enjoy vistas along the coast. The area is richly vegetated and a buffer which retains trees should be maintained outside of the highway right-of-way to realize objectives of the Scenic Highway Corridor Plan.

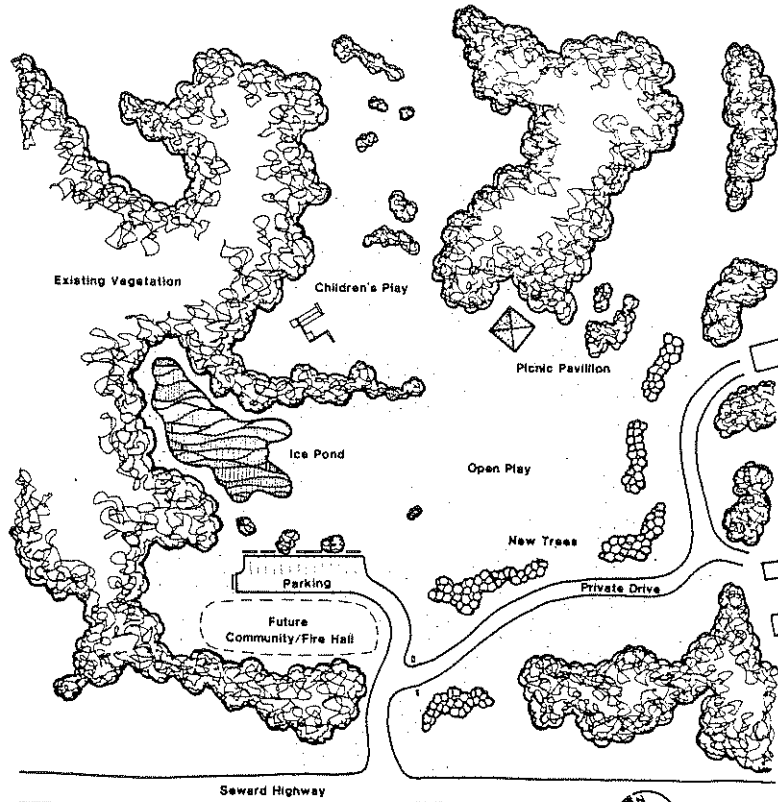
SCOPE: This area could be developed by the State or Municipality as an extension of the existing state campground to the west. A trail corridor should be set aside along the top of the bluff overlooking the coast and a scenic corridor buffer, measuring a minimum of 100 feet, should be reserved to the outside of the highway right-of-way. Potential uses include camping and day picnic activities. The cabin foundations should be investigated to ascertain their significance.

2. BIRD CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

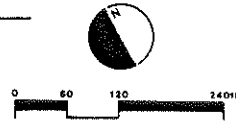
LOCATION: The four Municipal tracts adjacent to the Seward Highway just east of the Bird House should be set aside for park use.

VALUE: These sites are identified in response to the residents' desire for a park close to existing development. A combination Community Hall/Fire Hall was identified as a need by area residents. Such a facility could be designed to serve both public safety and recreational purposes.

There is a need for a park to serve local needs such as tot-lots and playfields. This neighborhood park will help meet such needs. The vegetation of this future park needs to be carefully considered in site planning. The



Bird Creek Park



hemlock stands are particularly important in that this area is the northernmost portion of the hemlock range. This conservation aspect is a major reason why all four tracts have been recommended to be reserved as parkland.

SCOPE:

Facilities within this ten-acre area could include a picnic pavillion, picnic tables, open play area, children's play equipment and parking for ten (10) cars. Space should be allocated for a possible Community Hall/Fire Hall. Management should remain with the Municipality.

3. BIRD CREEK REGIONAL PARK

LOCATION:

This 2,234 acre regional park is located about one-half mile north of Seward Highway, beyond the Bird Community, north of existing residential development. It is owned by the Municipality of Anchorage and managed by State Division of Parks via a management agreement. The park, which extends two and one-half miles to the north generally is one and one-half miles wide.

VALUE:

The majority of the land within this park is located on the valley floor of Bird and Penguin Creeks. This valley is almost one-mile wide, relatively flat with a general slope toward Turnagain Arm of approximately 2% to 6% with steeper areas near the creeks. The valley floor runs in elevation from near sea level to 500 feet; beyond the floor, the land ascends sharply to elevations up to 2,500 feet at the park's boundaries.

The total park area, with some exceptions such as avalanche areas, is heavily wooded. The evergreen tree cover consists primarily of Sitka Spruce and Mountain Hemlock. Some of these trees are large by Southcentral Alaska standards with trunk diameters of about three feet and heights ranging beyond 100 feet. The primary deciduous trees consist of birch, poplar and alder. The undergrowth is normal for the area. Large blankets of moss carpet the wooded areas with interspersing of ferns, cranberries, Devil's Club, willows, grasses and various other minor types of plant material. The steep slopes of the mountains to the east, which rise to an elevation of 4,305 feet, are heavily wooded with hemlock

except for two major avalanche areas. The avalanche areas, because of obvious reasons, are relatively free of trees and large brush and create pleasant grassy open spaces in late summer.

The beauty of nearby towering mountains is complemented by the park's vibrant water courses. Bird and Penguin Creeks are among the last unspoiled, unpolluted streams within the Municipality. Bird Creek, the major drainage in this valley, is a clear mountain stream of immense beauty. It is too swift and rocky for canoeing or drifting. Still, the sound of tumbling water and, conversely, the tranquility of its deep pools overhung by hemlock, spruce and poplar provide an aesthetic experience which should not be impaired. Penguin Creek is quite different from the vitality of Bird Creek. It is a creek of much smaller size and has more of a "babbling brook" quality. However, it is known to change its course, primarily at times of glaciation, seeking to find a continuous streambed. A number of residents living near the mouth of the creek use the unspoiled streams as their source of potable water.

Because of the location of the park adjoining the State Park and fact that it encompasses such a large healthy valley, its wildlife is extraordinary. Its setting provides habitat for for a variety of birds, mammals and fish. Among its population are Dall sheep, black bear, moose, coyote, lynx, wolf, red fox, wolverine, mink, beaver, snowshoe hare, weasel, land otter, porcupine and hoary marmot. Numerous species of birds include ptarmigan, spruce grouse and bald eagle. King, pink and chum salmon, golden fins and Dolly Varden inhabit Bird Creek.

SCOPE:

In keeping with the philosophy regarding a regional park, the emphasis regarding Bird Creek Regional Park should be on conservation of the unspoiled valley. It should be reserved as a natural recreation area and, as such, its landscape should not be developed with facilities which would have a high impact.

At this point in time, the park is managed by the State Division of Parks. Given the extent

of its geography and that of the adjacent Chugach State Park, management is at a minimal level to avoid forest fire, tree cutting, dumping, waste disposal and illegal practices which are contrary to state or local law. Among most severe potential hazards or problems which currently exists is forest fire, particularly because of bark beetle infestation of white spruce. Other problems cited by local residents include indiscriminate use of firearms and, in winter months, the driving of snowmachines and ATV's at speeds which could impair the safety of park users.

Given the lack of manpower and monetary resources, and the fact that no service area covers the park, the current management agreement with State Division of Parks should be maintained.

A brief master plan for the park was adopted by resolution in 1973. In effect, then, its geography is "dedicated" for park use. Formal dedication should be sought following the patenting of the land to the Municipality; the process has not been carried out due to lack of funds to cover survey costs.

4. STATE GRAVEL EXTRACTION AREA

LOCATION: Immediately west of the two and one-half acre parcels which form the majority of the Bird community and north of the Bird Creek Fishing and Picnic Access area.

VALUE: The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has requested that this area be retained under state ownership, primarily as a gravel extraction area. Its long-term potential value is twofold: (1) it has merit as a community park, and (2) it should be studied as an alternative means of access to Bird Creek Regional Park.

SCOPE: The area should be reclaimed following the completion of gravel extraction for park use. A trail easement should be provided across the tract to provide access to Bird Creek Regional Park and to Bird Creek to access fishing areas near the mouth of the creek. Greenbelts should be provided at its east side as a buffer to the community and west side to protect the slope leading down to Bird Creek.

STREAM CORRIDORS

5. PENGUIN CREEK

LOCATION: Penguin Creek flows southwestward from the Chugach mountains into the Bird Creek valley, joining Bird Creek near its mouth at the Turnagain Arm.

VALUE: The creek and its surroundings are valued as a scenic and recreational area along with providing several residents with their water source. It is imperative that its natural character and water quality be preserved.

SCOPE: The stream corridor includes that area between the outside banks on either side of the creek. There should be no removal of vegetation, grading, or building of structures (except the upgrading of bridges) or any other activity having adverse impacts on the water quality or stream character.

6. BIRD CREEK

LOCATION: Bird Creek flows southward from the Chugach Mountains directly north of the community, then along the base of the western mountains, joining Penguin Creek near its mouth at Turnagain Arm.

VALUE: As with Penguin Creek, Bird Creek is valued for its scenic and recreational qualities along with providing several residents with their water source. Again, it is imperative that the water quality and natural character is preserved.

SCOPE: The stream corridor includes that area within the outside banks bordering the creek. Within this area there will be no removal of vegetation, grading, or building of structures (except the upgrading of bridges) or any other activity having adverse impacts on the water quality or stream character.

TRAILS

7. INDIAN-BIRD TRAIL

LOCATION: Running along the south side of the Seward Highway connecting Bird and Indian.

VALUE: The main consideration for its development is safety. It serves to facilitate safe, non-motorized vehicular transportation between the two communities.

SCOPE: This trail has been constructed between "Boulder Stadium" community park and the State Campground at Bird. Extension of the trail to the southeast and underpasses should be programmed for development.

8. BIRD TO GIRDWOOD BICYCLE TRAIL

LOCATION: The bicycle trail will be set away from the highway wherever possible.

VALUE: Bicycling along Turnagain Arm has become increasingly popular following highway widening and the development of the Indian-Bird Trail. An extension of that trail to the southeast, incorporating off road locations wherever possible, will provide a safer, enjoyable recreation experience.

SCOPE: Siting and trail design should be undertaken as part of the highway design process. Routing should include Bird Point and use of former Seward Highway right-of-way when possible.

OTHER FACILITIES

9. BIRD CREEK FISHING AND PICNIC ACCESS

LOCATION: A picnic area, fishing area and parking facility located east of Bird Creek and north of the New Seward Highway.

VALUE: Offers residents of the entire Municipality fishing and picnicking opportunities along the highway.

SCOPE: A parking area for 30-50 cars has been provided as part of the upgrading of the Seward Highway. The site is used as a trail access point for fishing in Bird Creek.

SCENIC HIGHWAY CORRIDOR PROVISIONS

SCENIC HIGHWAY CORRIDOR PLAN PROVISIONS

The focus of the preceding sections to this plan have been on the parks and trails systems which would primarily serve the residents of Bird, Indian and Girdwood. There is a broader scope in preserving the beauty and realizing the potential of recreation along Turnagain Arm which has also been addressed in other documents. The Chugach State Park Master Plan is one. The Seward Highway Corridor Plan is another. This latter plan is a complement to this parks and open space plan and should be implemented concurrently. The details regarding management considerations and site improvements are found in the Scenic Highway Corridor, prepared by Kramer, Chin and Mayo, 1981.

In addition to the goals and management recommendations, sites were identified which are significant in offering recreation and viewing opportunities. In a number of cases the plans for the sites have been implemented. A summary of the improvements is presented below (for details please refer to the 1981 plan).

Potter Marsh Range: This 57-acre range was improved in 1983-84 to include ranges, skeet-shooting facilities, shooting sheds and parking.

Potter Weigh Station: The weigh station was moved to Mile 26 to allow for a potential nature center at the southeast end of Potter Marsh.

Johnson Trailhead at Rainbow: The site plan for this was partially implemented. Revegetation is still needed.

Bird Ridge Trailhead: This site plan has been implemented.

Bird Creek Wayside: The State has completed portions of the plan. Stabilization problems exist on highway slopes. Facility improvements are still needed. Parking at the bridge is still a concern.

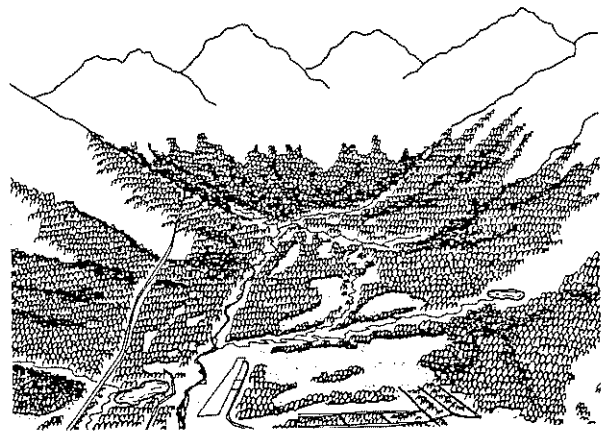
Bird Point: The Municipality should work with the State to realize the potential of this seaside point. The views, beaches, tidal action, wildlife and varied terrain are outstanding features at Bird Point. Parking, at a minimum, trails and railroad crossings should be developed.

Avalanche Safe Area: A cantilevered deck was planned for this site at Mile 25 to take advantage of the views up and down the Arm.

Boat Ramp at Twenty Mile River: Restroom and camp facilities highlight the site plan for the river's edge.

Wayside Design: A prototypical wayside was designed.

Seward Highway has been recognized as a scenic corridor as it runs from Potter's Marsh to the Municipal boundary at Portage (21.05.083).



Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the final product of these components, the Park and Open Space Master Plan was produced. Recommendations that accompany the Plan are listed below.

- I. In conjunction with the adoption of the Park and Open Space Plan, appropriate adjustments to the land use designations of several tracts of land in the Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan should be made.
- II. The implementation guidelines enumerated under each of the six (6) Park and Open Space categories should be adopted as policy statements in fulfilling the terms of the Park and Open Space Plan. (see pages 6-10).
- III. Before public lands are sold and developed for residential use, trails, neighborhood parks and open space should be set aside and recorded on each plat.
- IV. The Heritage Land Bank Fund is another means the Municipality has for funding acquisition of needed parks. The Land Bank will provide a means of disposing Municipal land for development purposes and the revenues from the sale of those lands will then be used to acquire land needed for parks, greenbelts, schools and other public purposes. These types of sites should be reflected on maps and other documents used by the Property and Facilities Management Department before any parcel of land is released for sale.
- V. The trails included in this plan should be set aside at the time of platting. The corridors identified on the Girdwood, Indian, and Bird maps and the accompanying text should be used as guidelines by the Platting Board and its staff in setting aside easements.
- VI. It is recommended that the communities along the Turnagain Arm consider becoming a part of the areawide Park Service District. In doing so, design, development, operation and maintenance services can be supplied by the Parks and Recreation Department. This would be a cost-effective means for the relatively small-sized communities to receive overall park and recreation services.

A P P E N D I X A

ANCHORAGE'S PARK STANDARDS

PARK TYPE	ACRES/ 1000 PEOPLE	SIZE RANGE	POPULATION SERVED	SERVICE AREA
Playlots	*	2,500 sq. ft. to 1 acre	500 - 2,500	Sub-neighborhood
Neighborhood	2.5	5-20 acres	2,000 - 10,000	1/4 - 1/2 mile radius
Community	2.5	20-100 acres	10,000 - 50,000	1 /2-3 mile radius
Large Urban	5.0	100 + acres	One per 50,000	Within 1/2 hour driving time
Regional	20.0	160 + acres	Entire pop. in smaller communities; need distribution throughout larger metro areas.	Within 1 hour driving time
Greenbelts	10.0	500 + acres	Entire population	1/2-3 mile radius

A P P E N D I X B

The following section was added to Volume 1 of this plan, during the public hearing on "The Anchorage Bowl" component of this park plan. Because there are regional aspects to such recreation activities, particularly trail related uses and snowmachining, the same information is presented in this appendix.

SNOWMOBILING AND ATV FACILITIES¹

Objectives:

The use of small motorized recreation vehicles, including snowmachines, "dirt bikes" and "three-wheel" vehicles, has become an increasing concern as the general population grows and the amount of open land available for such recreation pursuit diminishes. Former motorcycle and snowmachine riding areas are today's subdivisions. Problems arise in providing areas which offer relative safety, where noise is not a problem and where negative impacts to environmental resources are minimized. The objectives associated with this section are to provide areas for snowmobiling, dirt bike riding and related pursuits minimizing the safety, noise and environmental problems. Whereas such pastimes as snowmobiling can be undertaken with minimal impacts in sparsely settled areas, there are increased risks (e.g. automobile conflicts) and negative influences (for example, disruption of peace within neighborhoods) which result in the need for regulation of and designated places for this type of recreation.

Four general types of motorized recreation vehicle can be identified by season and type of use: (1) touring on snowmachines; (2) racing on snowmachines; (3) summer off-road touring; and (4) summer ATV racing. The opportunities and spatial requirements of these activities are not the same. Many areas which are capable of sustaining snowmobile

¹Definintions for municipal areas the following definitions apply. As is noted in the following text the state park and national forest personnel use slightly more encom-
passing definitions.

All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) include a wide range of vehicles designed to go where normal road vehicles cannot go. For purposes of this section of the plan, attention is directed to those ATV's which are not licensed for street and highway use and have gained wide popularity as sports racing or recreation vehicles. These include dirtbikes, "three-wheelers" and "four-wheelers" (similarly scaled as "three-wheelers"). The use of tracked vehicles (e.g. tank-like ATV's) is not addressed in the following pages.

"Snowmachines" as used in the following pages include snowmobiles, "three-wheelers" and "four-wheelers" (similarly scaled as the "three-wheelers").

use in winter cannot support "dirt bikes" or "three-wheelers" in the summer because of fragile underlying soils and vegetation. The focus of motocross racing is very different from extended trail riding. Motocross typically entails racing over a one mile layout in which varied terrain and turns are the norm. On the other hand, trail riding is pursued for the sake of exploration, contact with the outdoors, comradery and related aspect of "touring."

Inventory of Motorized Recreation Vehicle Areas

The Municipal Areas:

The Municipality has provided space for snowmobiling and dirt bike use since the 1970's. The Connors Lake area was a rather extensive tract used predominately for snowmobile use. At one time this area extended from the intersection of International Airport Road and Jewel Lake Road southeast to Campbell Creek. However, with the residential development and the construction of Raspberry Road, the area is now "officially" limited to the tract on the north side of Connors Lake. "Unofficially" much of the corridor west of Minnesota Drive is still used. The former land fill area in Kincaid Park, a 13-acre sandy bowl, is currently used for dirt bike, three-wheel and related vehicles.

Chugach State Park:

Areas have been identified for snowmachines and motorized vehicles within the State Park and Bird Creek Regional Park (a municipal park which is managed by state park personnel). The State defines the two vehicles as:

"snowmachine" means a self-propelled vehicles designed to travel over ice or snow and steered by skis, wheels, or skids and includes all terrain vehicles;

"vehicle" means a manual or self propelled device by which a person or property is or may be transported in drawn and includes bicycles, air-cushion vehicles, snowmachines, and other truck and wheeled devices.

Snowmachine use: Six areas are set aside within the State Park for snowmachines. These include:

1. The Eklutna Lake Basin from the northwest end of the lake to the toe of the Eklutna Glacier excluding the Twin Peaks Treail and the East Fork of the Eklutna River drainage.
2. Peters Creek drainage lying within T15N, R1E, and T15N, R1W, Seward Meridian.

3. Little Peters Creek drainage.
4. Eagle River drainage lying within the following townships excluding Raven Creek drainage: T13N, R1E; T13N, R2E; T13N, R2E; all Seward Meridian.
5. South Fork of Campbell Creek south of the northern boundary of Sections 28 and 29, T12N, R2W, S.M.
6. Existing logging trails in the Bird Creek Valley below the 500 foot elevation level.

The preceding areas are opened when there is sufficient snow cover to protect the underlying vegetation.

Summer use of motorized vehicles varies by types of vehicles which are permitted and by time frame. The following areas identified for the stated types of use:

1. Existing logging trails in the Bird Creek Valley below the 500 foot elevation level are available for all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles and three-wheel vehicles.
2. The unmaintained portion of the Eklutna Lake Road from the northwest end of Eklutna Lake to the road terminus within Section 18, T14N, R3E, S.M. is available for motorcycle and three-wheelers. Those vehicles which can be licensed for street use are not permitted (e.g. jeeps). This use may occur only from Sunday through Wednesday of each week.
3. All state and city maintained highways and parking areas within Chugach State Park only if the motorized vehicle is licensed for highway operation.

Chugach National Forest:

The U.S. Forest Service defines off-road vehicles, using seasonal basis:

Overland vehicles (snow-free periods) -- This category is comprised of four-wheel drive vehicles, motorcycles, trail scooters, and all-terrain vehicles (ATV's).

Over snow vehicles (winter -- This category is comprised of light tracked or wheeled vehicles (three, four or more wheels and so forth) that are capable of operation over the snow.

Most of the Chugach National Forest is open to over snow vehicles during the winter (December 1 through April 30)

when use will not damage soils and vegetation. However, partial closures and modification of opening and closing dates may be affected by public announcement from the forest supervisor.

The primary snowmachine area within the Municipality is the Twenty-mile River and Placer River Valleys. Two Chugach Forest areas specifically closed for all motorized vehicle use:

(1) Lands managed by the National Forest north and east of Girdwood in the vicinity of Mt. Alyeska Ski Resort.

(2) The Portage Lake area including the lake and Bear and Byron Valleys.

Four-wheel drive vehicles, trail scooters, motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles are allowed on existing roads, power line right-of-ways, and some river outwash plains such as the Snow and Resurrection Rivers, unless otherwise posted. Most trails are permanently closed to motorized use during this period.

Safety Concerns:

Along with suburban development, there are increasing hazards to snowmobile and ATV use. Open terrain generally can be equated with fewer hazards. ATV use in settled areas, however, can lead to accidents involving automobiles, fences, guy wires and other man made obstructions. Thus the alternative of snowmobile-ATV park can assist in minimizing such hazards.

During the period 1983-1984 there were at least 20 deaths and 538 injuries associated with "three-wheelers" in Alaska.² Operator negligence (e.g. failing to wear helmets, drunkenness) and hazards to riding (automobile conflicts, guy wires) contributed to the accidents. In the case of negligence, safety programs can be pursued to help alleviate problems. In the case of hazards, safer places can be provided to avoid recreation-related accidents.

During the 1983-84 period, there were no deaths in Anchorage involving three-wheel riders; however, several Anchorage citizens lost their lives while riding in the Matanuska Valley as a result. Often accidents occur late in the day,

²S. Jenkerson and J. Middaugh, MD, "Injuries Associated with Three-Wheel All-Terrain Vehicles - Alaska", Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (Centers for Disease Control), Vol. 34, No. 15, (April 19, 1985), 213-214.

suggesting that travel time to a recreation area adds to fatigue and may be attributable to the problem. Preliminary data shows that there were 70 in-patients admitted to Providence Hospital during 1983-84 for injuries sustained in ATV accidents. (Humana Hospital and Alaska Native Hospital statistics are not yet available for Anchorage incidences.)³

Other State and Region ATV Programs

The examples of the State of Idaho and Thurston County, Washington are illustrative of comprehensive ATV programs. The Idaho Department of Parks has provided system of ATV and snowmobile trails throughout the state and a handful of ATV parks. For instance, in the Boise area there are approximately 150 miles of trails. At Payette, Idaho 640 acres has been set aside as Clay Mountain Motorcycle Park, serving approximately 50,000 people in the region. Fifty miles outside of Boise 30,000 acres of public land has been maintained as a trail system for ATV use. The ORV parks typically contain a motocross racing area and a trail system for those less inclined to racing.

In Thurston County, Washington, the Thurston-Grays Harbor ORV Sports Park has been created. Adjoining a state park, an ORV loop trail system was set up for extended trail experiences. However, the 150-acre park focuses upon separate use areas for distinctly different ORV activities. A one-mile long motocross track has been established a varied terrain for both racing and general use. A hill climb has been set aside for those who like 45 degree climbing challenges. A kid's motocross track is provided for youngsters and is limited to 100 cc dirt bikes. Auxillary facilities are provided for camping and safety education. Capital improvements are made with gasoline tax revenues. Operating expenses are met with \$2.00 use fee.

Criteria Regarding Potential Sites

The Parks and Recreation Department developed criteria for siting ATV parks. The criteria was established to allow use while minimizing noise and other environmental impacts, to provide a facility at reasonable cost and to address size and terrain concerns. Specifically, the criteria were:

1. Existing public land (a cost consideration);
2. Private land that could be inexpensively obtained for long-term use;

³State of Alaska, Epidemiology Program Office

3. Lacks qualities and potential that could make the site highly valued for other uses;
4. Good access for passenger vehicles and trucks carrying or pulling trailers which carry the recreational vehicles;
5. Within close proximity of the majority of the population that will be served to avoid traveling long distances to engage in motorized recreation;
6. Distant enough from existing residential neighborhoods so as not to be heard by residents;
7. Offers participants interesting and varied terrain and a variety of views and experiences;
8. Reasonable assurance that encroachment on the site by incompatible uses will not occur in the future which could force closure of the area to motorized uses;
9. Large enough to accommodate 10-20 miles of meandering trails, a track, an oval dirt and ice, parking for 30 cars with trailers and 30 without trailers, overflow parking accommodation for an additional 10 cars with trailers and 290 cars without trailers.⁴

In examining potential sites, the following have been considered: (1) Point Woronzof, (2) Connors Lake, (3) the industrial corridor north of the New Minnesota-O'Malley Freeway and (4) former gravel pits near O'Malley and Old Seward Highway (see the following map). The Parks and Recreation Department has recommended the creation of an ATV Park at Point Woronzof.

The criteria note that good access is needed. In the following plan concept section, each Municipal area is examined. It is recommended that the Eagle River area be further studied for an additional ATV park site. In view of the distance from the Anchorage Bowl, the time involved to transport vehicles and minors to such an area and the growing population within the area, the question of ATV-area services to Eagle River also remains open. When a 30 to 40 minute drive is necessitated to undertake motocross-related activities, the temptation becomes great to say, forget it, and wheel off in unregulated nearby surroundings. To avoid

⁴Memorandum of Robert O. Robertson to Bill Luria, Alternative Sites Study for Motor Recreation, March 11, 1985.

this situation, a separate Eagle River-Chugiak motocross area needs to be addressed.

Plan Concepts

In that there are seasonal variations, different types of vehicles and both touring and racing pursuits, more than one area will be needed to fulfill the off-road motor vehicle desires of the Anchorage population, a broad, cooperative approach must be realized. In that ATV and snowmobile use includes trail and touring activities, the regional context is discussed in the following paragraphs.

State Role:

1. With the 495,000 acres within Chugach State Park, the State can play a foremost role in providing snowmachine and off-road vehicle opportunities. The current areas should be retained for snowmobiling and off-road vehicle use. There is potential for conflict within Bird Creek Regional Park, depending on the future development program for that park. If, for instance, a outdoor education school is developed there, programming of time-frame for snowmobile use and more stringent designation road system may be necessary.

2. Gasoline taxes for off-road vehicle capital improvements:

Alaska can benefit from the experience of other western states for funding of off-road vehicle facilities via revenues collected through gasoline taxes. Washington, Idaho and Wyoming have enacted enabling legislation whereby the proportion of gasoline revenue which is attributable to off-road vehicle use goes to fund capital improvements for such snowmobile, ATV and related facilities. This typically amounts to one percent of the state gasoline tax. Improvements include setting up state trails for ORV use and ORV parks within state and county parks. To provide for such a tax, a change in state law will be necessitated.

Federal/Municipal:

The southeastern portion of the Municipality is composed of Chugach National Forest lands. The Twenty-mile River basin and the western portions of the Portage Valley offer snowmobile opportunities which should be maintained. With the adoption of this plan, it is recognized that these and other areas within Chugach National Forest offer significant opportunities in fulfilling snowmobile and ATV needs.

Municipal Role:

The Municipality should promote safe places for various types of snowmobile and ATV use, including touring and "motocross" and "snocross" racing.

The following are recommended for each of the Municipal areas.

Anchorage Bowl:

A decision needs to be made if an ORV-park will be accommodated in the Anchorage Bowl and, if so, where is the facility to be located.

Closure of the Kincaid/Point Campbell Park ATV area is recommended only with the development of ATV Park.

Connor's Lake has severe limitations, including encroaching residential uses, lake-related habitat, lack of varied terrain for motocross and an openness making it difficult to manage use within the park. It should be considered an interim site.

Eagle River-Chugiak-Turnagain Arm:

Eagle River has provided an accessible, lengthy corridor for snowmachine use for many years. This use should be maintained. The adopted Eagle River Greenbelt Plan identifies snowmachining as an activity which should be accommodated.

An ATV park should be considered in the Eagle River-Chugiak area. While no statistics are available on the number of ATV vehicles in the area, observation leads one to believe it is proportionally high. The area is undergoing the similar development patterns as Anchorage in which former open riding areas are being developed. Emphasis would be on the reservation of land for construction of a safe set of ATV sports facilities.

Turnagain Arm:

In other sections of this plan, the need for a revised master plan for Bird Creek Regional park is cited. At the present time, both snowmobiling and ATV use is permitted within the municipal park and portions of the adjoining State Park. These uses, which are allowed on former logging roads, should be accommodated in the future. Both trail routing restrictions and programming as to season and portions of the week should be considered in future planning if conflicts with other park activities are anticipated.

Land Design North, Inc. wishes to thank the public officials and community residents listed below for their participation in the development of the Park and Open Space Master Plan. For the many others who participated in the workshop sessions and whose names didn't appear, please accept our apologies for the omissions. Our thanks to all.

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