



Girdwood  
Comprehensive Plan  
**PUBLIC MEETING**

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OCTOBER 11, 2023

# AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING

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- Girdwood Comprehensive Plan Update – What is it and why is it important?
- Vision, Goals, Policies
- Population, Housing & Employment Analysis
- Existing Condition & Land Suitability Analysis
- Future Land Use Plan Map
- What's Next?

# Girdwood

AREA PLAN

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 28, 1995  
(ASSEMBLY ORDINANCE 94-238 S)



PREPARED BY THE  
PHYSICAL PLANNING DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

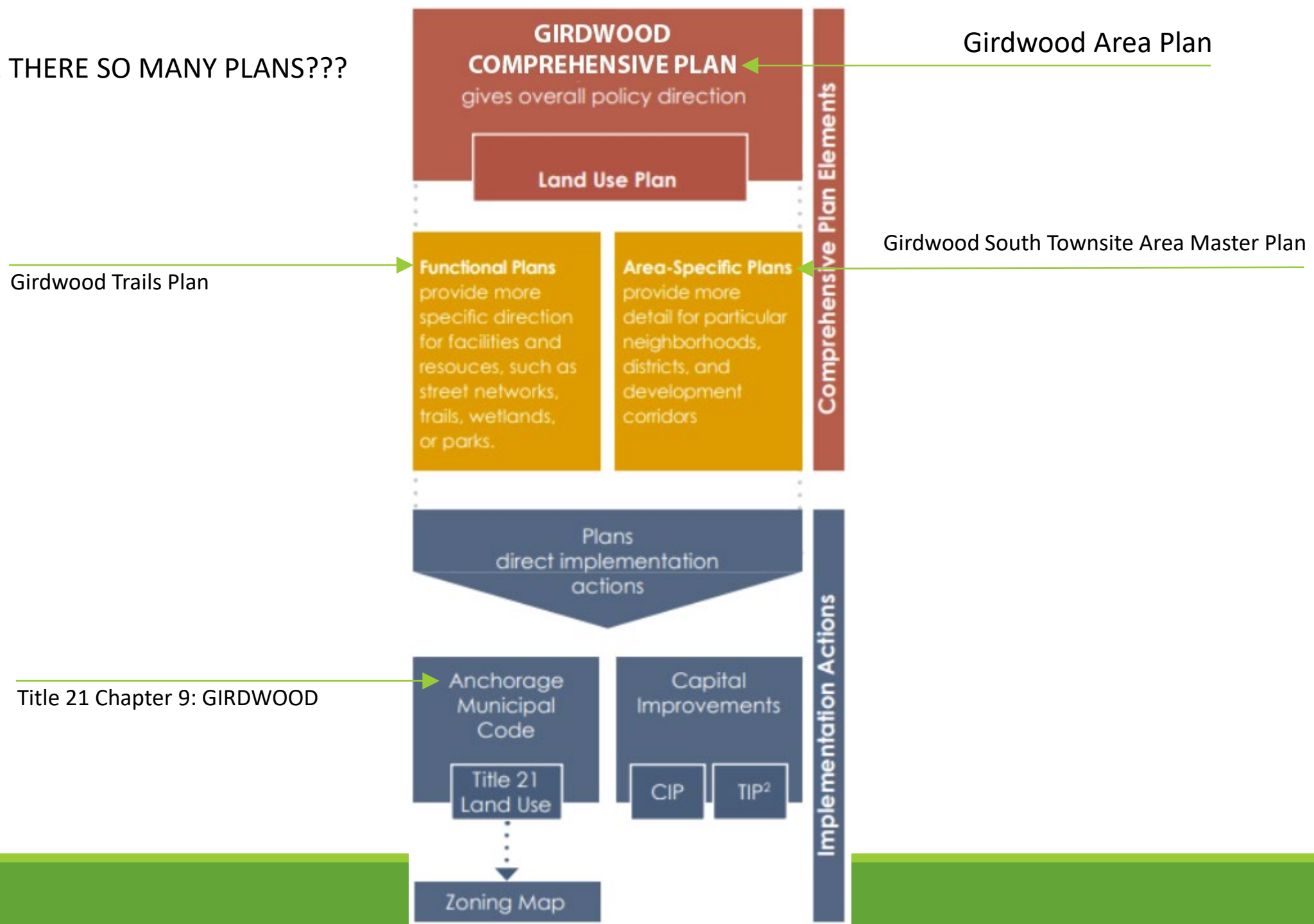


MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE  
RICK MYSTROM, MAYOR

# What is the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan?

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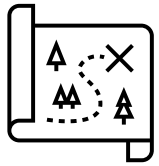
# WHY ARE THERE SO MANY PLANS???



# What is Included in the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan?



Community Vision & Goals



Future Land Use Plan Map



Policies & Implementation Actions

- 
- A map of Girdwood, Alaska, showing various land use zones and geographical features. The map includes a legend in the top left corner with seven categories: Public Lands and Institutions, Resort, Commercial Recreation, Resort Reserve, Recreation Reserve, Development Reserve, and Open Space. The map also shows California Creek, Crow Creek Road, Glacier, Airport, Alyeska Resort, and Chugach State Park. The text 'Why does Girdwood need a new plan?' is overlaid on the map.
- Public Lands and Institutions
  - Resort
  - Commercial Recreation
  - Resort Reserve
  - Recreation Reserve
  - Development Reserve
  - Open Space

Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Community Planning and Development, November 1995

# Why does Girdwood need a new plan?

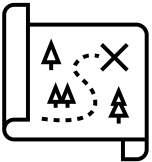
# What Has Been Accomplished to Date?



# What is the FOCUS of tonight?



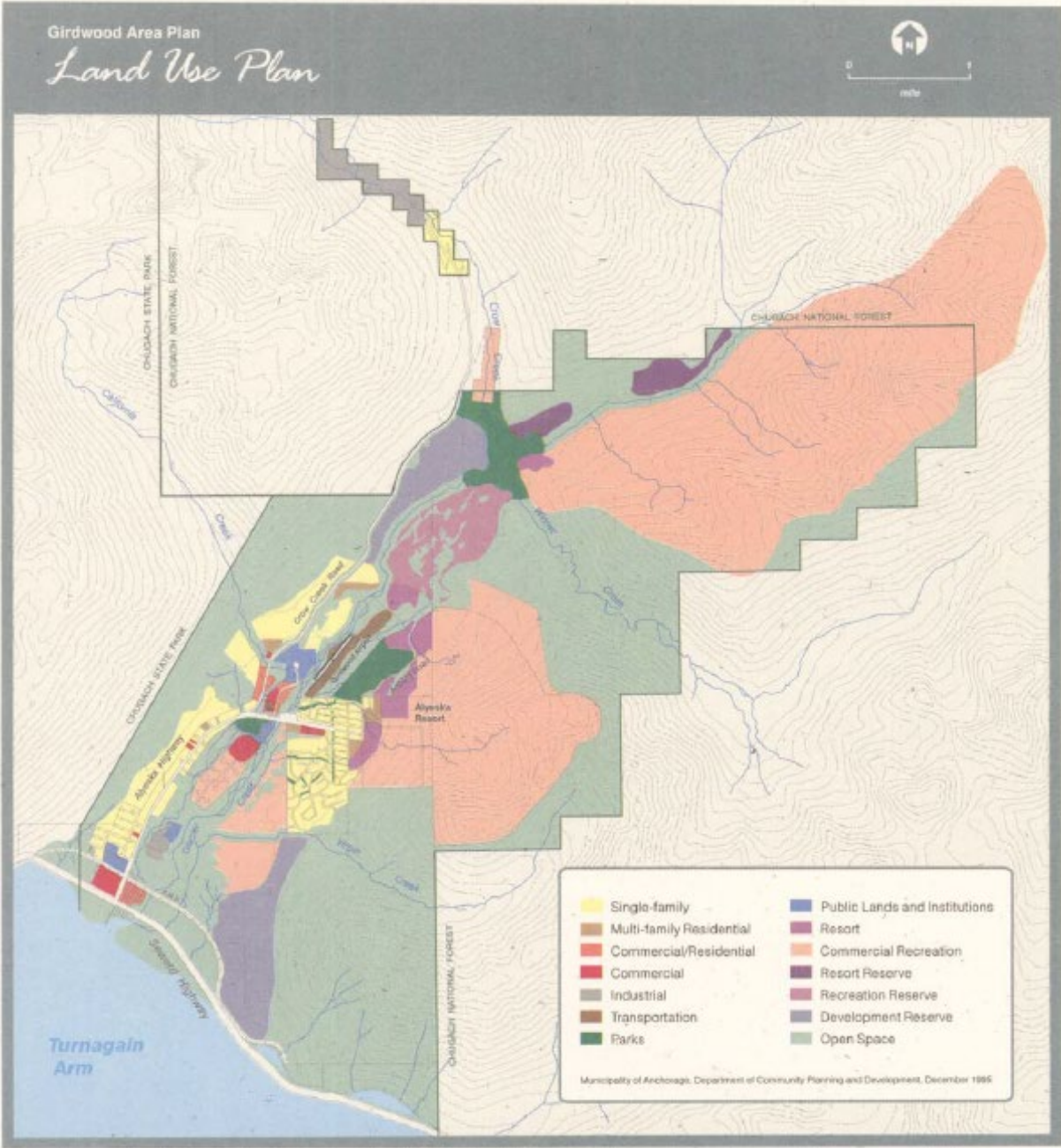
Community Vision & Goals



Future Land Use Plan Map

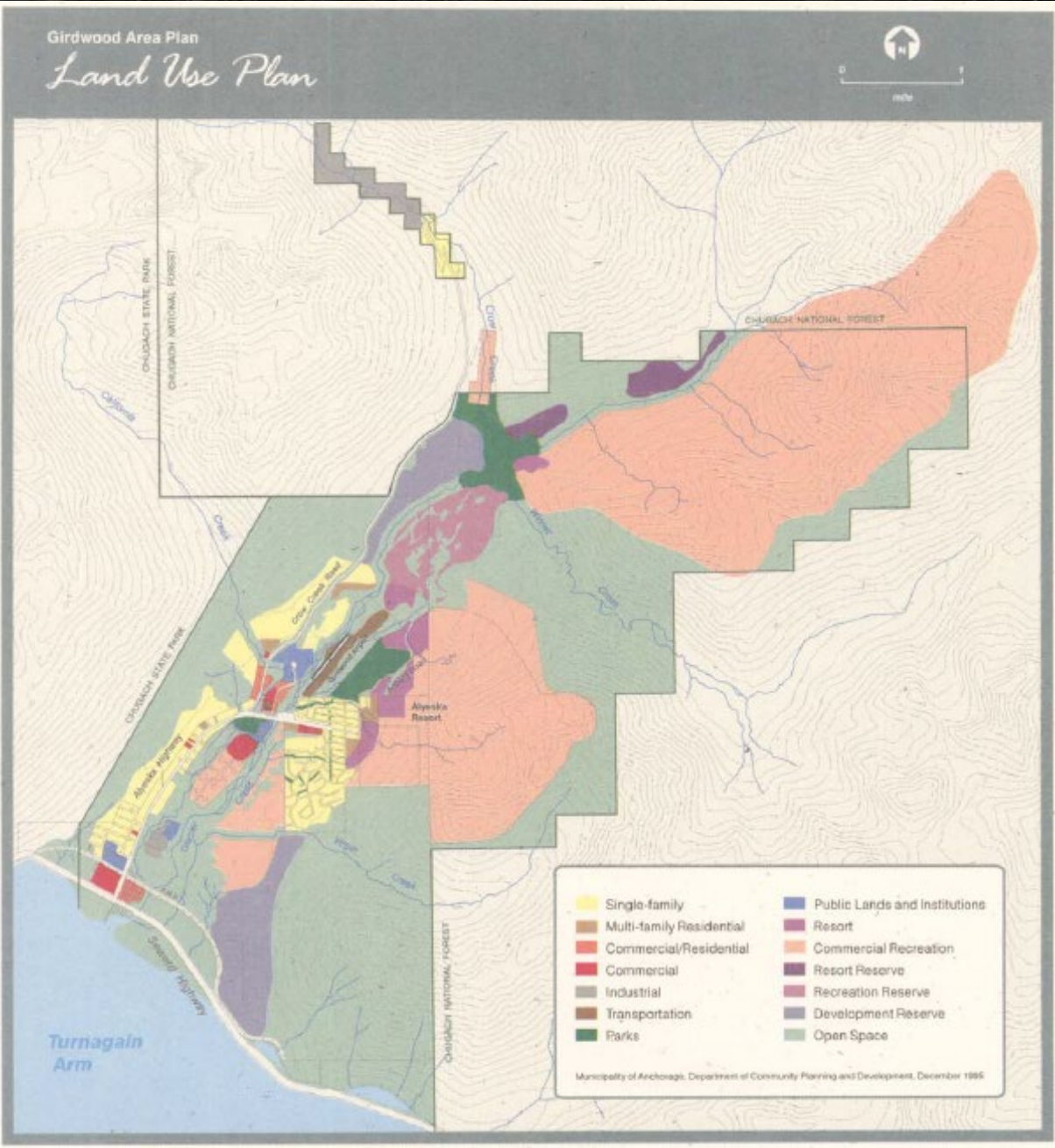


Policies & Implementation Actions



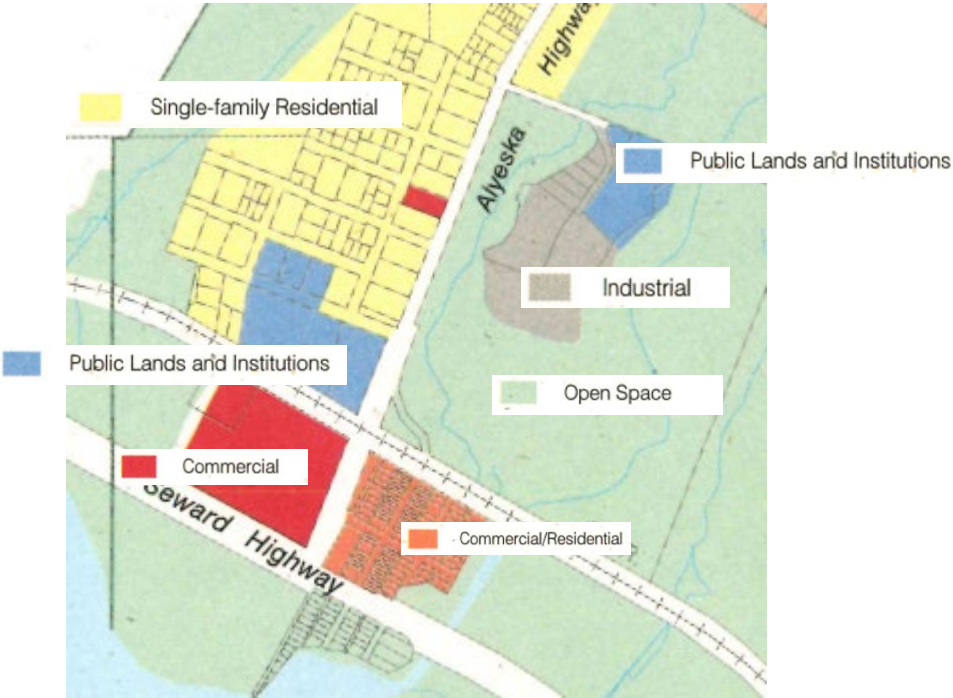


# WHAT IS LAND USE?



# Future Land Use Map Designations

- Single-family Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Commercial/Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Transportation
- Parks
- Public Lands and Institutions
- Resort
- Commercial Recreation
- Resort Reserve
- Recreation Reserve
- Development Reserve
- Open Space



# The Imagine! Girdwood Process is currently at this phase:

## Land Use Category Text

**Industrial** - This classification is for areas substantially developed for industrial purposes and are expected to remain so for the duration of the Plan, and for vacant areas best suited to industrial development.

**Industrial**  
Industrial uses in the Girdwood area generally fall into two categories. They are mining and industrial storage and repair. Mining is occurring at the end of Crow Creek Road where Girdwood Mining Company operates a placer mine on approximately 140 acres of land. The other form of activity – storage and repair – is typically carried out by contractors in the construction trades who use light and heavy equipment and materials.

Recently, the Heritage Land Bank created the Girdwood Industrial Park Subdivision. The purpose of the industrial subdivision is to encourage the removal of industrial activities and storage from the rest of the community, and centralize these functions at this site. There is also room for some limited expansion.

This Plan does not encourage the siting of industrial uses or activities in the Girdwood area unless they can be located in the industrial park. Industrial activities are generally out of character with, and detract from, the small town/resort recreational setting.

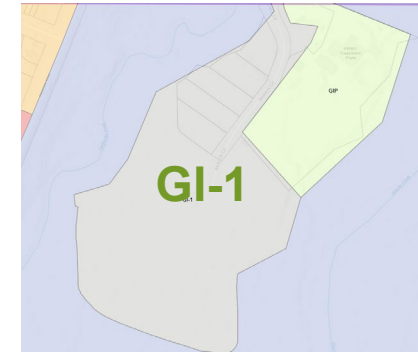


## Land Use Map Designation



# This phase comes later:

## Zoning permitted under that land use designation



This phase comes as the plan is being adopted or after the plan is adopted:

**D. Industrial Districts**

- General Description**  
There are two industrial districts in Girdwood, labeled GI-1 and GI-2. The GI-1 district, the Ruane Road industrial area, permits a varied range of commercial and industrial uses. The GI-2 district, encompassing the existing industrial mining area along Upper Crow Creek Road, primarily permits continuation of the existing use, along with a limited number of other uses. Girdwood-specific site and building design standards are contained in sections 21.09.070 and 21.09.080.
- Districts**
  - GI-1 (Ruane Road Industrial) District**
    - Location**  
The GI-1 district consists of the Ruane industrial area east of lower Alyeska Highway.
    - Intent**  
This largely undeveloped area is intended to contain the industrial uses necessary for the future development of Girdwood. In addition, commercial uses requiring large areas for storage, or with potentially more substantial visual and noise impacts than appropriate for the Girdwood commercial districts, are permitted in this district.

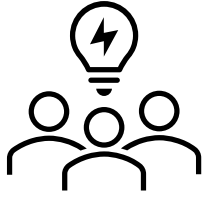
**3. Table of Dimensional Standards: Industrial Districts**

**TABLE 21.09.077: TABLE OF DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS GIRDWOOD INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS**

Use	Lot Dimensions		Minimum Setbacks (ft)			Building Bulk and Height	
	Min Area (Sq Ft)	Min. Width	Front	Side	Rear	Maximum Lot Coverage	Maximum Height
GI-1: Ruane Road Industrial District							
All uses, ≤ 1 acre	10,400	80 ft	20	10	10	Unrestricted	25 feet
All uses, > 1 acre			25	15	15		

# PROCESS

## *Developing a Future Land Use Plan Map for Girdwood*



Community Vision & Goals



Population, Housing, & Employment Analysis  
(This is land demand!)



Land Suitability Analysis  
(This is land supply!)

A photograph of two people riding fat bikes on a snowy mountain trail. The person in the foreground is wearing a red jacket and a grey beanie, while the person in the background is wearing a blue jacket and a patterned beanie. The background features snow-covered evergreen trees and a clear blue sky. The text "Vision, Goals, Policies" is overlaid in white, centered on the image. Two horizontal white lines are positioned above and below the text.

# Vision, Goals, Policies

# Vision, Goals, Policies

- 2019 Community Survey
- 2019 Public Meeting
- 12+ Committee Meetings and Work Sessions
- 2020 Virtual Public Meeting
- Committee Approved Draft – March 24, 2021

## Girdwood Community Survey Results

Prepared for:

Girdwood Area Plan Committee

Survey Conducted January-February 2019



721 Depot Dr Anchorage, AK 99501

(907) 223-2406 – [www.haysresearch.com](http://www.haysresearch.com)

### Biggest Problems in Girdwood





# Four Focus Areas:



Economic  
Development



Housing



Recreation &  
Natural Space



Transportation

VISION



GOALS



POLICIES



# Population, Housing, & Employment Analysis



# Girdwood Comprehensive Plan

October 25, 2023

## **Population, Housing and Employment Analysis Girdwood Comprehensive Plan**

### **DRAFT Findings**

# Purpose of Analysis:

## Population, Housing & Employment

- Provide an **economic & demographic chapter** within the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan document.
- **Help** the community and the planners develop **land use policies and implementation strategies** as part of the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan.
  - Characterize **broader trends**
  - Translate broader trends into **potential demand for land**; helps think about the amount of land needed over time

Note:

*This analysis is still underway. Results shared here are in draft form and will be subject to public review and internal refinement through the Girdwood Comprehensive Plan process.*

# Our Approach

**Step 1:** Identify your goals for the project + what you want to see as a result



## **Step 2:** ANALYZE DATA

Combine available secondary data + local data to understand demographics, economic forecasts, and housing needs



## **Step 3:** COLLABORATE

Work with Imagine! Girdwood to ground truth data findings, identify data gaps and tailor the information to better suit the needs of your community



## **Step 4:** INTERVIEWS

Hear from key local leaders and stakeholders in the housing policy and development space



## **Step 5:** SHARE FINDINGS

Integrate findings into updated Girdwood Comprehensive Plan

# Key Findings

- **10 Year Housing Demand:** Demand for at least 170 new housing units for year-round residents on 17 to 40 acres; plus rehab of 65 existing units.
  - Forecasted need by income (based on current demographics): 56% low income, 19% middle income and 26% high income
- **Influence of Short Term Rentals:** Short term rentals have grown about 10-15 unique listings per year and account for roughly 16% of the housing stock.
- **Commercial development:.** Employment growth could generate demand for at least 24 acres over 10 years.



# Population and Housing



# Methodology: Housing Forecast

This model has been purpose-built to forecast housing demand in Alaska communities, including rural Alaska, over a specific period. The model uses Census and State DOL data to estimate the need for new units, based on population growth and overcrowding, and the need for rehab or replacement of existing units based on three proxies for housing condition.

**New units** needed  
over the next 10 years



New units needed due to expected population growth

New units needed due to overcrowding in existing housing

**Rehab or replacement units**  
needed



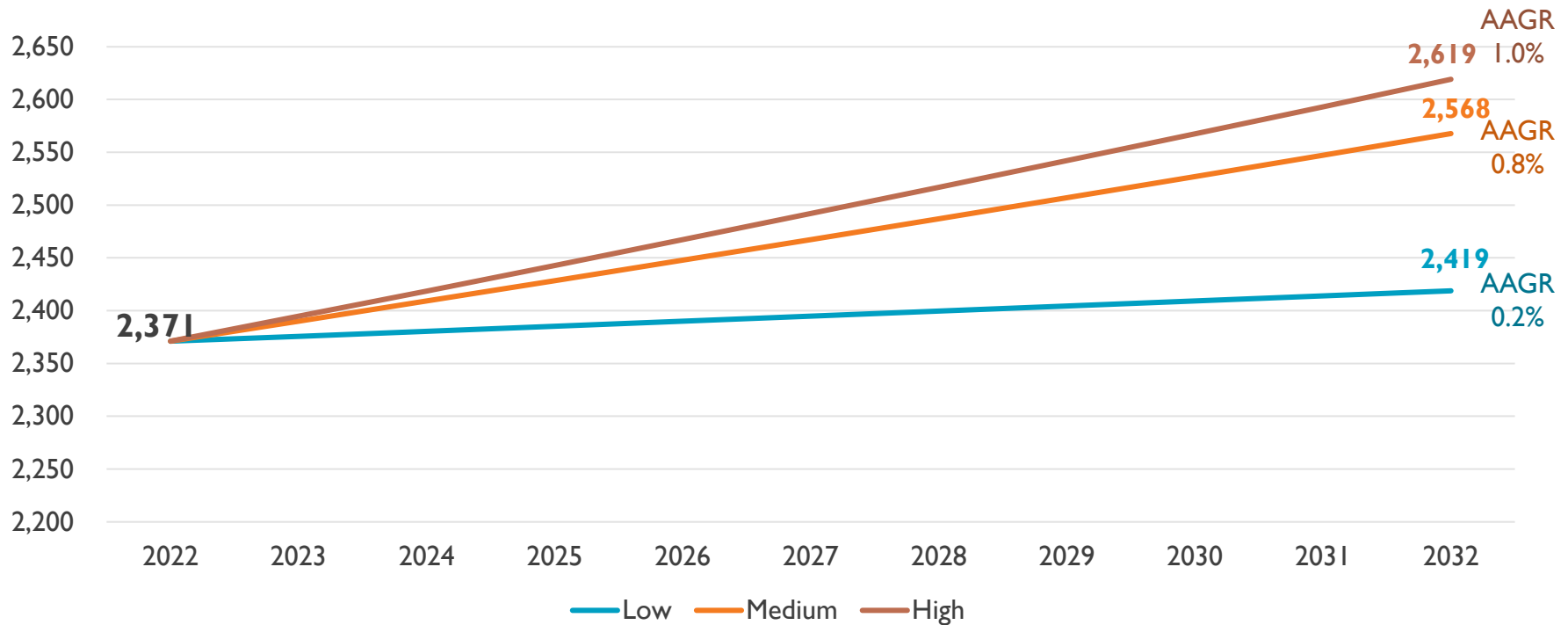
Aging housing stock  
(% of housing stock built before 1970)

Housing units without plumbing (% of occupied units without plumbing + kitchen facilities)

Mobile home units that need replacement sooner than other unit types (% of total housing stock that are mobile home units)

# Forecasting three modest population growth scenarios for Girdwood (2022-2032)

- Over the past decade, Girdwood's population has remained relatively flat
- The population forecasts used for this model take into consideration pent-up demand within the community due to lack of housing options
- Assumes that with more housing options, more people can and will choose to live in Girdwood

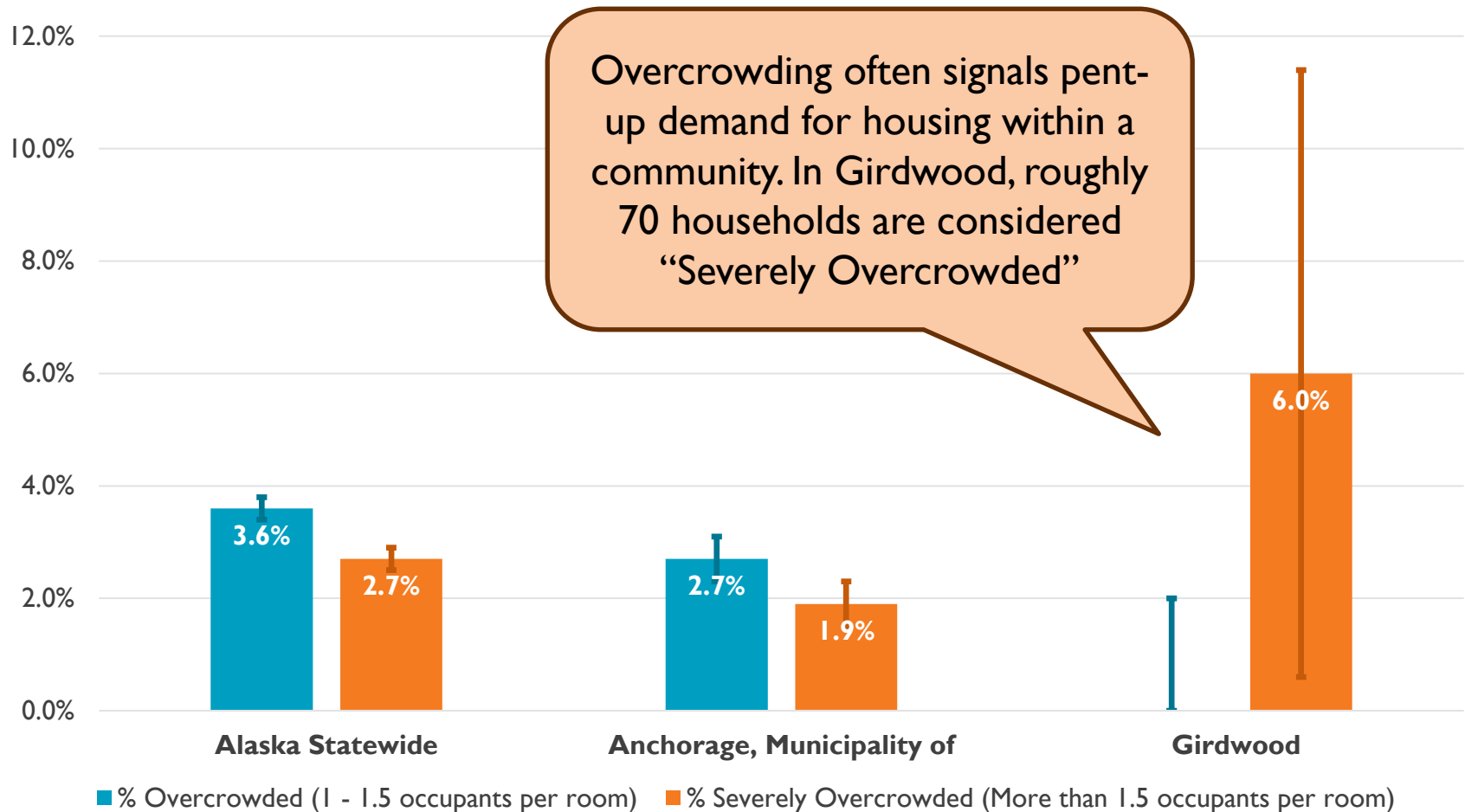


Low: based on ADOWLD population forecast for Municipality of Anchorage (AAGR 0.2%)

Medium: based on Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (AAGR 0.8%)

High: based on ADOLWD population forecast for Mat-Su Borough (AAGR 1.0%)

# Overcrowding in Girdwood



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2017-2021)

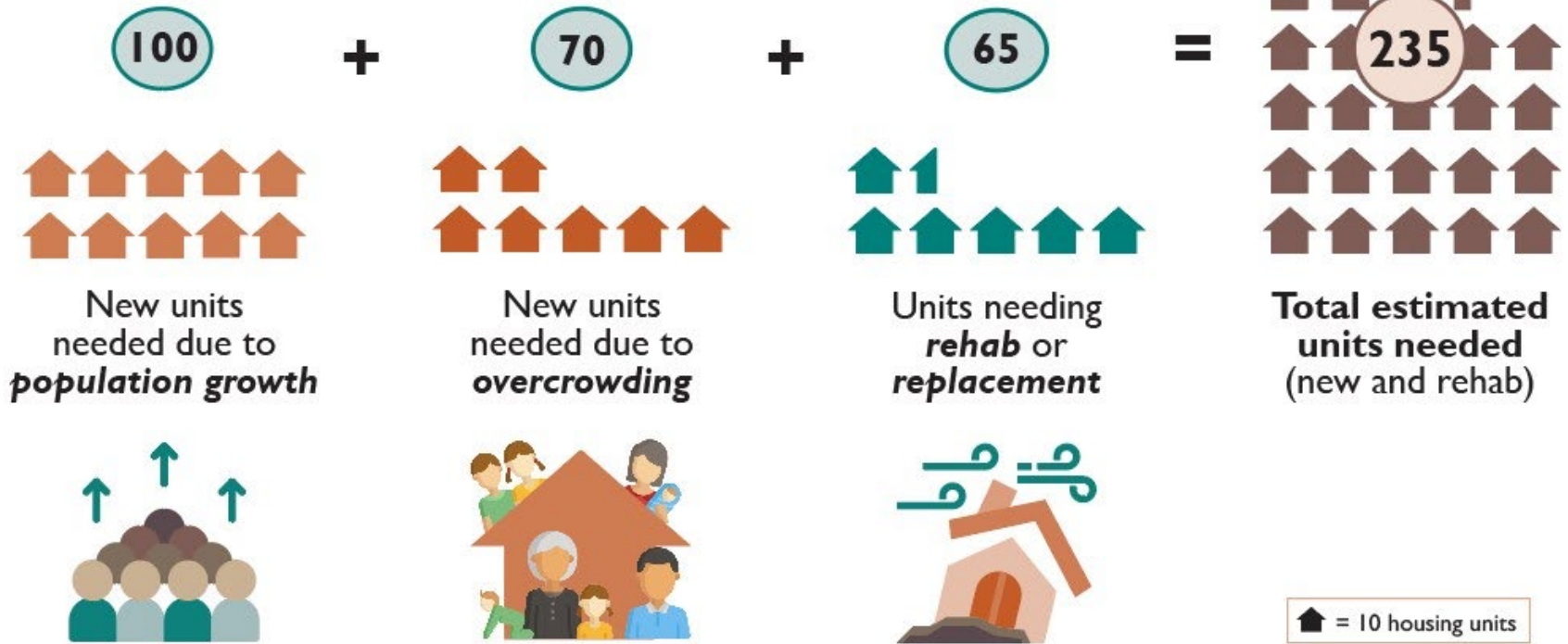
Note: A lower Margin of Error (MOE) indicates higher confidence levels in the produced result and are often tied to sample size. For example, the MOE for % severely overcrowded in Girdwood (smaller sample) is 5.4% compared to a 0.2% MOE for the Statewide estimates (larger sample).



# Housing Need Forecast

## Mid Population Growth Scenario

### 10-year housing need for Girdwood



# 10-Year Residential Land Use Forecast

*Mid population demand scenario for year-round residents*

## Based on Existing Building Trends

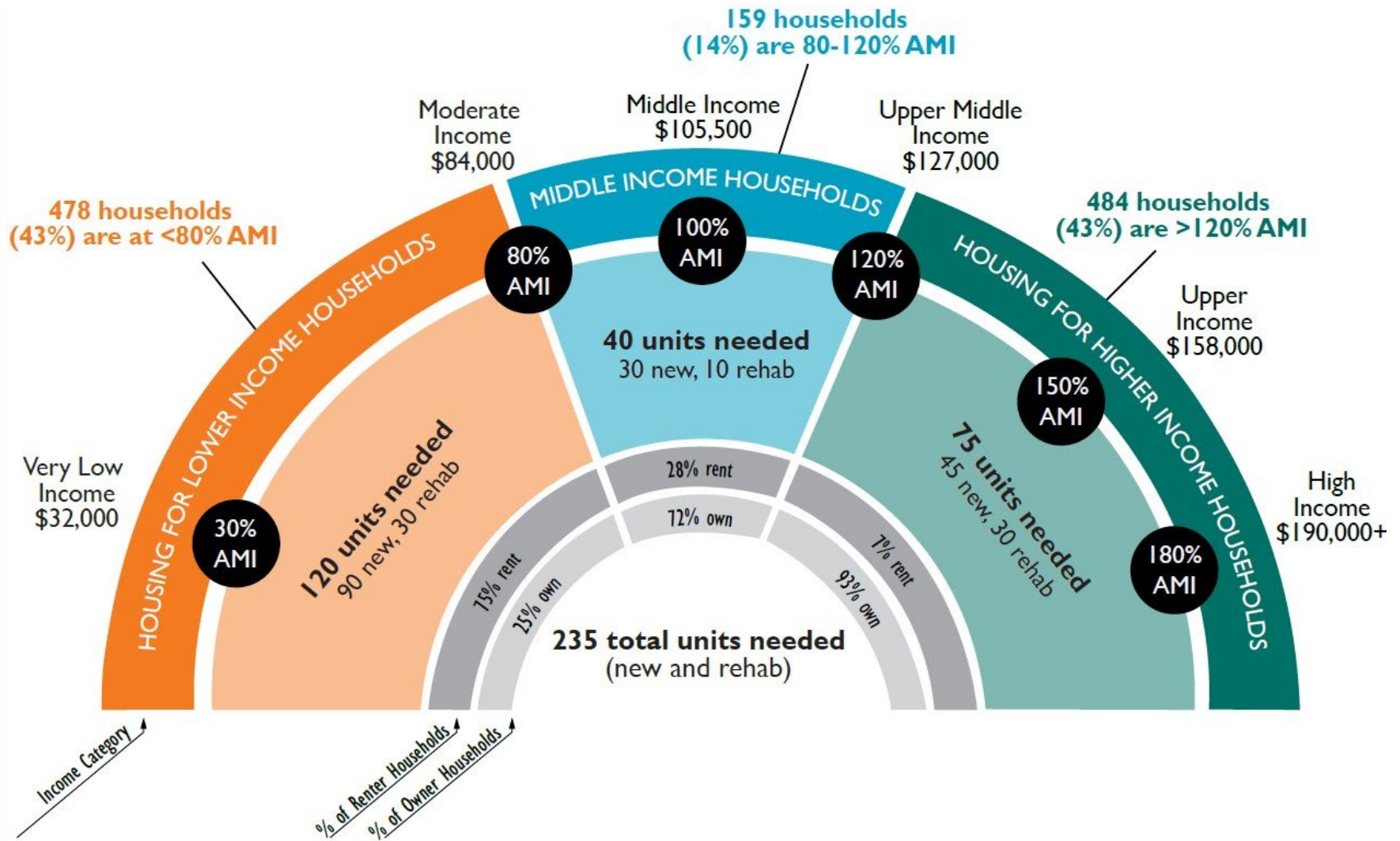
## Higher Density Buildout Scenario

Unit Type	Distribution of Existing Units	Forecasted New Units by Type	Total Acres	Higher Density Distribution	Forecasted New Units by Type	Total Acres
Single Family	71%	120	34.3	15%	25	7.3
Duplex	13%	23	4.0	10%	17	3.0
3-9 Units	7%	11	0.8	35%	60	4.0
10+ Units	10%	16	0.6	40%	68	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>16.7</b>

Between **17 and 40 acres** needed to accommodate forecasted need for new housing units in Girdwood

# Housing Need by Household Income

## Mid Population Growth Scenario



# Employer Interviews March 2023:

## Key Findings on Housing

The housing shortage is impacting businesses negatively. Situation has worsened in the last 4-8 years.

- Losing workers or can't recruit for new
- Businesses are putting resources toward housing
- Unable to operate at full capacity

### Immediate need for 100+ units:

- Build units with 2 or 3 bedrooms; families can use them, and singles can share.
- Townhome style
- Some small cabins
- Need lower cost but nicer than mobile home units.
- Prioritize or incentivize locals for new housing. Require a 20 hr/week job in Girdwood to qualify, as example

### Housing affordability

- Housing needs to be made affordable; not just higher end single family homes.
- Any new housing will benefit us, to some extent. People move up and their units become available, but a mix of prices and affordability will be best.
- More workforce housing

## Interviewees/Emails

*Businesses (March 2023)*

Alyeska Resort (Pomeroy Resort)

Jack Sprat

Powder Hound

Ice Cream Shop

Plowing Contractor

Girdwood Clinic

Girdwood Brewery

Local contractor/cleaning company

# Girdwood Small Businesses & Housing Solutions

## *What solutions are small businesses currently pursuing?*

- Master lease units in Girdwood for employees.
- Taxi vouchers provided for commute or commute stipend.
- Share employees with resort; current reliable schedule at resort has helped
- Support the resort, they are working on solutions. They bring economic activity.

## *Creative ideas for the future*

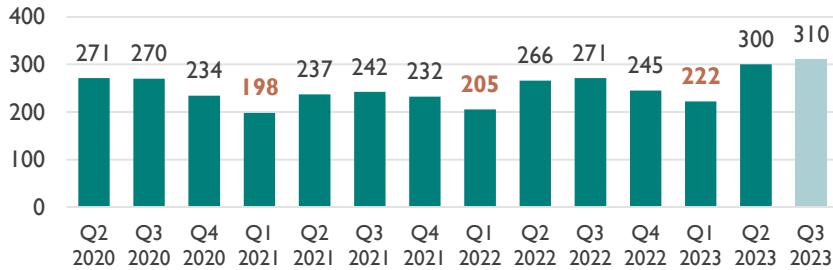
- Let's use “dark homes” more. Could we have a community-based property management entity?
- Leverage an investment like Holtan Hills to generate affordable housing.
- Focus on HLB procurement that includes local contractors and local businesses
- Unsure about short term rentals: Short term rentals are positive and also have impacts. “I would not have been able to afford the house I currently live in had there been bans on short term rentals.”
- Other issue: master plan for the industrial park.

# Short Term Rentals



# Girdwood short-term rental growth and density

Girdwood Active Short Term Rental Listings by Quarter



Source: AirDNA Quarterly Reports for Girdwood (Q2 2020-Q2 2023, Q3 2024 partial)

Reports pulled from **AirDNA** currently show an estimated **310 short-term rental units for Q3 2023**.

**Short-term rental density is high in Girdwood and has been increasing.**  
On average, **10-15 new short-term rental listings** were added per year between 2020-2023.

## Short-term rentals as % total units

Geography	Total residential units	Short-term rentals	% of total units
Girdwood, AK	1,885 <sup>1</sup>	310 <sup>2</sup>	16.4%
Homer, AK	2,201 <sup>3</sup>	326 <sup>3</sup>	14.8% <sup>3</sup>
Anchorage, MOA <sup>4</sup>	118,293	2,323	2.0%
Kenai Peninsula <sup>4</sup>	31,330	2,149	6.9%
Matanuska-Susitna <sup>4</sup>	42,018	903	2.1%
Fairbanks North Star <sup>4</sup>	44,270	717	1.6%
Juneau <sup>4</sup>	13,792	379	2.7%
Sitka <sup>4</sup>	4,229	151	3.6%
Kodiak Island <sup>4</sup>	5,450	140	2.6%
Ketchikan Gateway <sup>4</sup>	6,427	127	2.0%
Wrangell-Petersburg <sup>4</sup>	3,251	37	1.1%

Sources:

[1] CAMA 2023 units for Girdwood (Assessor data). ACS data shows 1,839 units as of 2021.

[2] AirDNA, extrapolated estimate for Q3 2023

[3] City of Homer October 2022 City Council Work Session

[4] Alaska Economic Trends, September 2022

## Comparisons Outside of Alaska Short-term rentals per 1,000 population

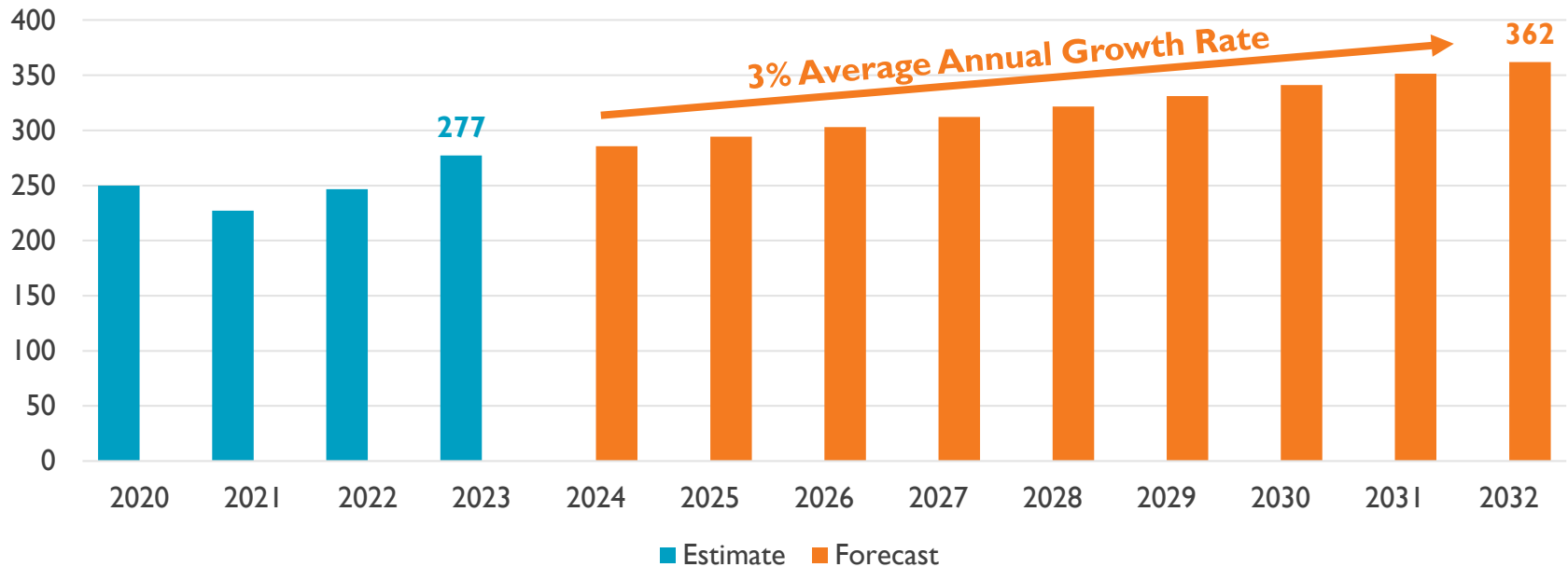
City	2023 STR density <sup>4</sup>
Girdwood, AK	105.4 <sup>2</sup>
Homer, AK	59.1
Hawaii	22.4
New Orleans	18.8
Seattle	9.0
New York City	4.9

Sources:

[2] AirDNA, average estimate for Q1-Q4 2022 compared to 2022 population.

[4] Inside Airbnb, June 2023 Report for remaining communities.

# Girdwood short-term rental forecast



On average, unique short-term rental listings have increased at a rate of roughly 3 percent per year (2020-2023). If this trend were to continue, Girdwood could expect an increase of **85 short term rental listings by 2032**.

Land demand for short term rentals is not estimated due to the potential for conversions and/or new construction. Without more data collection, we don't know how the demand for STRs will materialize in terms of new builds or conversions.

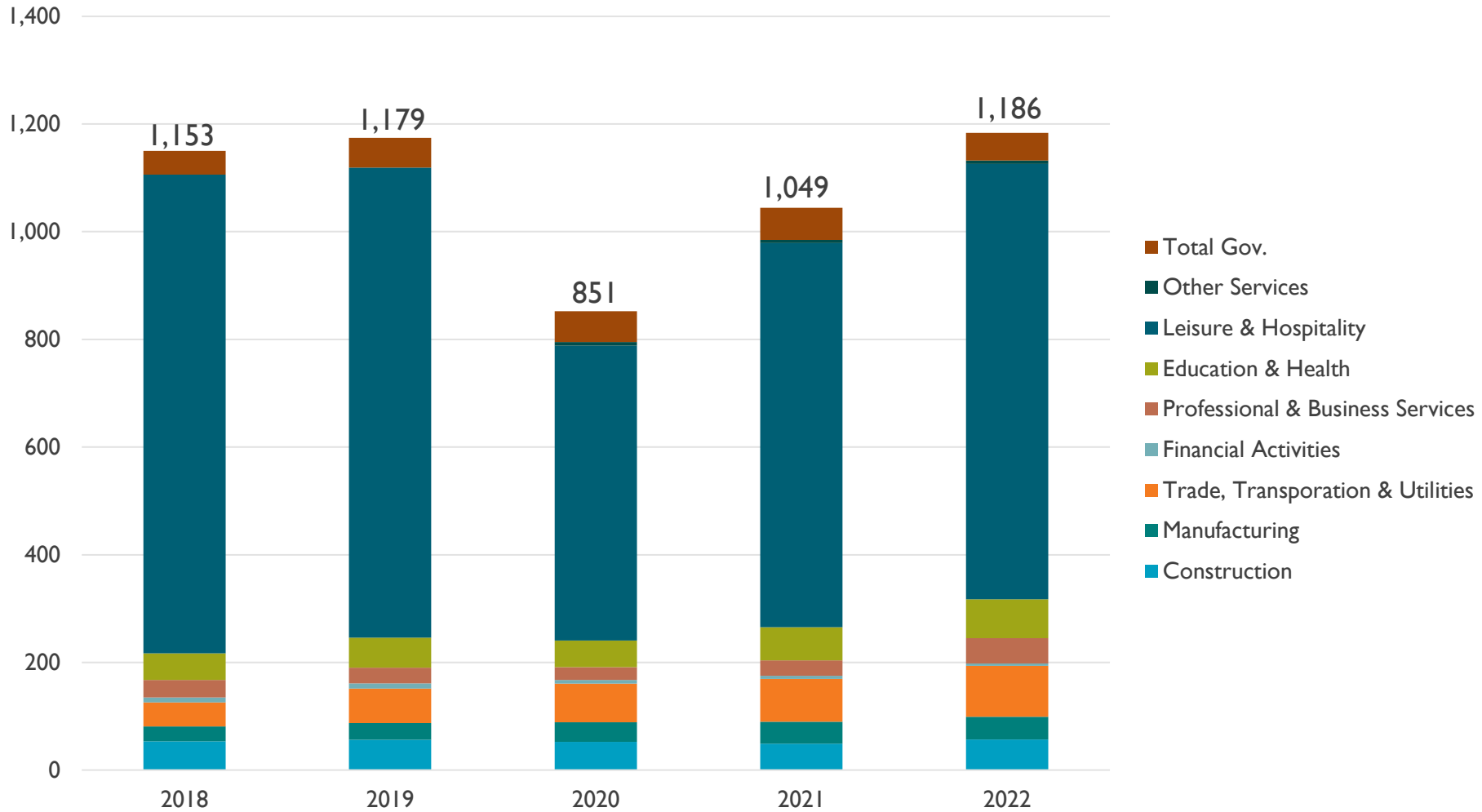




# Girdwood Employment Trends + Commercial Land Demand Forecasts

# Employment in Girdwood was hit hard by the pandemic but made a full recovery in 2022

Average Annual Employment in Girdwood By Industry



Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, (QCEW)- August 2023 Data Request

# Girdwood Employment Forecast (10-year)

Sector	Girdwood Employment 2022	Assumed AAGR for Girdwood (2022-2032)	2032 Jobs Forecast (10-year)	Net Change
Construction	57	2%	72	15
Manufacturing	42	6%	73	31
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	95	9%	214	119
Financial Activities	4	0%	4	0
Professional & Business Services	47	4%	70	23
Education & Health	72	4%	105	32
Leisure & Hospitality, including arts/entertainment	809	4%	1,214	405
Other Services	6	1%	7	0
Government	51	1%	57	6
<b>Total Nonfarm Employment</b>	<b>1,186</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1,816</b>	<b>630</b>

\*Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR)

## Data Sources

Source	Geography	Time Frame
Historical Estimates	Girdwood (Census Tract 29)	2018-2022
Near-Term Forecast	Municipality of Anchorage	2022-2023
Long-Term Forecast	State of Alaska	2020-2030

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, (QCEW)

# 10-Year Commercial Land Use Forecast

Land Use	Projected Employees Requiring Space	Acres Needed
<b>Office</b> <i>Land used predominantly for administration, professional, or clerical services</i>	34	1
<b>Industrial/Flex Space</b> <i>Land containing manufacturing, transportation, construction, communication, utilities or wholesale trade. Flex space refers to light industrial zoned buildings that can be used for both office, warehouse or other multi-functional use</i>	63	11
<b>Retail</b> <i>Land used for the provision of goods and services including shops, grocery stores, hardware stores...etc.</i>	82	4
<b>Accommodation + Food Services</b> <i>Establishments providing customers with lodging and/or preparing meals, snacks and beverages for immediate consumption</i>	350	7
<b>Institutional</b> <i>Land used primarily for religious, government, educational, or health care facilities.</i>	14	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>24</b>

Note: An estimated 92 or 15% of forecasted employees do not have space requirements. This includes jobs in industries like construction that require less physical space as well as remote employees.



# Key Takeaways

- Girdwood Comp Plan should accommodate at least 40 acres of residential and 25 acres of commercial (10 years worth of growth).
- We encourage you to plan for more like 20 to 30 years of land demand and beyond. Having more land available than immediate demand allows the community to respond to market opportunities.
- Consider other areas of policy that may be worth addressing or collecting more complete information.



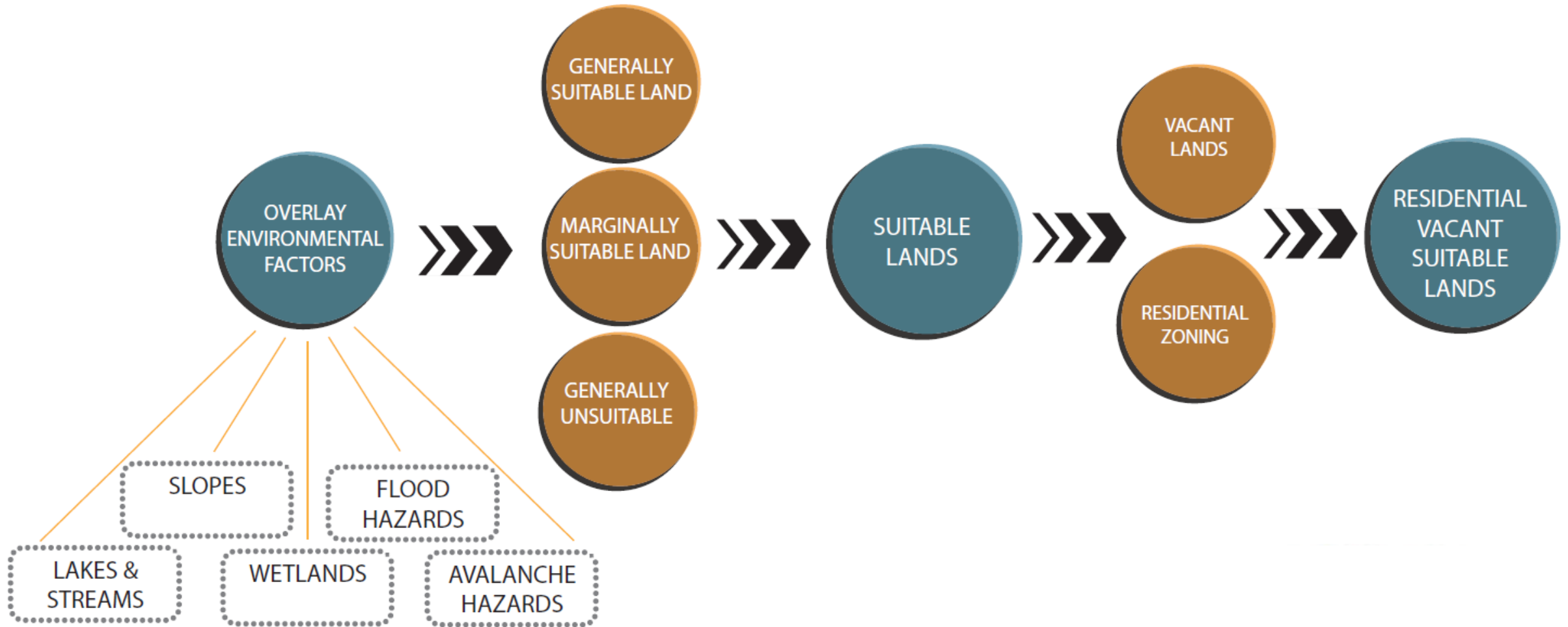


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# Land Suitability Analysis

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# Land Suitability Analysis Process



# Land Suitability Analysis



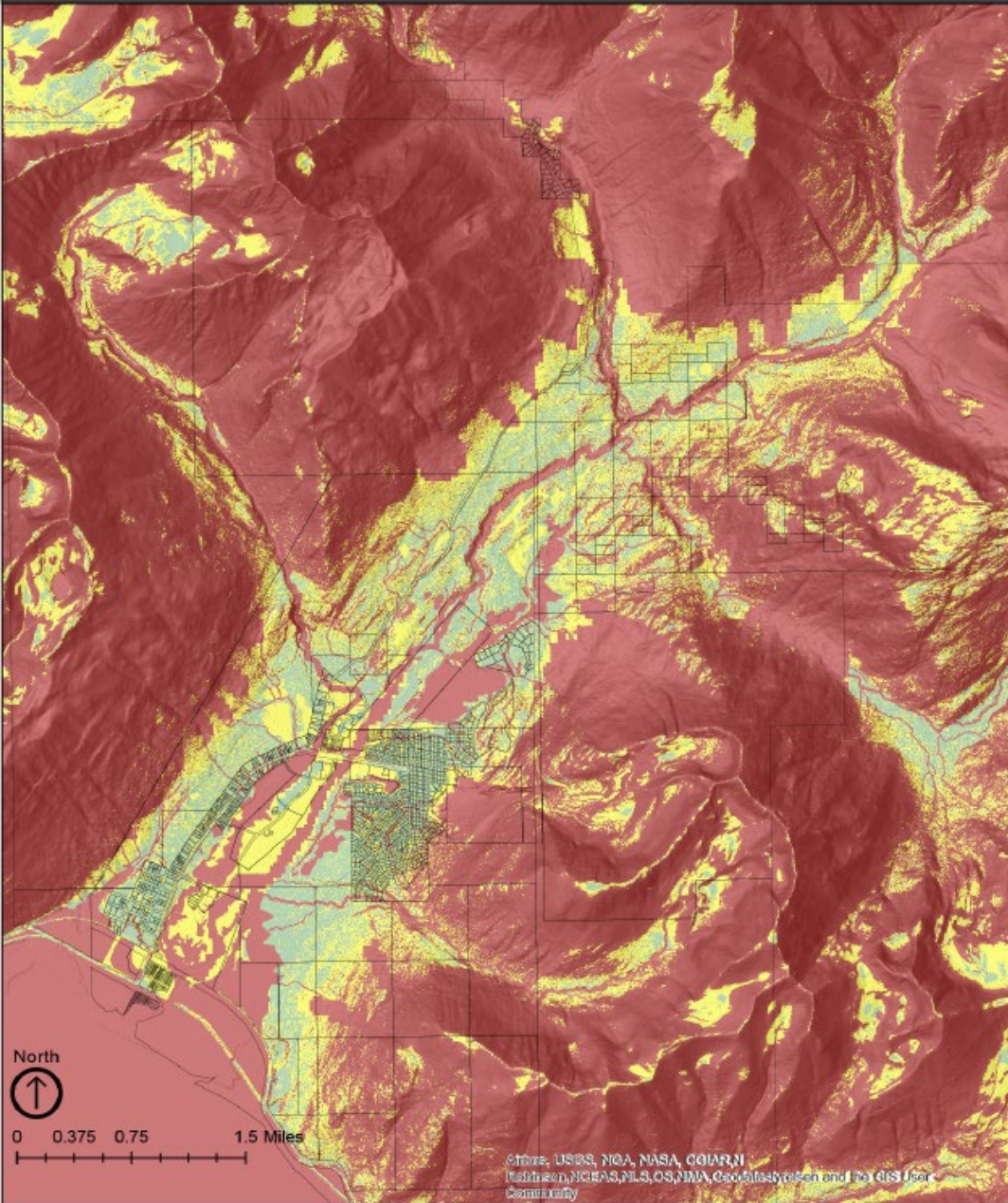
Residential Land



Commercial Land



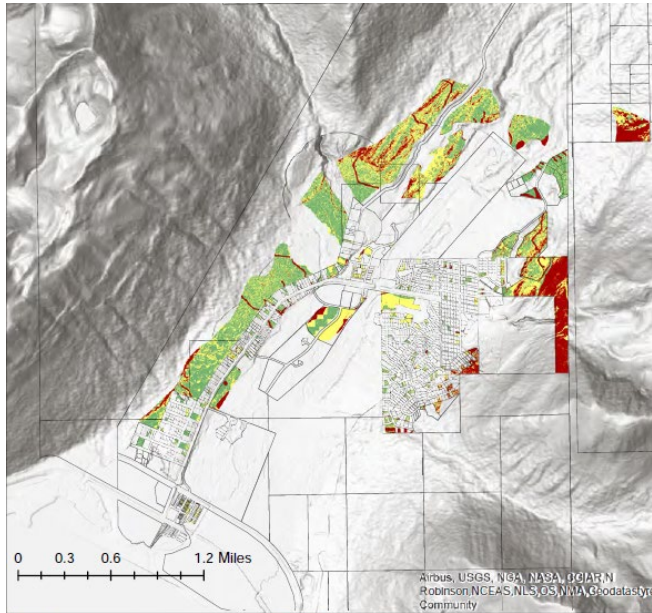
Industrial Land





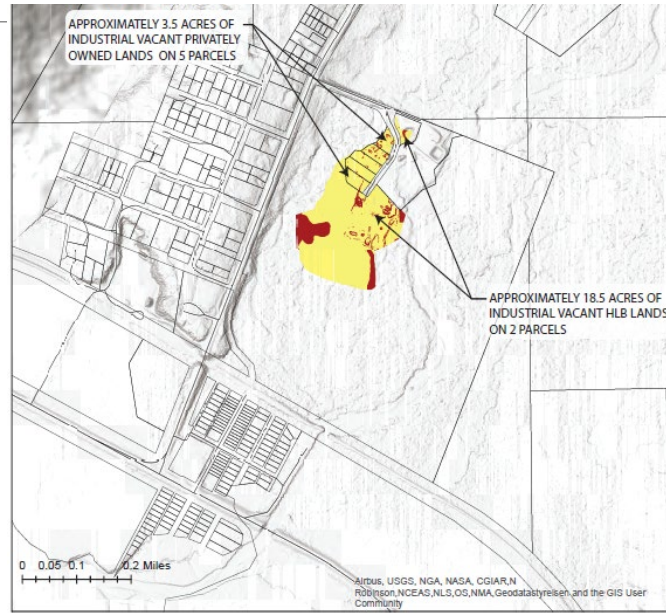
# Availability of Suitable, Vacant Land

Residential



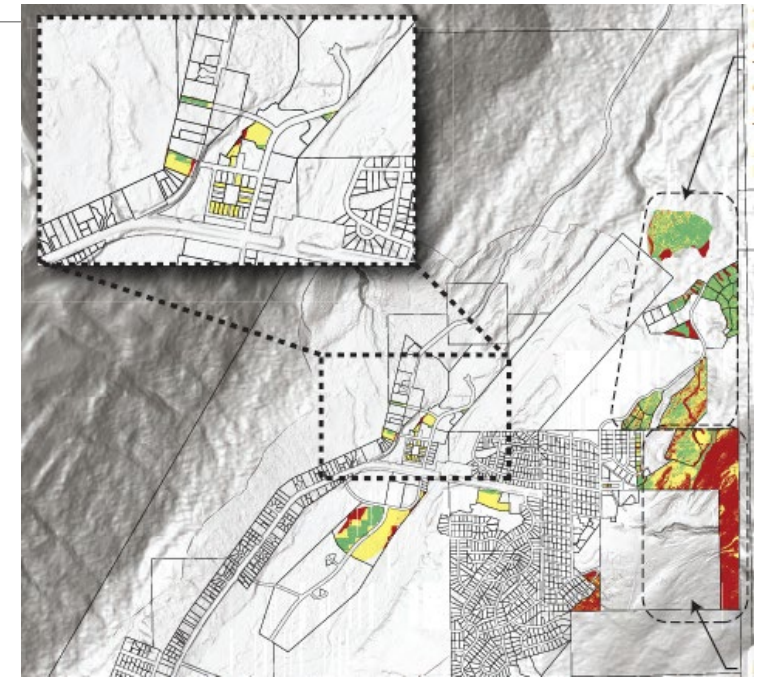
■ GENERALLY SUITABLE     ■ GENERALLY UNSUITABLE  
■ MARGINALLY SUITABLE     □ PARCEL LINES

Industrial



■ GENERALLY SUITABLE     ■ GENERALLY UNSUITABLE  
■ MARGINALLY SUITABLE     □ PARCEL LINES

Commercial



Vacant Commercial Suitable Acres

Size of Parcels in Acres	Acres	Acres of Generally/Marginally Suitable Land
Generally Suitable (Green)	63	172
Marginally Suitable (Yellow)	109	
Unsuitable (Red)	111	-

Vacant Industrial Suitable Acres

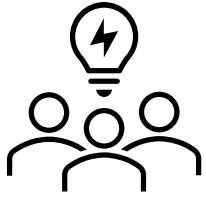
Size of Parcels in Acres	Acres	Acres of Generally/Marginally Suitable Land
Generally Suitable (Green)	0	19
Marginally Suitable (Yellow)	19	
Unsuitable (Red)	3	-

Residential Suitable Acres

Size of Parcels in Acres	Acres	Acres of Generally/Marginally Suitable Land
Generally Suitable (Green)	276	534
Marginally Suitable (Yellow)	258	
Unsuitable (Red)	161	-

# REFRESHER!

## *Developing a Future Land Use Plan Map for Girdwood*



Community Vision & Goals



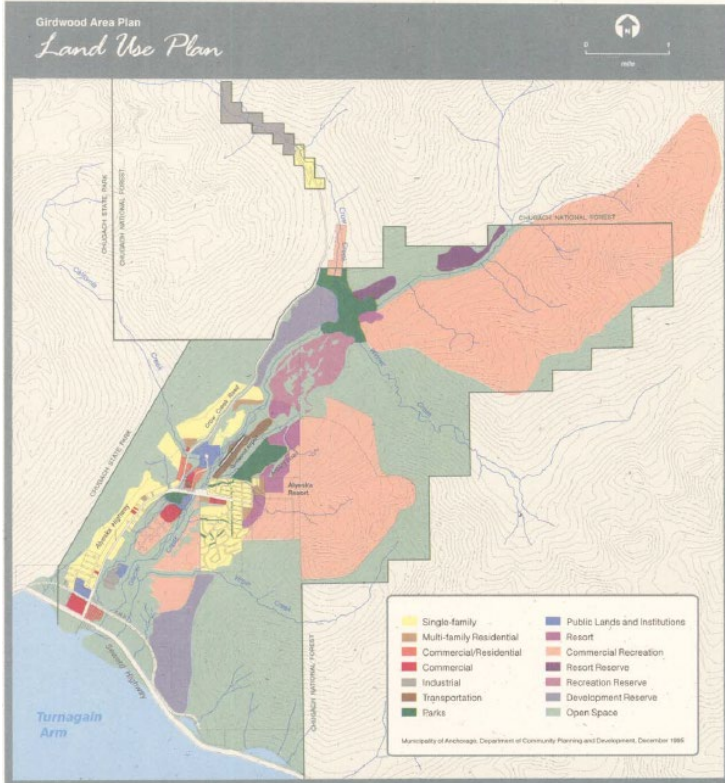
Population, Housing, & Employment Analysis  
(This is land demand!)



Land Suitability Analysis  
(This is land supply!)

# 2 Draft Land Use Scenarios

## 1995 Land Use Plan



## Other Area Specific Plans



Girdwood Trails Plan (in-process)

Crow Creek Neighborhood Plan  
(2006)

Girdwood South Townsite  
Master Plan (2014)

MOA Official Street and  
Highways Plan (2014)



## 2 Draft Land Use Plans

Overall Land Use Plan Concept  
Land Use Categories  
Key Land Use Designations

## Community Feedback

What land use designations do you  
like in each plan?

What is missing or you think should  
be different?



## Final Land Use Plan

(Combination of scenario A&B  
elements based on feedback.)








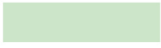







## Scenario A

### “Expanded Alpine Town Center”

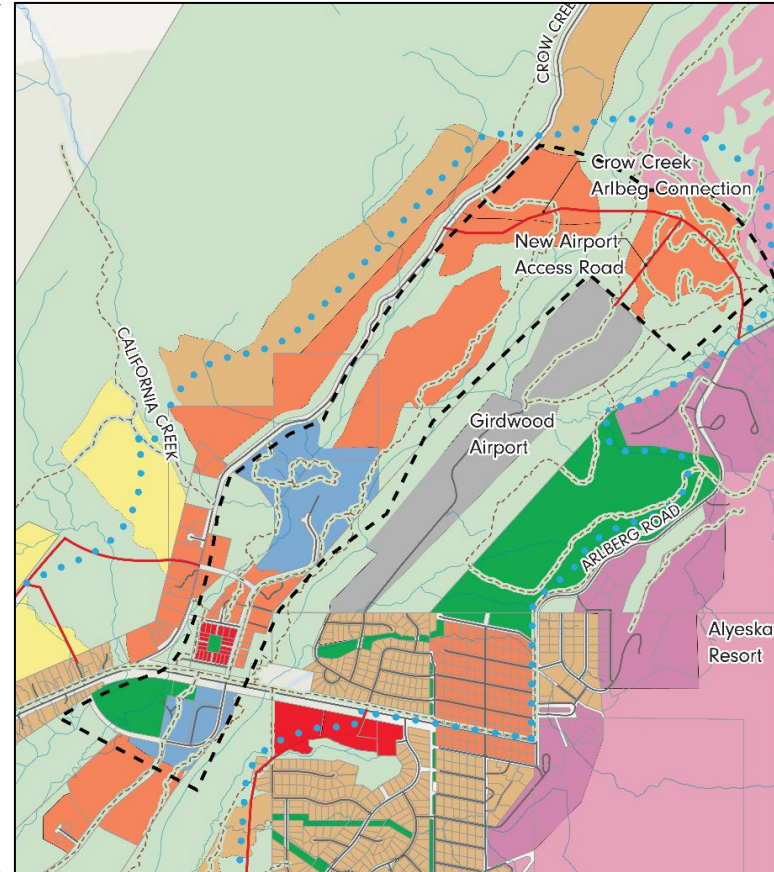
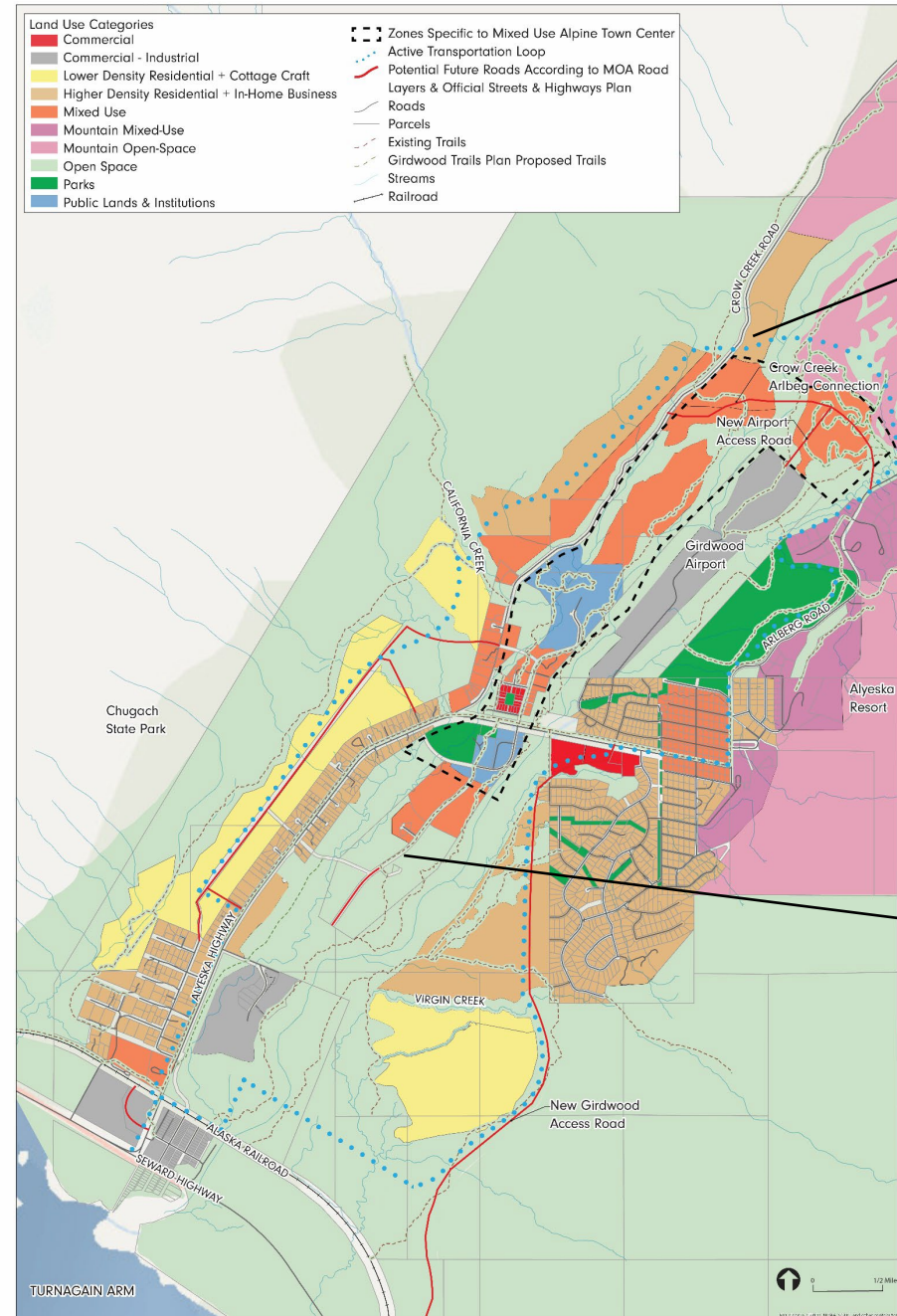
- Create opportunities for mixed use commercial and residential development with a core town center
- Greater opportunities for mixed residential development centered around the expanded town center
- Active transportation network circling the valley
- Main-street style development through zoning design standards

# Scenario A

	Land Use	Description
	Lower Density Residential + Cottage Craft	One to two unit homes, duplexes/condos and town homes allowed. Businesses with small customer interface.
	Higher Density Residential + In-Home Business	Higher density housing opportunities. Businesses with a small quantity of employees and customer interface.
	Mixed Use	Commercial uses (small to medium footprint i.e., no big box stores). Residential permitted.
	Commercial	Commercial uses (small to medium footprint i.e., no big box stores). Residential excluded.
	Commercial/Industrial	Light industrial, commercial opportunities, residential excluded.
	Mountain Mixed Use	Commercial uses that are related to mountain use or the outdoor industry. All residential uses permitted.
	Mountain Open Space	Limited infrastructure for outdoor recreation (i.e., public use cabins, public nature centers).
	Open Space	Natural areas with the opportunity to become dedicated park land.
	Parks	Dedicated park land.
	Public Lands & Institutions	Schools, libraries, civic centers, government buildings
	Alpine Community Core	Zones with a form-based code for a main street-style, pedestrian oriented development.
	Transportation Corridors	New and/or improved roadways that are a part of the official streets and highways plan.
	Active Transportation Network	A multi-use loop around the valley that can be used for pedestrian and bicycle commuting to various community nodes.

# Girdwood Land Use Plan DRAFT - Scenario A

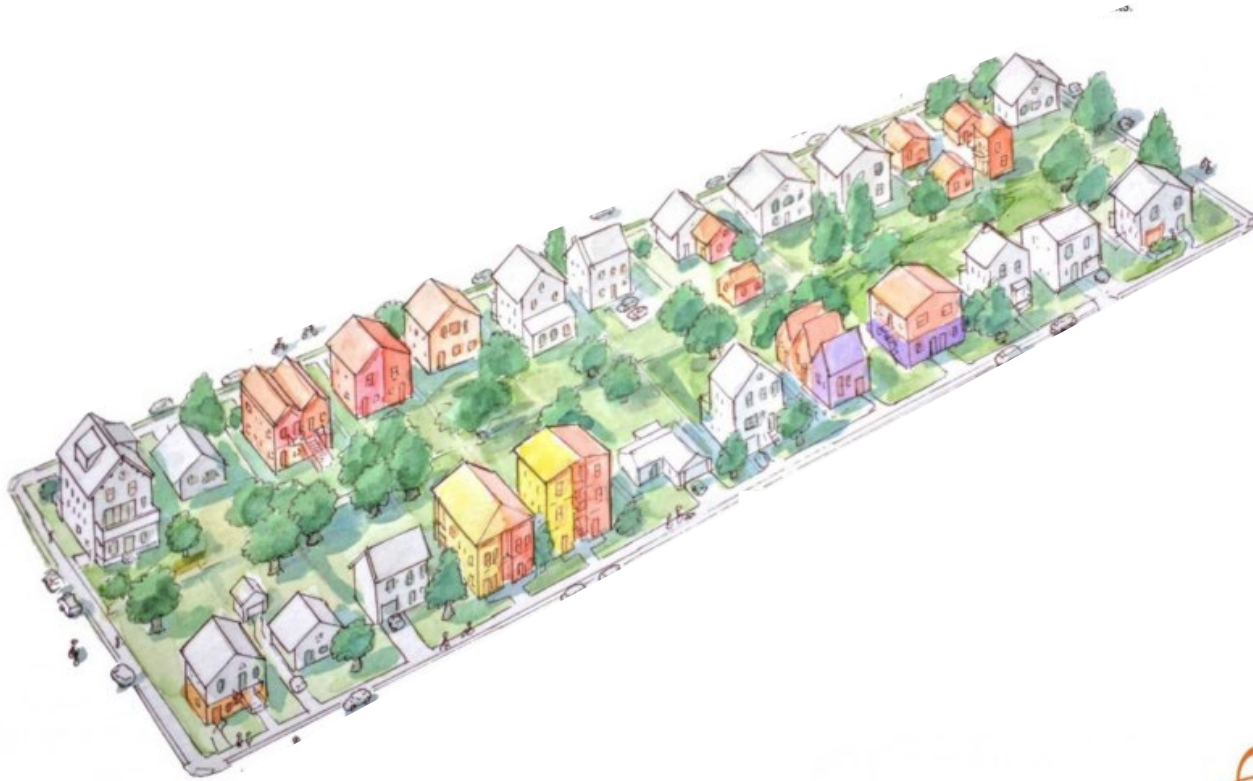
## Expanded Alpine Town Center



# Scenario B

## “Trail Oriented”

- One residential land-use category with opportunities for a variety of housing types
- Allow for native vegetation retention through all housing types
- More open space based on trails plan
- Active transportation network throughout the valley

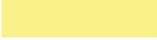





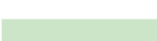






\* Maximum building sizes based on floor area ratio allowed on a typical 50' x 100' lot in the R-5 zone.

Source: Sightline Institute



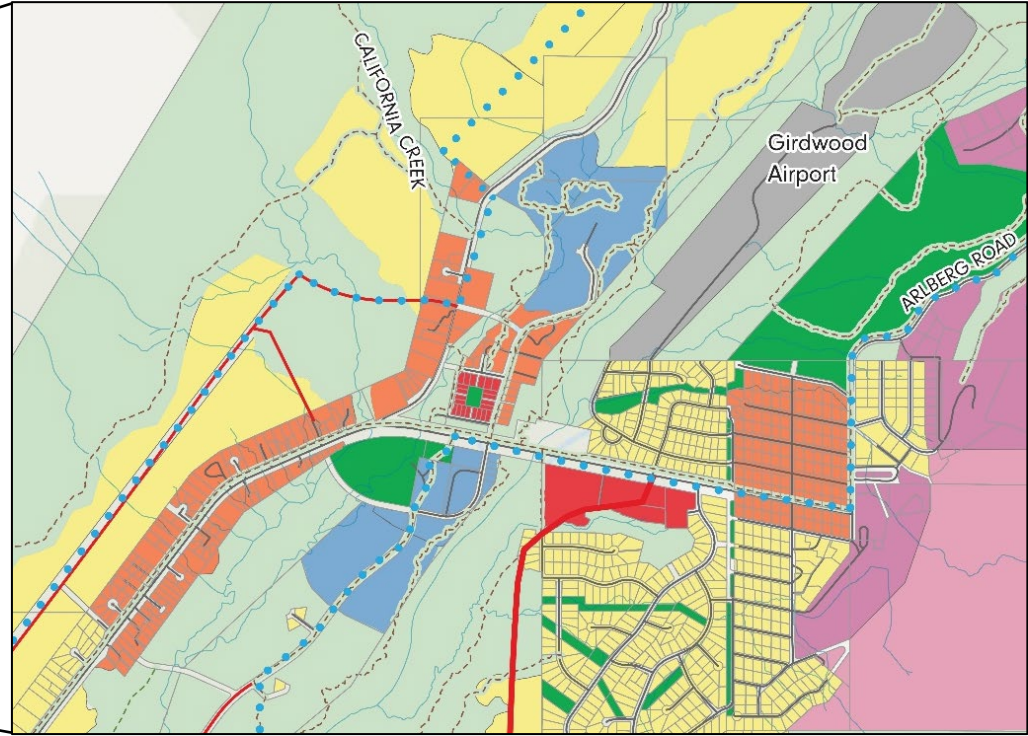
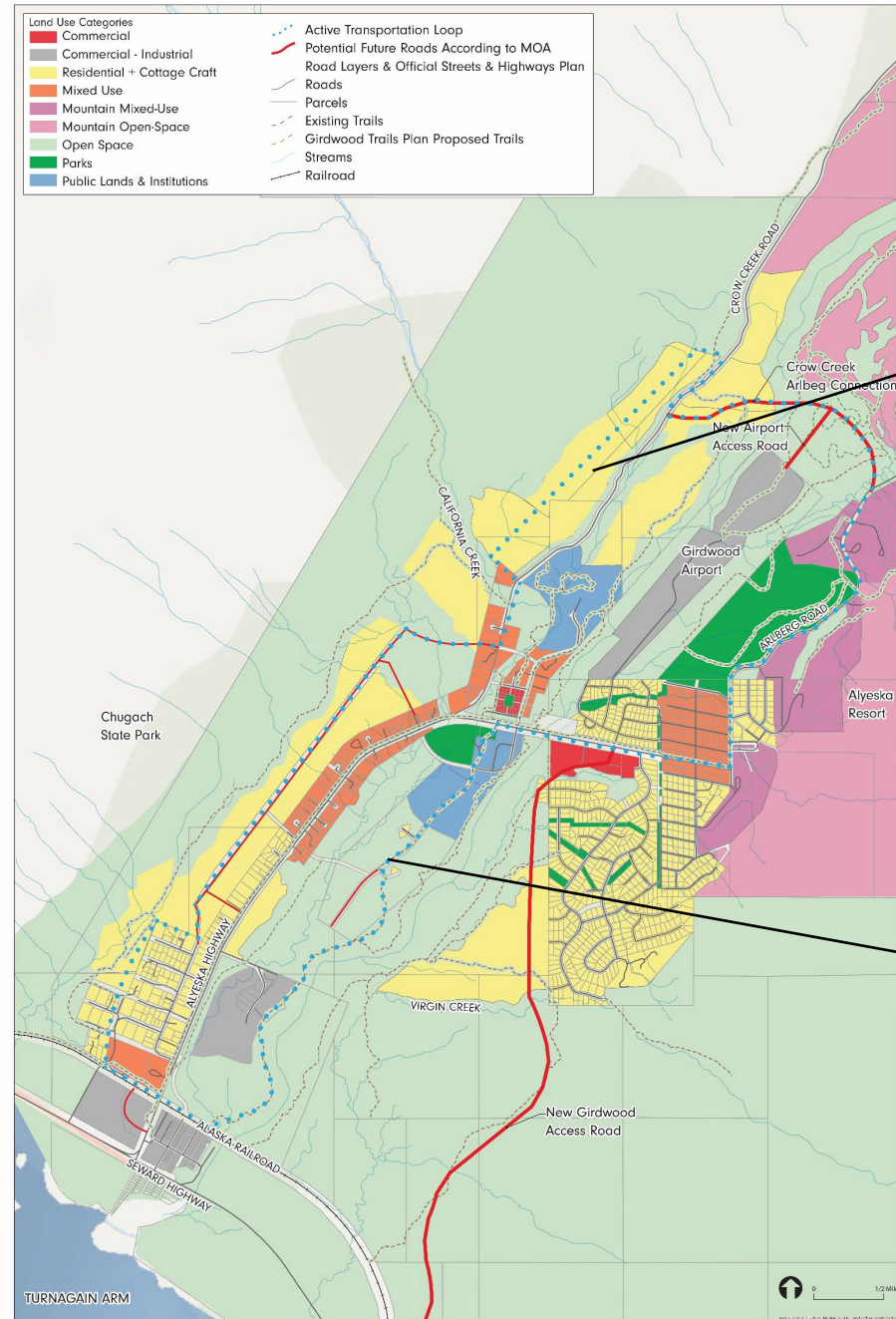
# Scenario B

	Land Use	Description
	Residential	All housing densities as designated in Girdwood. Businesses with small customer interface.
	Mixed Use	Commercial uses (small to medium footprint i.e., no big box stores). Residential permitted.
	Commercial	Commercial uses (small to medium footprint i.e., no big box stores). Residential excluded.
	Commercial/Industrial	Light industrial, commercial opportunities, residential excluded.
	Mountain Mixed Use	Commercial uses that are related to mountain use or the outdoor industry. All residential uses permitted.
	Mountain Open Space	Limited infrastructure for outdoor recreation (i.e., public use cabins, public nature centers).
	Open Space	Natural areas with the opportunity to become dedicated park land.
	Parks	Dedicated park land.
	Public Lands & Institutions	Schools, libraries, civic centers, government buildings
	Transportation Corridors	New and/or improved roadways that are a part of the official streets and highways plan.
	Active Transportation Network	A multi-use loop around the valley that can be used for pedestrian and bicycle commuting to various community nodes.



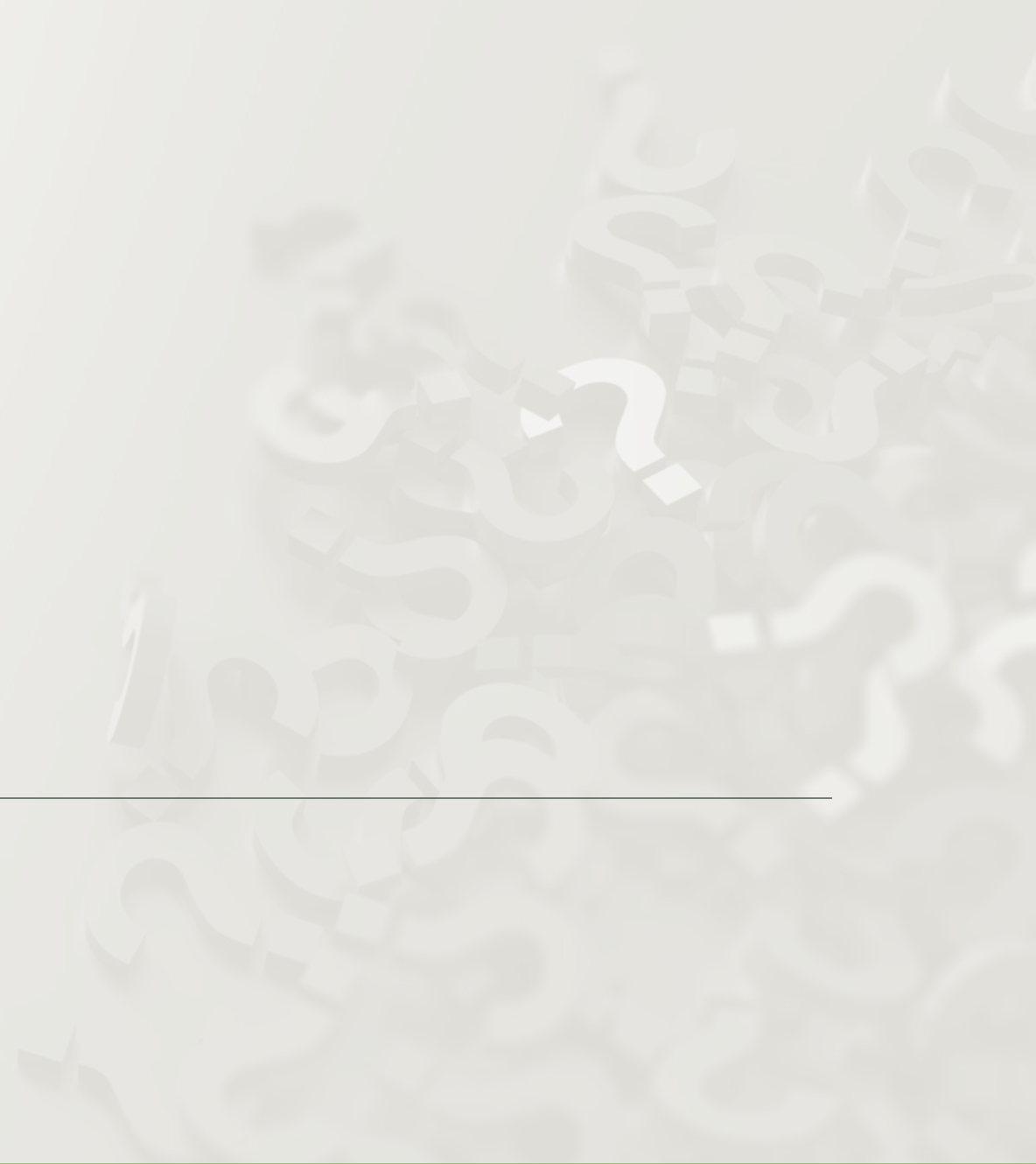
# Girdwood Land Use Plan DRAFT - Scenario B

## Trail Oriented Development



# Questions?

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# How to comment on the Future Land Use Plan Maps

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All maps and documents are available on the Imagine! Girdwood website (<https://www.imaginegirdwood.org/>)



Submit comments in writing tonight using the forms.



Submit comments in writing to [holly@huddleak.com](mailto:holly@huddleak.com)



COMMENT DEADLINE: Tuesday, October 31st

