



Summary of Agency Comments to the Public Review Draft Hillside District Plan

General

Agencies would like to see more focus in the Plan on resolving problems in existing developments. Agencies offer suggestions for making the document clearer, easier to read, and ask for more clarity on how HDP draft relates to other HDP related documents (referenced on website). Agencies comment on the need for a clearer understanding of how HDP recommendations relate to other plans, policies, and regulations (e.g., Title 21, Areawide Trails Plan, Chugach Access Plan, Southeast Parks Plan, 2006 Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource and Recreation Facility Plan, Section 36 Planning).

Land Use

Agencies note that many of the development standards and review procedures proposed in the HDP already exist and ask for a clearer explanation of how exactly the HDP recommendations differ from existing policies and procedures, as well as greater consideration of how the HDP recommendations would be implemented. Agencies also ask for clarification about the existing non-residential uses on the Hillside that are noted in the Plan – are these legal nonconformities or some other designation?

Drainage

Agencies ask for more emphasis on: property redevelopment, the need to acquire drainage easements (not only purchase of land) along natural drainages (including crossing lands that have already been subdivided), and the relationship between drainage and road design. Agencies also request a description of “Low Impact Development (LID),” the technical term for what the HDP is essentially recommending to reduce runoff from individual lots.

Again, agencies note that many of the development standards and review procedures proposed in the HDP already exist and asked for a clearer explanation of how exactly the HDP recommendations differ from existing policies and procedures, as well as greater consideration of how the HDP recommendations would be implemented.

Transportation - Roads

Agencies ask for a clarification of how the proposed HRRDTSA would interface/interact with existing Municipal departments: does the HDP propose a

drainage-only management entity or a combined service area? Agencies have strong reservations about the practicability of separating drainage from road services.

Agencies also ask for more clarification and attention to coordinating maintenance of city-owned rights of way with those owned by the State, noting some inaccuracies regarding State ownership of roads. Agencies offer a suggested list of state road projects that would be needed to avoid having roads that are over capacity, and ask that the HDP clearly indicate that state-owned roads will be built and maintained according to State road standards, which are in conflict with the proposed road standards in the HDP.

Transportation - Trails

There is general support from commenting agencies for HDP policies that recognize the need for additional trails, trail connectivity, trailhead development and management, and access to CSP. Agencies support using the HDP to reserve trailhead & access to CSP in MOA land use development decision-making, but note that the Plan needs to be more explicit about the extent to which Hillside land use decision-making should rely on the HDP versus other plans, as related plans are updated, completed and adopted. Comments also include a request for the HDP to note that while neighborhood impacts are to be avoided, zero impacts may not be achievable and should not warrant the denial of public access.

Comments note that the green infrastructure system/map should include access to public lands in addition to trails, as reservation of public easements in platting process may not necessarily be linked to “trails” as a developed facility. Agencies also request that the Plan show more flexibility for specific access and trailhead locations described and mapped in Chapter 4, and note some confusion/inaccuracies in map, as well as additional access points and connection opportunities that they believe deserve mention in the HDP.

Agencies request that the HDP provide more explicit linkage between existing and proposed trail routes (as shown on map) and HDP recommended actions (e.g., public easement reservation, access & parking improvements, major access development); some potential conflicts are noted. Comments also include a request to distinguish between existing and proposed trails/trailheads.

Agency comments include the request to reference ARDSA boundaries, as the MOA Parks and Recreation Department currently maintains trails along road ROWs outside ARDSA boundaries, as well as a request to include on-street bike route to roadside trails sections, since a significant amount of on-street bicycle use has been observed within the study area. Agencies also note some forthcoming land acquisitions/easements and trail improvements that will affect HDP policies.

Water & Wastewater

Agencies have some reservations about the legal ability to shift responsibility for managing future neighborhood wastewater systems from ADEC to MOA Development Services.

Implementation

Agency comments note a general need for greater clarity on the implementation actions recommended by the HDP, which includes a combination of policies, programs and action-items. Agencies express concerns about the redundancy of HDP recommendations, considering existing code (e.g., new trail & road standards) and other MOA plans and policies. Commenting agencies request more information on how the plan addresses certain goals (e.g., “Provide a range of new housing types,” “Retain land for public purposes”), and whether certain existing implementation tools (e.g., special assessment districts) were considered as a means of solving neighborhood problems.

Agencies request more specific information on green infrastructure implementation and clarification on the Furrow Creek conservation subdivision recommendations. Concerns are expressed about how the conservation subdivision recommendations fit into the existing platting process, whether they effectively improve upon existing Title 21 standards and procedures, and the degree to which the development standards proposed in the HDP are already considered in existing subdivision plat review.

Agency comments include suggestions for additional glaciation solutions, and request greater specificity about design alternative(s) to road ditches for drainage. Agencies also note that onsite drainage control involves detention/retention ponds, which are now being required under individual plan review, even though a good mechanism for ongoing maintenance has not yet been developed, and request that the HDP speak to this issue.

Agencies ask for greater clarity on how transit goals are implemented, as well as on the recommendation for a Hillside Road, Drainage and Trails Service Area: How would the HRRDTSA interface/interact with existing Municipal departments? Who will resolve disputes and respond to complaints? Does the HDP recommend a drainage-only management entity or combined service area? Or is the HDP recommending that if the combined service area is not implemented, a drainage authority will be imposed? Agencies note the need for greater consistency in how this entity is referred to in the HDP, as well as in discussions of how it’s structured and paid for.

Agencies also note that maximum grade standards are in place to preserve the safety of the traveling public, and that loosening road grade standards to reduce environmental impacts can only go so far before safety is compromised. Alternative ways of decreasing cuts, such as mandating retaining walls, may be the only acceptable solution.

Comments indicate an appreciation for the incremental implementation approach to trails and CSP access, as well as the focus on partnering opportunities between MOA and the State. Agencies request more specificity on how the HDP relates to the Title 21 Rewrite and CSP Access Inventory, among other park and trail-related policies and regulations.

Agencies request clarification on how to implement the trail system/plan outlined in the HDP, noting that implementation may be different for trails inside ROWs versus those located outside of ROWs. More details are sought on the proposal to change the Park Service Boundary: who is affected and how? What are the implementation steps? Agencies also request more information on the Chugach Access Bond Measure (How would it work? How would it be implemented?), and note that it should include Eagle River, Girdwood and Turnagain Arm.