

**Turnagain Community Council**  
 c/o Acting President Cathy L. Gleason  
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April 7, 2017

sent via e-mail

Municipality of Anchorage  
 Real Estate Department  
 Heritage Land Bank Division  
 4700 Elmore Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
 Anchorage, Alaska 99507

**RE: Draft 2017 HLB Annual Work Program and 2018-2022 Five-Year Work Plan**

Dear HLB Director Ward, HLB Staff, and HLB Advisory Commissioners,

As the Turnagain Community Council (TCC) does each year, we are submitting comments on the Draft 2017 Heritage Land Bank (HLB) Annual Work Program and the 2018-2022 Five-Year Work Plan (Draft 2017 Plan). The following was approved at our April 6, 2017, general meeting.

**Summary of TCC Comments & Requests:**

1. **PAGE 9:** As requested and accepted by HLB last year, but not reflected in the Draft 2017 Plan, **include reference to HLB maintaining mailing list for anyone requesting notification on proposed HLB actions.**
2. **PAGE 21:** TCC has long advocated for parcels located within the Ted Stevens Anchorage Airport (Airport) boundaries that Mayor Berkowitz has requested be transferred to the Municipality of Anchorage — **TCC supports HLB's involvement in this effort.**
3. **PAGE 27:** TCC has long advocated for HLB land west of the Airport where the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail/greenbelt and sections of the Sisson Loop Trail are located to be transferred to the Parks and Recreation Department. While we have presented ample rationale over the years, **this year there is a significant, new justification: this HLB land is now designated "Park or Natural Area" in the Draft 2040 Land Use Plan, which will be adopted by the Assembly sometime this year (this designation currently has concurrence by the Planning and Zoning Commission). TCC, once again, makes the request to include transfer of this HLB land to the Parks Dept. in the HLB Five-Year Plan.**
4. **PAGE 29:** As requested and accepted by HLB last year, but not reflected in the Draft 2017 Plan, **make minor, but clarifying, amendment to language regarding request for State of Alaska land to be transferred to the Municipality.**

**CHAPTER 1: HERITAGE LAND BANK OVERVIEW**

**ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM**

**1. Page 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> graph:**

This graph describes how Municipal Code (AMC 25.40.020.B & AMC 25.40.030) applies to public notice and hearing requirements for HLB plans and proposed actions on specific work items. *TCC views this*

information as an important component of the Plan and supports its inclusion. That's why we included the below request in our April 8, 2016, comment letter on last year's (2016) HLB Plan. **Our request was accepted by HLB staff, as indicated in Appendix F "Response to the Public and Community Council Comments on the Draft 2016 HLB Work Program/2017-2021 Five-Year Plan, April 2016."** Yet — in the Draft 2017 Plan, this additional sentence is NOT included.

TCC once again provides the following comment and request:

One specific public notice item from AMC 25.40.030 is not included in the Draft 2017 Plan description. This item (AMC 25.40.030.D.3.) references HLB maintaining a standing list of persons who have requested to receive notices, and this list is to be mailed notices whenever HLB is proposing an action — regardless of where they live. *So that the public notice description in this section is complete and readers are aware of this notification opportunity...*

⇒ *TCC requests that the following sentence be added after the current sixth sentence ("Considerable effort is made to keep the public notified of proposed HLB activities through neighborhood mailings, publication of the agenda and via online information maintained on its website."):*

**"In addition, HLB maintains a standing list of people who request to receive notification of proposed HLB actions, and will mail notices of all proposed actions to this list."**

## **CHAPTER 3: 2017 WORK PROGRAM**

### **2017 POTENTIAL ACQUISITIONS**

#### **2. Page 21, 3<sup>rd</sup> graph (& Chapter 4, Proposed Acquisitions: 2018-2022, page29):**

**TCC is pleased to see that Mayor Berkowitz has submitted a list of State-owned parcels to be transferred to the Municipality and supports HLB's involvement in this effort.**

This list includes parcels currently located within the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (TSAIA) boundaries, but chosen by the MOA in the 1986 Municipal Land Entitlement agreement with the State of Alaska. TCC has long advocated for these parcels to be transferred to the Municipality, due to the important value they have as public use/natural open space areas.

Specifically:

- Lands being used as public parks/natural open spaces/recreational areas: Parcels #21 & #68, where Point Woronzof Overlook/sections of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail are located; Parcel #77-Little Campbell Lake Park; #78-land adjacent to Kincaid Park; #113-Delong Lake Park; and a portion of #71- northern section of Connors Bog Park.
- Kloop Snow Disposal Site is also located within #71.

## **CHAPTER 4: FIVE YEAR WORK PLAN: 2018-2022**

### **PROPOSED DISPOSALS: 2018-2022**

#### **3. Page 27, Region 4 — Northwest Anchorage Bowl, 4. HLB Parcels 4-033(A-F) and 4-034:**

Consistent with previous TCC requests, this section of the HLB Plan should be amended to include a specific proposal to transfer all HLB land within HLB Parcels 4-032, 4-033(A-F) and 4-034, not under lease or otherwise encumbered, to the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department, for the permanent protection of important municipal lands currently being used by the public for park, recreation and natural open space purposes.

While TCC understands that this transfer request should come from the Parks and Recreation Dept., **Appendix B — Heritage Land Bank Policies, page 4, IX. HLB Policies, A. Land Management Policies** states,

*“The HLB shall consult regularly with other municipal agencies and the Assembly to determine whether HLB land is needed to fulfill various municipal purposes.”*

The 2017 Draft Plan reflects this policy, as stated on page 30: HLB will “periodically review and consult with municipal agencies and community councils to determine their need for HLB land to fulfill municipal purposes.” TCC concurs with this statement. So...

It is appropriate to include in this section of the plan reference to participating in a discussion with the Parks and Recreation Dept. and TCC regarding the public’s longstanding desire for the Coastal Trail/associated greenbelt/tidelands and portions of the Sission Loop Trails system located on HLB land to be transferred to the Parks Dept.

In addition to the *RATIONALE FOR TRANSFER* below in black — which we have included in our previous years’ comments — *a very important NEW development has occurred that provides an additional level of justification for transferring HLB parcels west of the Airport to the Parks and Recreation Department:*

***NEW INFORMATION/RATIONAL:*** The Municipal Planning Department is currently working on the **2040 Land Use Plan (LUP)**. At this time, the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&ZC) is reviewing public comment and considering Planning staff input. While the P&ZC has not formally voted on recommendations to forward to the Assembly (anticipated in April or May 2017), it has been reaching consensus on numerous items, including how the HLB land west of the Airport should be designated on the 2040 LUP Map.

The Planning Dept’s “Comment and Issue Response Summary” (4-3-2017 draft), page 48 (**ATTACHMENT A TO THIS LETTER**), states as a recommendation: “Change the Land Use Plan Map by **eliminating the southern portion of the diagonal lines, which depict the Airport Expansion, in the southwest corner of the Airport-MOA land interface.** This includes the HLB Clitheroe Center and former composting facility property and lands south of there. **There is no foreseeable Airport growth planned for the MOA land here.**” (TCC emphasis in bold)

The “Issue Response Item 3 Recommended LUP Change” map (**ATTACHEMENT B TO THIS LETTER**) now designates the northeastern areas of HLB land as “Community Facility or Institution” (where the Clitheroe Center is located), and the **remainder of the HLB land is designated as “Park or Natural Area.”**

***P&ZC has concurred with the above Planning Dept. recommendation during their deliberations.***

This HLB land designation change (from its earlier draft as “Airport Expansion Alternative”) reflects Planning discussions with TCC and the Airport as well as the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport 2014 Master Plan Update (Appendix K, Airport Layout Plan Drawing-Future Conditions, Sheet 4 of 34) (**ATTACHEMENT C TO THIS LETTER**), which DOES NOT show any proposed Airport acquisition of, or development in, any HLB land west of its boundaries.

HLB staff has previously rejected TCC’s request to include it the HLB Plan transference of HLB property west of the Airport to the Parks and Recreation Dept., based on adherence to the West Anchorage District Plan (WADP).

*However,* the Planning Dept’s 2040 Land Use Plan “Comment and Issue Response Summary” (4-3-2017 draft), page 18 (**ATTACHMENT D TO THIS LETTER**), states, “[Municipal Code] Title 21 states that, where comprehensive plan elements conflict, the most recently adopted shall govern. This principle will apply when one plan element, such as the 2040 LUP, lists a different land use

designation from another plan element, such as the neighborhood or district plan. **The 2040 LUP governs if it is adopted more recently than the neighborhood or district plan.**” (TCC emphasis in bold)

The WADP was adopted by the Assembly in July 2012 (AO 2012-47). As stated, the 2040 LUP is anticipated to be adopted by the Assembly sometime in 2017.

***RATIONALE FOR TRANSFER:*** The portions of HLB Parcels 4-033 and 4-034 (as well as 4-032, which is all tideland) not being leased or otherwise encumbered by easements and right-of-ways should become permanently dedicated parkland due to the location of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail as well as a portion of the Sisson Loop Trail within the parcel boundaries. The naturally wooded areas remaining in these two parcels are serving as de facto parkland and the natural open space provides essential buffering from high impacts generated by TSAIA operations to the east. This buffering will only increase in value to the community if the airport’s West Airpark is fully developed with high-impact cargo operations adjacent to this municipal land. This land also contains marginal soils; if there is ever a need to relocate the Coastal Trail inland due to erosion, the Parks and Recreation Department will already have the permanently protected land under its management authority to build a new trail.

Transfer of this municipal land to the Parks and Recreation Department would provide permanent protection of a Coastal Trail greenbelt/buffer, and protect some of the most important attributes about Anchorage, as stated in the goals and expressed by the community in the 2020 Anchorage Comprehensive Plan.

On December 4, 1997, TCC passed a resolution in support of transfer of title and management authority of Parcels 4-032, 4-033 and 4-034 from HLB to the Parks and Recreation Dept. We reiterated our position by passing another resolution making the same request on December 2, 1999. Each year, our TCC-approved comment letter on the HLB 1-Year and Five-Year Plans has underscored our continuing position. TCC sees no justifiable reason to delay this action any longer and it should take place early in the 2018-2022 timeframe, to ensure permanent protection of high value land used by a multitude of park and trail users along our scenic coast.

Once the 2040 Land Use Plan & Map is approved by the Assembly later this year, TCC would like to collaborate with the current administration’s appropriate departments (including HLB), with the goal of initiating a request from the Municipal Parks Dept. for transfer of these HLB parcels to their department.

TCC feels it is important to reiterate our request for this action to be included in the HLB Five-Year Work Program.

⇒ ***TCC requests that the current language on page 27 for HLB Parcels #4-033 and 4-034 deleted:***

~~“In the future, HLB will manage this land in a manner consistent with the newly adopted West Anchorage District Plan, which provides for parks and natural resources, and potentially major transportation facility uses for these parcels. Public access to the Coastal Trail may be considered.”~~

⇒ ***and be replaced with the following:***

**“HLB will manage this land in a manner consistent with the 2040 Land Use Plan, which is expected to be adopted by the Assembly in 2017. The draft 2040 LUP designates most of HLB land west of the Airport as “Parks or Natural Areas.” The area currently leased to the Clitheroe Center is designated as “Community Facility or Institution.” These draft designations are based on Municipal Planning Department discussions with Turnagain Community Council, Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Airport’s latest Master Plan Update Airport Layout Plan (December 2014), which shows no proposed acquisition or development of this HLB land.**

Once the 2040 Land Use Plan is adopted, the HLB staff will collaborate with the above entities to discuss transferring title and land management authority of all “Parks or Natural Areas” designated HLB land in Parcels 4-033 and 4-034, as well as Parcel 4-032 tidelands, to the MOA Parks and Recreation Department, with the intent that this land become permanently dedicated parkland. Detailed ordinance language should be written with community and agency input to ensure all easements, plat notes and restrictions are appropriately included and honored in the land transfer.

While this action would conflict with the West Anchorage District Plan (adopted July 2012) designation for portions of this parcels, AMC Title 21 Land Use Regulations Section 21.01.080D.5. states, “Where comprehensive plan elements conflict, the most recently adopted shall govern.” But, the “Parks or Natural Area” would conform to WADP Park Objective #6: “...permanently preserve the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail as a well-maintained, continuous, public recreational corridor with vegetative buffer from Kincaid Park to Westchester Lagoon.”

#### **PROPOSED ACQUISITIONS: 2018-2022**

##### **4. Page 29, 2<sup>nd</sup> graph, only sentence in this section:**

⇒ *TCC recommends amending this sentence by inserting language used on page 22 of the Draft 2017 Plan, which provided more specific information on the transfer proposal:*

**“State Land Request by Mayor Berkowitz - The list of requested properties to be transferred to the MOA ownership has been well received and it is anticipated that some of these parcels will be disposed of by the State of Alaska to the MOA during the 5-year work plan horizon.”**

TCC requested this change last year, which was accepted by HLB staff, as indicated in Appendix F “Response to the Public and Community Council Comments on the Draft 2016 HLB Work Program/2017-2021 Five-Year Plan, April 2016.” Yet — in the Draft 2017 Plan, this change is NOT included.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the 2017 Heritage Land Bank Work Program and 2018-2022 Work Plan. In the past, HLB has worked with TCC in incorporating our requests into these important municipal planning documents and we look forward to that continued effort. Appropriate planning and management of our public land is vital to the long-term future of our city, and citizen/community council involvement is an important element of this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Cathy Gleason  
Turnagain Community Council Acting President

CC:  
Mayor Ethan Berkowitz  
Anchorage Assembly  
Planning Director Hal Hart  
Parks and Recreation Department Director John Rodda  
Parks Superintendent Joshua Durand