

**Turnagain Community Council**  
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sent via e-mail

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

**RE: Draft 2014 HLB Annual Work Program and  
 2015-2019 Five-Year Management Plan**

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

As the Turnagain Community Council (TCC) does each year, we are submitting comments on the Draft 2014 Heritage Land Bank (HLB) Annual Work Program and the 2015-2019 Five-Year Management Plan from TCC. The following requests were approved at our regular November 7, 2013, meeting.

**Chapter 1. HERITAGE LAND BANK — 2014 WORK PROGRAM:**

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HERITAGE LAND BANK**

**Page 5** — Looking back at the last three HBL Work Program documents as well as the draft version of the 2013 plan, an important piece of information was included in the discussion of the Municipal Entitlement Act of 1978 regarding how much acreage has actually been transferred from the state to the Municipality, compared to the total acreage the city is entitled to. But, inexplicably, this sentence was removed from the 2013 final plan and is not in the current draft 2014 plan. This information is relevant, based on the draft plan's discussion of HLB's continuing effort "to work with the state to identify and resolve any remaining land entitlement issues." (page 7)

⇒ *TCC requests that the following sentence be reinserted in the second graph in this section as the third sentence:*

**“In 2010 the Heritage Land Bank became a division level agency under the newly named Real Estate Department (RED). The department also includes the Division of Real Estate Services (RES), and both are located in the Permit Center at 4700 Elmore Road. RES provides services to municipal agencies and manages all land and leases for the MOA except for the Heritage Land Bank, Anchorage Community Development Authority (ACDA), Anchorage School District, Merrill Field, the Port, and Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility (AWWU). RES also supervises the delinquent and**

**foreclosure activities for properties in the municipality, restoring the tax base in amounts often over six million dollars each year.**

### **ACQUIRING MUNICIPAL ENTITLEMENT LANDS**

**Page 7** — Related to the above item, this section discusses in more detail the Municipal Entitlement Act and states that the Municipality is entitled to 44,893 acres of state land. In the 2013 Final Work Program (page 7), the first graph in this section provides specific data on acreage received and balance still owed the city. Inexplicably, this sentence was removed from the draft 2014 plan. It is important that the HLB yearly plan provides the public with specific information relating to how much of the acreage the Municipality is still entitled to receive from the state, versus how much has actually been granted.

⇒ *TCC requests that the following sentence from the 2013 Final Work Program be reinserted at the end of the first graph in this section (with any applicable update to the actual acreage numbers):*

**“As of today, the Municipality has received 31,176.17 acres, leaving a balance of 13,716.83 acres.”**

**Page 7 (& Chapter 3, page 19) — Municipal Entitlement Lands** — TCC supports the Municipality of Anchorage’s efforts to continue to work with the State of Alaska to resolve any remaining land entitlement issues, as outlined in the *Agreement for the Conveyance of Lands of the State of Alaska to the Municipality of Anchorage and Settlement of Land-Related Issues* dated November 25, 1986, and provided for under AS 29.65.010.

TCC once again thanks HLB for specifically referencing Parcel #68 Point Woronzof (ADL 223363) and Parcel #21 Airport North (ADL 201573) as parcels to be conveyed to the city by the state. It has been a long-standing position of TCC that these parcels, which are currently located within TSAIA boundaries, should become Municipal land, as they are used by the public as important recreational areas in West Anchorage, and the popular and widely-praised Tony Knowles Coastal Trail is routed through both of these parcels. This conforms to the West Anchorage District Plan (WADP) Park Objective #6, P-8: “Acquire all remaining portions of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail on airport land along with a vegetative greenbelt buffer, so that the full length of the trail corridor is consolidated under MOA ownership for permanent public recreational use.”

### **FIVE-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Page 9** — In our comments on the 2013 plan, TCC requested language from previous HLB plans stating that the majority of HLB inventory will continue to be held in future years for unspecified, future use — and that lands with designated uses be transferred to other municipal agencies — be included in the 2013 plan. We reiterate this request for the 2014 plan. It is important that this specific language be included in HLB yearly plans, to remind and ensure the

public that a key purpose of HLB is to manage and retain the inventory for potential, as yet unidentified, future Municipal use as well as appropriately transfer lands when specific uses are identified.

⇒ *TCC requests that the following language from page 10 of the 2012 Work Program (and previous plans) be reinserted as the new third graph in this section:*

**“The majority of HLB inventory, as a land “bank,” will continue to be held for unspecified future use. HLB will seek to preserve and enhance the value of the land asset. HLB will focus management responsibilities on unimproved land while removing improved properties or lands with designated uses from its inventory for other municipal agencies.”**

### **Chapter 3. HERITAGE LAND BANK — 2014 WORK PROGRAM:**

#### **2014 ACQUISITIONS**

**Add to Page 19 — Coastal Trail/Greenbelt on Airport Property** — Consistent with our comments in previous years, TCC requests that acquisition of property north of the Municipally owned HLB parcels on the west side of the Airport be included in the HLB Acquisitions list. Purchasing this land would permanently protect a contiguous greenbelt/buffer for the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail that would span from the HLB parcels north to Pt. Woronzof Park. This land should then be transferred to the Department of Parks and Recreation as dedicated parkland to be added to Pt. Woronzof Park.

**Rationale:** This specific area where the Coastal Trail transverses TSAIA property was identified in the 2020 Anchorage Comprehensive Plan (page 63) as containing important wildlife habitat and being identified by the community as a preference for Natural Open Space. Also, acquisition of this land would conform to the WADP Park Objective #6, P-8, which states, “Acquire all remaining portions of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail on airport land along with a vegetative greenbelt buffer, so that the full length of the trail corridor is consolidated under MOA ownership for permanent public recreational use.”

**This, along with conveyance of State Entitlement Parcels #21 and #68, would put the entire length of the Coastal Trail from Earthquake Park to Kincaid Park in Municipal ownership.**

⇒ *TCC requests that the 2014 HLB Work Program include the following language:*

**“Coastal Trail/Greenbelt on Airport Property** — A section of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail is located on TSAIA property north of Municipal HLB parcels. This important trail link and greenbelt area should be purchased for the sole intent to transfer the trail and associated greenbelt/buffer to the Municipal Department of Parks and Recreation for a permanently dedicated parkland addition to Point Woronzof Park. Purchasing this land would permanently protect a contiguous greenbelt/buffer for the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail that would span from the HLB parcels north to Pt. Woronzof Park. Specific boundaries would be determined by a Municipal/TSAIA/FAA/ community Working

**Group. This acquisition would conform West Anchorage District Plan Park Objective #6, P-8 (page 223), which states, “Acquire all remaining portions of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail on airport land along with a vegetative greenbelt buffer, so that the full length of the trail corridor is consolidated under MOA ownership for permanent public recreational use.”**

### **CURRENT AND CONTINUING PROJECTS**

**Page 22 — Point Woronzof — Closed Compost Facility** — HLB Staff concurred with TCC’s request for the 2013 plan to reinsert amendment language approved by the Assembly July 12, 2011, for the compost facility parcel. The language referred to HLB striving to achieve maximum public benefit of this land. Inexplicably, this language was not included in the 2013 Final plan posted on the HLB website, nor is it included in the current draft 2014 plan. It is important that this specific language be included in HLB yearly plans, to honor the Assembly’s amendment that ensures oversight and long-term management of this parcel are done in the public’s best interest.

*⇒ TCC requests that the following 2011 Assembly-approved amendment for the closed compost facility parcel be added after the second sentence:*

**“HLB will strive to achieve maximum public benefit regarding these lands.”**

### **CONSERVATION EASEMENTS**

**Page 24** — As we have done in the past, TCC recommends that **HLB Parcels 5-001, 5-002A, 5-020 and 5-021 be added** to the list of parcels to have conservation easements placed on them, for addition to the HLB mitigation bank. These parcels are identified in the WADP, Exhibit 4-18: Wetlands Disposition Status (page 197), as “Publicly Owned – To Be Preserved with Conservation Easement.” TCC strongly supports this WADP recommendation.

*⇒ TCC requests that HLB Parcels 5-001, 5-002A, 5-020, 5-021 be added to the list of parcels recommended for Conservation Easements and added to the mitigation bank, which would be consistent with the WADP.*

## **Chapter 4. HERITAGE LAND BANK — FIVE YEAR WORK PLAN, 2015-2019:**

### **POSSIBLE DISPOSAL OF HLB PARCELS: 2015-2019**

**Page 26 — Potential Disposal & Withdrawal Properties: 2015-2019 TABLE** — HLB Parcels 4-033 and 4-034, listed on page 26 of this section, are not included in the Table.

*⇒ Clerical error should be corrected: Parcels #4-033 and 4-034 information should be added to the Table on page 26.*

**Page 26 & 28 — HLB Parcel 5-023** — TCC recommends that a “Region 5 — Southwest Anchorage” section be added, and a project be included under this section: transfer HLB wetland Parcel 5-023 to the Parks and Recreation Department. Our previous request for this parcel is based on the identification of it in the WADP, Exhibit 4-18: Wetlands Disposition Status (page 197) as “Publicly Owned – To Be Transferred to the Parks and Recreation Department.” The intent would be for it to become permanently dedicated parkland. TCC strongly supports this WADP recommendation.

⇒ *TCC requests that a section for Region 5 — Southwest Anchorage be added to the Possible Disposals of HLB Parcels: 2015-2019 on page 28, for the purpose of adding the transfer of Parcel 5-023 to the Parks and Recreation Department, with the intent of the parcel becoming dedicated parkland. This parcel would also be added to the Possible Disposals of HLB Parcels: 2015-2019 Table.*

**Page 28 — 3. HLB Parcels 4-033 and 4-034** — Consistent with previous TCC requests, HLB Parcels 4-033 and 4-034 should be transferred 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.

**Rationale:** The portions of HLB Parcels 4-033 and 4-034 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.

The same rationale provided on pages 3 and 4 of this letter for the purchase of TSAIA land north of this area can be applied to the transfer of this municipal land to the Parks and Recreation Department — permanent protection of a Coastal Trail greenbelt/buffer would 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 and explicitly stated as an objective in the WADP on page 223.

On December 4, 1997, TCC passed a resolution in support of transfer of title and management authority of Parcels 4-032, 4-033 and 4-044 from HLB to the Parks and Recreation Dept. We reiterated our position by passing another resolution making the same request on December 2, 1999. TCC sees no justifiable reason to delay this action any longer and it should take place early in the 2015-2019 timeframe, to ensure permanent protection of high value land used by a multitude of park and trail users along our scenic coast.

⇒ *TCC requests that the language for HLB Parcels #4-033 and 4-034 on page 28 be replaced with the following:*

**“Title and land management authority of HLB Parcels 4-033 and 4-034 should be transferred to the MOA Parks and Recreation Department, with the intent that it 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 in the land transfer. This 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.”**

**Page 28 — Region 6 —Girdwood/Turnagain Arm** — HLB Parcel 6-002 is included in the Table on page 26, but there is no description/details for this parcel on page 28.

⇒ *Clerical error should be corrected: Parcel #6-002 and accompanying text should be added as the new #2 under the Region 6 section on page 28.*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the 2014 Heritage Land Bank Work Program and 2015-2019 Management Plan. TCC hopes that the above requests are incorporated into these important municipal planning documents. 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. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need clarification on any of the requests included in this letter.

Sincerely,

Cathy L. Gleason  
Turnagain Community Council President