DRAFT Comments on HLB 2022 Annual Work Program

**DRAFT to HLB and our Assembly members**

Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC) supports HLB’s intended transfer of parcel 2-147 to Chugach State Park as part of the HLB Annual Work Program for 2022.  This transfer was recommended in the Potter Valley Land Use Analysis (adopted in 1997) and we are glad to finally see this transfer implemented.

HLB Parcel 2-147 is not suited for residential development.  The parcel starts at brush line and extends steeply above treeline to the ridge top above 3,000 feet elevation. Almost the entire parcel is within avalanche hazard areas.  This is also a high wind zone, subject to extreme Turnagain Arm winds and high elevation winds.

On the other hand, this parcel has notable value to the public through inclusion in Chugach State Park. This parcel has high viewshed values: it is a prominent part of the panorama of McHugh Peak, seen from all across the Anchorage Bowl.  The Hillside District Plan (HDP) (2010) includes a goal to “Protect views, both looking out from the Hillside and views of the Hillside as see from the rest of Anchorage” (Goal 7). The HDP acknowledges the visual value of ridge tops and recommends avoiding development on or straddling ridge tops (see Map 6.8 and Policies 7-B and 14-P).

In addition, public management of this parcel would avoid future conflicts between recreation on the ridgetop and private uses (HDP Goal 7).

This parcel may also contribute to future access, as outlined in the HDP and Chugach State Park Access Plan. There is high demand for additional access to the alpine zone of the Chugach front-range. The existing alpine parking areas at Glen Alps, Upper Canyon Road, and Bear Valley are notoriously over-capacity.  Trailhead crowding diminishes the quality of recreation and tourism, and limits those important sectors of the local economy. The Hillside District Plan shows a potential primary trailhead in upper Potter Valley, with access across this parcel (HDP Map 4.5). Transfer of this land to Chugach State Park would present a much-needed access option.  The Council notes that a robust and thorough process of public involvement and road and trail upgrades would be needed as part of any trailhead design and approval.

In summary, the most valuable use of this land is to incorporate it into Chugach State Park to maintain the natural mountain landscape, provide potential new recreation access, and avoid residential construction on hazardous terrain.  RCCC supports transfer of this parcel to CSP in 2022.