

The AlaskaPoll



DITTMAN RESEARCH
& COMMUNICATIONS
CORPORATION

DRC Building
8115 Jewel Lake Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99502

Phone: (907) 243-3345



Information for Solutions

- ❖ Market Research
- ❖ Public Opinion Analysis
- ❖ Political and Government Research
- ❖ Focus Groups



OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF CHUGIAK/EAGLE RIVER RESIDENTS REGARDING DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

November 2006

Prepared for

CHUGIAK/EAGLE RIVER
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Background/Overview

As part of the Anchorage area comprehensive plan's Title 21, the Chugiak/Eagle River Chamber of Commerce decided to conduct a public opinion survey of residents to help identify and prioritize ideas for downtown development. During the period November 13 through December 6, 2006, four-hundred-one (n=401) residents of the Chugiak/Eagle River area at least 18 years of age were personally contacted via telephone by professional interviewing employees of the Dittman Research Corporation of Alaska. The views and opinions of these Alaskan residents were recorded on a strictly confidential basis.

Prior to being asked the questions, residents were advised:

"I have a few quick questions from the Chamber of Commerce about downtown development. Overlay districts provide a method of placing special restrictions in addition to those required by basic zoning laws. They can be used to enhance an area like a downtown. The Chugiak/Eagle River Chamber is considering zoning regulations in the area known as "old downtown" that would grandfather existing uses but modify land use for new development or re-development. Please tell me if you would support or oppose the following development changes within the old downtown area."

If residents were unfamiliar with the "old downtown" it was described as between Artillery Road to the south; Eagle River Loop and Glen Hwy to the north; Business Boulevard to the West; and the area around Eagle River shopping center to the East.

Research Design

A random sample design was featured which provided that all households listed in the most current telephone directory for Chugiak/Eagle River had essentially an equal chance of being interviewed.

Sample Selection

Individual respondents were randomly selected from current telephone subscribers listed in the most current directory for Chugiak/Eagle River.

Sample Allocation

The interviews were allocated by community council as follows:

Community Council	Sample Size n=	% of Sample
Birchwood	35	9%
Chugiak	93	23%
Eagle River	106	26%
Eagle River Valley	151	38%
South Fork	16	4%
Eklutna Valley	0	0%



Sample Error

The potential sample error associated with a sample size of n=401 to represent a population of 32,892 is +/-4.9%.

Processing the Data

Dittman Research employees completed coding, editing, data entry and verification, while data processing was completed through the in-house Dittman Research Corporation computer system featuring the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The SPSS program is one of the most sophisticated research-oriented data processing and analytical systems available, and is designed specifically for the processing and analysis of survey research data.

Measurement History

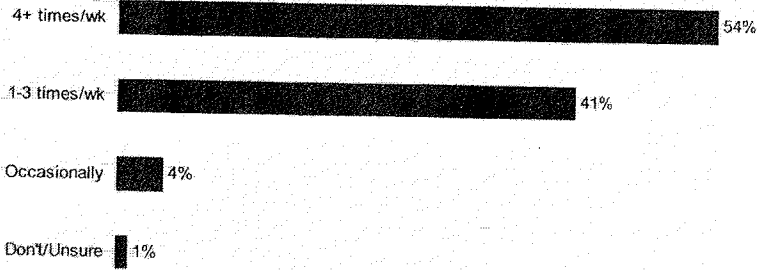
Citizen opinion measurements by the Dittman Research Corporation, utilizing the previously described methodology, analytical procedures and data processing systems, have proven to be virtually perfect predictors of political election results in Alaska for the past thirty-five years.



Downtown Eagle River

More than half of the respondents (54%) shop in downtown Eagle River "four times or more per week".

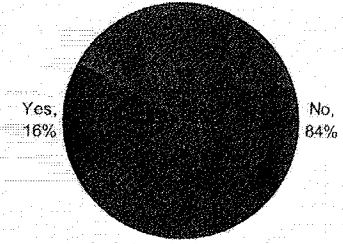
Question: "How many times per week do you shop in downtown Eagle River?"



*Includes: Have breakfast, fast food, buy groceries, buy gas, supplies, etc...

And Chugiak/Eagle River residents represent a strong entrepreneurial streak -- approximately one of six households surveyed (16%) contained a Chugiak/Eagle River business owner, including part-time and home-based businesses.

Question: "Are you or is anyone in your household an owner of a business in Chugiak/Eagle River?"



More than half of the respondents (57-58%) strongly support "more landscaping and pedestrian improvements" and "limiting the height of commercial buildings", and nearly half (47%) strongly support "restricting or prohibiting certain types of businesses from the downtown zone".

*Question: "Would you say you support or oppose...?
...And is that somewhat or strongly (support/oppose)?"*

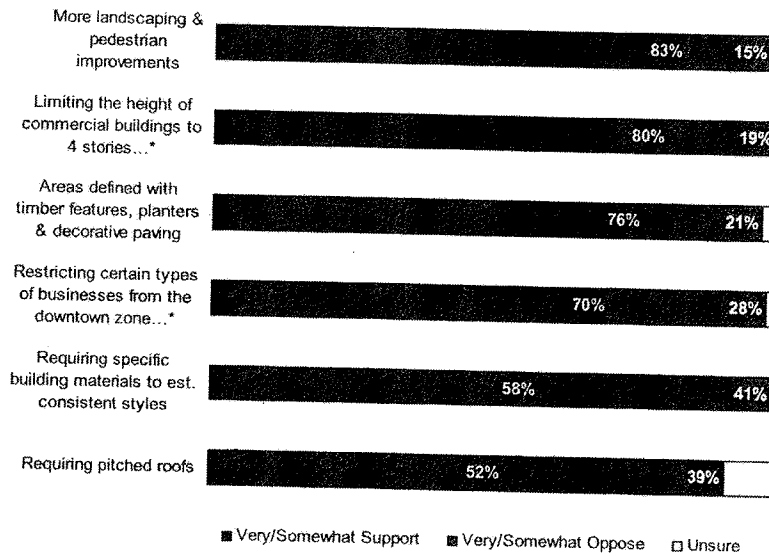
	<u>Strongly support</u>	<u>Somewhat support</u>	<u>Somewhat oppose</u>	<u>Strongly oppose</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
More landscaping & pedestrian improvements	57%	26%	8%	7%	2%
Limiting the height of commercial buildings to four stories, which is 60 feet or less	58%	22%	9%	10%	1%
Restricting or prohibiting certain types of businesses from the downtown zone, such as car repair or warehouses	47%	23%	14%	14%	2%
Areas defined with timber features, planters & decorative paving	44%	32%	10%	11%	3%
Requiring specific building materials to establish consistent styles	30%	28%	23%	18%	1%
Requiring pitched roofs	26%	26%	26%	13%	9%



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

And when "somewhat" and "strongly support" are combined, at least three out of four respondents (76-83%) support "more landscaping and pedestrian improvements", "limiting the height of commercial buildings" and "areas defined with timber, planters and paving". On the other hand, just over half of the respondents (52-58%) support "requiring specific building materials" and "requiring pitched roofs".

Question: "Would you say you support or oppose...?"



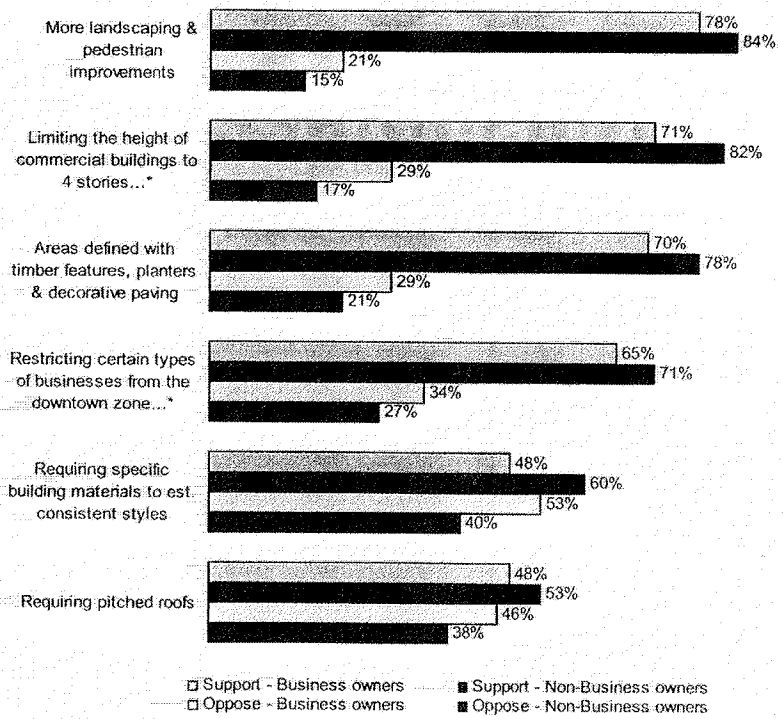
*Note: Question abbreviated for graph, full question in table on previous page.



When comparing the opinions of households of Chugiak/Eagle River business owners to non-business owners the profiles are basically consistent, however, business owners are more likely to oppose restrictions and requirements, particularly "requiring specific building materials".

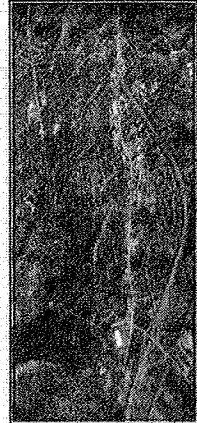
Question: "Would you say you support or oppose...?"

Business owners compared to Non-Business owners



EAGLE RIVER Downtown Revitalization

OVERLAY DISTRICT



What do we want
for Downtown
Eagle River's future?

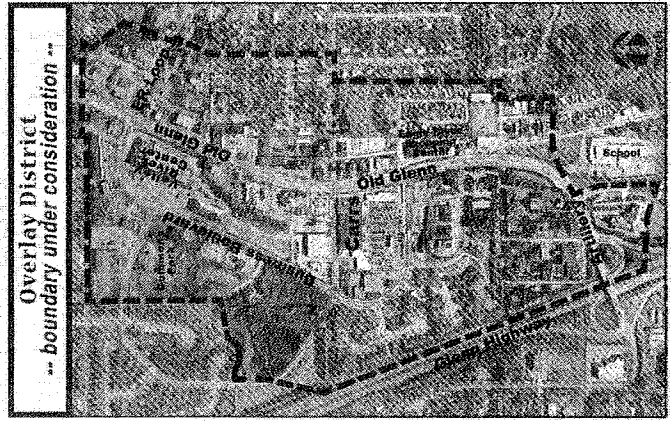
- “Local Identity”
- “More Landscaping & Pedestrian Improvements”
- “Convenience”
- “GREAT MIX OF BUSINESSES AND SERVICES”
- “Community Scale”
- “Main Street, Friendly Atmosphere”
- “Supportive of our local businesses”
- “SELF-DETERMINATION”

- Input from Eagle River residents, Spring 2008

Dittman Poll Findings:

A Dittman Poll recently found that, if existing uses are grandfathered, Eagle River and Chugiak area residents support zoning changes in the old downtown:

- 70% of local residents support “restricting or prohibiting certain types of businesses”
- 80% of residents support the “limiting of commercial building heights to four stories”
- 83% of residents support “more landscaping and pedestrian improvements”
- 86% of residents support “defining areas with timber features, planters and decorative paving”



Overlay District
-- boundary under consideration --

Contact us with questions or input:
Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce
Susan Gorski, Executive Director
694-4702 • info@cer.org • www.cer.org

B3 Zoning
The following is abbreviated from the existing B3 zoning that applies to most of Eagle River's old downtown area. To read the full text go to Municipal code 21.40.180

- A. Intent. The B-3 district is intended for general commercial uses in areas exposed to heavy automobile traffic. . . .
- B. Permitted principal uses and structures: 1) Business, professional services and personal services, including incidental manufacturing or processing of goods for sale; 1a) Large retail establishment, subject to public hearing site plan review; 1b) Self-storage facility and vehicle storage subject to public hearing; 2) Office; 3) Other uses: 3a) Multifamily residential uses, at a density of not less than 12 dwelling units per acre; 3b) Dwellings in commercial structures with a gross floor area not less than 5,000 sf; 3c) Private clubs and lodges; 3d) Parks, playgrounds and playfields, and government buildings and uses; 3e) Vocational or trade schools; 3f) Family residential care, day care . . . ; 3g) Churches . . . ; 3h) Roominghouses; 3i) Antennas without tower structure . . . ; 3j) Schools; 3k) Business colleges and universities; 4) Computer aided learning center; 5) Offices and centers for family self sufficiency service; 6) Unlicensed nightclub
- D. Conditional uses: 1) Utility substations; 2) Helipads; 3) Marquees, overpasses; 4) Planned unit developments; 5) Drive-in theaters; 6) Camper parks; 7) quasi-institutional houses; 8) Liquor stores, restaurants . . . and other places serving food or beverages involving the retail sale, dispensing or service of alcoholic beverages. . . . 9) . . . towers that do not meet the supplementary district regulations. . . . 10) Snow disposal sites; 11) Correctional community residential centers.
- E. Prohibited uses and structures: 1) The outdoor storage or display of any scrap, junk, salvaged or secondhand materials, or any salvage yard or salvage operation. . . . 2) Any use which causes, or may reasonably be expected to cause excessive noise, vibration, smoke, dust or other particulate matter, toxic or noxious matter. . . . 3) Storage or use of mobile homes, 4. Truck and heavy equipment repair, service and storage; 5) Open storage of cinders, coal, feed, gravel, manure, muck, peat, sand or loessil.
- I. Maximum height of structures is unrestricted [except within the Birchwood Airport Zone under Section 21.65.090]

Overlay District Zoning
Anchorage's Municipal code allows the creation of overlay districts. To read the full text go to 21.20.140

- The overlay district may: 1. Permit, require, prohibit or restrict structures or the use of land or structures;
2. Alter the provisions of the supplementary district regulations as applied to property within the overlay district;
3. Require new development or attributes of new development to conform to a specific architectural or design theme;
4. Require a design review approval process; and
5. Alter the development standards of the underlying district by decreasing or increasing the requirements with regard to building height, yards, lot area, lot width, lot coverage, and lot densities of the underlying district.

What is Overlay Zoning?

Overlay Zoning places special restrictions on new development in addition to those required by basic zoning laws. This tool can be used to enhance an area and help tailor zoning to local needs.

In the Municipality of Anchorage, communities and neighborhoods can propose creating Overlay Districts under Title 21. An Overlay District must be approved by both Anchorage's Planning and Zoning Commission and the Anchorage Assembly.

Why Downtown Eagle River?

For decades, Eagle River's downtown and the entire business corridor on the Old Glenn have been zoned "B3". This type of zoning allows development of many types and forms which are not always compatible with creating a community friendly "downtown". As Eagle River continues to grow, zoning or the lack of zoning provisions will shape our downtown's future.

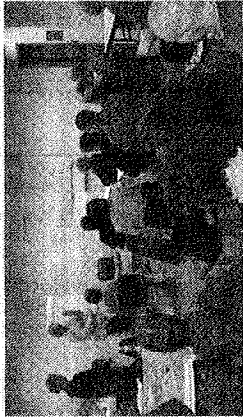
Community Input

In the spring of 2006 the Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce began to explore the idea of an Overlay District. Because zoning changes are a significant step, the Chamber decided to ask local residents and business members "what do you think" in a variety of venues:

On April 1, 2006, Board Members spent time in the grocery store and surveyed 172 residents. Chamber volunteers heard that locals do care about the commercial core, and have strong ideas about development downtown.



Overlay District public forum, April 2006



Overlay District public forum, April 2006

Next, the Chamber held a highly-publicized community forum where local business owners and residents were asked questions about the future of the business district:

- What are the boundaries of our "Downtown"?
- What do we want for Downtown's future?
- What land uses are incompatible?
- Should there be height restrictions?
- Should there be design guidelines?
- What about the impacts of overlay zoning to property owners?

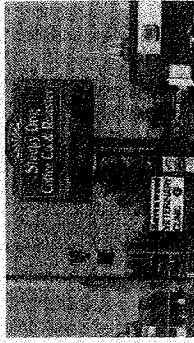
This community forum created a lot of discussion and many participants agreed that if existing uses were grandfathered they supported the overlay concept in principle.

Following this meeting, sub-committees of the Chamber met over the summer to consider boundaries, to draft up ideas for regulations, and to consider next steps. In November of 2006, a Dittman Research Poll was commissioned to ask residents in a statistically valid format what might be included in an Overlay District. The Dittman Poll again showed strong support for a number of overlay provisions (copies are available in the Chamber office).

What is Next?

Based on these findings a draft ordinance and boundary are being drafted to present at a public meeting in the spring, 2007. After the community is comfortable with the final draft, it will go to the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission and Assembly for approval.

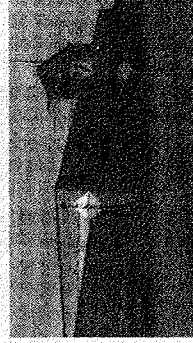
An Overlay District in Eagle River's "Old" Downtown would:



... grandfather existing development



... encourage compatible development



... restrict certain uses for future development