

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM

AM No. 395 - 2024

Meeting Date: May 7, 2024

1 **FROM: MAYOR**

2
3 **SUBJECT: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING WITHDRAWAL OF HLB**
4 **PARCELS 2-127 THROUGH 2-136, LEGALLY DESCRIBED AS**
5 **THE W2SE4SW4 SEC 3 T11N R3W, LOTS 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, 18**
6 **SEC10 T11N R3W, AND E2E2W4 & E2W2NE4NW4 SEC 10 T11N**
7 **R3W, S.M., FROM THE HERITAGE LAND BANK INVENTORY,**
8 **FOR TRANSFER OF MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY TO THE**
9 **PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT FOR THE PURPOSES**
10 **OF LONG-TERM CONSERVATION AND PARK USE, AND TO**
11 **AMEND THE 2023 HLB ANNUAL WORK PLAN.**
12

13
14 The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) owns, and Heritage Land Bank (HLB)
15 manages 10 parcels, slightly over 100 acres, just east and uphill of Potter Marsh
16 (Appendix A). The withdrawal and transfer of these 10 parcels will coincide with an
17 approximately 200-acre acquisition creating the 300-acre Potter Marsh Watershed
18 Park. The authorization for the other acquisition is being sought in a separate
19 ordinance.

20
21 Since acquiring these parcels from the State Municipal Land Entitlement process,
22 the MOA has approved several planning documents that support the transfer and
23 withdrawal and ultimate use of the parcels as parks and open space.

24
25 In 1999, HLB in coordination with MOA Long-Range Planning Division, drafted a
26 Potter Valley Land Use Analysis (1999), which was adopted by the Assembly (AO
27 99-144). At that time, these 10 parcels, and the surrounding area, were identified
28 as providing considerable environmental function to Potter Marsh.

29
30 This area is also within the Hillside District Plan (2010) boundaries which
31 designates the area as Park and Natural Resource with the southern edge as
32 Residential/Access Reserve. The Hillside District Plan states that the intent of the
33 Residential/Access Reserve is "The Residential Access Reserve designation is for
34 land set aside that could be made available for roadway access or disposed of in
35 the future." At that time, it was anticipated that portions of HLB 2-135 would be
36 necessary to address the expansion of Potter Valley Road if residential
37 development in the area were to occur.
38

1 The neighboring community councils have advocated for the HLB parcels to be
2 retained for open space over the years and the 2023 HLB Work Plan (Chapter 4
3 Five-Year Management Plan: 2024 - 2028) states the following:
4

5 *HLB 2-127 - Per the adopted 1999 Potter Valley Land Use Analysis*
6 *(PVLUA), this parcel will be retained for public space. Any future action on*
7 *these parcels will be consistent with the 2010 Hillside District Plan (HDP),*
8 *PVLUA, and other adopted plans.*
9

10 *HLB Parcels 2-126 - 2-135 - HLB is currently managing these properties as*
11 *open space for the protection of water quality, and habitat, consistent with*
12 *the adopted PVLUA. Any future actions on these parcels will be consistent*
13 *with the HDP, PVLUA, and other adopted plans. Key considerations will*
14 *include an evaluation of appropriate land uses, access, and watershed*
15 *management. HLB will meet with Rabbit Creek Community Council, Alaska*
16 *Department of Fish and Game, and other interested parties to ensure that*
17 *future actions involving these parcels support the adjoining Anchorage*
18 *Coastal Wildlife Refuge and long-term public values.*
19

20 *HLB Parcels 2-136 - HLB is currently managing these properties as open*
21 *space for the protection of water quality, and habitat consistent with the*
22 *PVLUA. Any future actions on these parcels will be consistent with the HDP,*
23 *PVLUA, and other adopted plans. As per the PVLUA the south end of the*
24 *parcel could be used for future residential and access development, but*
25 *internal analyses have determined this would most likely be economically*
26 *infeasible.*
27

28 Depending on the timing of the approval of the 2024 HLB Work Plan (AO 2024-92),
29 an amendment to the 2023 HLB Work Plan may not be necessary. The language
30 in the DRAFT 2024 HLB Work Plan states the following:
31

32 *HLB Parcel 2-127 - 2-136 – Potential transfer of management authority to*
33 *Parks and Recreation Department (P&R) as part of the Potter Marsh*
34 *Watershed Park Project. This proposed project was presented to HLBAC at*
35 *the November 2023 meeting, and it is anticipated the transfer of these 10*
36 *parcels (approximately 100 acres) will be before the Commission for action*
37 *in 2024. This project is in collaboration with local non-profit Great Land Trust*
38 *(GLT), who would be donating the adjacent 200 acres to P&R for the creation*
39 *of the new Potter Marsh Watershed Park totaling approximately 300 acres.*
40 *This project will implement elements of the adopted Potter Valley Land Use*
41 *Analysis (PVLUA) and Hillside District Plan (HDP), which indicate that these*
42 *areas are best suited for open space.*
43

44 Great Land Trust, Inc. (GLT) approached the MOA in 2021 with a grant opportunity
45 with the US Forest Service for their Community Forest grant program. It was
46 identified at that time that a portion of the value of the HLB properties could be used
47 as a grant match, leveraging their use as open space and watershed protection for
48 Potter Marsh, with a grant award of six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000). The
49 grant was proposed to be used towards the purchase price of the adjacent parcels

1 owned by a GCI-subsiary to preserve a larger contiguous forested area that was
2 determined to be environmentally significant to Potter Marsh. GLT supported the
3 MOA in the grant writing effort and the MOA was awarded the grant (AR 2024-97).

4
5 During the HLB agency review of the withdrawal and transfer of the HLB parcels it
6 was noted that there is a municipal need for a public use easement along the
7 alignment of E 172nd Avenue. The Right-of-Way Section requested an easement
8 width of sixty (60) feet and the request was included in the HLBAC Resolution as a
9 condition. HLB Staff will continue to support Parks and Recreation regarding
10 easement needs along E 172nd Avenue which will be before the Assembly at a
11 later date. Comments were received from the State of Alaska Department of
12 Transportation and Public Facilities and MOA Traffic Department on the disposal
13 and did not object to the proposed park use and they did not cite a need for portions
14 of HLB parcel 2-135 for any future access roads.

15
16 Following approval of the withdrawal and transfer of the subject HLB parcels and
17 acquisition of the GCI parcels, Parks will begin drafting a park master plan for the
18 former HLB parcels in addition to the adjacent 200-acre area currently owned by a
19 subsidiary of GCI for a 300-acre Potter Marsh Watershed Park for approval by the
20 Planning and Zoning Commission. Development of the properties by the Parks and
21 Recreation Department is anticipated to be low impact with soft trails that will
22 provide recreation opportunities while ensuring long-term conservation values.

23
24 The HLB Advisory Commission held a public hearing and approved Resolution
25 2024-03 on February 22, 2024, recommending the withdrawal and transfer of these
26 10 HLB Parcels with management authority to the Parks and Recreation
27 Department (Appendix B).

28
29 The Parks and Recreation Commission passed Resolution 2023-14 on December
30 7, 2023, supporting the overall Potter Marsh Watershed Park project (Appendix C).

31
32 A resolution from the Watershed and Natural Resource Advisory Commission,
33 Resolution 2023-01, passed on December 20, 2023, supporting the overall Potter
34 Marsh Watershed Park project (Appendix D).

35
36 This project has received numerous letters of support from agencies including the
37 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Natural Resources,
38 Rabbit Creek Community Council, Anchorage Economic Development
39 Corporation, Visit Anchorage, and various Anchorage organizations (Appendix E).

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42 **THE ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDS APPROVAL.**

43
44 Prepared by: Heritage Land Bank, Real Estate Department
45 Approved by: Tiffany Briggs, Real Estate Director
46 Concur: Lance Wilber, OECD Executive Director
47 Concur: Michael Braniff, Parks and Recreation Director
48 Concur: Sharon Lechner, OMB Director
49 Concur: Anne Helzer, Municipal Attorney

1 Concur: Kent Kohlase, P.E., Municipal Manager
2 Respectfully submitted: Dave Bronson, Mayor

3
4 Appendices:

- 5 Appendix A – Location Map
- 6 Appendix B – HLBAC Resolution 2024-03
- 7 Appendix C – Parks and Recreation Commission Resolution 2023-14
- 8 Appendix D – Watershed and Natural Resource Advisory Commission
- 9 Resolution 2023-01
- 10 Appendix E – Letters of Support