



ALASKA NATURAL BURIAL

**01/23/2026 Heritage Land Bank Presentation
Rachel Bernhardt, Board President**

OVERVIEW

- Cemetery Infrastructure
- Natural Burial
- HLB Parcel 2-156
- Compatibility
- Plan

Cemetery Infrastructure



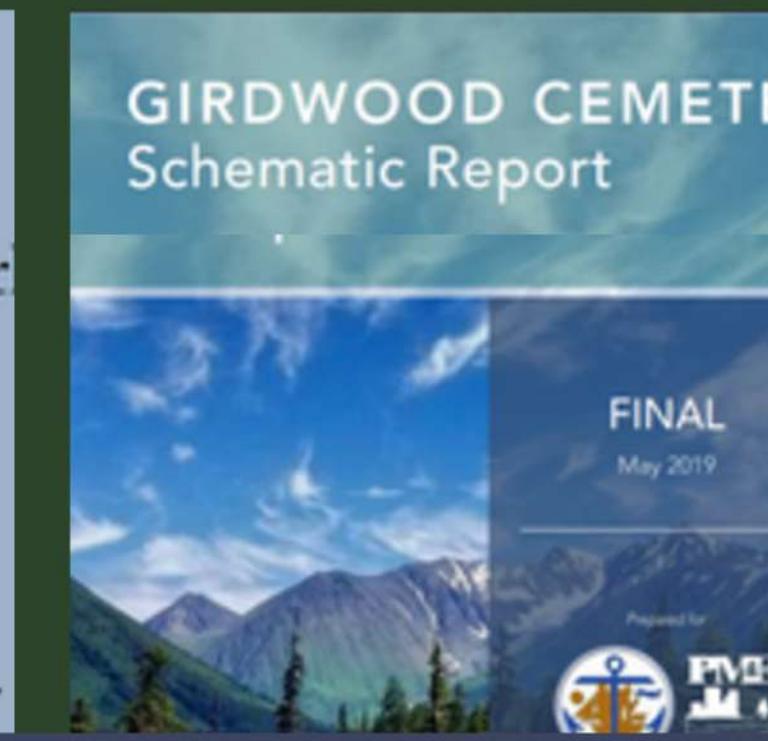
Cemetery Infrastructure

- Cemeteries are critical pieces of urban infrastructure
- Running out of affordable burial space – white paper
- Muni priorities haven't aligned with community's growing need for affordable cemetery space
 - Eagle River/Girdwood
 - 2024 bond failed to pass: no funds for Anchorage Memorial Park improvements and the new projects are stalled
- 2024 HLB RFP for cemetery



ANCHORAGE MEMORIAL PARK CEMETERY
White Paper
Planning beyond the first 100 years...

G. Jones, Cemetery Master Plan, 2017



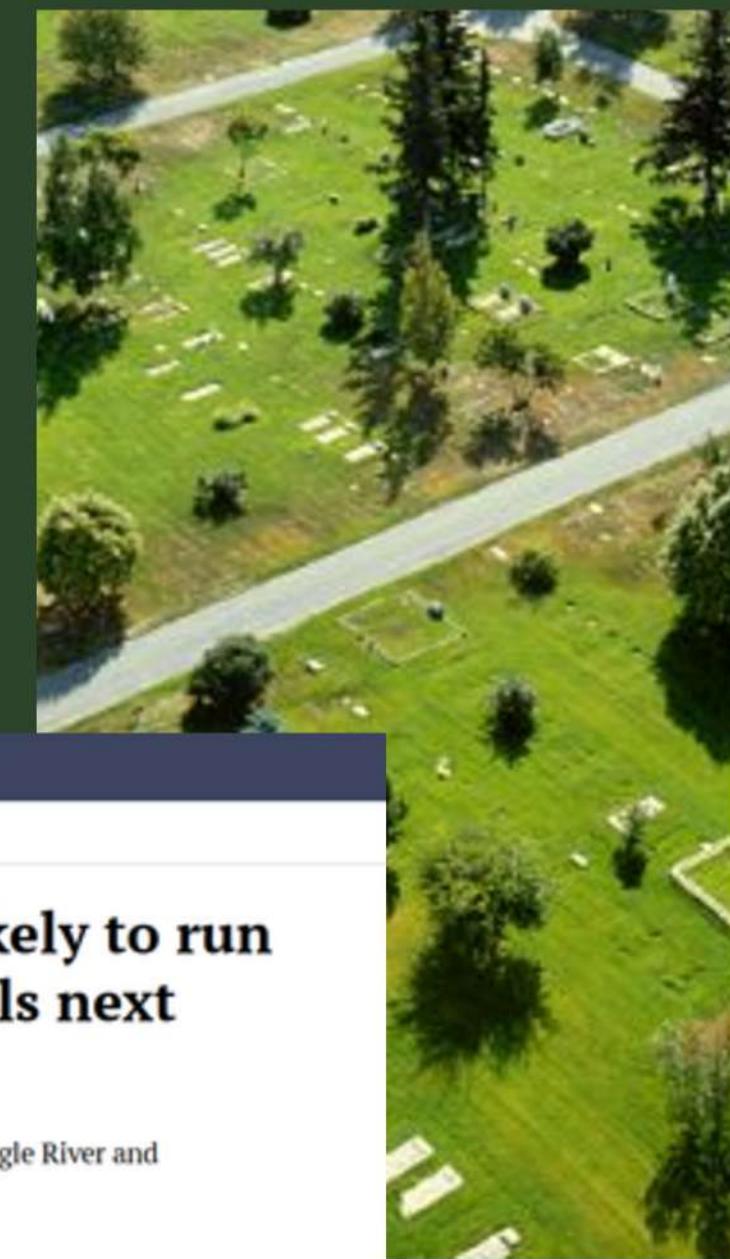
GIRDWOOD CEMETERY
Schematic Report
FINAL
May 2019
Prepared for: FME

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Anchorage's public cemetery is likely to run out of room for low-cost burials next summer

Voters rejected a bond this year to establish new cemeteries in Eagle River and Girdwood.

By Tess Williams Published: December 1, 2024



NATURAL BURIAL



What is natural burial

What is buried

Materials that are readily biodegradable
(no concrete, plastics, resins, metal, formaldehyde)

Grounds maintenance

Might include habitat cultivation,
invasive species mitigation (not turf maintenance)

Community use

Recreation, access to green space

...in Anchorage...

Fulfilling a community need (for affordable burial space)
that Anchorage Memorial Park can no longer meet



Natural burial *is not*



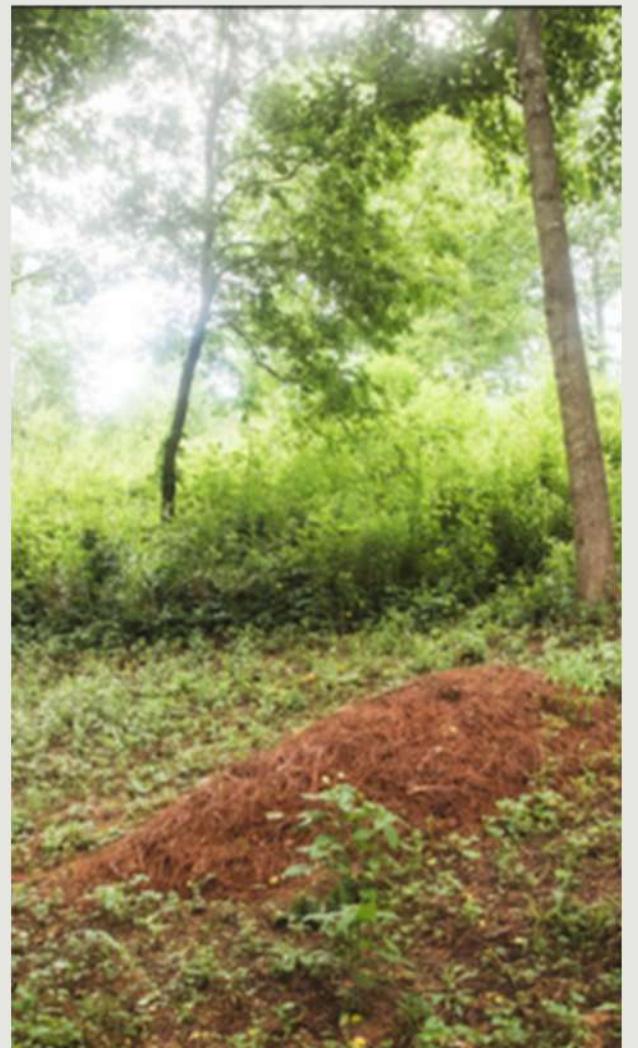
Natural burial *is*

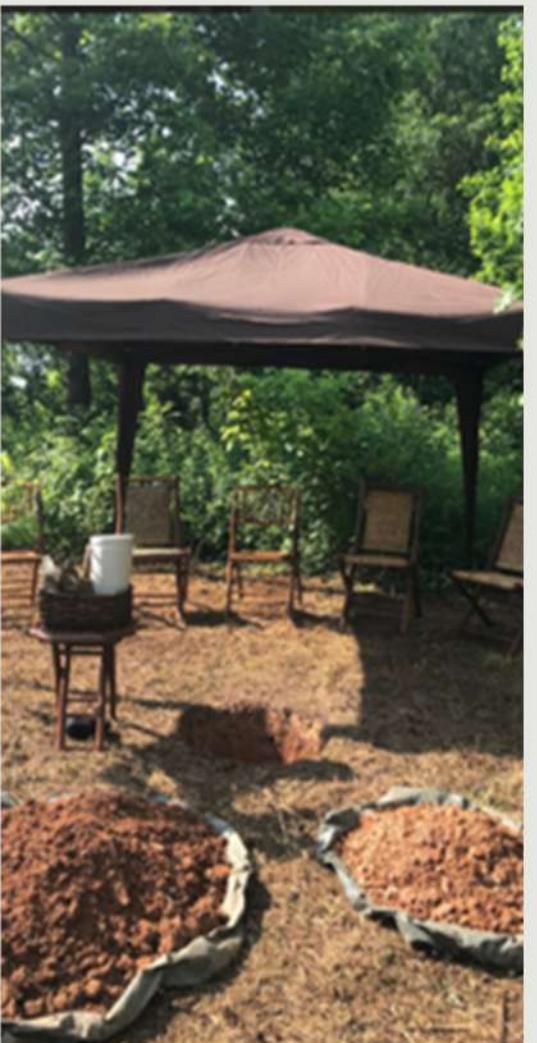




low-density,
natural burial

- 300 per acre maximum



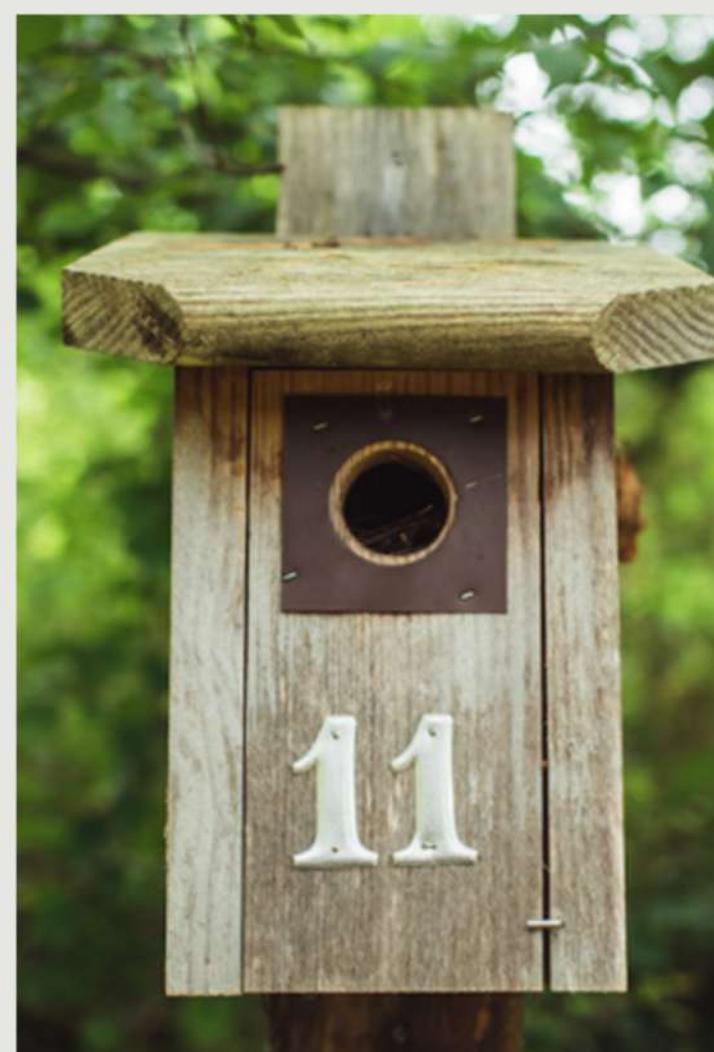
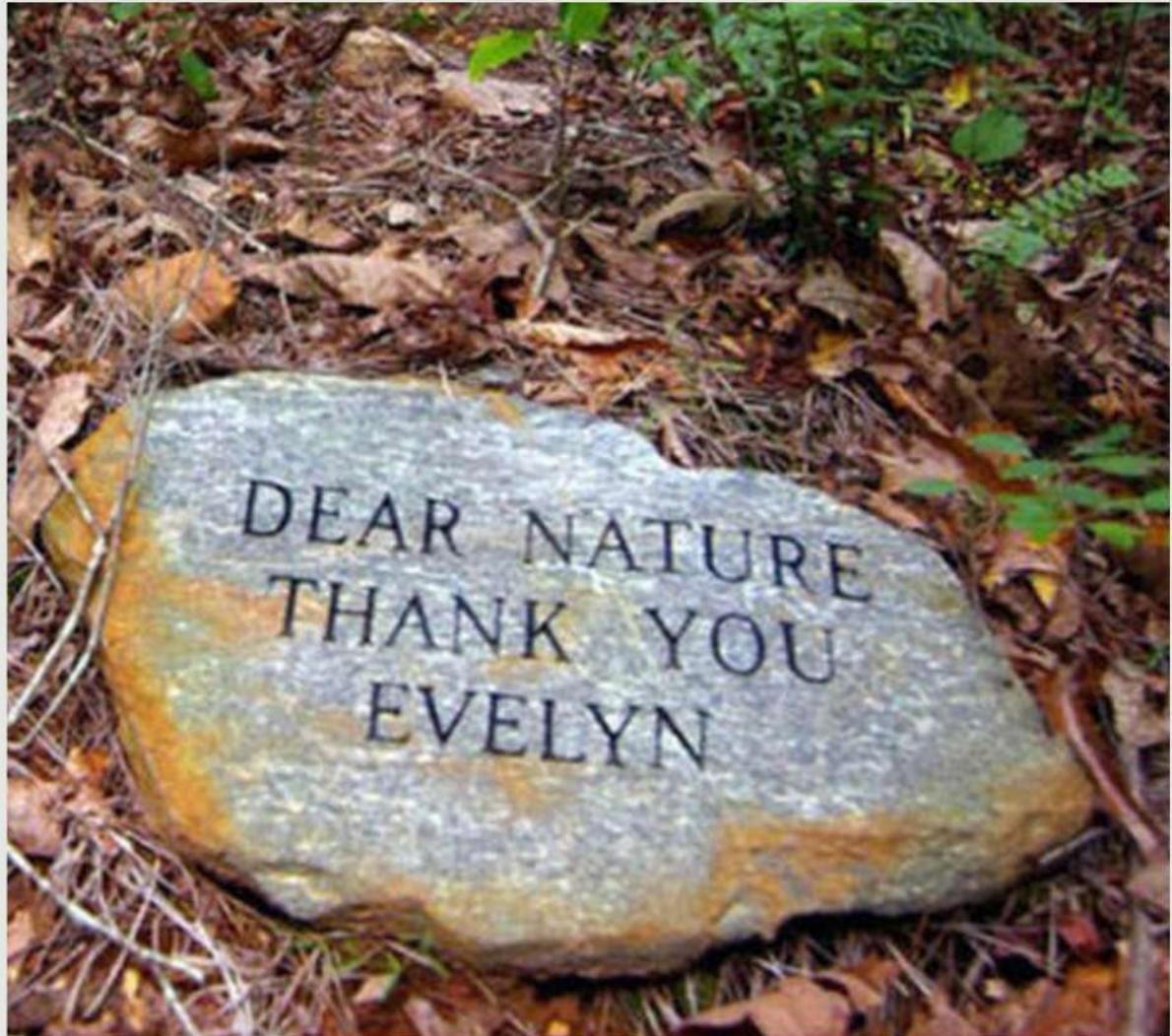
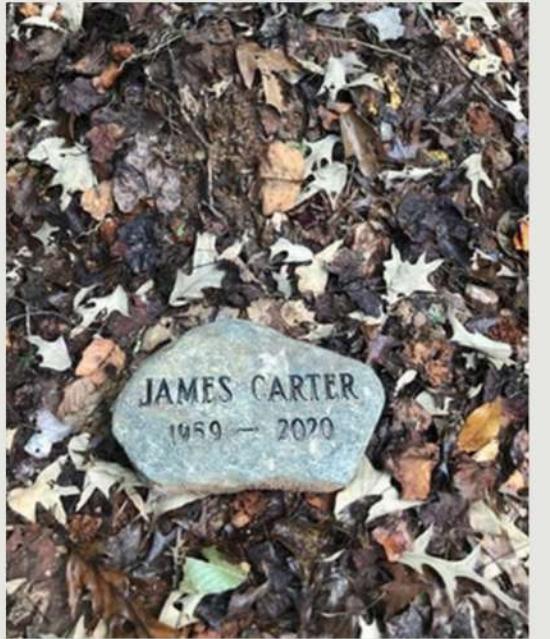


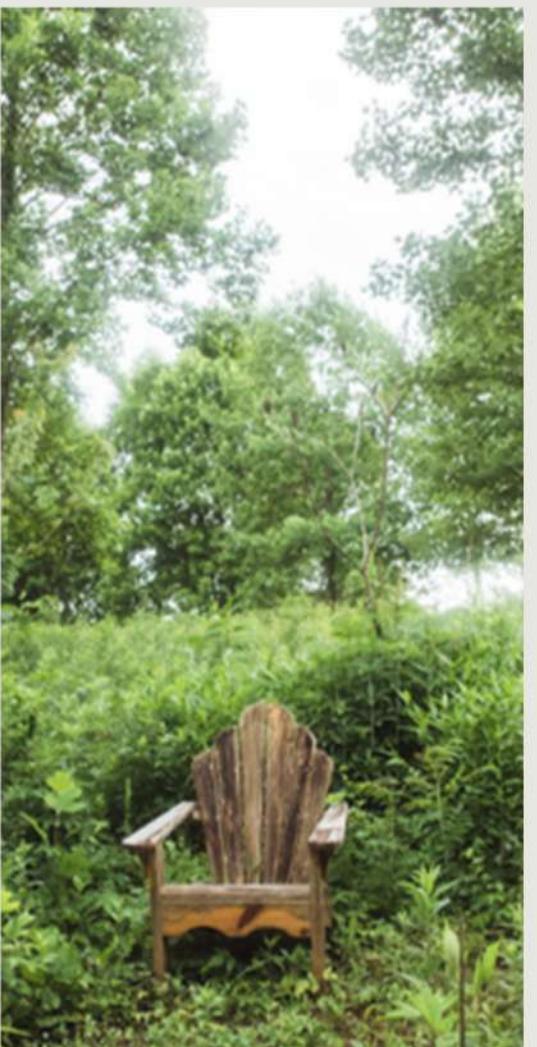
low-tech,
low-impact, low cost



markers & monuments

- Limiting marker type & size
- Memorial plantings of approved species

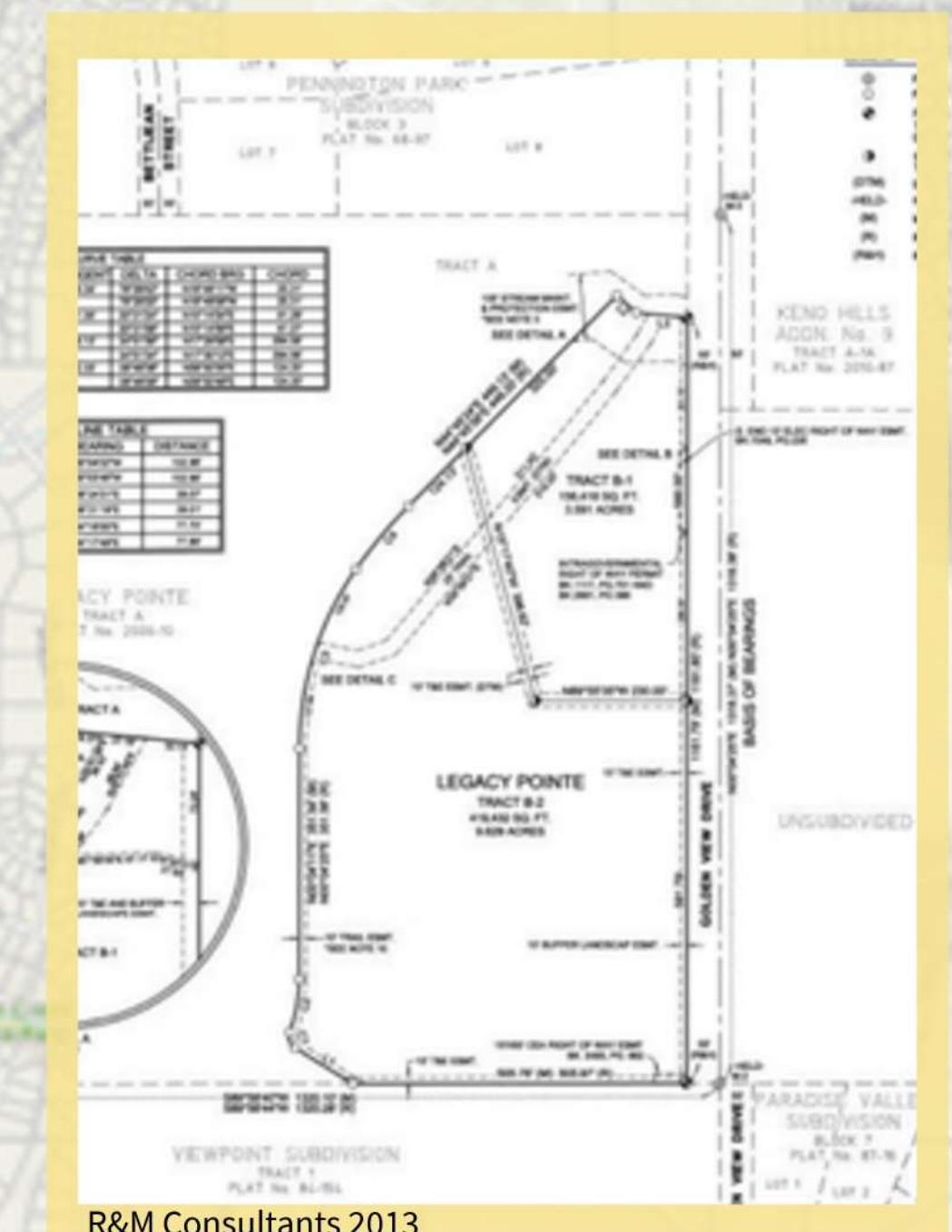
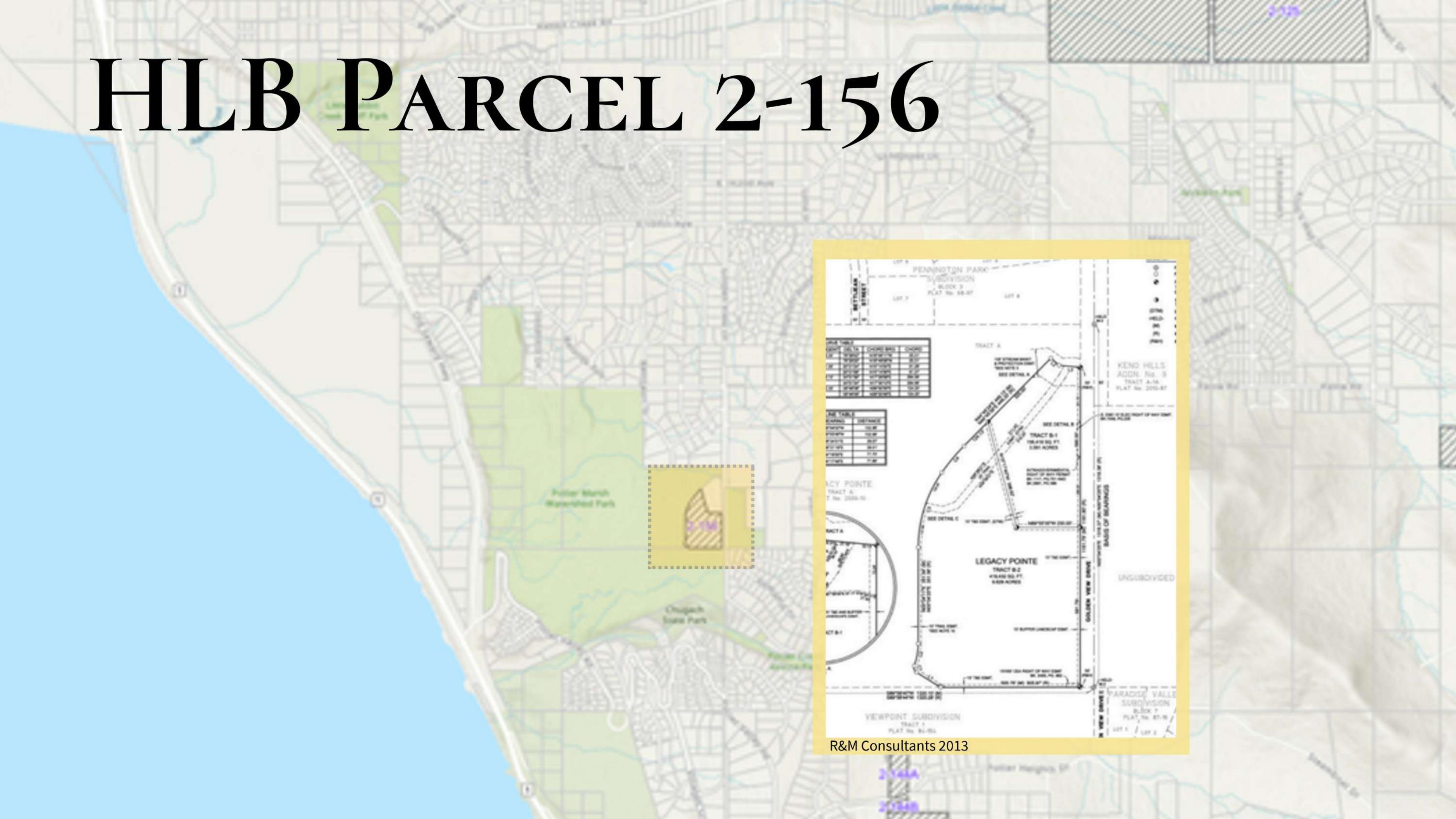




multi-functional urban space

- cemetery infrastructure
- wildlife habitat
- green space for recreation

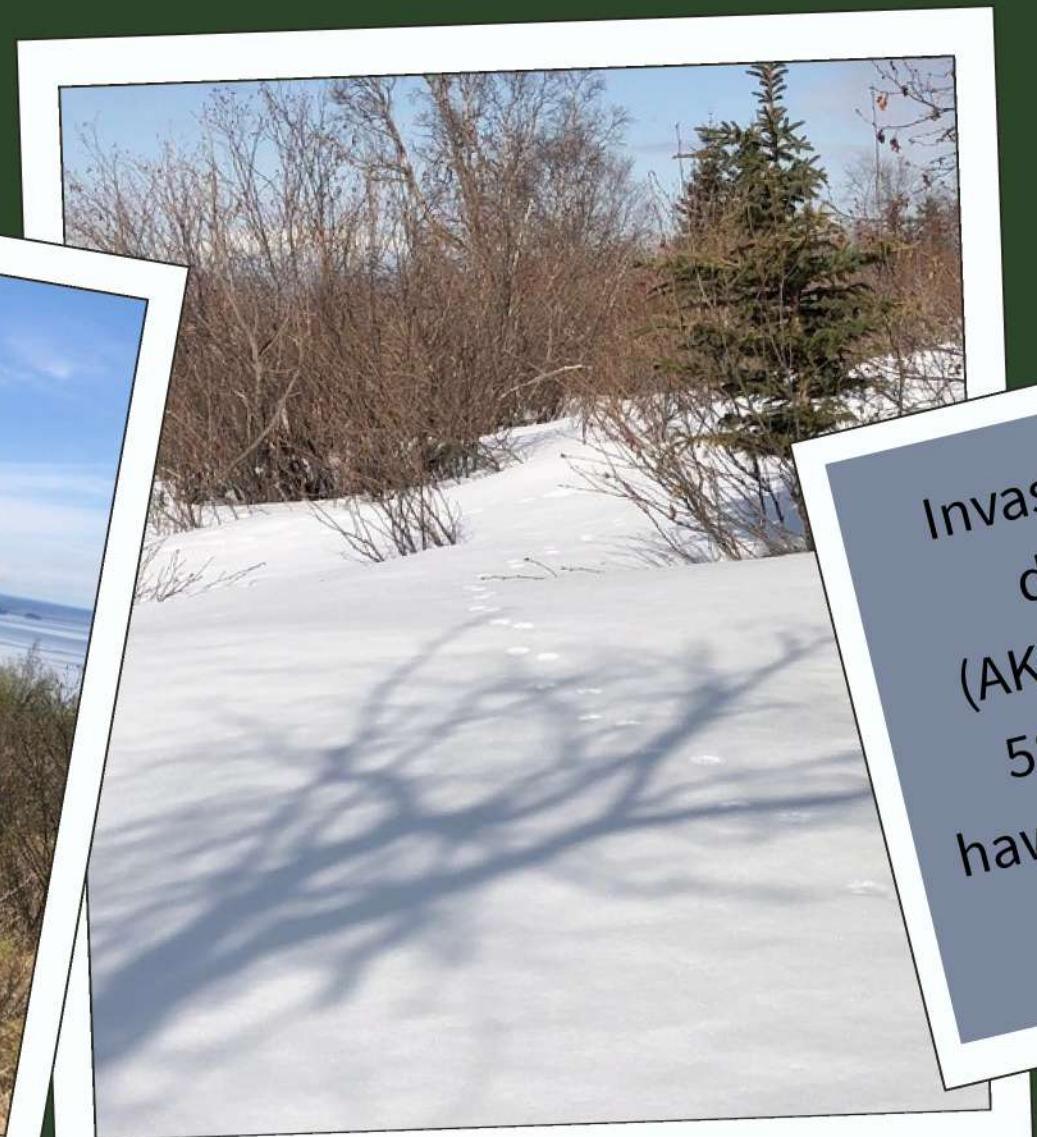
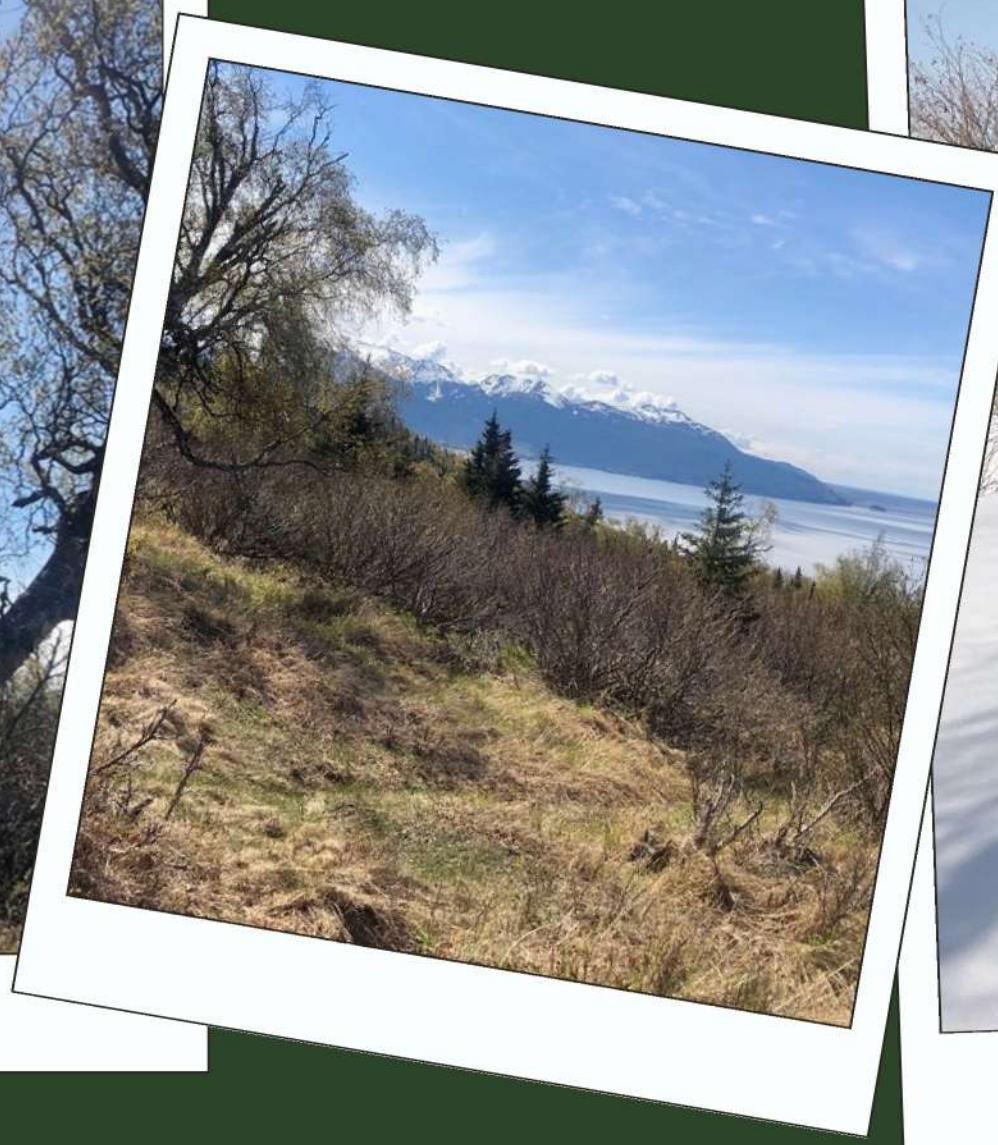
HLB PARCEL 2-156



R&M Consultants 2013

Vegetation Description

Native plant species:
paper birch, white
spruce, quaking aspen,
bluejoint grass, alder,
devil's club, spirea,
dogwood, bluebell



Invasive species:
dandelion
(AKEPIC* ranking
58) and orange
hawkweed (AKEPIC*
ranking 79)

Existing Use

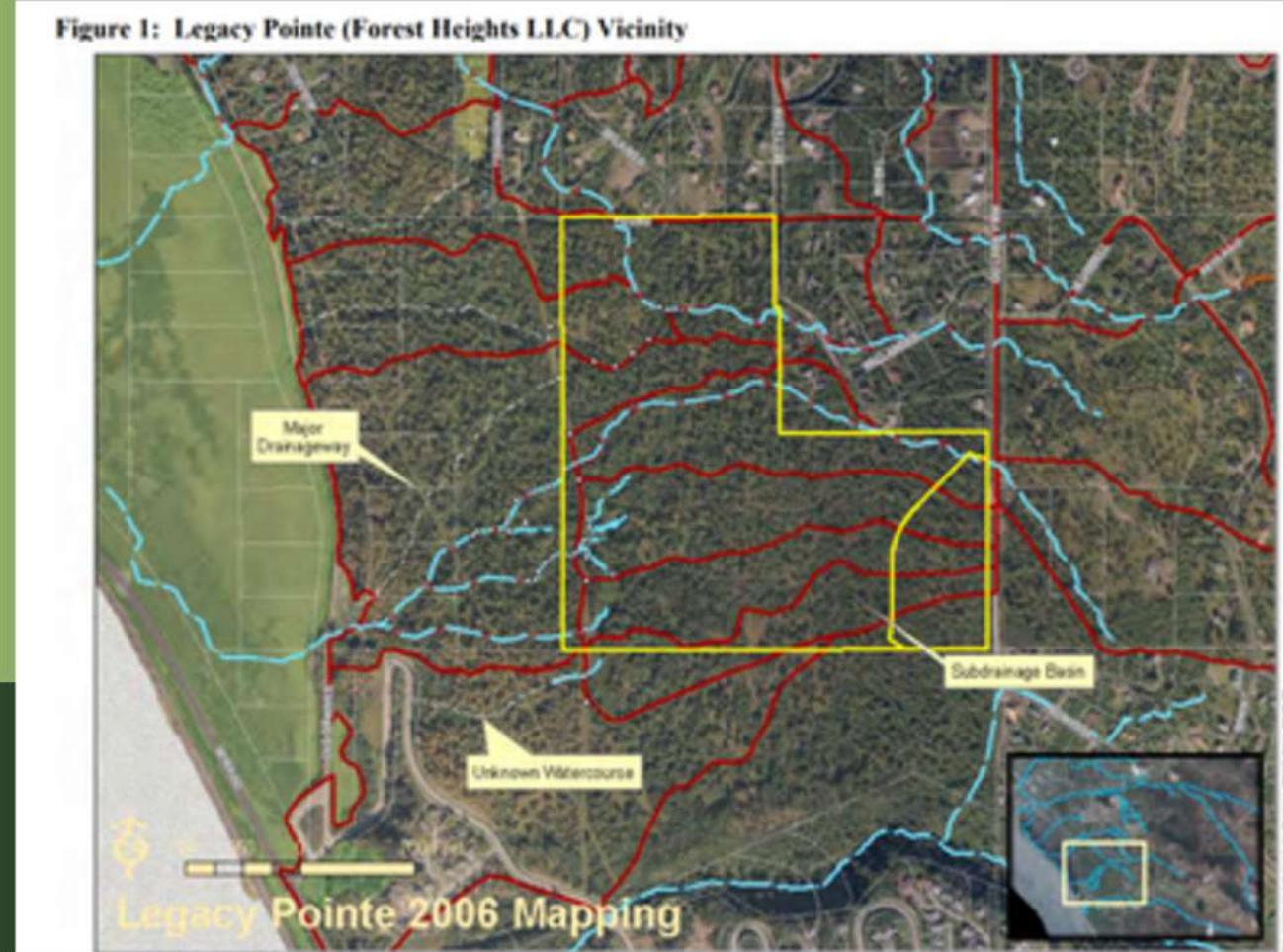
- Recreation and green space for area residents
- Important wildlife corridor, especially for moose and bear



Hydrogeological Conditions

- No wetlands, no wells, divergent runoff
- Slopes
- Well drained soil overlaying gravelly glacial till
- Some areas of shallow bedrock

Alaska Testlab Soils Report 1977
MOA Soils logs 1983
Shannon & Wilson Geotechnical Report 1998
Terrasat Hydrogeologic Eval 2005
Shaw Wetland Delineation Report 2006
Watershed Management Services Report 2006
R&M Consultants Geotechnical Memo 2025



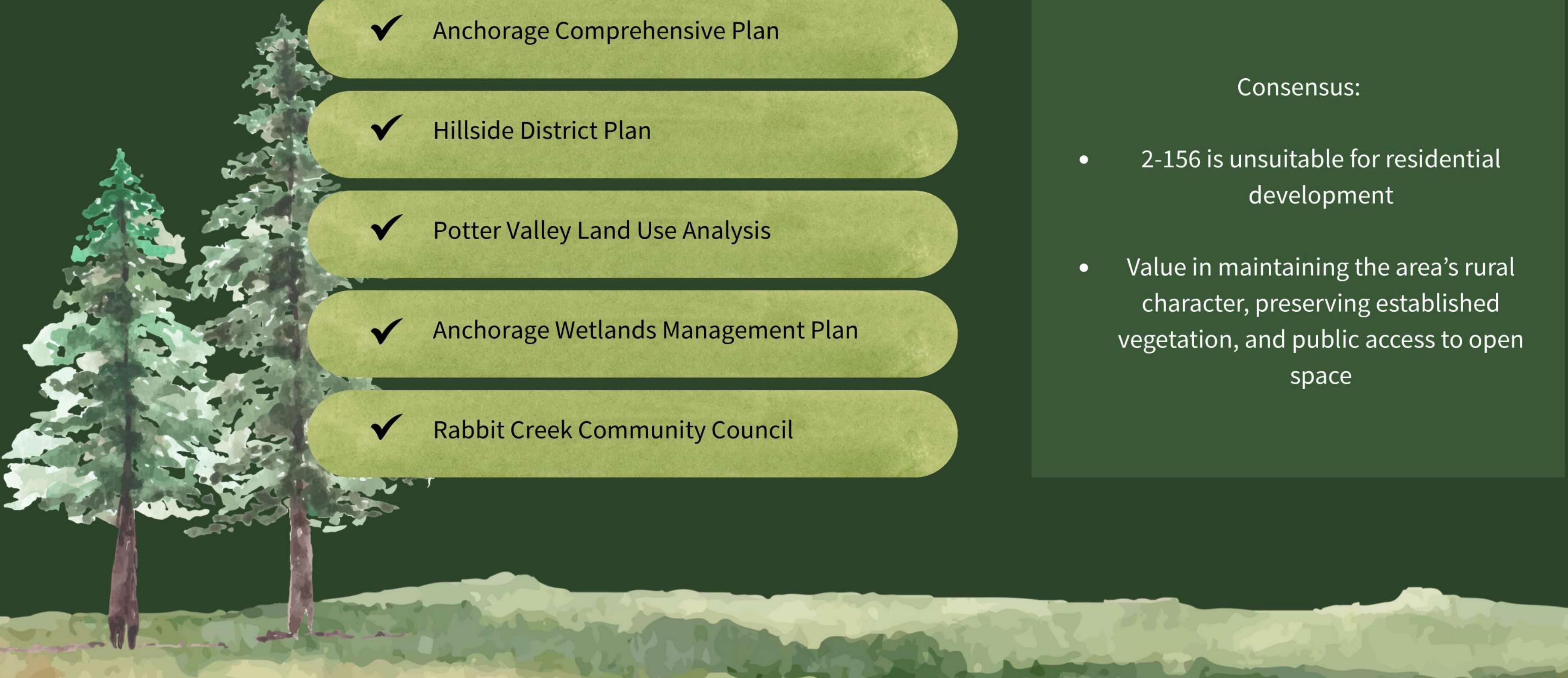
Test Pt Location	Easy Excavation Zone (feet, ftsp)	Hard Excavation Zone (feet, ftsp)	Trench Stability and groundwater flow conditions	
			Groundwater Flow	Trench Stability
RH025-TP-01	0 - 5.5	>5.5		
RH025-TP-02	0 - 4.5	>4.5		
RH025-TP-03	0 - 5.5	>5.5		
RH025-TP-04	0 - 8.0	>8.0		
RH025-TP-05	0 - 2.5	>2.5		
RH025-TP-06	0 - 4.5	>4.5		
RH025-TP-07	0 - 2.0	>2.0		
RH025-TP-08	0 - 3.5	>3.5		

▪ Pit excavation stayed open during excavation. No collapse was observed during fieldwork.

▪ Groundwater encountered in RH025-TP-03 and RH025-TP-04 was observed to be slowly seeping into the bottom of the pit at the soil/rock interface.



Alignment with Regional, District, and Neighborhood Planning

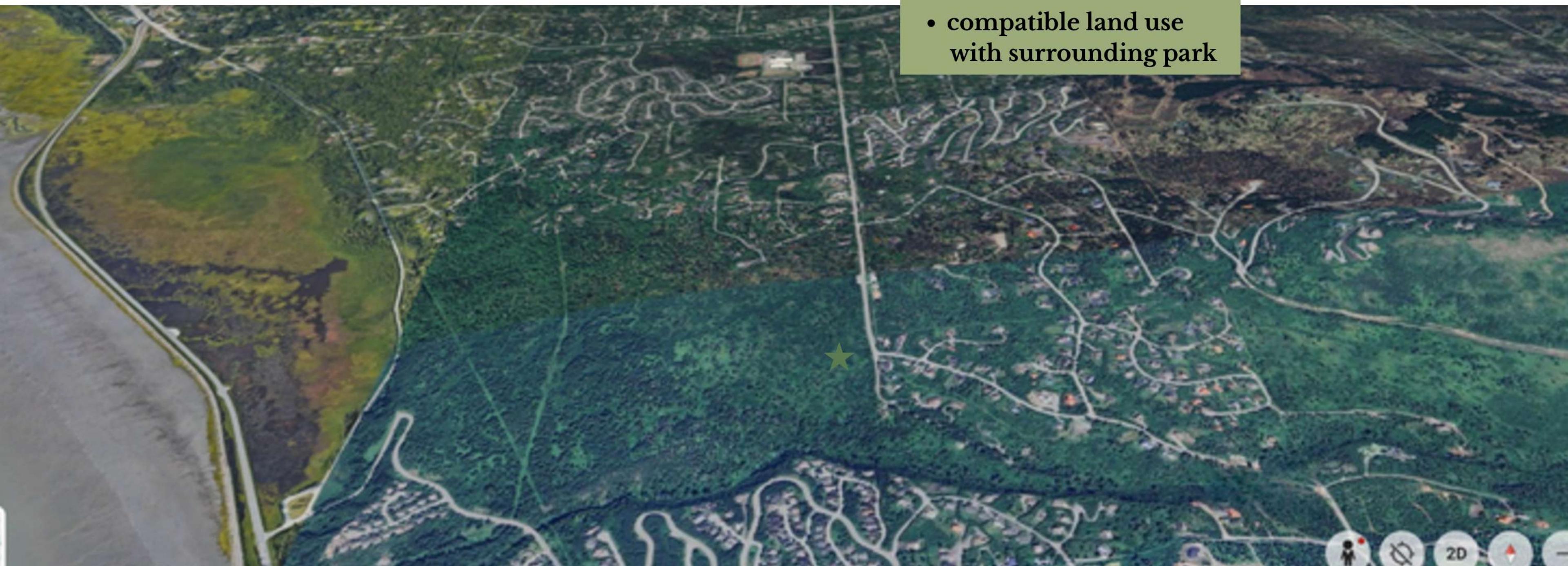


Compatibility

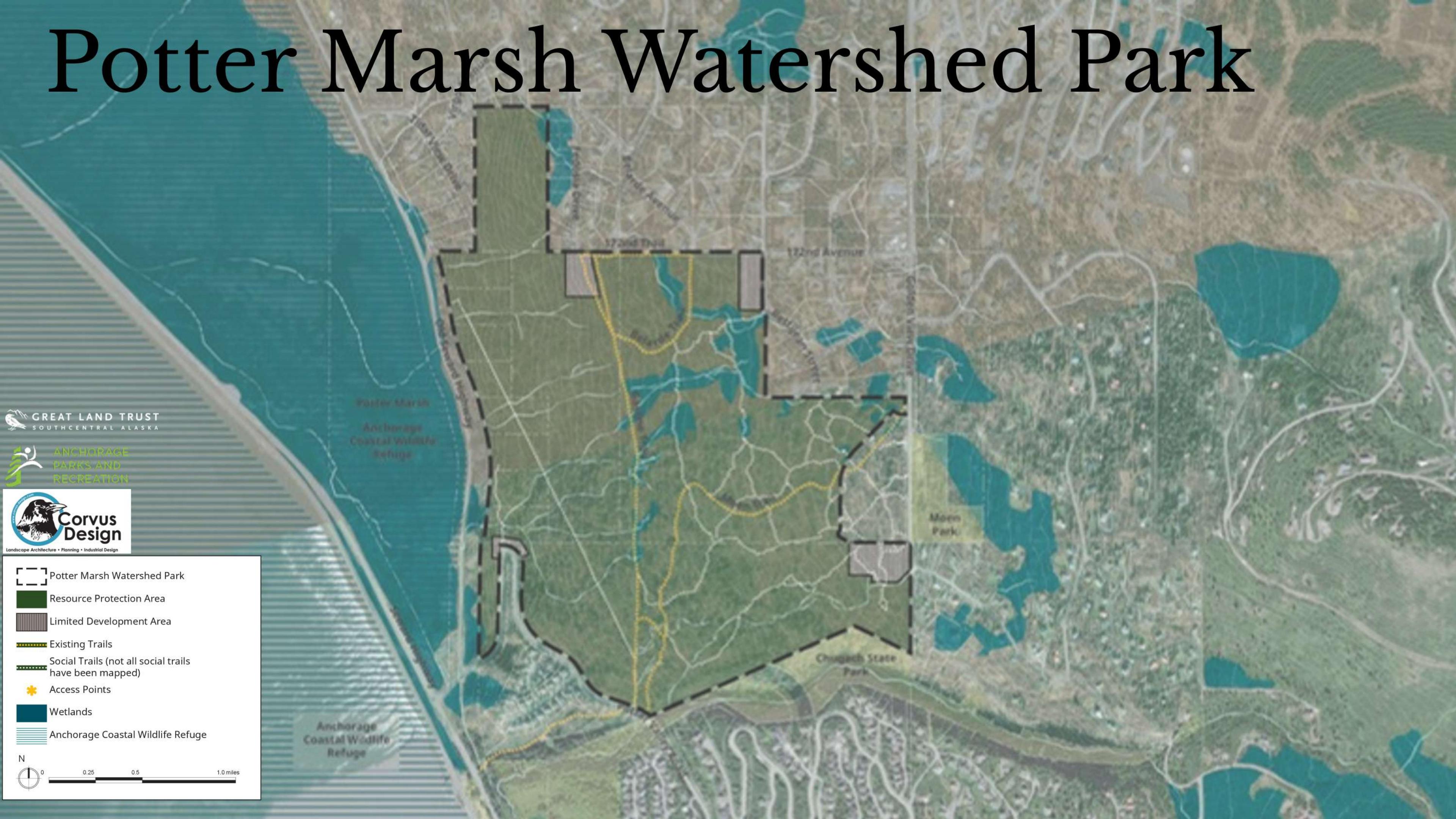
why this project works for this parcel

- slopes & drainage
- wetlands
- zoning
- road accessibility
- neighborhood approval
- ADF&G

- compatible land use
with surrounding park

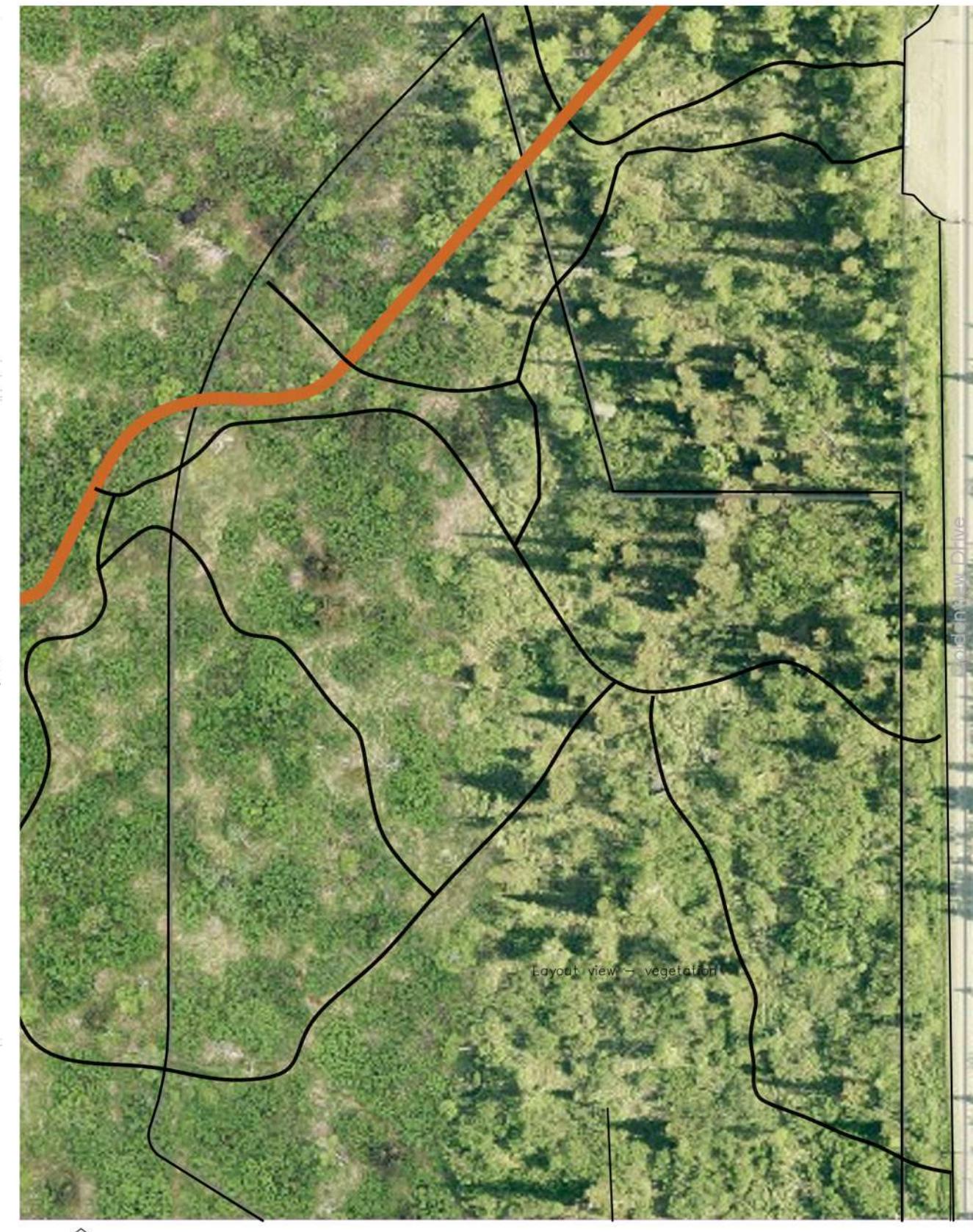
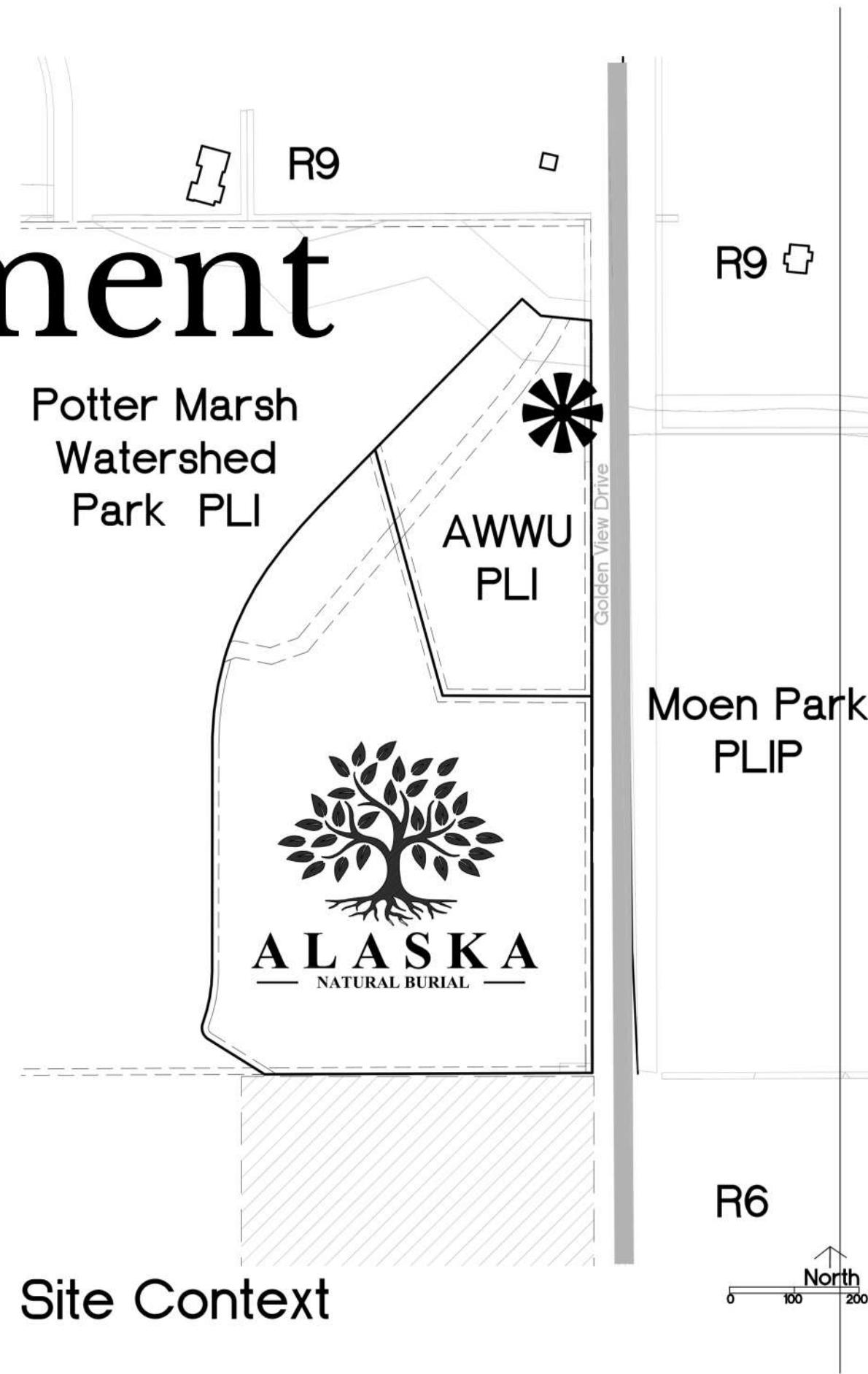


Potter Marsh Watershed Park



Phased Development

- shared trail & parking infrastructure
- consistency in trail construction & maintenance practices
- improving existing trails vs new construction



Alaska Natural Burial is...



- ▷ the highest and best use
- ▷ nonprofit solution for providing the community with cemetery infrastructure
- ▷ unburdening the MOA with cemetery development and operational costs
- ▷ piloting the idea that cemeteries can truly serve as multifunctional community spaces and wildlife habitat



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ALASKA NATURAL BURIAL

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907-360-7136

Natural Burial Photo Credits

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The Forest Conservation Burial Ground
Carolina Memorial Sanctuary
Kings Mountain Preserve
Ramsey Creek Preserve
Foxfield Preserve
Larkspur Conservation
Kokosing Nature Preserve