



## CITY OF WASILLA

290 E. HERNING AVE.

WASILLA, ALASKA 99654-7091

PHONE: (907) 373-9050

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### COUNCIL MEMORANDUM NO. 95-10

Date: January 17, 1995

From: Planning

Subject: Supplemental appropriation to complete update of the 1992 Wasilla Comprehensive Plan.

#### BACKGROUND

At its regular meeting on January 10, 1995, the Wasilla Planning Commission considered the proposal from The Canelos Group, dated January 5, 1995. This proposal was developed with input from the city's planning staff to provide cost estimates for a number of planning activities and products that were not included in the update of the 1992 Wasilla Comprehensive Plan. The proposal contains cost estimates totaling \$47,090 and it includes an estimated timeline to allow for flexibility in the scope of the project.

The original scope of this project was based on input received from staff and from the Wasilla Planning Commission. As noted in the attached memos, there have been a number of changes in the original assumptions underlying the scope of this project, such as the failure of the Capital Move Initiative and the changes in the composition of the Wasilla Planning Commission. In addition, the scope of the original contract did not fully take into account the need to provide a complete reprint of the plan. It was believed, early on, that certain chapters could be updated and inserted into the remaining copies of the plan. When staff approached the Mat-Su Borough, it was discovered that only about 35 copies of the 1992 plan remain. When the plan update is completed, the city should have enough copies to last for at least 2-3 years before another reprint is necessary.

An update of maps and graphics in the plan is another area that was thought to be a minor point at the beginning of the project. The original maps that were published in the plan were not found to be in the possession of the city or the Mat-Su Borough, which hired the consultants during the last planning process in 1991-92. Further investigation showed that the original maps have apparently been lost in a fire that destroyed the office of the planning consultant after the 1992 plan effort was completed. Changes in the plan will require changes in the maps and other plan graphics. This expense should be included in the overall cost of the project.

The Commission deliberated on the proposal and adopted Resolution No. 95-01, providing a recommendation to the Wasilla City Council regarding a supplemental appropriation to complete the update of the 1992 Wasilla Comprehensive Plan.

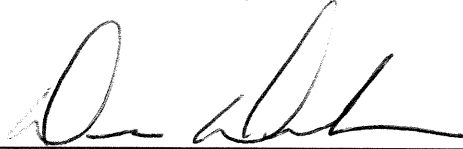
## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Council adopt Ordinance No. 95-04, based on the recommendation of the Wasilla Planning Commission. Staff would, however, recommend that the Council may wish to reconsider the estimated cost for a Parks Highway Improvement Project planning process. This issue is an important one for the city with significant ramifications for the future of Wasilla. Perhaps after the Main Street USA planning conference in Soldotna, Commission and Council members may wish to address this proposal at the public hearing on February 13, 1995. (Estimated cost would be an additional \$9,360)

## APPROPRIATE MOTION

Should the Council agree with the Planning Commission and staff recommendations, the following motion is appropriate:

Move to adopt Ordinance No. 95-04.



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Duane Dvorak, City Planner



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### WASILLA PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 95-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE WASILLA PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WASILLA, ALASKA, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION TO COMPLETE THE UPDATE OF THE 1992 WASILLA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

WHEREAS, the Wasilla Planning Commission (WPC) has considered a revised scope and timeline for the plan revision process that is already underway; and

WHEREAS, the WPC recognizes that certain planning assumptions and priorities have changed since the project was begun during the summer of 1994; and

WHEREAS, the composition of the WPC has changed substantially in the last several months due to the seating of four new members;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wasilla Planning Commission of the City of Wasilla, hereby recommends that the Wasilla City Council approve Ordinance No. 95-04, to provide a supplemental appropriation to complete the update of the 1992 Wasilla Comprehensive Plan as revised in scope by the following additional items:

Task	Cost Estimate	Comments
Base Maps and Graphics	\$6,000	10 - 11 x 17 maps per plan in two (2) colors, plus several 8.5 x 11 maps. Original graphics to be retained by the city.
Additional Consultant Meetings	\$1,000	15.4 hours @ \$65/hr. with Planning Commission
Facilities & Services plan	\$3,250	50 hours @ \$65/hr. To focus on City Hall, Library, Museum and Post Office
Report Production	\$3120	Updating other material from the 92 plan; incorporating comments, etc; assume 48 hours @ \$65/hr.
Reproduction and Binders	\$750	Assume \$7.50/book x 100 copies
<hr/>		
Total appropriation	\$14,120	

AND FURTHERMORE, the estimated timeline for this project is revised, in accordance with the proposal dated January 5, 1995, until June of 1995.

I certify that a resolution in substantially the above form was passed by a majority of those voting at a duly called and conducted meeting of the Wasilla Planning Commission this 10th day of January, 1995.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

APPROVED:

Marilyn L. Stewart  
Marilyn L. Stewart, Planning Clerk

John A. Cannon  
John A. Cannon, Chair



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### PLANNING COMMISSION MEMORANDUM - 95-01

Date: January 6, 1995

To: Wasilla Planning Commission

From: Duane Dvorak, City Planner

Re: Review of proposal for planning consultant services submitted by The Canelos Group dated 12/12/94.

The proposal submitted by The Canelos Group provides a progress report on the comprehensive plan update that was begun last summer. At the request of staff, it contains a number of suggestions to enlarge the scope of the planning effort now underway. This proposal, if approved for funding, would enlarge the scope of the present plan update to a full fledged planning process. This process is envisioned to accomplish several definitive objectives as outlined in the proposal.

The existing plan update was envisioned as a limited project and funded to the amount of \$20,000. Of this original amount, 61.5% of the money has been expended to-date. This leaves \$7,715.00 remaining on the original contract and scope of work. A copy of the original scope of work is included for comparison purposes.

The Commission has three main options in determining a recommendation to the City Council. 1) Maintain the status quo and complete the plan update as originally envisioned by the city, 2) recommend adequate funding to enlarge the scope of this project to a full fledged planning process outlined by the consultants and recommended by the planning staff; 3) recommend funding of a middle ground alternative based on the proposal, and a recommendation as to those areas that the staff and administration may be able to in-house.

While the administration may be able to accomplish some of the objectives set forth in the proposal, having the consultants do the graphics and the survey will probably save time and provide a result that is perceived to be more objective. This rationale is similar to that used by the Council to justify an independent analysis of our personnel policies and procedures even though the administration could have done some of the project in-house.

The Commission should discuss this issue thoroughly and make a recommendation to the City Council (by resolution) as to the scope and funding level the Commission feels is appropriate for this project. Staff can draft the resolution only after obtaining feedback from the Commission.

Duane Dvorak, Planner

The Canelos Group  
3120 West 79th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99502  
(907) 243-0506

January 5, 1995

Mr. Duane Dvorak  
City Planner  
City of Wasilla  
290 East Herning Avenue  
Wasilla, Alaska 99654-7891

Dear Mr. Dvorak:

This letter offers our thoughts for changes in the Scope of Work (SOW) for the Comprehensive Plan update. With four new Planning Commission members, new City Council members, an active Parks & Recreation Commission, the defeat of the proposed capital move, and the passage of several months, this is an excellent time to consider a "mid-course correction" for the comprehensive plan update. This memo addresses several issues for your consideration:

- ◆ a progress report
- ◆ unresolved issues concerning base maps and format/content for final products
- ◆ a proposal by the city for a Community Survey
- ◆ a proposal by the City to add additional meetings with the Planning Commission.
- ◆ recommendations for conducting planning for public facilities and services.
- ◆ the proposal by the City for a public planning process associated with the design for the Parks Highway.
- ◆ a proposal by the City to revise the schedule
- ◆ suggested budget revisions

Many of the goals and objectives proposed in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan have already been achieved. The City has made extraordinary progress in the past few years. Consider that:

- ◆ The City adopted and reaffirmed the sales tax;
- ◆ A Police Department was established;
- ◆ The new airport was developed and put into operation;
- ◆ A street paving program was initiated using money from the sales tax;
- ◆ The Parks & Recreation Dept. which was dependent on the Borough has been improved and made more financially secure.
- ◆ The Museum is on sound financial ground and is moving forward with significant improvements to facilities and services.

- ◆ The Library which faced severe budget problems from the Borough is now contemplating a relocation and improvements based upon city support;
- ◆ The City established a Planning Department and is working to have powers transferred from the Borough.
- ◆ Walmart has arrived, and commercial development is increasing.

### 1) Progress Report

Our current project was envisioned as a limited update of the 1992 plan, rather than a complete updating and reprinting of all material.

- ◆ Chapter 3, Economy and Population focused on the capital move, and provided updated economic and population forecasts. We held a workshop with the Commission in September, presented all draft material and received comments from the city, borough and public. This material is complete, except for incorporating Commission and public comments.
- ◆ Chapter 4, Land Use Plan was to provide an overview of major development sites in the city available for the new government center and other activities. It was to have been based on an analysis by Lee Wyatt and a capital move sub-committee. This analysis never took place, however, and the capital move is now moot. The draft chapter now before the Planning Commission provides an updated description of overall land use in Wasilla, together with important new material on annexation.
- ◆ Chapter 5, Parks and Recreation, focuses on parks and recreation issues. We have met twice with the Parks & Recreation Commission and are incorporating their ideas into this chapter. The revised master plan for the old airport will appear in this chapter.
- ◆ Chapter 6, Transportation, is envisioned as a summary of highway, road and trail improvements needed in Wasilla. The City and Borough's CIP requests are to provide the basis for this analysis.
- ◆ Chapter 7, Implementation, will address issues associated with the transfer of planning powers, the adoption of a new development code, annexation, etc. that are important to the City.

### 2) Unresolved issues concerning base maps and format/content for final products

The original intent was to provide a series of special reports which would update certain parts of the plan. In our conversations in September, the City preferred a more complete update of the 1992 plan which would be formatted in 3-ring binders. We agree this would be much more useful to everyone concerned.

The City had also intended to provide the necessary base maps which could be reproduced in the report, and used for overall planning purposes. Recently, the Planning Department requested we provide a proposal to prepare necessary base maps and graphics.

### 3) The Need for a Community Survey/Visioning Exercise

The Planning Department has asked us to propose conducting a community survey, as a key element in the city's planning process. We believe a survey and visioning exercise would be extremely valuable for the administration, City Council, Planning Commission, and the public. First, to our knowledge, Wasilla residents have never been formally surveyed regarding their opinions on growth and development, facilities and services, and the desired future direction of the community. Second, a survey would provide valuable data to guide the City as it faces a variety of difficult public issues. Third, the survey would identify the most important public issues facing area residents. These issues can then be effectively targeted for resolution. The survey could address opinions on:

- ◆ DOT&PF's proposed major improvements to the Parks Highway which has long-lasting consequences for traffic flow, congestion, access to local businesses and the appearance of the community.
- ◆ The growing demand for parks and recreation services. How should the City deal with important issues of program services, the need for facilities, the need for increased lakeside access, and the need to adequately maintain existing parks?
- ◆ Master planning for the old airport site. Events are beginning to overtake planning on the old airport site. A master plan should be prepared and adopted to guide development on this key site.
- ◆ land use regulations. The Valley continues to grow, largely without benefit of planning and reasonable land use regulations. The City should look seriously at annexation issues.
- ◆ expansion of city utilities and services.
- ◆ community appearance and beautification.

We propose polling Wasilla residents through a mail-out survey which would be sent to each registered voter within the City. With approximately 2,000 voters, a good scientific sample can be obtained cost-effectively. In addition, if desired, a separate survey can be addressed to all business license holders (about 1,000) within the city. Survey questions can be reviewed by Council and the Planning Commission during a joint workshop session.

As part of the survey, we believe this time is appropriate to more formally involve city staff in the planning process. For the first time, Wasilla has a relatively complete city organization, including finance, the police department, museum, planning, public works, etc. We would recommend interviewing and holding a joint workshop to poll these professionals who run your city. They also may have specific ideas and insights for survey topics and questions, and key issues to be resolved.

Following the survey, we would conduct a public "town meeting", perhaps at the High School, to go over survey results, and work on strategies to resolve the most important issues. We believe this method would give residents a much more important role in the planning process than has been possible to date.

#### 4) Additional Consultant Meetings with the Planning Commission

We agree with the importance of holding additional meetings and work sessions with the Planning Commission, especially with four new members. Depending on the nature of the meeting, costs normally range from 4-8 hours per meeting per person. A \$2,000 budget increase, as proposed by the



City, would allow us to participate in 4-8 additional "person meetings". In other words, two people conducting two intensive workshops could spend \$2,000 (e.g. \$65/hr x 2 people x 16 hours = \$2,080), or one person might appear at up to eight meetings (e.g. \$65/hr. x 1 person x 32 hours = \$2,080).

#### 5) Public Facilities and Services

A chapter on public facilities and services is currently not budgeted. We believe it would be beneficial to expand the scope to provide updated planning for all major public facilities and services in Wasilla, including future needs and potential locations for:

- ◆ city hall
- ◆ water system
- ◆ sewer system
- ◆ surface water drainage
- ◆ police
- ◆ fire protection
- ◆ library
- ◆ Wasilla museum and historic area
- ◆ post office

We understand the Post Office has proposed to triple the size of their Wasilla facility within the next year, and are looking for a suitable location. This triggers several issues, including the City's preferred location for this major traffic generator, the use of the existing building (for the library??), etc. Museum Department Director John Cooper would like the plan to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the historic area to include current and future land and parking requirements.

#### 6) Parks Highway Design Process

Proposed improvements to M.P. 35-44 of the Parks Highway will have a significant impact on the future development and growth of Wasilla's downtown corridor. Once completed, the improved roadway will have a great bearing on the economic well-being and viability of businesses and commercial property. This, in turn, will affect city sales tax revenues, and the subsequent ability to provide and expand services. In addition, these improvements will make a long-term statement over the attractiveness, aesthetics and quality of life in the city. If done correctly, the Parks Highway could become an attractive gateway, and multi-purpose corridor through the heart of downtown.

I concur that timing is excellent for the Planning Department to undertake a public involvement effort to have the community define and articulate it's preferred design plans to DOT&PF. DOT&PF intends to hold a public hearing in Wasilla in March when their environmental documents are complete. Here are two approaches:

The Canelos Group would obtain, review and evaluate the latest preliminary design from DOT&PF. We would conduct a series of two or three evening workshops to solicit ideas and alternatives for improving the highway corridor. The goal would be to find the best solution which satisfies the

business community, provides desired levels of traffic flow, and improves the physical appearance of the corridor. Evening workshops would give more people an opportunity to attend than a single weekend effort. Results would be professionally rendered and presented to the City for presentation to DOT&PF. We recommend adding a Landscape Architect to the team for this effort.

A second option would be to conduct an intensive 1-2 day weekend session, in a manner somewhat similar to that envisioned by Soldotna's "Mainstreet Alaska" project. This would involve considerable preparation and the use of several facilitators. The disadvantage is that weekends are precious to many people, and with a "one-shot" opportunity, we would likely miss key participants who might be better able to come to one of two evening sessions.

7) Revising the Schedule

We fully support the City's desire to have a new schedule which is comfortable for new Planning Commission members, and would provide a better opportunity for public involvement. Here's our suggestion:

Task	Old Schedule	Revised Schedule
Base maps/graphics	July-August 94	March-June 95
Capital move analysis	Sept 94	Sept 94 (completed)
Land use/Annexation	Oct 94	Feb 95
Parks & Recreation/Old Airport Plan	Dec 94	March 95

I suggest we work out a revised schedule for new elements that makes sense for everyone concerned.

8. Here are suggested budget changes:

Task	Cost Estimate	Comments
Base Maps and graphics	\$6,000	This should provide 10 11x17 two color maps per plan, plus several 8.5x11 maps.
Community Survey/Visioning	\$19,360	provides for community survey development, administration and analysis, plus two visioning workshops with city and public.
Additional Consultant Meetings with Planning Commission	\$2,000	30.8 hours @ \$65/hr.

Facilities & Services plan	\$6,500	100 hours @ \$65/hr.
Parks Highway Design Process	\$9,360	Involves team of planners and landscape architect conducting 2-3 public workshops
Report Production	\$3,120	Updating other material from 92 plan; incorporating comments, etc.; assume 48 hours
Reproduction and Binders	\$750	assume \$7.50/book x 100 copies
Cost Estimate	\$47,090	

We believe these modifications would provide a significantly better product, and help position the City for the many challenges which lie ahead.

Sincerely,

George J. Cannelos  
Principal

The Canelos Group  
3120 West 79th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99502  
(907) 243-0506

*N. Wall*  
*good*  
*John, FYI*  
*Revised per administrative and staff comments*  
*thw*  
*JS*

**RECEIVED**  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

July 14, 1994

JUL 15 1994

Mr. Duane Dvorak  
City Planner  
City of Wasilla  
290 East Herning Avenue  
Wasilla, Alaska 99654-7891

Dear Duane:

This letter provides the recommended Scope of Work to update Wasilla's Comprehensive Plan. These recommendations take into account the comments received at the workshop with the Planning Commission on July 12th, and our phone conversation yesterday.

### Chapter 3 Economy and Population

Updates to this chapter will include revised population and economic forecasts, based on a number of statewide trends, potential economic development projects and annexation policy. Local projects include:

- Capital Move
- Developments at Port McKenzie
- Hatcher Pass
- Other projects as appropriate
- An update on tourism/visitor industry
- a section on the importance of small business development, and the role of the City in attracting and encouraging small business.

We will review existing market and feasibility studies relating to each project, and estimate the impact each of these projects would have on the City of Wasilla.

### Chapter 4 Land Use Plan

The update will include an overview of potential sites in and around Wasilla suited for major development, based on transportation access, utilities, existing land use, ownership, etc. These sites could be used for a new government center or other large retail, commercial, industrial projects. The Mayor suggests we use Lee Wyatt's analysis recently prepared for one of the capital move subcommittees.

Updated concept plan for Old Airport. The plan will incorporate recent developments, such as the Valley Performing Arts center, playground, proposed rose garden, and other ideas.

### Chapter 5 Public Facilities and Services

We will work with the Parks and Recreation Committee and other groups to update the parks and recreation section of the plan. We will examine issues relating to:

- the city taking/assuming management of certain parks
- the city camper park issue
- year-round use of parks
- policy on new park lands, including small city or borough lots in neighborhoods which could be suitable for park development
- priority tasks for improving/managing each park

### Chapter 6 Transportation

Local and regional transportation systems (roads, airports, rail) should also be evaluated in light of potential growth. Access requirements to potential major development sites should be examined. Much of this information will be provided from the city's ongoing CIP priority exercise.

### Chapter 7 Implementation

Several important policy areas will be covered, especially those issues which provide a foundation and justification for rewriting the Development Code. These include:

- How to design and streamline the regulatory/permitting process, and enforcement process, given the transition of planning powers from the Borough, and the level of staffing at the City
- Annexation policy issues
- Dust control, revegetation
- Promoting infill
- Aesthetics and community appearance
- Development on wetlands

Timeline:

Here's a general schedule for your consideration:

July-August: prepare base map, data gathering  
September: public workshop on planning issues; present data relating to capital move  
October: workshop with Planning Commission  
November: public hearing draft  
December: public hearing in early December  
January: revised PHD  
February: 2nd public hearing and final report

We would appreciate your help coordinating with Lindsey Finney at the Borough for production of a base map. The Borough has digitized tax maps which we need on disk in an AutoCAD-compatible format. We need the following MSB AutoCAD layering standards:

- ◆ All layers that are normally "on" remain on, except for PARCLOT, SUBLLOT, and SUBNMBR which should be turned "off"
- ◆ We'll need TRAILS, SEWERCOMM, and WATERCOMM available, but not on the generic base map.

Let's discuss outer boundaries of the map. It probably should extend at least one mile north, west and south of town. Eastward, the map should extend all the way to the Glenn Highway junction.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to working with you to provide a valuable product for the future of Wasilla.

Sincerely,

George J. Cannelos  
Principal