

City Narrows Down Snow Storage Options

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Kodiak hasn't had too much snowfall this winter, which is probably good considering the city has no place to put it. Last year the city learned that its age-old method of dumping snow removed from city streets into the harbor would no longer fly with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. This prompted the city to hire Dowl HKM engineers to help identify spots that snow could be stockpiled during the winter months.

In August, Dowl's project manager, Aaron Christie, identified a list of potential snow storage spots and presented three options to the city council. Christie returned on Tuesday and narrowed that list down to one.

"Site 12 is city owned, the entire parcel is 143 acres, much of that is hillside and sloped. There is an anadromous stream, meaning there's fish there. And there are potential wetlands, it's not officially mapped, but you can walk out there and tell there are wetlands. There's good access from the corner of Maple and right where it transitions to Pillar."

The site is at the base of Pillar Mountain, behind the water treatment plant. He said its location near the wetlands and stream means there will probably have to be some sort of filter or treatment system for the snow melt, but that won't be known until the permitting process is complete.

"Some place in here, you probably won't use this as an official design, but some place in here you'd have a retention or dilution pond, so that will allow contaminated sediments to settle out before they enter the wetlands or stream."

Christie said the location of the site is convenient, but will require zoning talks with the Borough.

"It does have good access, it's very close to the center of the snow removal area, being close to the Aleutian Homes location. There is a small portion of it that's already been inventoried as wetlands, but we suspect it's probably more than that. It is currently zoned as conservation by the borough, so there would have to be some discussion with the borough, and there's been some preliminary discussion. There's no indication that there'd be any issue in trying to converting that use."

While the location to the central snow removal zones is ideal, Councilman John Whiddon had concerns about increasing truck traffic through a residential area. Snow removal trucks from throughout the city would have to pass through a portion of the Aleutian Homes to access the site, most likely in the early hours when kids might be walking to

school. City Manager Aimee Kniaziowski said there hasn't been any community outreach yet, mainly because they haven't officially decided on the site. Dowd HKM is suggesting.

"I know they're used to seeing the trucks come. They come and they haul all the snow to the center of the road and they fill up the dump trucks, but we haven't done any kind of specific targeted outreach until we know that we're ready to go with this and then we can certainly let folks know in the best way or ways possible."

Christie estimates the site at Pillar Mountain will cost about \$830,000 to develop, but thinks a portion of that could be offset by using gravel leftover from the Aleutian Homes project, or the gravel pit farther up Pillar Road.

The city will vote on whether or not to pursue the site in the coming weeks, and if all goes according to plan the design and permitting can begin as early as next month. The hope is to have a useable site by winter 2015. In the meantime, the city has been working with the DEC to find short term snow storage and disposal solutions.