

Memorandum 10-33 Finding for Junk Car Removal

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TO: Members, of the Homer City Council
THROUGH: Walt Wrede, City Manager
FROM: Rick Abboud, City Planner
Dotti Harness-Foster, Planning Technician
MEETING: February 8, 2010

SUBJECT: Ordinance 10-08 would appropriate \$15,000.00 from the General Fund Reserves Account #100-100-5990 to a Junk Car Reserve Account. The \$15,000.00 would be used for the removal of junk cars.

Currently: It costs approximately \$300 for a citizen to have a junk car towed from the City's core to the Baycrest landfill. Of the \$300 approximately \$150 is for the proper disposal of the fluids and battery. Once fluids are emptied, it is FREE for a citizen to dispose of the car at the landfill. The KPB then contracts with a vendor to crush and transport the 'carcasses' to Anchorage. The crushing, storing and transportation costs are paid by the borough taxpayers.

Program Vision: The Planning and Zoning Office envisions a one - two week program during the Spring 2010 community clean-up in conjunction with the Homer Chamber of Commerce. Funds would cover the cost to drain fluids from one vehicle, per city resident on a first come, first served bases. Staff hopes to leverage the requested \$15,000.00 by applying for matching funds with the goal of disposing 100 – 150 junk cars.

Commercial recyclers, tow companies and garages are best suited for the proper disposal of fluids. If approved, the City seek would seek a Request for Proposal for fluid and battery removal and tow services to the crusher and disposal site.

Background: The accumulation of junk cars reduces property values, are a potential environmental hazards, and an eyesore. Currently, junk car violations are handled through the Planning and Zoning Office, Port and Harbor and the Police Department.

In 2009, the City's Police and Port and Harbor Departments spent approximately \$2,500 for the removal of approximately 15+/- cars from rights-of-way and the Spit. This expense does not include the cost of enforcement notices, impound warnings and staff time required to facilitate the removal. For example, prior to issuing violation notices the Planning and Zoning Office verifies ownership with the Police Department. Tracing vehicle ownership is costly and time consuming because car ownership may not transfer to and from multiple owners. A typical violation requires a minimum of two certified notices to the property owner(s), to the tenants, and to the car owners followed by months of conversations with the violators. If violators are not aiming for compliance, legal notices are handled by the City Attorney. In 2009, ten (10-12) junk vehicles were removed by their owners through the Planning and Zoning Office enforcement efforts.

This proposal would direct planning staff time to promote voluntary disposal of junk cars by providing FREE fluid removal. If Homer is similar to other Alaskan communities, Homer could see a five to ten fold increase in the disposal of junk cars.

Other Alaska communities

Dillingham's Planning Commission formed a task force to deal with junk cars. With \$12,000 in donations, 107-149 junk cars were disposed of in 2006.

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Juneau: Disposing of a personal junk vehicle in Juneau is FREE to the citizens. This includes fluid removal and disposal, it does not include towing. The junk car removal program is funded by the Motor Vehicle Registration Tax (MVRT). The MVRT is collected by DMV when our vehicles are registered. The revenue collected is transferred to the boroughs and cities. Juneau budgets \$425 per vehicle for approximately 800 vehicles per year. The \$425 covers fluid removal and shipping. If costs exceed the amount recouped from MVRT funds, the balance is taken from Juneau's general fund. If comparing a community's population is relative to the number of junk cars, Juneau's population is 31,000 which results in approximately 800 junk cars per year, Homer's population of 5,400 could generate approximately 140 cars. Homer received approximately \$61,814 in 2009 from the MVRT tax. These funds go directly into the General Fund for general distribution and are not earmarked for a particular purpose.

Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council: The Backhaul Program (disposing of car caresses) is funded by the USDA and was started in 2004 to address pressing solid waste issues in the Yukon River Watershed. The Backhaul Program has also branched into providing solid waste handling trainings to Tribal workers.

Bethel: In coordination with the annual spring cleanup, citizens may have one vehicle removed to the landfill by the Public Works Department. A fee of \$100.00 is charged if the fluids are not removed from the vehicle prior to pickup. Over 200 vehicles have been moved to the landfill in a 3 year period.

Att: Ordinance 10-08

Related Ordinances **Memorandum - Related Ordinances:** [Ordinance 10-08\(A\) Amending the FY 2010 Budget for a Junk Car Program](#)

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