



# City of Cordova

## A L A S K A

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 28, 2021, AT 6 PM**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBER, LEVEL 2, CORDOVA CENTER**

**AGENDA**

**Chair:** Wendy Ranney; **Vice Chair:** Dave Zastrow; **Commissioners:** Karen Hallquist, Kristi Jurica, Henk Kruithof, Ryan Schuetze, Martin Van Den Brock

**Parks & Recreation Department Director:** Duncan Chisholm

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**  
Wendy Rainey, Dave Zastrow, Karen Hallquist, Kristi Jurica, Henk Kruithof, Ryan Schuetze, Martin Van Den Brock.
- 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- 4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR**
  - a. Minutes of June 29, 2021, Regular Meeting. Copies to be distributed at meeting.
- 5. CORRESPONDENCE**
  - a. Cooperative Greenhouse Initiative letter dated 8/10/21.
- 6. COMMUNICATIONS BY AND PETITIONS FROM VISITORS**
  - a. Audience comments regarding agenda items (3 minutes per speaker)
- 7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Discussion only)**
  - a. **Proposed Parks & Recreation Dept. Mission, Vision & Values**
  - b. **Work Plan through Dec 31, 2021**
  - c. **Proposed Work Plan 2022**
  - d. **Fee Schedule 2022**
- 8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
  - a. Verbal update on the Cordova Comprehensive Trails Plan.
- 9. NEW BUSINESS**
  - a. Cooperative Greenhouse Initiative Proposal
- 10. COMMISSION COMMENTS**
- 11. ADJOURNMENT**

You may submit written public comments via email to [parksandrec@cityofcordova.net](mailto:parksandrec@cityofcordova.net), mail comments to Dept. of Parks & Recreation, City of Cordova, PO Box 1210, Cordova, AK 99574, or delivered to City Hall directly. Written public comments must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the day of meeting





August 10, 2021

Duncan Chisholm, Parks & Recreation Director  
City of Cordova  
P.O. Box 1210  
Cordova, Alaska 99574

Dear Mr. Chisholm,

We are writing to request permission to develop a cooperative community garden on a section of the City-owned recreation field on Whitshed Road. The portion of the lot we are interested in is approximately 9,016.92 square feet (see attached sketch).

The Cooperative Greenhouse Initiative has created an action plan, outlined in this request, to expand the community's efforts to increase local food production and food security, addressing multiple goals outlined in Cordova's 2019 Comprehensive Plan.

We are requesting that the City of Cordova lease the land to the Prince William Sound Economic Development District (PWSEDD) for a nominal fee, unless another land use mechanism is more suitable to the project (e.g. a land use permit).

### **BACKGROUND**

In October 2020 the Copper River Watershed Project and Prince William Sound Economic Development District began a feasibility study for a cooperative greenhouse in Cordova. The cooperative greenhouse would serve as a community-accessible space for increasing local food production, improving our town's food security and increasing the quality of produce available. The cooperative will consist of a small geodesic greenhouse structure to grow vegetables to sell locally at a farm stand (or Saturday Market), as well as raised bed plots for rent by community members. The "cooperative" structure will involve some form of membership compensation (in produce, or in use of a growing plot) in exchange for members' time contributed to helping with food production.

In November 2020, we surveyed Cordova community members on a co-operative greenhouse initiative to gauge interest on increasing the amount of locally-grown produce in Cordova. The survey was met with strong participation and 81.90% of the 120 participants stated they would commit to some amount of volunteer time each month in exchange for produce.

## **VISION**

We are requesting use of the land to develop a cooperative garden space to increase local food production, expand and improve Cordova's indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities, support local schools with education opportunities, conduct additional research on how climate change may impact Cordova and the surrounding environment and develop adaptation strategies that anticipate future changes and challenges, and encourage resident participation and engagement in cooperative governance, decision-making and volunteerism.

We have developed an action plan to develop a cooperative garden space.

Phase 1: Construct raised garden plots to increase access to local food production, 2022.

- Raised-bed garden plots will be available for cooperative members to rent on a seasonal basis. We anticipate constructing 30 – 50 raised beds for use by cooperative members (individuals and organizations) for their use in growing produce for households and organization programs.
- The cooperative garden will be run and maintained by its membership, governed by an established set of cooperative by-laws under the Alaska Cooperative Corporation Act.

Phase 2: Secure funding to install a geodesic dome, 2022 – 2023.

- Geodesic domes from the company Growing Spaces in Pagosa Springs, CO are rated for 120+ mph winds, can handle heavy snow loads, and are made of 16mm multi-wall polycarbonate glazing.
- Produce grown in the geodesic dome will be available for community members to purchase, providing a revenue stream to support operational cost.



- Sell plant starts in spring 2023 to create an additional revenue stream for the cooperative.

To date our fundraising efforts include:

- Award from USDA Farm to School program for a planning grant, \$22,317 (July 2021).
- Application to Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources for the micro-grants for food security program, \$18,927.52 requested. Awards to be announced in late August, 2021.
- Applied for funding to purchase a geodesic dome greenhouse from the USDA's Community Food Assistance Program Grant (\$50,000) and matching funds from the Denali Commission (\$50,000). We expect to hear back from the USDA by November, 2021.

### **PROJECT NEED**

The City of Cordova recently spent a year writing its Comprehensive Plan, and used a thorough process of engaging residents through local events such as our Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival, our Christmas Bazaar, solicitation of comments on-line, and three community workshops held during that year of planning. The resulting plan has six areas for community development, one of which is "Quality of Life Issues and Policies". This section enumerates several strategies, one of which is "Strategy #5: Increase Local Food Production" (p. 46, [www.cordovacomplan.com](http://www.cordovacomplan.com)).

A Food Cost Survey conducted annually by the University of Alaska's Cooperative Extension Service shows that a weeks' worth of groceries for a family of four (with children from 6-11 years old) in Cordova, Alaska cost 46% more than the same "market basket" of groceries purchased in Anchorage, Alaska (UA School of Natural Resources and Extension, June 2018).

### **BENEFITS**

#### **Increased Food Security**

There are multiple benefits of establishing a cooperative garden in Cordova. Establishing a cooperative garden space will increase Cordova's food security which is more vulnerable than ever with continued cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry service being made at the State level.



### **Increase Food Quality**

The fresher the produce, the higher the nutritional value. Once harvested, vegetables' nutritional value begins to decrease substantially. Due to lack of water, cutting off their nutrient supply, and their interiors being exposed to oxygen, vegetables immediately begin to consume the nutrients within themselves. Vegetables lose anywhere from 15 - 77% of their Vitamin C within a week of harvest (UC Davis, 2007). By the time we consume our vegetables here, they've spent time being shipped, sitting on store shelves, and then stored in our home refrigerators for a few days, likely two weeks removed from harvest and with a fraction of the nutrients they once had.

### **Lower Carbon Footprint**

By increasing our local supply of produce, we will subsequently lower our carbon footprint of food production. In a time when Alaska is seeing its climate change 1.7 times faster in warmer months than the northern hemisphere ("Key indicators of Arctic climate change: 1971-2017", Box et al., 2019), lowering the carbon footprint of food production by producing food within our community is an important benefit as a model for community response to climate change.

### **Support Existing Programs**

A cooperative garden space will allow participating individuals, community organizations, and tribal organizations to support the Cordova School District's existing lunch program and create hands-on educational opportunities.

We greatly appreciate the efforts local businesses have provided for the community to have access to fresh, nutrient dense produce and look forward to working with those businesses to diversify and increase the amount of locally grown produce that is available in Cordova.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Kristin Carpenter  
Executive Director

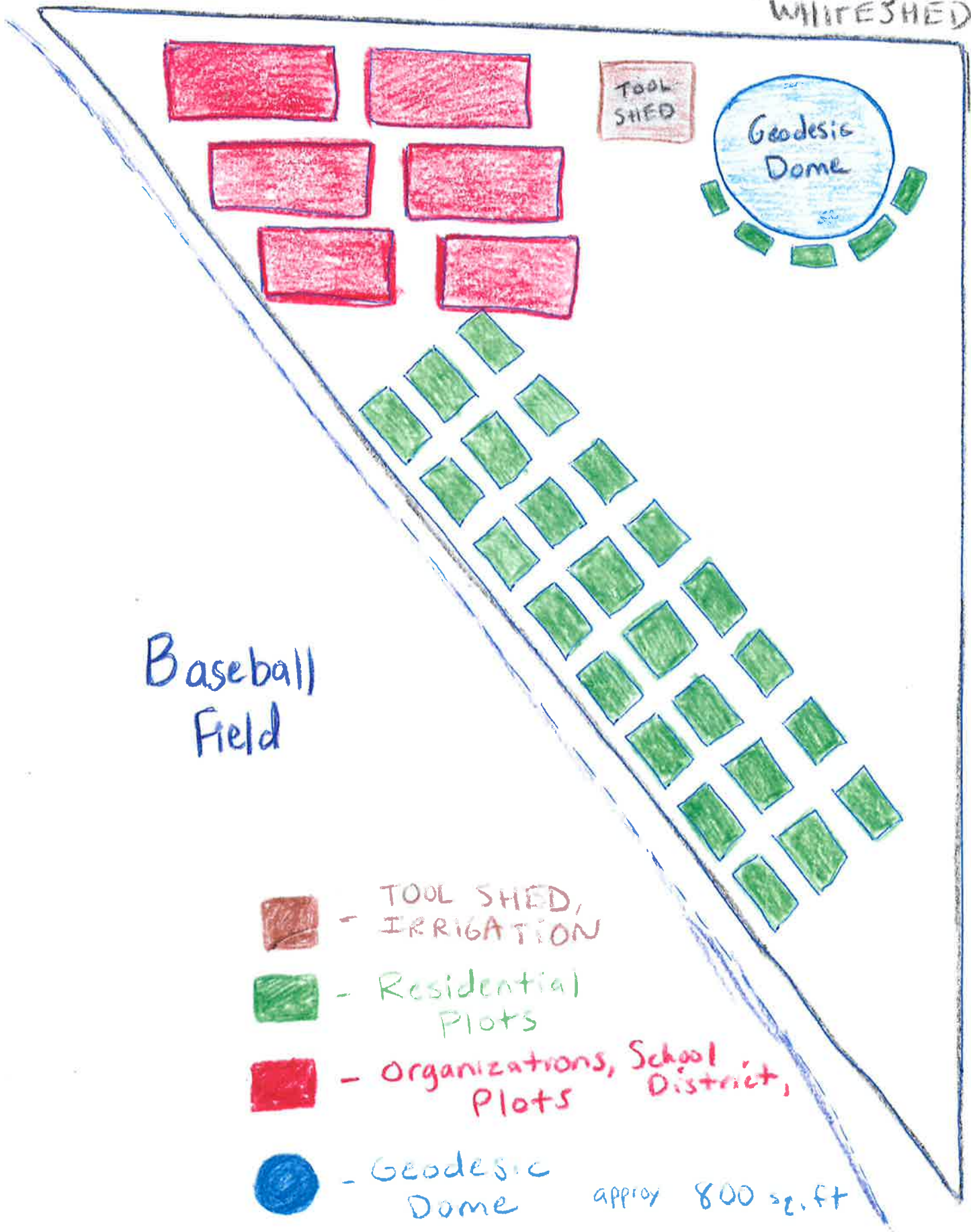


Christopher Iannazzone  
Cooperative Greenhouse Project Manager, CRWP



# COMMUNITY GARDENING AREA





MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD  
WHITESHED RD.



Baseball Field

TOOL SHED

Geodesic Dome

-  - TOOL SHED, IRRIGATION
  -  - Residential Plots
  -  - Organizations, School District, Plots
  -  - Geodesic Dome
- approx 800 sq. ft





