

3 ISSUES, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

Area Snapshots: Downtown

Community members helped identify assets and challenges for each planning area throughout the planning process by taking part in various exercises in public workshops and meetings, focus group sessions, and written comments. The assets and challenges were used to develop issue statements, goals, and objectives for each planning area.

Assets (Strengths)

Historical Features: Historic/cultural venues; Dorothy Page Museum; Teeland Building; potential historic district

Parks and Open Space: Wonderland Park (amphitheatre and skate park) appeals to a variety of interests; lake recreation

Location: Centrally located

Municipal Services & Infrastructure: Post office; library; local government; water; sewer; power

Shopping & Services: Variety of small business; access to large and small businesses and services; centralized shopping and services; destination

Economic & Development Potential: High traffic count; available land to develop; historic features to draw tourism; tourism traffic nearby

Challenges (Weaknesses)

Traffic: Poor traffic flow; no traffic plan; post office location contributes to congestion

Parking: Limited availability; no parking with a Downtown atmosphere

Access: No ease of accessibility; lack of connectivity—too spread out, must use car to go everywhere; lack of sidewalks

Parks & Trails: Parks not connected; lack of trails

Identity & Appearance: Lack of identifiable Downtown area; no theme, no architectural appeal; not viewed as a destination; not well-planned; unattractive, uninviting, not a good representation of citizens and skills in the area

Existing Structures: Outgrowing what is there, i.e. library, post office, etc.



Wasilla Post Office



Wasilla Library



Retail, restaurant, and office spaces in Downtown Wasilla

Area Snapshots: South Wasilla Heights

Assets (Strengths)

Aesthetics: Viewsheds in this planning area set it apart

Infrastructure: Main line utility lines are already in place

Services/Attractions: The Senior Center; Iditarod Headquarters; Lake Lucille Campground; and the Knik Museum are near the planning area

Access: Good access off the Parks Highway

Development Potential: Almost a clean slate; mostly large lots/room for development; opportunity exists NOW to make fewer mistakes and do things right the first time; road system easily promotes growth; commercially zoned

Challenges (Weaknesses)

Aesthetics: Large areas of clear cutting have occurred with no following development, which has made the area an eyesore to local residents

Geology: The area has tight soils and a high surface water table

Transportation: An internal network of roads is needed; traffic problems exist and a bypass is already needed

Land Ownership: Almost all of the land in this area is owned by private individuals, and these landowners will dictate development

Infrastructure: Developers must bear the cost of tying into the utility main lines that surround undeveloped parcels



Left: Multi-family homes in the sub-area of South Wasilla Heights.

Center: Expansive views

Right: Long-standing clearing without follow-up development

Area Snapshots: Airport and Transportation Museum Area

Assets (Strengths)

Development/Expansion Potential: abundant open area, with developable land; opportunity to plan for future development and increase tourism

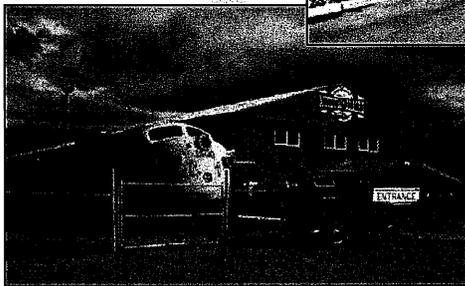
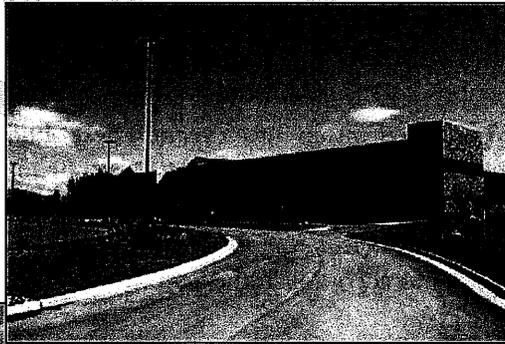
Attractions: MUSC; MATI (contains many things that appeal to the older demographic), Live Steamers; Wasilla Municipal Airport; trailheads and good community activities

Challenges (Weaknesses)

Roads/Access: Poor and indirect road access to the area (one way in and out)

Airport Facilities: The current airport should be expanded; no float plane access

Location & Communication: Assets are hidden; poor signage; proximity to Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport detracts from attracting commercial flights; not really considered part of Wasilla (some think it is out of City limits)



Left: MATI (a.k.a. the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry)

Center: The MUSC (a.k.a. Multi-Use Sports Complex)

Right: Wasilla Municipal Airport

Issues, Goals, & Objectives

This section identifies the issues, goals, and objectives for each planning area and provides a summary framework for action items, or strategies, to implement the plan.

WHAT DO THESE TERMS MEAN?

Issues are problems that impede progress or perceptions that the existing conditions are inadequate.

Goals are general, broad statements of what you want to accomplish, or the community's aspirations. They are positively stated desired future situations to address an issue.

Objectives are statements of planned results that are measurable or trackable.

The following summary tables are categorized by issue statements and identified by planning area. Priority issues for each of the planning areas were derived from evaluating the results from the Visioning Committee workshop, focus group sessions, charrette, public workshop, and individual public comments. Some issues identified during this planning process are lingering issues previously identified in existing planning documents.

From each identified issue, the planning team developed goals and objectives. Some issues are common to all areas and are indicated by italicized text. The tables also identify potential leads and/or participating partners for initiating actions or strategies to accomplish objectives and achieve associated goals.

Schedules for Completion

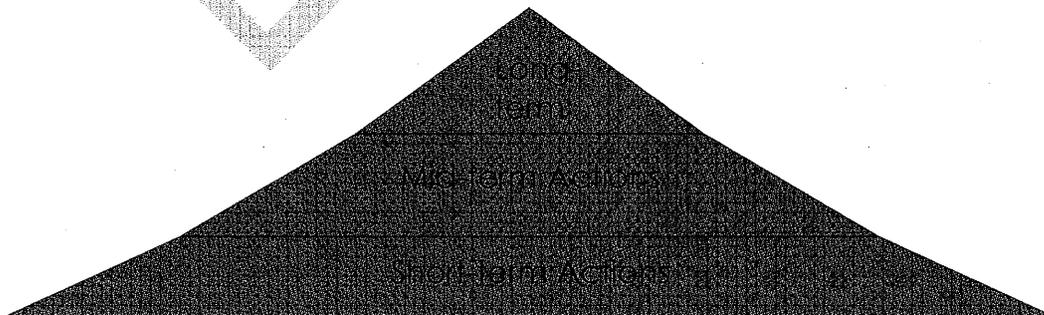
Each implementation item is tied to a timeframe defined as on-going, or short-, mid-, or long-term. The planning timeframe for this plan is 15 years.

On-going actions require relationship building and maintenance of relationships, structures, plans, zones, etc. On-going actions results are often difficult to measure.

Short-term actions can be accomplished within 1 to 2 years. These actions often provide immediate reward and success, which can be motivating for accomplishing more intensive actions. Many short-term actions lay the groundwork for accomplishing mid-term actions.

Mid-term actions are accomplished within 3 to 5 years. These actions take a larger coordinated effort to complete, and more than one entity may be involved with implementing the action.

Long-term actions will take 5 to 10 years to complete and typically will involve a number of different coordinating entities to accomplish the action.



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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
<i>Community Character (CC)</i>		
<p>1. Downtown Wasilla lacks a distinct identity. The boundaries are unclear.</p> <p>2. The appearance of Downtown Wasilla needs to be improved, capitalizing on the historical elements.</p>	<p>A. Create an attractive identity for Downtown that complements Wasilla's natural setting and history.</p>	<p>i. Institute design standards such as signage, lighting, and accommodate winter design factors.</p>
		<p>B. Promote downtown as a center of public and education services, supported by mixed commercial and residential use.</p>
	<p>iii. Consider establishing a "Gateway Program/Committee" (primary responsibility is to plan, design, and implement improvements for wayfinding stations and gateway entrances).</p>	
	<p>iv. Consider establishing a Downtown Revitalization Committee and Public-Private Partnerships to develop the character of Downtown Wasilla, design projects to achieve the character, and implement improvements.</p>	
	<p>v. Develop visual cues to identify gateways and sub-districts, such as entry kiosks, wayfinding stations, thematic landscape design, and signage.</p>	
	<p>vi. Capitalize on existing facilities to develop plazas and community gathering places.</p>	
	<p>vii. Encourage use of design themes through incentives such as variances from requirements, expedited permit processing, tax abatements, and loan programs.</p>	
	<p>viii. Explore zoning areas by building type, rather than use to achieve aesthetic objectives but allow for flexibility in mixed use districts.</p>	
	<p>ix. Promote community events that support the identity and theme of the area to attract visitors and tourists.</p>	
	<p>x. Create an educational program through a public-private partnership to promote Downtown's identity and theme.</p>	
<p><i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i></p>		

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning Department City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Gateway Committee*
Mid-term	<\$100,000	Downtown Revitalization Committee* Public-Private Partnerships* Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau
Short-term	<\$100,000	Civic Groups (including art and history)
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Long-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	<\$100,000	

*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence

ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Land Ownership, Platting, and Zoning (LO)		
1. Small lot sizes pose challenges to development.	A. Create larger, functional parcel sizes that accommodate development.	i. Create an overlay Downtown zoning district.
		ii. Work with the Mat-Su Borough to develop and negotiate an intergovernmental cooperation agreement that transfers the platting powers to the City of Wasilla.
		iii. Streamline the replatting process with regard to consolidation of small lots.
		iv. Institute development incentives, such as replatting initiatives and business improvement districts.
		v. Create a program where the City purchases available parcels to hold for potential replatting.
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

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Schedule		Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
			Downtown
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning Department City of Wasilla Planning Commission Downtown Landowners Mat-Su Homebuilders Association	
Mid-term	<\$100,000		
Long-term	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
Long-term	>\$500,000		
*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence			

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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Economic Development and Recommended Land Uses (EC/LU)		
<p>1. A good mix of services, shopping, and dining is limited in Downtown Wasilla.</p> <p>2. Wasilla is known as a “pass through” site; tourists pass by the community on their way to other destinations.</p>	<p>A. Develop an attractive, diverse city center.</p> <p>B. Develop Downtown Wasilla as a government and education center that is interspersed with mixed use (including residential and commercial development).</p> <p>C. Make Downtown a destination for residents and visitors.</p> <p>D. Establish a downtown redevelopment district.</p>	<p>i. Identify priorities for infill development, in terms of locations and uses.</p> <p>ii. Evaluate and prioritize needs for visitor service infrastructure in the area, such as public restrooms, parking, signage, pedestrian paths, and visitor information stations.</p> <p>iii. Prepare a public facilities plan that addresses city, borough, state, and federal facility needs in Wasilla.</p> <p>iv. Advocate the needs of Wasilla students to the Mat-Su School District for future long-term facility planning efforts, forging a relationship that benefits students.</p> <p>v. Incorporate public institutions and mixed use as priorities in re-zonings and ordinance revisions.</p> <p>vi. Adopt design standards to ensure infill development complements existing development.</p> <p>vii. Promote infill development through incentives such as a business improvement district.</p> <p>viii. Provide financing incentives for mixed use development, such as credit assurance, equity investment in the project, or soft second loans to developers.</p> <p>ix. Identify enterprise zones for specific uses such as employment core zones.</p> <p>x. Develop partnerships and marketing programs to promote Downtown.</p> <p>xi. Review and revise public relations and marketing materials, featuring changes and attractions in the Downtown and other areas of Wasilla.</p> <p>xii. Update zoning in Downtown to encourage a diversified city center.</p> <p>xiii. Inventory vacant properties and abandoned buildings and offer incentives for redevelopment.</p> <p>xiv. Explore alternate uses of strip mall developments, including incentives for redevelopment to mixed use.</p> <p>xv. Encourage development of establishments that would entice visitors to the area, such as small shops, cafés, and sites with historic themes.</p>
<p><i>3. There are few locally based industries and limited professional employment opportunities for the influx of new residents.</i></p>	<p><i>A. Attract and retain professional service sectors to provide local employment and decrease economic leakage.</i></p>	<p><i>i. Attract Mat-Su Borough and state government offices to Downtown Wasilla.</i></p> <p><i>ii. Identify resources that promote entrepreneurship and business relocation/ location to Wasilla, such as venture capital, marketing strategies, and private-public partnerships.</i></p>
<p><i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i></p>		

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	
		Downtown	
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Mat-Su Borough Mat-Su School District Public-Private Partnerships* Downtown Revitalization Committee* Chamber of Commerce and Member Organizations Downtown Businesses and Trade Organizations Alaska Housing Finance Corporation	
Short-term	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
On-going	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
Long-term	>\$500,000		
Short-term	<\$100,000		
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
Short-term	<\$100,000		
On-going	<\$100,000		
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000		City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments Wasilla Chamber of Commerce Alaska Small Business Development Center
Short-term	<\$100,000		

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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Infrastructure (IN)		
<p><i>1. The community is experiencing rapid growth and it is projected to continue.</i></p> <p><i>2. Rapid growth and development is placing strains on existing infrastructure and public facilities, including roads and schools.</i></p>	<p><i>A. Provide infrastructure and services that accommodate growth and development.</i></p>	<p><i>i. Update infrastructure and economic development plans, and coordinate priorities and timing of interdependent projects and facilities improvements.</i></p>
		<p><i>ii. Encourage infill development to address under utilized areas of Downtown.</i></p>
		<p><i>iii. Establish economic incentives such as Business Improvement Districts.</i></p>
		<p><i>iv. Evaluate school expansion capacity on school campuses.</i></p>
<p><i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i></p>		

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Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
		Downtown
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning, Economic Development and Public Works Departments
On-going	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission Wasilla City Council
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	Wasilla Chamber of Commerce Public-Private Partnerships*
Short-term	<\$100,000	Downtown Businesses Mat-Su School District
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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Transportation and Connectivity (TC)		
1. Local residents feel that Downtown Wasilla is vehicle oriented and unsafe for pedestrians.	A. Create a pedestrian-friendly Downtown. B. Increase inter-modal connectivity within the Downtown area and to other parts of Wasilla.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Use infill development to encourage mixed use and reduce vehicle trips. ii. Encourage pedestrian amenities in capital project planning, zoning, and subdivision actions with the establishment of such things as walkways and overpasses. iii. Institute design standards that promote pedestrian access including winter design factors. iv. Develop and/or enforce City ordinances that enhance pedestrian safety, such as stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks. v. Coordinate pedestrian improvements with parking initiatives and solutions. vi. Investigate winter city solutions for pedestrian access.
2. Parking is limited for Downtown Wasilla services (e.g., the library and post office).	A. Address the parking demand in Downtown. B. Provide parking solutions that encourage mixed use, meet public facility needs, and improve pedestrian access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Assess existing capacity versus existing and projected demand. ii. Review and revise as necessary the parking requirements for new developments. iii. Evaluate the feasibility of centralized parking facilities, including construction via public-private partnerships, municipal funding, or tax increment financing.
<p>3. <i>Wasilla has congested roads and poor traffic flow.</i></p> <p>4. <i>There is a lack of public transit service within the community.</i></p>	A. <i>Improve the movement of people and commodities throughout Wasilla and surrounding areas via various modes of safe, accessible transit.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Update current transportation plans to reflect growing demands and patterns and to roadway assess condition and capacity, and traffic/accident problem areas. ii. Recognize projects already programmed in the capital improvements projects such as the Main Street/Yenlo One-Way Couplet and focus future redevelopment around them. iii. <i>Ensure that transportation plan updates reflect growing demands and patterns, roadway condition and capacity, and traffic/accident problem areas.</i> iv. <i>Coordinate transportation improvements with the development of new public and commercial development that can generate changes in traffic volumes and patterns.</i> v. <i>Implement priorities from the Wasilla Official Streets and Highway Plan.</i> vi. <i>Initiate a feasibility study to determine public transportation needs, potential demand, and expansion options.</i> vii. <i>Work with MASCOT to investigate additional funding sources to expand public transit service.</i> viii. <i>Investigate funding sources to promote multi-modal transportation (such as bike paths) and ensure incorporation into transportation improvements.</i>
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Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Long-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning Commission Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Public-Private Partnerships* Downtown Revitalization Committee*
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	Downtown Businesses State Legislators
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000	Public-Private Partnerships* Downtown Businesses
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission Wasilla City Council MASCOT Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
On-going	<\$100,000	Public-Private Partnerships* Downtown Businesses
On-going	<\$100,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
On-going	>\$500,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	

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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Transportation and Connectivity (TC)		
<i>5. Local residents feel that Wasilla railroad crossings are inconvenient and unsafe.</i>	<i>A. Improve railroad crossing efficiency and safety.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Work with the Alaska Railroad to evaluate and assess crossing safety, eliminate at-grade crossings, and realign track facilities.</i> <i>ii. Improve signage, striping, and crossing markers.</i> <i>iii. Work with the Alaska Railroad to provide public education outreach.</i>
<i>6. An integrated trail system is needed to connect areas of Wasilla and destinations outside Wasilla.</i>	<i>A. Provide a multi-use trail system that promotes connectivity within Wasilla and multi-modal circulation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Inventory existing trails in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.</i> <i>ii. Explore options for land acquisition, easements, and partnerships.</i> <i>iii. Provide incentives for developers to include space and/or reserve easements for public plazas, parks, and trails.</i> <i>iv. Investigate funding sources such as those through SAFETEA-LU/National Recreation Trails Program and other partnerships to implement methods and action items, which include acquisition of rights-of-way and funding trails.</i> <i>v. Create multi-modal linkages, for example, car to parking to trails; centralized parking, bus, bike path.</i>
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Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
		Downtown
On-going	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments Alaska Railroad
Mid-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Area Landowners, Residents, and Businesses Public-Private Partnerships* Nonprofit Community Interest Groups
Short-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Funding (FN)		
<p><i>1. There is limited funding for ongoing projects and City incentives.</i></p>	<p><i>A. Efficiently utilize existing funding. B. Obtain new funding sources for projects and City incentives.</i></p>	<p><i>i. Establish the framework for tax increment finance districts to provide funding for future development incentives.</i></p>
		<p><i>ii. Identify grants, bonds, development districts, cost sharing options and public-private partnerships to fund projects.</i></p>
		<p><i>iii. Identify and complete projects or plans that make the community eligible for new funding sources.</i></p>
		<p><i>iv. Develop partnerships with the state and Mat-Su Borough governments to fund existing and proposed City projects.</i></p>
		<p><i>v. Initiate a public education program that promotes the availability of the City's capital improvement projects in locations such as City Hall and the City website through mediums like mailings, newspaper notices, and public service announcements.</i></p>
		<p><i>vi. Evaluate phasing and sequence of projects to ensure efficient use of funds.</i></p>
<p><i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i></p>		

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Schedule		Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
			Downtown
Mid-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Public-Private Partnerships* Downtown Businesses Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and other state agencies	
Short-term	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
On-going	<\$100,000		
Short-term	<\$100,000		
On-going	<\$100,000		
On-going	<\$100,000		
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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
<i>Community Character (CC)</i>		
<p>1. Residents wish to improve the aesthetic character of development in South Wasilla Heights.</p> <p>2. Residents desire development in South Wasilla Heights to be distinctive, contributing to the identity of the area.</p>	<p>A. Promote a development theme that emphasizes large scale commercial and entertainment activities and related services.</p> <p>B. Cultivate attractive development in South Wasilla Heights.</p> <p>C. Protect the area's scenic qualities by incorporating them into development plans.</p> <p>D. Area development shapes a distinct identity for South Wasilla Heights through incorporation of design themes.</p>	<p>i. Institute design standards such as signage, lighting, and accommodate winter design factors.</p> <p>ii. Establish a South Wasilla Heights overlay zoning district that includes landscaping standards aimed at maintaining the aesthetic qualities of the area such as retaining a certain amount of mature vegetation.</p> <p>iii. Consider establishing a "Gateway Program/Committee" (primary responsibility is to plan, design, and implement improvements).</p> <p>iv. Develop visual cues to identify gateways and sub-districts, such as entry kiosks, wayfinding stations, thematic landscape design, and signage.</p> <p>v. Identify and acquire or reserve lands for community parks and open space.</p> <p>vi. Consider establishing design elements that visually link adjacent properties and create public spaces.</p> <p>vii. Encourage use of design themes through incentives such as variances from requirements, expedited permit processing, tax abatements, and potential loan programs.</p> <p>viii. Identify viewpoints and access points important to the public, and establish design criteria, scenic easements, and rights-of-way to maintain these important community attributes.</p>
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

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Schedule		Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
			South Wasilla Heights
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning Department City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Public-Private Partnerships* South Wasilla Heights Property Owners and Businesses South Wasilla Heights Policy Advisory Committee*	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
Short-term	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
Long-term	>\$500,000		
Short-term	<\$100,000		
Long-term	>\$500,000		
Short-term	<\$100,000		
*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence			

ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
<i>Land Ownership, Platting, and Zoning (LO)</i>		
<p>1. Zoning of the small lots south of the Parks Highway pose challenges to development.</p> <p>2. Current platting and zoning regulations do not adequately encourage protection of natural amenities such as viewpoints and greenbelts.</p>	<p>A. Zoning accommodates existing uses and provides clear guidance for development that meets community objectives for development of South Wasilla Heights.</p> <p>B. Provide development incentives for encouraging protection of natural amenities such as viewpoints and greenbelts.</p>	<p>i. Review and update zoning to accommodate nodes of mixed use, residential multi-family development, and other land use districts.</p> <p>ii. Evaluate use of Planned Unit Development and other land use tools to provide incentives to developers that incorporate views and other natural amenities into development plans.</p> <p>iii. Evaluate use of common parking between developments to reduce loss of natural areas.</p> <p>iv. Develop subdivision code replatting standards that the City of Wasilla must first approve before recommending approval to the Mat-Su Borough.</p> <p>v. Work with the Mat-Su Borough to develop and negotiate an intergovernmental cooperation agreement that transfers the platting powers to the City of Wasilla.</p> <p>vi. Create a program where the City purchases available parcels to hold for potential replatting.</p>
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

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Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
		South Wasilla Heights
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission South Wasilla Heights Landowners
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Long-term	>\$500,000	
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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Economic Development (EC)		
1. Small lot sizes south of the Parks Highway pose challenges to development.	A. Foster development in the Kennedy and Nelson subdivisions.	i. Institute development incentives, such as replatting initiatives and business improvement districts. Please refer to Land Ownership, Platting, and Zoning Objectives that also contribute to achieving economic development goals.
2. There is a need for greater business development in South Wasilla Heights.	A. Attract a diversity of sectors to establish in the area, including professional, medical, hospitality, and retail services.	i. Work with property owners to identify priorities for area development. ii. Incorporate development priorities in re-zonings and ordinance revisions. iii. Identify enterprise zones for specific uses such as employment core zones. iv. Adopt design standards to ensure development contributes positively to area identity. v. Update zoning for South Wasilla Heights to encourage diversified area development.
3. <i>There are few locally based industries and limited professional employment opportunities for the influx of new residents.</i>	A. <i>Attract and retain professional service sectors to provide local employment and decrease economic leakage.</i>	i. Work with property owners to develop incentives to attract medical and visitor services to South Wasilla Height. ii. <i>Identify resources that promote entrepreneurship and business relocation/location to Wasilla, such as venture capital, marketing strategies, and private-public partnerships.</i>
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
		South Wasilla Heights
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission South Wasilla Heights Landowners
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments
Mid-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Public-Private Partnerships*
Short-term	<\$100,000	South Wasilla Heights Development Committee*
Short-term	<\$100,000	Chamber of Commerce and Member Organizations South Wasilla Heights Businesses and Trade Organizations*
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments Wasilla Chamber of Commerce
Short-term	<\$100,000	Alaska Small Business Development Center
*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence		

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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
<i>Recommended Land Uses (LU)</i>		
1. The public feels that there are no formal plans for the area.	A. Provide adequate planning for area development and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Implement and strengthen existing City of Wasilla plans. ii. Prepare formal plans to address issues that arise in the future. iii. Make existing plans more readily available to residents. For example, provide online access to plans through the City's website. iv. Form a South Wasilla Heights Policy Advisory Committee to Formulate specific design considerations for the area.
2. Parks, trails, and public facilities are not currently designated in South Wasilla Heights.	A. Establish accessible multi-use trails, parks, and public facilities that serve broad community needs, year round uses, and transportation objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Complete a facility inventory to determine level of service needs. ii. Update Parks and Recreation Master Plan (currently underway). iii. Implement action items from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. iv. Explore options for land acquisition, easements, and partnerships. v. Provide incentives for developers to include space for public plazas, parks, and trails.
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning Department City of Wasilla Planning Commission South Wasilla Heights Policy Advisory Committee*
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Public-Private Partnerships* South Wasilla Heights Landowners and Businesses Nonprofit Community Interest Groups Community Recreation Clubs/Groups (e.g., running club)
Short-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Long-term	>\$500,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	>\$500,000	

*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence

ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Infrastructure (IN)		
1. South Wasilla Heights has limited infrastructure.	A. Expand infrastructure connections in the area.	i. Review and update utility and facility plans. ii. Establish priorities for infrastructure expansion. iii. Explore funding mechanisms for additional facility capacity to accommodate infrastructure expansion. iv. Evaluate connectivity and adequate capacity for infrastructure during the platting process.
2. <i>The community is experiencing rapid growth and it is projected to continue.</i> 3. <i>Rapid growth and development is placing strains on existing infrastructure and public facilities, including roads and schools.</i>	A. <i>Provide infrastructure and services that accommodate growth and development.</i>	i. <i>Update infrastructure and economic development plans, and coordinate priorities and timing of interdependent projects and facilities improvements.</i> ii. <i>Encourage infill development to address under utilized areas of South Wasilla Heights.</i> iii. <i>Establish economic incentives such as Business Improvement Districts.</i>
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

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Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
South Wasilla Heights		
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments South Wasilla Heights Landowners Alaska Division of Community Advocacy
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning, Economic Development and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission Wasilla City Council Wasilla Chamber of Commerce Public-Private Partnerships* South Wasilla Heights Businesses
On-going	>\$500,000	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	

*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence

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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Transportation and Connectivity (TC)		
1. The area has limited connectivity with the Parks Highway and the Alaska Railroad.	A. Develop an efficient transportation system and associated infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review and update the Streets and Highways Plan to reflect the growing demands and changing patterns. ii. Evaluate placement and capacity of access to the area off the Palmer-Wasilla Highway and Knik-Goose Bay Road.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Wasilla has congested roads and poor traffic flow. 3. There is a lack of public transit service within the community. 	A. Improve the movement of people and commodities throughout Wasilla and surrounding areas via various modes of safe, accessible transit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure that transportation plan updates reflect growing demands and patterns and to roadway assess condition and capacity, and traffic/accident problem areas. ii. Coordinate transportation improvements with the development of new public and commercial development that can generate changes in traffic volumes and patterns. iii. Implement priorities from the Wasilla Official Streets and Highway Plan. iv. Initiate a feasibility study to determine public transportation needs, potential demand, and expansion options. v. Work with MASCOT to investigate additional funding sources to expand public transit service. vi. Investigate funding sources to promote multi-modal transportation (such as bike paths) and ensure incorporation into transportation improvements.
4. Local residents feel that Wasilla railroad crossings are inconvenient and unsafe.	A. Improve railroad crossing efficiency and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Work with the Alaska Railroad to evaluate and assess crossing safety, eliminate at-grade crossings, and realign track facilities. ii. Improve signage, striping, and crossing markers. iii. Work with the Alaska Railroad to provide public education outreach.
5. An integrated trail system is needed to connect areas of Wasilla and destinations outside Wasilla.	A. Provide a multi-use trail system that promotes connectivity within Wasilla and multi-modal circulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Inventory existing trails in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. ii. Explore options for land acquisition, easements, and partnerships. iii. Provide incentives for developers to include space and/or reserve easements for public plazas, parks, and trails. iv. Investigate funding sources such as those through SAFETEA-LU/National Recreation Trails Program and other partnerships to implement methods and action items, which include acquisition of rights-of-way and funding trails. v. Create multi-modal linkages, for example, car to parking to trails; centralized parking, bus, bike path.
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council
Short-term	<\$100,000	MASCOT Alaska Railroad Corporation and Shipping/Transportation Businesses Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Public-Private Partnerships*
On-going	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission Wasilla City Council
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	MASCOT Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Public-Private Partnerships*
On-going	>\$500,000	Wasilla Businesses
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments Alaska Railroad Corporation
Mid-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Public-Private Partnerships*
On-going	<\$100,000	Area Landowners, Residents, and Businesses Nonprofit Community Interest Groups
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	

*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence

ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
<i>Funding (FN)</i>		
<p><i>1. There is limited funding for ongoing projects and City incentives.</i></p>	<p><i>A. Efficiently utilize existing funding.</i> <i>B. Obtain new funding sources for projects and City incentives.</i></p>	<p><i>i. Establish the framework for tax increment finance districts to provide funding for future development incentives.</i></p> <p><i>ii. Identify grants, bonds, development districts, and cost sharing options and public-private partnerships to fund projects.</i></p> <p><i>iii. Identify and complete projects or plans that make the community eligible for new funding sources.</i></p> <p><i>iv. Develop partnerships with the state and Mat-Su Borough governments to fund existing and proposed City projects.</i></p> <p><i>v. Initiate a public education program that promotes the availability of the City's capital improvement projects in locations such as City Hall and the City website through mediums like mailings, newspaper notices, and public service announcements.</i></p>
<p><i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i></p>		

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Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
South Wasilla Heights		
Mid-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Public-Private Partnerships* South Wasilla Heights Businesses
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	

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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
<i>Community Character (CC)</i>		
1. Transportation and sports complex uses and activities in the area are valued by Wasilla residents and should be enhanced.	A. Maintain and enhance transportation and recreation uses.	i. Support activities associated with the Alaska Museum of Transportation and Industry, including access improvements. ii. Implement action items included in the MUSC Master Plan, including development of outdoor recreation facilities. iii. Implement action items in the Airport Master Plan.
2. The natural environment of this planning area is an asset that should be protected with planning and development.	A. Protect the area's scenic qualities by incorporating them into development plans.	i. Identify valuable and sensitive environmental and recreational resources in the planning area to be accommodated in future development plans and the City Parks and Recreation Master Plan. ii. Institute design standards that emphasize the use of natural materials and climate sensitive design.
<i>Land Ownership, Planning, and Zoning (LO)</i>		
1. There are inadequate noise buffers between the airport and surrounding areas.	A. Promote compatible land uses adjacent to the airport.	i. Review and update zoning to minimize future land use conflicts that could occur where the rural residential zoning designation meets the industrial zoning designation at the east end of the planning area. ii. Evaluate options for City annexation or City acquisition of property to accommodate future airport growth and provide noise buffers.
2. The natural environment could be impacted by potential development.	A. Provide development incentives for encouraging protection of natural amenities such as trails, viewpoints and greenbelts.	i. Evaluate use of Planned Unit Development and other land use tools to provide incentives to developers that incorporate views and other natural amenities into development plans.
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Airport and Transportation Museum Area		
On-going	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Public Works Department Wasilla Parks and Recreation Commission
Mid-term	>\$500,000	MATI Board of Directors and Staff Wasilla Chamber of Commerce Civic Groups
Long-term	>\$500,000	Local Residents and Developers Mat-Su Visitor's and Convention Bureau
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Parks and Recreation Departments Wasilla Parks and Recreation Commission
Short-term	<\$100,000	Wasilla Planning Commission City Council Nonprofit Community Interest Groups
Airport and Transportation Museum Area		
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Airport and Transportation Museum Area Landowners and Businesses Airport Advisory Commission
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments Wasilla Planning Commission City Council
Short-term	<\$100,000	

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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Economic Development (EC)		
1. The area's assets have untapped potential and are underutilized.	A. Fully utilize the area's assets, particularly the airport, MUSC, and the MATI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Implement projects included in the Airport Master Plan capital improvement schedule and update as demands and uses change. ii. Promote the use of the Wasilla Airport among general aviation stakeholders in Alaska. iii. Investigate partnerships, funding options, and marketing programs to promote the MUSC, MATI, and airport in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. iv. Maintain and improve services offered by the MUSC. v. Investigate development of a rail passenger terminal and rail dependent economic development in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. vi. Implement projects included in the MUSC Master Plan and update as demands and uses change.
2. There is a lack of hospitality services for residents and visitors at the airport.	A. Promote a district that offers a variety of hospitality services to residents and visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review and update zoning to promote commercial development such as hotels, restaurants, and services in the airport area. ii. Investigate partnerships to explore the viability of commercial enterprise to support existing and future uses. iii. Provide incentives for targeted commercial development such as future property tax reductions, regulatory flexibility, potential loan programs, or contributions to a business improvement district. iv. Actively market City-owned commercial lands to potential service providers. v. Encourage public transit connections between the airport and Downtown Wasilla.
3. Residents feel that the airport is too small to meet the growing needs of Wasilla and surrounding areas.	A. Provide an airport that meets the needs of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Implement projects included in the capital improvement plan in the Airport Master Plan and update as demands and uses change. ii. Evaluate options for City annexation to accommodate future airport growth. iii. Evaluate options for municipal acquisition of lands that could be used for airport-focused industrial and services expansion.
<i>4. There are few locally based industries and limited professional employment opportunities for the influx of new residents.</i>	<i>A. Attract and retain professional service sectors to provide local employment and decrease economic leakage.</i>	<i>i. Identify resources that promote entrepreneurship and business relocation/location to Wasilla, such as venture capital, marketing strategies, and private-public partnerships.</i>
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Long-term	>\$500,000	Airport and Transportation Museum Area City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Public-Private Partnerships* Airport and Transportation Museum Area Development Committee* Chamber of Commerce and Member Organizations Airport and Transportation Museum Area Businesses and Trade Organizations Airport Advisory Commission
On-going	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	>\$500,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Public-Private Partnerships* Airport and Transportation Museum Area Development Committee* Chamber of Commerce and Member Organizations Airport and Transportation Museum Area Businesses and Trade Organizations MASCOT
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	>\$500,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Long-term	>\$500,000	
Long-term	>\$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Public-Private Partnerships* Airport and Transportation Museum Area Landowners and Businesses Airport Advisory Commission
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Economic Development Departments Wasilla Chamber of Commerce Alaska Small Business Development Center

*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence

ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
<i>Infrastructure (N)</i>		
<p>1. The Airport and Transportation Museum Area has a lack of infrastructure (particularly water and sewer) and public facilities.</p>	<p>A. Expand infrastructure connections in the area.</p>	<p>i. Review and update utility and facility plans, including co-locating transportation and utility corridors.</p> <p>ii. Establish priorities for infrastructure expansion.</p> <p>iii. Explore funding mechanisms for additional facility capacity to accommodate infrastructure expansion.</p>
<p>2. <i>The community is experiencing rapid growth and it is projected to continue.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Rapid growth and development is placing strains on existing infrastructure and public facilities, including roads and schools.</i></p>	<p><i>A. Provide infrastructure and services that accommodate growth and development.</i></p>	<p><i>i. Update infrastructure and economic development plans, and coordinate priorities and timing of interdependent projects and facilities improvements.</i></p>
<p><i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i></p>		

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Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Airport and Transportation Museum Area		
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments Airport and Transportation Museum Area Landowners
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning, Economic Development, and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission Wasilla City Council Wasilla Chamber of Commerce Public-Private Partnerships* Airport and Transportation Museum Area Businesses
*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence		

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ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
<i>Transportation and Connectivity (TC)</i>		
1. The area has limited connectivity with other areas of Wasilla.	<p>A. Establish convenient access corridors to the area and decrease commercial traffic through adjacent residential areas.</p> <p>B. Develop efficient transportation and shipping infrastructure.</p>	<p>i. Implement recommendations included in the Streets and Highways Plan such as the South Mack Drive Extension, Aviation Avenue, and signage.</p> <p>ii. Investigate federal and state funding sources to implement projects included in the capital improvement plan.</p> <p>iii. Implement traffic calming measures in the vicinity of adjacent residential areas.</p> <p>iv. Encourage public transit connections between the airport and Downtown Wasilla.</p> <p>v. Develop an Airport and Transportation Museum Area overlay zoning district for freight and shipping facilities.</p> <p>vi. Create a multi-modal terminus consistent with the identified location in the Airport Master Plan that includes connections for personal vehicles, taxis, charter buses, trains, public transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists.</p> <p>vii. Create incentives that focus development around the multi-modal facility.</p> <p>viii. Initiate a partnership with ARRC to do a feasibility study that determines the economic thresholds for developing passenger and shipping facilities.</p> <p>ix. Establish zoning to cluster freight facilities in the vicinity of the airport and potential rail terminal.</p>
2. Residents are concerned about maintaining access to existing recreation trails that originate in the planning area.	A. Maintain and improve trail access within the planning area and improve connectivity with other areas.	1. Identify and maintain existing trails, and develop new trails as part of the Wasilla Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
<p>3. <i>Wasilla has congested roads and poor traffic flow.</i></p> <p>4. <i>There is a lack of public transit service within the community,</i></p>	<i>A. Improve the movement of people and commodities throughout Wasilla and surrounding areas via various modes of safe, accessible transit.</i>	<p><i>i. Ensure that transportation plan updates reflect growing demands and patterns and to roadway assess condition and capacity, and traffic/ accident problem areas.</i></p> <p><i>ii. Coordinate transportation improvements with the development of new public and commercial development that can generate changes in traffic volumes and patterns.</i></p> <p><i>iii. Implement priorities from the Wasilla Official Streets and Highway Plan.</i></p> <p><i>iv. Initiate a feasibility study to determine public transportation needs, potential demand, and expansion options.</i></p> <p><i>v. Work with MASCOT to investigate additional funding sources to expand public transit service.</i></p> <p><i>vi. Investigate funding sources to promote multi-modal transportation (such as bike paths) and ensure incorporation into transportation improvements.</i></p>
5. Local residents feel that Wasilla railroad crossings are inconvenient and unsafe.	A. Improve railroad crossing efficiency and safety.	<p><i>i. Work with the Alaska Railroad to evaluate and assess crossing safety, eliminate at-grade crossings, and realign track facilities.</i></p> <p><i>ii. Improve signage, striping, and crossing markers.</i></p> <p><i>iii. Work with the Alaska Railroad to provide public education outreach.</i></p>
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	
Long-term	>\$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Public-Private Partnerships* Area Landowners MASCOT	
Short-term	<\$100,000		
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
On-going	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
Long-term	>\$500,000		
Long-term	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
Short-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		City of Wasilla Public Works Department Parks and Recreation Commission Nonprofit Community Interest Groups
On-going	<\$100,000		
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
On-going	>\$500,000		
Short-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000		
Long-term	<\$100,000		
Mid-term	<\$100,000		
On-going	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments Alaska Railroad Corporation	
Mid-term	<\$100,000		
On-going	<\$100,000		

*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence

ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
<i>Transportation and Connectivity (TC)</i>		
6. <i>An integrated trail system is needed to connect areas of Wasilla and destinations outside Wasilla.</i>	A. <i>Provide a multi-use trail system that promotes connectivity within Wasilla and multi-modal circulation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="800 289 1323 363">i. <i>Inventory existing trails in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.</i> <li data-bbox="800 363 1323 436">ii. <i>Explore options for land acquisition, easements, and partnerships.</i> <li data-bbox="800 436 1323 510">iii. <i>Provide incentives for developers to include space and/or reserve easements for public plazas, parks, and trails.</i> <li data-bbox="800 510 1323 688">iv. <i>Investigate funding sources such as those through SAFETEA-LU/National Recreation Trails Program and other partnerships to implement methods and action items, which include acquisition of rights-of-way and funding trails.</i> <li data-bbox="800 688 1323 758">v. <i>Create multi-modal linkages, for example, car to parking to trails; centralized parking, bus, bike path.</i>
<i>Funding (FN)</i>		
1. <i>There is limited funding for ongoing projects and City incentives.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="418 800 800 852">A. <i>Efficiently utilize existing funding.</i> <li data-bbox="418 852 800 905">B. <i>Obtain new funding sources for projects and City incentives.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="800 800 1323 915">i. <i>Establish the framework for tax increment finance districts to provide funding for future development incentives.</i> <li data-bbox="800 915 1323 1010">ii. <i>Identify grants, bonds, development districts, and cost sharing options and public-private partnerships to fund projects.</i> <li data-bbox="800 1010 1323 1083">iii. <i>Identify and complete projects or plans that make the community eligible for new funding sources.</i> <li data-bbox="800 1083 1323 1178">iv. <i>Develop partnerships with the state and Mat-Su Borough governments to fund existing and proposed City projects.</i> <li data-bbox="800 1178 1323 1360">v. <i>Initiate a public education program that promotes the availability of the City's capital improvement projects in locations such as City Hall and the City website through mediums like mailings, newspaper notices, and public service announcements.</i>
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Airport and Transportation Museum Area		
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Public-Private Partnerships* Area Landowners and Businesses
Short-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Airport and Transportation Museum Area		
Mid-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Public-Private Partnerships*
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence		

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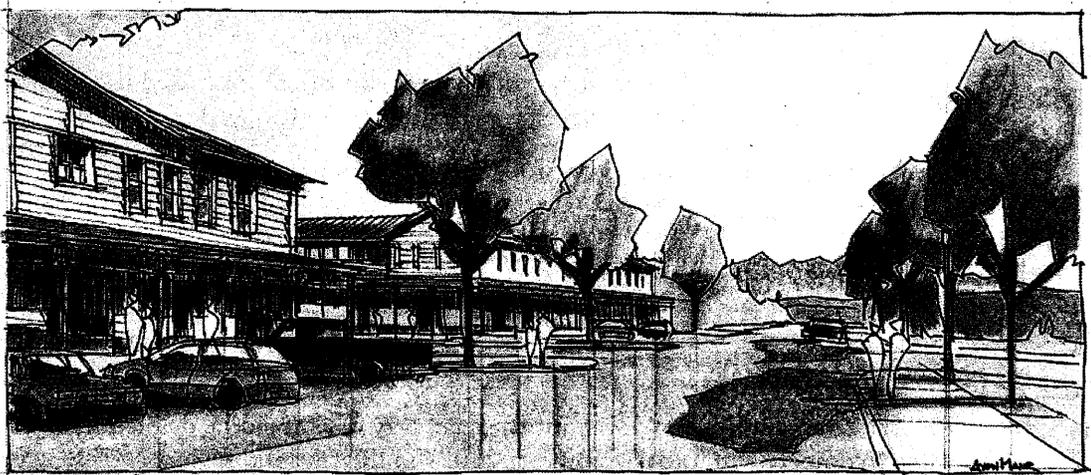
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4 PLAN ELEMENTS

The Plan Elements chapter addresses planning considerations, goals, and recommendations for implementing the Wasilla Area Plans. The plan elements expand upon the goals and objectives identified for each area. Plan elements include Land Use, Economic Development, Transportation and Circulation, and Public Facilities and Utilities.

An overview is provided for each planning area element, which is intended to capture key aspects of the area vision and portray the future condition of the planning area. The planning considerations incorporate aspects of the area's current issues, strengths, and weaknesses. They are grouped by topic area, such as residential, retail, recreation, circulation, connectivity and accessibility, and parking. The goals outline broad aspirations for accomplishments over the life of the plan.

Recommendations are included for each planning element and area. The recommendations describe potential tools for the City and its partners to use to achieve the community's vision for each planning area. Recommendations include tools such as planning, inventories, design standards, zoning changes, and incentives.



Yenlo Square Rendering: looking east on Swanson Avenue in Downtown.

LAND USE

OVERVIEW

The future of land use in Downtown Wasilla will incorporate development centering on the individual and community needs to retain and attract residents and visitors. Residents feel that Downtown currently lacks a distinct identity and future land uses will work to bring an identity to this area.

New development should offer architectural appeal keeping with the rural character of Wasilla, complement existing development, and incorporate climate sensitive design. Realizing the community's vision for land use will result in a more livable community that residents will continue to be proud to call home.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Downtown is a community center with several anchors to build from. Downtown offers several parks, locally owned retail shops and restaurants, and civic services and offices. These land uses serve the community by providing a full spectrum of employment opportunities and services for Wasilla and surrounding areas.

A barrier to development is the small parcel sizes found throughout Downtown. Prominent land uses shaped goals for the area. Goals and objectives were developed taking the following specifics about each land use into consideration.

Residential

- Residents expressed a desire for mixed use development in Downtown.
- Traffic congestion and connectivity problems complicate getting around Downtown.

Retail

- Retail locations in Downtown contribute to the small town charm because the shops are small and locally owned.
- Downtown provides centrally located and diverse commercial services.
- As Wasilla continues to grow, Downtown retail services should be diverse and unique to compete with other commercial areas in the City and region.

Hospitality / Cultural Entertainment

- Residents value the history of Downtown, the museum, and the historic townsite buildings.
- Downtown is lacking a strong entertainment component—there are no teen centers, clubs, or venues for large artistic or event performances.
- As Downtown revitalization projects are developed, managers and business owners should consider development of visitor service infrastructure and establishments to attract tourism to the area.

Office

- Downtown houses most City offices.
- Residents would like to have more public services centralized in Downtown.
- More office space for government and private sectors would increase demand for other land uses.

Education

- Three schools are located Downtown.
- Residents suggested co-locating complementing land uses with education facilities (e.g., teen center and library).

Recreation

- Residents desire additional sidewalks in Downtown to make pedestrian movement easier.
- The lack of sidewalks, particularly in the Main Street area, and the lack of discernable crosswalks hinders pedestrian movement in Downtown.
- Location of parks, retail, and government services in proximity to each other could promote pedestrian friendly activities such as holiday decoration tours, landscaping contests or floral displays, and art displays.
- Residents want multi-use trails to accommodate various modes of recreation.
- Parks in Downtown should have connectivity to one another.

DOWNTOWN LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Downtown will be developed as a center of civic and education services supported by mixed use development. As a destination for residents and visitors, the area will incorporate more pedestrian-friendly design with new development. Mixed use development will provide commercial and public services for downtown residents, reducing traffic and the need for area parking. Connectivity throughout Downtown will be improved with multi-use trails, multi-modal connections, and centralized parking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the exception of platting authority, the City has the powers needed to achieve the vision identified for Downtown. Following are descriptions of tools that the City can use by making small adjustments to current approaches, as well as some innovative new mechanisms that can also be used.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Cohesive design and architecture firmly establish an area identity.

- Design standards should be flexible, and not dictated by one group or government entity. Design standards can succeed if they are crafted as a collaborative effort by the primary stakeholders such as developers and

business owners. A community survey that incorporates comparative photographs may be useful to determine what is aesthetically appealing to consumers. Design standards should be divided to include mandatory and voluntary standards backed by incentives.

- The first floor of mixed use buildings should command attention from passersby and be visually appealing and inviting. Examples to include in standards are transparent façades, benches, awnings, and decorative lighting.
- Infill development should complement existing development. Standards should include guidance on building colors, types, heights, and signage that are complementary.
- Climate sensitive design standards should be incorporated with new development Downtown. Climate sensitive design can increase the amount of natural light allowed in the building through the amount of window cover on the façade and/or skylights. Conifer trees planted along the sidewalk can provide a wind break for pedestrians while also contributing to the visual appeal of the street.
- Incentives should be established to promote design standards. Ideas include variances from other requirements and expedited permit processing. For instance, if a developer commits to including a certain percentage of voluntary design standards, the City can expedite necessary permits or provide a variance to setbacks. Also, the City could consider relaxing number of spaces parking requirements for a mixed use structure and focus on parking location.

INFILL

Promoting infill development in Downtown will provide more services that residents desire and is an efficient use of currently available infrastructure like water and wastewater lines. Consolidation of small lots can promote large mixed use and government development.

ZONING

Changes to existing zoning code can help address the small lot sizes found in Downtown and help create a more solid economic base through increased development.

Form-Based Codes

- **Use infill** to encourage mixed use. Downtown has several small vacant lots that have been viewed as undevelopable due to size. These lots provide suitable sites for mixed use development, which places a greater emphasis on vertical development and a combination of uses within one building. Adjustments will need to be made to the current zoning code to remove barriers to this type of development.

Zoning Revision

- Changes to existing zoning code and district boundaries can help address development difficulties with the small lot sizes found in the northern sub area and reduce land use conflicts with existing zoning.

- Form-based codes emphasize building types, design, and parking location versus land uses and density. This type of zoning can bring cohesiveness to an area, while allowing the owner to determine the use of the building. The community aesthetics are more stable throughout the years, while the uses may be quite dynamic.
- Districts define form-based codes, and there is an awareness of the relationship between multiple elements like roads, parking, neighborhoods, and retail corridors.

Overlay Zoning Districts

- An Overlay Zoning District would create a distinct district that delineates specific regulations within the current zoning boundaries. This zoning district can be arranged to protect certain resources (e.g., the historic townsite), or promote a specific type of development in a particular area (e.g., community gathering places or tourist services).
- Overlay zoning districts should be created in Downtown to promote government office development and mixed use.
- Overlay zoning districts should include provisions requiring specific design, public art, or landscaping elements that contribute to the distinctiveness of the district.

PLATTING AUTHORITY

Platting configures parcels of land, either dividing or consolidating them.

- The City should pursue negotiations with the Mat-Su Borough to establish an intergovernmental cooperation agreement that transfers some or all of the platting authority to the City.
- Downtown has several small vacant parcels that are difficult to develop because of the lot size. If the City had platting authority, the re-platting process could be streamlined as an incentive to stimulate development.
- This would reduce the burden on the Mat-Su Borough and provide Wasilla with increased autonomy and increased efficiency with re-platting and development.

LAND BANK

A municipal land bank can be organized to work as a real estate arm of the City to consolidate land by purchasing and reselling key parcels that have been identified for targeted future land uses.

- The City should establish a land bank that serves as a repository for land with the intent that the parcels will later be disposed.
- The land bank can include and manage parcels of City land that are currently vacant.
- The land bank can also strategically purchase parcels that are too small for development but would be adequate if re-platted into larger parcels.
- Disposal or acquisition of land must be at fair market value and can occur by any method including outright sale or exchange.



DOWNTOWN
SKETCH
- DRAFT -



LAND USE

OVERVIEW

The future of land use in South Wasilla Heights will incorporate design that centers on the individual property owners, natural environment, and the current needs of the community. With this in mind, this area of the City will retain and attract residents and visitors. South Wasilla Heights will transition into an attractive diversified business district with future land uses that will bring identity to this area without diminishing the visual appeal of the area.

New development can be profitable to developers while offering architectural appeal in keeping with the rural character of Wasilla, complementing existing development, and incorporating climate sensitive design. Realizing the community’s vision for land use will result in improvements to a community that residents will continue to be proud to call home.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

South Wasilla Heights offers several commercially zoned large vacant lots, which are in private ownership. An older sub area of South Wasilla Heights is north of Park Avenue with occupied commercial and residential land uses on small lots. Vacant lots in this sub area are small and pose challenges similar to some Downtown parcels. This plan offers many ideas and suggestions from the public who expressed a desire to see this area become a diversified business district that provides large retail stores, nice restaurants, hospitality services, medical facilities, and business parks filled with professional offices to add diversity to employment options in Wasilla.

As development proceeds in this area, it is important to residents to retain the character and aesthetic appeal, with development contributing to the identity of the area. Four prominent land uses shaped goals for South Wasilla Heights. Goals and objectives were developed taking the following specifics about each land use into consideration. The following points were taken into consideration while developing goals.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Residential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Single and multi-family housing is found in the sub area of South Wasilla Heights, yet zoning is commercial. |
| Retail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The community clearly expressed that they want to see a variety of retail land uses in South Wasilla Heights. ○ Small lot sizes in the South Wasilla Heights sub area challenge development. |
| Hospitality / Entertainment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The community clearly expressed a desire to see a variety of entertainment/hospitality land uses in this planning area, particularly a theater complex. |

Office

- South Wasilla Heights is a prime area for the City to encourage business development.

Recreation

- Residents fear that current zoning regulations do not encourage protection of natural amenities that set South Wasilla Heights apart from other areas of town.
- There are currently no designated recreation land uses in South Wasilla Heights.

SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Planning will guide South Wasilla Heights development as a diversified business center that provides urban amenities like nationwide retail outlets, restaurants, hotels, and medical and professional offices. South Wasilla Heights will retain its aesthetic qualities as development shapes a distinct identity for the area incorporating multi-use trails, parks, and public facilities serving broad community needs and year round uses. Zoning adjustments will accommodate existing uses and development of small vacant lots will be promoted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the exception of platting authority, the City has the powers needed to achieve the vision identified for South Wasilla Heights. Following are descriptions of land use tools that the City can use by making small adjustments to current approaches, as well as some innovative new mechanisms that can also be used.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Cohesive design and architecture firmly establish an area identity.

- Design standards should not be dictated by one group or government entity. Design standards can succeed if they are crafted as a collaborative effort by the primary stakeholders such as developers and business owners. A community survey that incorporates comparative photographs may be useful to determine what is aesthetically appealing to consumers. Design standards should be divided to include mandatory and voluntary standards.
- Building placement and design should take advantage of the natural setting, employing appropriate color and style themes.

- The first floor of mixed use buildings should command attention from passersby and be visually appealing and inviting. Examples to include in standards are transparent façades, benches, awnings, and decorative lighting.
- Climate sensitive design standards should be incorporated with new development in South Wasilla Heights. Climate sensitive design can increase the amount of natural light allowed in the building through the amount of window cover on the façade and/or skylights. Conifer trees planted along sidewalks and bikepaths can provide a wind break for pedestrians while also contributing to the visual appeal of the street.
- Incentives should be established to promote design standards. Ideas include variances from other requirements and expedited permit processing. For instance, if a developer commits to including a certain percentage of voluntary design standards, the City can expedite necessary permits. Also, the City could consider waiving or altering parking requirements for a mixed use structure, or to encourage creative use of open space.

ZONING

Zoning guides the type and intensity of land uses in an area, reduces land use conflicts, and ensures that the area remains intact for the enjoyment of all users.

Zoning Revision

- Making changes to existing zoning code can help address development difficulties with the small lot sizes found in the northern sub area and reduce land use conflicts.

Form-Based Codes

- Form-based codes emphasize building types, design, and parking location versus land uses and density. This type of zoning can bring cohesiveness to an area, while allowing the owner to determine the use of the building. The community aesthetics are more stable throughout the years, while the uses may be quite dynamic.
- Districts define form-based codes, and there is an awareness of the relationship between multiple elements like roads, parking, neighborhoods, and retail corridors.

Overlay Zoning Districts

- An Overlay Zoning District creates a distinct district that delineates specific regulations within the current zoning boundaries. This zoning district can be arranged to protect certain resources (e.g., the viewshed or mature forests), or promote a specific type of development in a particular area (e.g., professional business park).
- Overlay zoning districts should be created in South Wasilla Heights to promote professional business parks or mixed use in the sub area.
- Overlay zoning districts should include provisions requiring specific design or landscaping elements that contribute to the distinctiveness of the district.

Planned Unit Development

- A PUD is a tool that can unify large-scale development with a variety of land uses and densities on a single tract of land.

- A PUD is mutually beneficial to developers and the community. Developers have greater flexibility with design and densities in exchange for including parks, trails, or preservation of specific resources.

PLATTING AUTHORITY

Platting configures parcels of land, either dividing or consolidating them.

- The sub area of South Wasilla Heights has small vacant parcels that are difficult to develop because of the lot size. If the City had platting authority, the re-platting process could be streamlined as an incentive to stimulate development.
- This would reduce the burden on the Mat-Su Borough and provide Wasilla with increased autonomy and increased efficiency with re-platting and development.

- The City should pursue negotiations with the Mat-Su Borough to establish an intergovernmental cooperation agreement that transfers some or all of the platting authority to the City.

LAND BANK

A municipal land bank can be organized to work as a real estate arm of the City to consolidate land by purchasing key parcels that have been identified for targeted future land uses.

- Disposal or acquisition of land must be at fair market value and can occur by any method including outright sale or exchange.

- The City should establish a land bank that serves as a repository for land with the intent that the parcels will later be disposed.

- The land bank can include and manage parcels of City land that are currently vacant.

- The land bank can also strategically purchase parcels that are too small for development but would be adequate if re-platted into larger parcels.

PARTNERSHIPS

Good partnerships are beneficial to all parties and can help achieve difficult goals.

- Partnerships with community and regional nonprofit organizations, governments, and private entities can help the City fund and acquire land and easements for recreation land uses.

PLANNING

Adopted and current plans can ensure the vision of the community is developed.

- Existing plans should be reviewed and updated as the community changes and grows.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

By making documents and permit application reviews available online, the public process is more transparent and available to a greater audience.

- Planning documents and permit/application reviews should be readily available to the public on the City website.

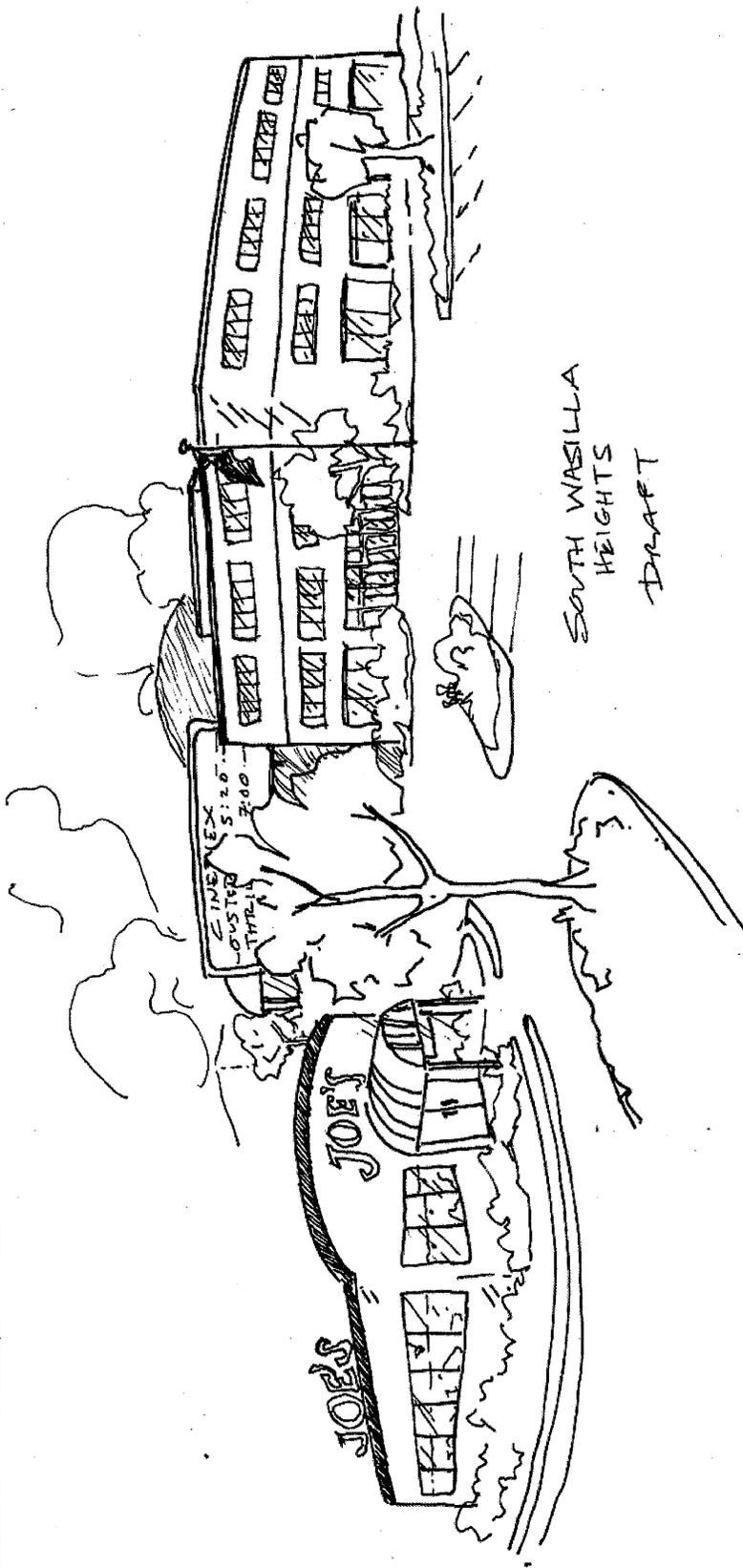
- Utilize public service announcements, newspaper notices and advertisements, and mailings to draw attention to economic development efforts.

PROGRAMS / COMMITTEES

Establishment of a focused committee is a way to involve citizens in planning ideas they helped formulate.

- A South Wasilla Heights Policy Advisory Committee should be formed as a sub committee to the Planning Commission to develop specific design criteria for consideration in design standards and form-based codes for the South Wasilla Heights.

DRAFT



SOUTH WASILLA
HEIGHTS
DRAFT

LAND USE

OVERVIEW

The future of land use in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area will incorporate a multi-modal transportation hub, expand existing recreational activities, and assemble new industrial and commercial growth to support Wasilla and surrounding communities. New development should offer architectural appeal keeping with the environment and small town character of Wasilla, complement existing development, and should incorporate climate sensitive design. Realizing the community’s vision for land use will result in a more livable community that residents will continue to be proud to call home.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Airport and Transportation Museum Area is largely undeveloped and zoned primarily for light and heavy industry in one district at the southwestern periphery of the City. The MUSC is adjacent to the Lake Lucille Trailhead and represents a large recreation land use in the area. As road, rail, and air uniquely come together in this area, opportunities for a multi-modal transportation hub are apparent. These amenities are anchors for ancillary uses such as hospitality. The City is the largest land owner in the planning area having ownership of the municipal airport and the MUSC, with several private land owners including MATI.

There is a lack of utilities and general infrastructure in the area. Investments from the City or private developers will be needed to fund utility extensions in the area. A tax or levy would likely be needed to support municipal investment in utility extensions.

Residents want to see this area develop its assets, yet retain the essence of its natural environment and aesthetic appeal. Making minor revisions to current zoning to blend current land uses will need to be considered. Three prominent land uses shaped goals for the area. Goals and objectives were developed taking the following specifics about each land use into consideration. The following points were taken into consideration while developing goals.

Industrial

- Airport and Transportation Museum Area is a prime area for the City to encourage business development compatible with existing land uses.

Recreation

- Expand/build on existing facilities and opportunities
- Residents want to protect the integrity of the natural environment in this planning area.
- Opportunities exist to develop new trails and parks in this area.

Hospitality

- There are no support services, or hospitality uses in this area for the airport, MUSC, or MATI.

AIRPORT & TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Airport and Transportation Museum Area will retain its scenic qualities as development occurs in the area incorporating multi-use trails and parks serving broad community needs and year round uses and providing improved connectivity with other areas of Wasilla. As planned expansion efforts continue with the airport, new development will include hospitality services to meet the needs of residents and visitors. Minor zoning adjustments will accommodate existing uses adjacent to the airport and ensure future compatible land uses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the exception of platting authority, the City has the powers needed to achieve the vision identified for the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. Following are descriptions of land use tools that the City can use by making small adjustments to current approaches, as well as some innovative new mechanisms that can also be used.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Cohesive design and architecture firmly establish an area identity and help protect an area's visual appeal.

- Design standards should not be dictated by one group or government entity. Design standards can succeed if they are crafted as a collaborative effort by the primary stakeholders such as developers and business owners. A community survey that incorporates comparative photographs may be useful to determine what is aesthetically appealing to consumers. Design standards should be divided to include mandatory and voluntary standards.
- A specific color palette, variety of natural building materials, and height standards within viewshed corridors could be included in new design standards. Standards like these would help buildings blend with the natural setting and protect viewsheds.
- Climate sensitive design standards should be incorporated with new development in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. Climate sensitive design can increase the amount of natural light allowed in the building through the amount of window cover on the façade and/or skylights. Conifer trees planted along sidewalks and bikepaths can provide a wind break for pedestrians while also contributing to the visual appeal of the street.
- Incentives should be established to promote design standards. Ideas include variances from other requirements and expedited permit processing. For instance, if a developer commits to including a certain percentage of voluntary design standards, the City can expedite necessary permits.

ZONING

Zoning guides the type and intensity of land uses in an area, reduces land use conflicts and ensures that area resources remain intact for the enjoyment of all users.

instance, there are two parcels on the south end of the planning area that include industrial and rural residential zoning designations within the same parcel. Revisions that delineate a heavy industrial district (e.g., airport) converging with a light industrial district (e.g., storage or distribution operations), advancing to a rural residential district is less abrupt and without the conflicts posed by a parcel sharing two contrasting zoning designations.

Zoning Revision

- Updating existing zoning codes can direct development of hospitality services in this area.
- Zoning revisions can reduce future conflicts with existing land uses. For

Overlay Zoning Districts

- An Overlay Zoning District creates a distinct district that delineates specific regulations within the current zoning boundaries. This zoning district can be arranged to protect certain resources (e.g., the viewshed or mature forests), or promote a specific type of development in a particular area (e.g., freight and shipping).
- An overlay zoning district should be created in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area to promote a freight and shipping district.
- Overlay zoning districts should include provisions requiring specific design or landscaping elements that contribute to the distinctiveness of the district.

Planned Unit Development

- A PUD is a tool that can unify large-scale development with a variety of land uses and densities on a single tract of land.
- A PUD is mutually beneficial to developers and the community. Developers have greater flexibility with design and densities in exchange for including parks, trails, or preservation of specific resources.

ANNEXATION

Annexation is the act of formally incorporating adjacent land into the City's boundaries.

- Annexing land south of the airport would provide the City an opportunity to deflect future land use conflicts through zoning as the airport expands.

PARTNERSHIPS

Good partnerships are beneficial to all parties and can help achieve difficult goals.

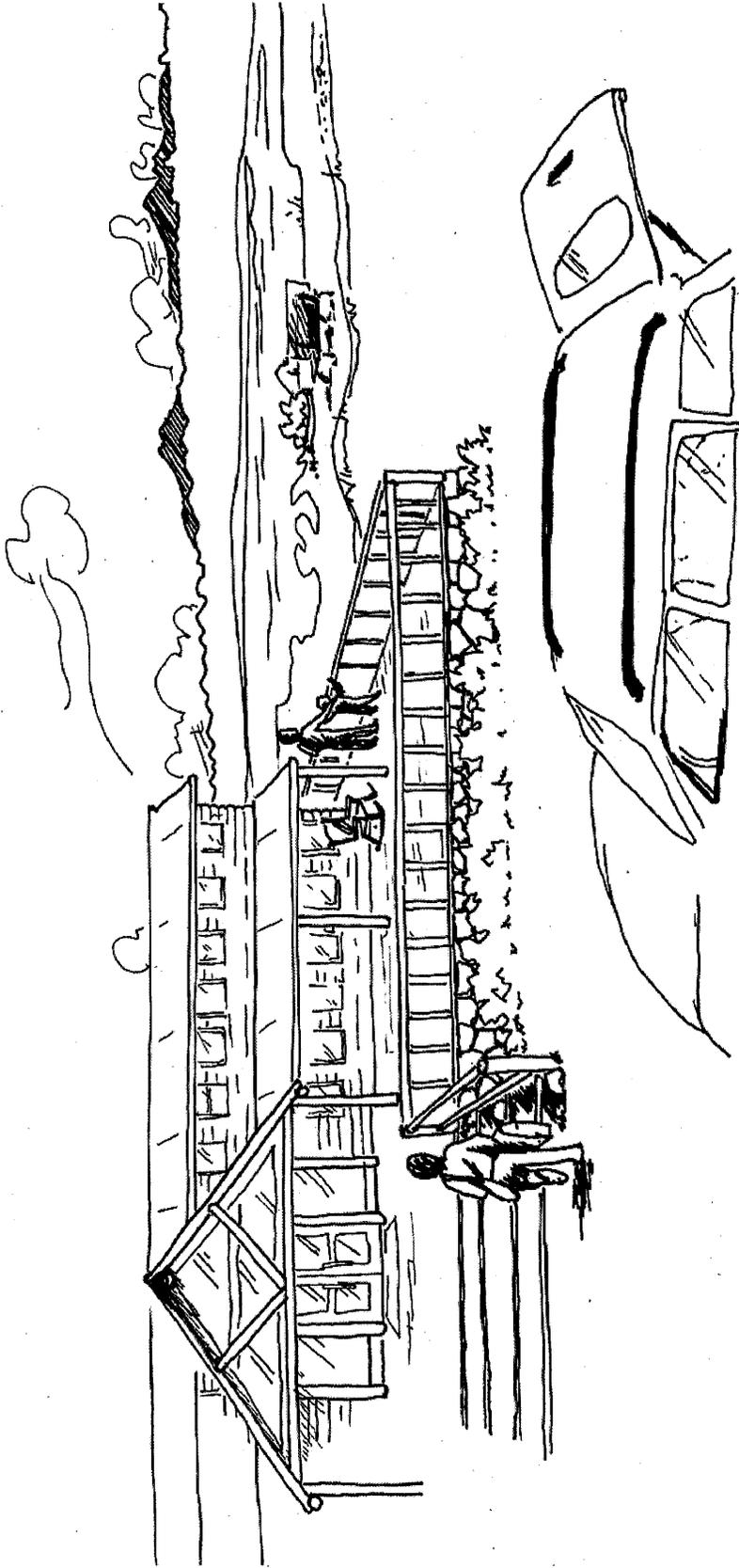
- Partnerships with community and regional nonprofit organizations, governments, and private entities can help the City fund and acquire land and easements for recreation land uses.

PLANNING

Adopted and current plans can ensure the vision of the community is developed.

- Existing plans should be reviewed and updated as the community changes and grows.

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AIRPORT & TRANS. MUSEUM
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The residents of Wasilla envision a vibrant Downtown that supports a variety of public services and small businesses that are mixed with multi-family residential units, art venues, and education facilities. Mixed use development and effective multi-modal transportation will be key factors in transitioning the Downtown into a social and economic center of the community.

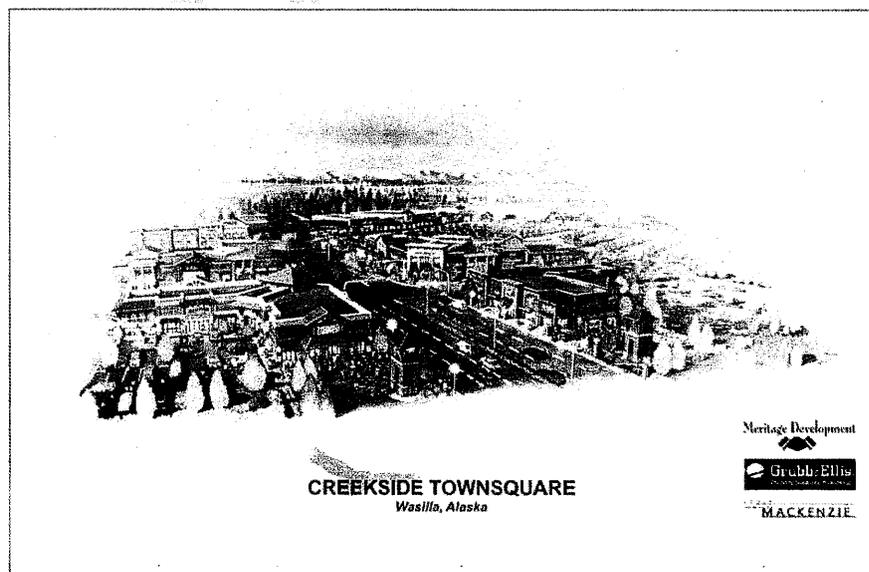
Offering a variety of commercial services in a core Downtown district where residents can live and work will contribute to additional business development in the area. The City, landowners, business community, and local citizens will need to work together to achieve the community vision for the Downtown. The City will work with others to establish incentives for infill and mixed use development, such as business improvement districts and partnerships.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Social and economic indicators remain strong in the City of Wasilla. Population has increased at an unprecedented rate, annual traffic volumes have steadily increased, and sales tax receipts continue to grow (City of Wasilla 2006b). Projected trends for the community indicate additional growth, spurring further economic development in the community.

There will be additional demands for residential units, retail development, and office space in the Downtown area. New development will occur as infill on vacant lands as well as via redevelopment of existing properties. Key planning considerations for economic stimulation in Downtown include residential, retail and hospitality, and office developments.

Development will be guided by City entities, such as the Downtown Revitalization Committee and Gateway Committee. A Downtown Revitalization Committee would likely be responsible for planning and guiding economic development proposals for the area. A Gateway Committee would focus on making each area readily identifiable in the gateway entrances, incorporating design themes for each area.



The Creekside Townsquare designed for Wasilla near Downtown.

Residential

Additional housing will be constructed in the Downtown area via PUDs, such as the Yenlo Square project. Multi-family units will be constructed, including low-cost or rent-subsidized units. Disadvantaged populations will be served, including low-income, elderly, and people with disabilities. Combining residential areas with retail and public services will make businesses more accessible and assist with reducing traffic in the core Downtown area.

Retail & Hospitality

Retail development will include new infill development, as well as redevelopment and expansion of existing businesses. The Downtown area will be distinguished by small businesses that support the government service, education, and tourism sectors. Hospitality services will include small cafes and restaurants. Beautification incentives will be offered to make the area more aesthetically appealing and to entice customers to spend time in the Downtown area.

Office

As a center for public services, government offices will be located in the Downtown area. City Hall will remain in the Downtown area, as the headquarters for City offices. The City will actively encourage office leases with state and federal agencies to establish Wasilla as a core location for public services.

Small office buildings will house private professional services that support government agencies and serve community needs.

DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Residents desire the Downtown to be an attractive, diverse city center. The City will work to attract and retain government services in the Downtown area. Incentives will be provided to enhance economic development, including mixed use of residential and commercial development. The area will be a destination for residents and visitors. A Downtown Improvement District will provide impetus and guidance for redevelopment efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To capitalize on the favorable economic outlook, and to achieve the Downtown vision, several economic development tools have been identified. The City is currently using some

of these tools; others are new to the community. Following are descriptions of economic development tools that the City can use by making small adjustments to current approaches, as well as some innovative new mechanisms that can also be used.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Development incentives will assist property owners to implement the community vision for Downtown. For example, design themes will assist to develop the community identity and character. Reservations for public plazas, parks, and trails will enhance the aesthetic quality of the community. While these elements are in the public interest, they can add a financial burden to proposed development projects. There are several incentives the City may provide to private landowners to reduce costs or other requirements to attain the goals for the area.

- Tax abatements or deferrals can be offered for a fixed time, typically during development and/or at the initiation of services. Wasilla's tax base is predominantly supported by a sales tax, which does not support tax abatement or deferral. The City should work with the Mat-Su Borough to explore potential tax abatements or deferrals.
- Offer variances from requirements as trade-offs to achieve high priority goals. For example a greater density development may be permitted in exchange for reservation of public spaces.
- Expedite permit processing as a trade-off to achieve high priority goals.
- A Business Improvement District is a geographically defined area in which a majority of businesses or property owners agree to impose a specific tax or fee to provide certain public services. The concept may be used for a completely undeveloped area or for a revitalization project.
- A Tax Increment Finance District is a district that includes an area where redevelopment or public improvements are desired. The property values in the area are projected to increase due to project implementation. The funding mechanism is generated through the difference between existing tax abatements and projected increases in these taxes. This increment or difference between tax levies would be used to fund the proposed development. (Note: This tool assumes a property tax is levied.)
- Public-private partnerships engage the public and private sectors in specified roles through the planning, financing, designing, construction, operation, and/or maintenance of a project. For example, the government entity may contribute the initial investment for the project, with other tasks accomplished under contract by private parties.
- Develop partnerships with federal, state, and Mat-Su Borough governments. Take advantage of grant sources and matching funds. Identify and complete projects or plans that make the community eligible for new funding sources.
- Municipal funds may be identified for project implementation, such as development of a centralized parking facility. Municipal funds may also be leveraged as credit assurance or loans to facilitate private development of projects.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS

- A Gateway Committee would have a primary responsibility for planning,

designing, and implementing improvements for wayfinding stations and gateway entrances. The committee would seek to make each area readily identifiable and work to incorporate design themes in the gateways.

- Implement marketing programs to promote the Downtown. Feature community events, special attractions, and local businesses. Target audiences include local residents, regional residents, and tourists. Develop partnerships with local businesses and business organizations for marketing efforts.
- Support Downtown revitalization efforts, such as façade improvements, beautification projects, pedestrian-oriented facilities, and parking improvements.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION & SUPPORT

By making documents and permit application reviews available online, the public process is more transparent and available to a greater audience.

- Planning documents and permit/application reviews should be readily available to the public on the City website.
- Improve communication efforts with the community to increase understanding and support for

economic development efforts.

- Highlight community plans and the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) program and make related documents more readily accessible to the public. For example, there have been requests to have electronic copies of all current community plans available on the City website.
- Utilize public service announcements, newspaper notices and advertisements, and mailings to draw attention to economic development efforts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

South Wasilla Heights is largely undeveloped at this time. This presents the community with an opportunity to literally develop their vision for the area from the ground up. Residents desire a diversified business district to be developed in the area, including professional, retail, medical, and other services.

The City, landowners, business community, and local citizens will need to work together to achieve the community vision for the South Wasilla Heights area. The City will work with others to establish incentives for development, such as business improvement districts, enterprise zones, and partnerships.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Most of the area is held in large lots and is zoned commercial. With indicators for continued economic growth, demand is likely for retail development and office space in the South Wasilla Heights area. Key planning considerations for economic development in South Wasilla Heights include residential, retail, entertainment and hospitality, and office developments.

Residential

Residential development exists in the northern portion of the planning area, although most of the land is zoned as commercial. Residential development will likely hem the edges of the planning area.

Retail

New retail development will shape the business landscape in South Wasilla Heights. The area will be distinguished as a diversified business district that features a combination of national retail establishments and small businesses.

Office

Targeted growth in South Wasilla Heights will include the professional sector. Class A office facilities will serve public corporations and private firms. Medical facilities could be located in this area.

Federal, state, and local government offices could also be located in the area, expanding from the Downtown core.

Hospitality / Entertainment

Residents desire development of entertainment facilities such as a theater complex. The visioning sessions included suggestions for development of small hotels to serve the business community, as well as a variety of restaurants.

SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Residents desire South Wasilla Heights to be a diversified business center with entertainment and hospitality amenities to serve the community. The City will work to attract and retain business development in South Wasilla Heights. Incentives will be provided to guide and facilitate development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To capitalize on the favorable economic outlook, and to achieve the vision for South Wasilla Heights, several economic development tools have been identified. The City is currently using some of these tools; others are new to the community. Following are descriptions of economic development tools that the City can use by making small adjustments to current approaches, as well as some innovative new mechanisms that can also be used.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Development incentives will assist property owners to implement the community vision for South Wasilla Heights. For example, reserving space for public plazas, parks, and trails will enhance the aesthetic quality of the area and connectivity to other portions of the community. While these elements are in the public interest, they can add a financial burden to proposed development projects. There are several incentives the City may provide to private landowners to reduce costs or other requirements to attain the goals for the area.

- Tax abatements or deferrals can be offered for a fixed time, typically during development and/or at the initiation of services. The City should work with the Mat-Su Borough to explore potential tax abatements or deferrals.
- Formalize a strategy for an overlay zone to achieve high priority goals. For example a greater density development may be permitted in exchange for reservation of public spaces.
- Expedite permit processing as a trade-off to achieve high priority goals.
- A Business Improvement District is a geographically defined area in which a majority of businesses or property owners agree to impose a specific tax or fee to provide certain public services. The concept may be used for a completely undeveloped area or for a revitalization project.
- A Tax Increment Finance District is a geographically defined area where redevelopment or public improvements are desired. The property values in the area are projected to increase due to project implementation. The funding mechanism is generated through the difference between existing tax abatements and projected increases in these taxes. This increment or difference between tax levies would be used to fund the proposed development. (Note: This tool assumes a property tax is levied.)

- Enterprise Zone includes a geographically defined area that is targeted for economic development or growth. The area may be identified as an employment core zone, with particular emphasis on creating new job opportunities for the community. Businesses that operate in the zone would be offered tax credits, which then would be used by those companies to create new job opportunities.
- Public-Private Partnerships engage the public and private sectors in specified roles through the planning, financing, designing, construction, operation, and/or maintenance of a project. For example, the government entity may provide the initial investment for the project, with other tasks accomplished under contract by private parties.
- Develop partnerships with federal, state, and Mat-Su Borough governments. Take advantage of grant sources and matching funds. Identify and complete projects or plans that make the community eligible for new funding sources.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS

- A Gateway Committee would have a primary responsibility for planning, designing, and implementing improvements for wayfinding stations and gateway entrances. The committee

would seek to make each area readily identifiable and work to incorporate design themes in the gateways.

- Planning – Implement and strengthen existing plans that relate to economic development. Develop new plans as conditions change.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION & SUPPORT

By making documents and permit application reviews available online, the public process is more transparent and available to a greater audience.

- Planning documents and permit/application reviews should be readily available to the public on the City website.
- Improve communication efforts with the community to increase

understanding and support for economic development efforts.

- Highlight community plans and the CIP program and make related documents more readily accessible to the public. For example, there have been requests to have electronic copies of all current community plans available on the City website.
- Utilize public service announcements, newspaper notices and advertisements, and mailings to draw attention to economic development efforts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The economic activity in the Airport and Transportation Museum area will center on industrial activities, recreation, and hospitality services, in relation to the airport, MATI, and the MUSC. The City, landowners, business community, and local citizens will need to work together to achieve the community vision for the Airport and Transportation Museum area. The City will work with others to establish incentives for development, such as tax abatements, business improvement districts, and partnerships.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Projected trends for the community indicate additional growth. Facilities in this area would likely experience additional demands, causing the City to address airport expansion and additions to the MUSC facilities. The MATI and other private facilities could likewise experience additional demands. New private facilities may be developed to support the key economic activities in the planning area and to accommodate the social and demographic changes in the community. Development will be guided by the zoning regulations, which are predominantly industrial in this area. Key planning considerations for economic development in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area include residential, industrial, public facilities and recreation, and retail and hospitality.

Residential	New residential development will be discouraged in the vicinity of the Airport and Transportation Museum planning area.
Industrial	Industrial development will be targeted for the planning area, particularly businesses that support airport and associated transportation services.
Public Facilities/Recreation	The MUSC facilities are expected to expand to serve the recreation needs of the community. Outdoor playing fields, winter facilities and activities, and additions to the MUSC will continue to draw residents and visitors to the area.
Hospitality & Retail	The area will be distinguished by businesses that support the transportation, tourism, and recreation industries. Hospitality services will be developed to accommodate private pilots and regional aviation. Development of motels, restaurants, open air markets, and shops will be encouraged.

AIRPORT & TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Residents desire the Airport and Transportation Museum Area to be a busy light-industrial area that is hemmed by recreation activities. The City will work to attract and retain industrial and commercial enterprises to service the existing airport and recreation uses. The area will continue to be a destination for residents and visitors. Incentives will be provided to enhance economic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To capitalize on the favorable economic outlook, and to achieve the vision for the Airport and Transportation Museum Area, several economic development tools have been identified. The City is currently using some of these tools; others are new to the community. Following are descriptions of economic development tools that the City can use by making small adjustments to current approaches, as well as some innovative new mechanisms that can also be used.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Development incentives will assist property owners to implement the community vision for South Wasilla Heights. For example, reserving space for public plazas, parks, and trails will enhance the aesthetic quality of the area and connectivity to other portions of the community. While these elements are in the public interest, they can add a financial burden to proposed development projects. There are several incentives the City may provide to private landowners to reduce costs or other requirements to attain the goals for the area.

- Tax abatements or deferrals can be offered for a fixed time, typically during development and/or at the initiation of services. The City should work with the Mat-Su Borough to explore potential tax abatements or deferrals.
- Offer variances from requirements as trade-offs to achieve high priority goals. For example a greater density development may be permitted in exchange for reservation of public spaces.
- A Business Improvement District is a geographically defined area in which a majority of businesses or property owners agree to impose a specific tax or fee to provide certain public services. The concept may be used to encourage development near the existing public facilities.
- Public-Private Partnerships engage the public and private sectors in specified roles through the planning, financing, designing, construction, operation, and/or maintenance of a project. For example, the government entity may provide the initial

investment for the project, with other tasks accomplished under contract by private parties.

- Municipal Funds may be identified for project implementation, such as development of a multi-modal transportation facility. Municipal funds may also be leveraged as credit assurance or loans to facilitate private development of projects.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS

- Implement projects in the Airport Master Plan Capital Improvement Schedule that support economic development.
- Actively market City-owned commercial lands in the vicinity of the airport and MUSC to potential service providers.
- Initiate a partnership with the Alaska Railroad to determine the economic thresholds for passenger and shipping facilities.
- Implement marketing programs to promote the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. Feature recreation events, aviation events, and special attractions. Target audiences include local residents, regional residents, the aviation community, and tourists. Develop partnerships with local businesses and business organizations for marketing efforts.
- Support rail-dependent economic development efforts, such as a passenger rail terminal.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION & SUPPORT

By making documents and permit application reviews available online, the public process is more transparent and available to a greater audience.

- Improve communication efforts with the community to increase understanding and support for economic development efforts.
- Highlight community plans and the CIP program and make related documents more readily accessible to the public. For example, there have been requests to have electronic copies of all current community plans available on the City website.
- Utilize public service announcements, newspaper notices and advertisements, and mailings to draw attention to economic development efforts.

ANNEXATION

Annexation is the act of formally incorporating adjacent land into the City's boundaries.

- Develop a plan for annexation to address airport expansion and retain future economic development options in the area as facilities expand.

Transportation and Circulation

Overview

Downtown is widely viewed as the center of Wasilla as a community. The parks, shops, restaurants, offices, and civic services available in this district set a tone that residents would like to build on. However, traffic is often congested, and parking is limited and sometimes inconvenient to amenities. Passenger cars are the predominant mode of transportation in this area. Mat-Su Community Transit (MASCOT) operates a fixed route mini-bus system between Palmer and Wasilla and provides a minor portion of the core area transportation needs. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic offer a minor portion of the transportation needs as well. Residents expressed concern that the area is unsafe for pedestrians. Community members want a Downtown that is easy to get to, convenient to navigate, and inviting to spend time in.

Planning Considerations

The vision of Downtown as the center of education and civic services, supported by mixed use, brings to the forefront considerations of pedestrian access, public transportation, traffic flow, and sufficient, well-designed parking. Further, the kind of vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Downtown envisioned by residents suggests careful attention to aesthetic appeal.

Circulation

- Residents expressed a desire for traffic flow to be improved throughout Downtown, including new and redesigned corridors.
- Residents want accommodations for multi-modal transport, such as bike paths.
- The Parks Highway presents the biggest traffic problem in the core area. According to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) Main Street Traffic Study, traffic volumes on the Parks Highway will increase from 33,000 (2005 average daily traffic [ADT]) to 50,000 ADT in the next 20 years. The proposed Wasilla By-Pass that will move the Parks Highway and the railroad south of the City will alleviate some of the traffic congestion in the core area. ADOT&PF is also in the beginning stages of a preliminary engineering study for the By-Pass project, although final design and construction are not expected to be completed for several years. Even with the By-Pass, the volumes through the core area are expected to be near current volume levels in 20 years due to increased population.
- The preferred alternative chosen by ADOT&PF for the Main Street/Knik-Goose Bay Road project is a one way couplet similar to 5th and 6th Avenues in Anchorage. Main Street and Knik-Goose Bay Road will become a one way southbound street, Talkeetna and Yenlo Streets will become a one way north bound street. Talkeetna Street will 'Y' off Knik-Goose Bay Road in the South Wasilla Heights area. Intersections at the Parks Highway will be at-grade. This option is currently under Environmental Re-Evaluation, with construction probably taking place between 2010 and 2015.

Connectivity & Accessibility

- Downtown should connect easily and rapidly to other areas of Wasilla.
- Downtown is seen as unsafe and inconvenient for pedestrians.
- Inadequate parking and lack of pedestrian measures make Downtown facilities less accessible to patrons.
- Residents would like to see a feasibility study on public transit.
- At the present time, 5-foot wide sidewalks along City streets are the primary pedestrian facilities in Downtown. Many existing sidewalks are in good condition, but additional pedestrian improvements are desired. Recently constructed paved pathways connect to the City streets from the Parks Highway to the east, Wasilla Fishhook Road to the north and Knik-Goose Bay Road to the south. A pedestrian tunnel was recently constructed under the Parks Highway at Crusey Street. This is the only north-south connection of pedestrian facilities across the Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad at this time.
- The connection of the Knik-Goose Bay Road pathway to the Wasilla-Fishhook Road pathway is across the Main Street/Parks Highway intersection. Pedestrian facilities along Main Street are in poor condition. Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant curb ramps are in bad shape at the Parks Highway, and nonexistent at other intersections. The ADOT&PF design for Main Street reconstruction was postponed in order to complete the Main Street Traffic Study, which was completed in 2006. The re-construction will likely include construction of sidewalks and/or pathways, which will complete connectivity along this corridor, with an at-grade pedestrian crossing at the Parks Highway.

Parking

- Downtown parking is inadequate and inconvenient.
- Parking solutions should be integrated with traffic circulation design and with pedestrian improvements.

DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION GOALS

The overall goal for transportation and circulation in the downtown area is improved traffic flow with well-planned transportation upgrades. Upgrades will include new and redesigned corridors, parking solutions, pedestrian measures, public transit, and accommodations for multi-modal transportation.

Recommendations

PLANNING

Adopted and current plans can ensure the vision of the community is developed.

- Consider what traffic measures will work best in Wasilla. A

combination of traffic calming measures, strategically located with linkages to multi-modal transportation, can channel traffic, improve access, and ease congestion. Options include: widening major thoroughfares; one-way streets; traffic lights at busy intersections; traffic circles at slower intersections; integrated bike paths; pedestrian malls.

- To ensure that major civic services and traffic draws are easily accessible; the City should identify which ***specific facilities are the most heavily used***. This information should inform the design and redesign of major corridors and of parking, with heavily-used and high-volume facilities being close to major arteries into Downtown and to parking facilities.

CLIMATE SENSITIVE DESIGN

Climate sensitive design can account for the low winter temperatures, frequent high winds, extreme daylight variations, and snow removal and storage.

options such as skating corridors, outdoor fires, and dogsled ‘taxi’ are all possible.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Increased pedestrian access can contribute to healthier, more vibrant communities—something that Wasilla residents expressed a desire for.

pedestrian access within the heart of Downtown will encourage less vehicle use within Downtown, and can be beneficial for businesses as well. Specific measures include: easily maintained sidewalks; clearly marked pedestrian crossings; overpasses and crosswalks with push-button stoplight controls in places where walking to a street corner would be inconveniently lengthy for pedestrians.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Wasilla’s relatively small population and diffuse neighborhoods may keep City-wide public transport from being viable at this time.

continuous shuttle running a Downtown circuit during busy times.

PARKING

A variety of parking options can improve circulation patterns throughout Downtown.

- Consideration should be given to ***climate*** when designing multi-modal transportation linkages. For instance, bike routes can be designed to be seasonal; pedestrian malls and connections between sidewalks can be designed to be easily maintained in winter; creative winter options such as skating corridors, outdoor fires, and dogsled ‘taxi’ are all possible.
- Pedestrian access has proven to be a key consideration in other cities attempting to foster vibrant Downtown areas. While careful attention must be given to traffic flow to and from Downtown, as well as through and into it for users in vehicles, prioritizing
- Periodically evaluate expanding public transportation options. Feasibility studies should be coordinated with MASCOT.
- Make small increases in service between popular destinations such as hospitals, Downtown, the MUSC; or a
- Consider a public-private partnership to fund municipal parking lots and multi-level parking facilities.
- Consider including integrated parking garages into designs standards.

- Integrate public transportation and improved pedestrian access with parking space that serves the whole Downtown.
- Consider requiring bike racks at new developments to encourage alternate forms of transportation that can help improve circulation.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Consider the *aesthetic values inherent in Wasilla's identity* as an Alaskan town as well as the community's pride in its small-town charm.

and are visually unappealing year round. Shade ordinances can be employed to mandate trees and shade provisions as new parking lots are constructed, and large existing lots can be redesigned to incorporate shade landscaping.

- Parking is an aesthetic and quality-of-experience issue as well, given that poorly designed parking (whether in a garage or parking lot) can be both ugly and stressful to navigate. Large parking lots without trees and other vegetation become hot and uncomfortable in summer

DRAFT

Transportation and Circulation

Overview

Community members envision South Wasilla Heights as a largely commercial district, incorporating hotels, restaurants, medical and professional offices. Residents noted the views and woodlands in the area, and want South Wasilla Heights development to integrate with the natural aesthetic appeal, and to include multi-use trails and parks.

Planning Considerations

South Wasilla Heights is largely undeveloped with no internal road network. The area is bounded on the south and east by the recently constructed Palmer-Wasilla Highway extension. Design capacity (year 2020) ADT for the road is 14,150 vehicles per day. The 2005 ADT count was about 10,000 vehicles per day. The north side is bounded by low volume residential streets in fair condition. The area is bounded on the west by Knik-Goose Bay Road, which will be upgraded as part of the Wasilla Main Street project. The one-way northbound Talkeetna Street and one-way southbound Knik-Goose Bay Road will 'Y' in the northwest corner of this area. The remainder of Knik-Goose Bay Road between Glennwood Avenue and the 'Y' will also be reconstructed.

South Wasilla Heights currently has a residential area, and commercial areas of both small and large lot size. The region is largely undeveloped, giving planners the opportunity to design nearly from the ground up. The vision for South Wasilla Heights voiced by the community implies the following considerations regarding transportation and circulation:

Circulation

- Community members would like traffic flow within South Wasilla Heights to facilitate navigating the area quickly and efficiently.
- The extension of Crusey Street across the Parks Highway and railroad could provide a second north-south access corridor between this area and the Downtown core area. However, obtaining approval from the Alaska Railroad for an at-grade crossing would likely be difficult and a separated grade crossing over the tracks and highway would be costly.
- The City continues to propose railroad relocation to the south of town to facilitate circulation within the community.
- Safety for pedestrians is a concern, but pedestrian flow is to be emphasized within groups of buildings and businesses, rather than area-wide.

Connectivity & Accessibility

- South Wasilla Heights currently has limited connectivity with the Parks Highway and the Alaska Railroad. Community members would like the area to be easy to get to.
- Safe connections across busy roads are a concern to community members.
- The community would like to see multi-use trails and parks within the area.

- Where public transit is deemed feasible, residents would like to see it be linked with both parking and facilities, and to increase the area's connectivity to other parts of Wasilla.

Parking

- Residents would like to see adequate, well-planned parking that avoids the downfalls of current Downtown parking.

SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION GOALS

Residents would like to see transportation and circulation in South Wasilla Heights support connectivity to other areas of Wasilla by multi-modal transportation that facilitates easy flow of pedestrians, vehicles, bicycles and public transit systems within the area.

Recommendations

PLANNING

Adopted and current plans can ensure the vision of the community is developed.

- Planning for this area should identify intersections at locations along Knik-Goose Bay Road and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway opposite existing roads to consider four-way intersections with traffic signals.

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

Multimodal linkages connect air, road, rail, and trails to increase transport efficiency of goods and people.

- Parks could be connected by trails as well as by road. Groups of buildings/businesses could be connected by multi-use trails as well.
- Aside from the pedestrian tunnel under the Parks Highway at Crusey Street there is not a **direct**

connection for pedestrians between the South Wasilla Heights area and Downtown. Additional pedestrian crossings over or under the Parks Highway and railroad might be considered in future planning.

- The City might consider encouraging bicycle racks near buildings and in complexes.

CLIMATE SENSITIVE DESIGN

Climate sensitive design can account for the low winter temperatures, frequent high winds, extreme daylight variations, and snow removal and storage.

- Climate sensitive design can be used to make sure that public transit routes have adequate shelter, integrating stand-alone shelters and loading zones for facilities with spacious entries. New facilities of a certain size can be required to accommodate public transit by design.

Transportation and Circulation

Overview

The Airport Transportation Museum Area houses some key public facilities – the transportation and Dorothy Page museums, the MUSC, as well as the airport. Much of the area is covered by natural vegetation. Lands around the MUSC are being developed for sports and recreational use, and residents want to see woodland and multi-use trails in the area. Residents would like to see commercial development in this area, including hospitality, transportation, and shipping. The transportation and circulation needs are similar to those in both Downtown and South Wasilla Heights, with flow, parking, and pedestrian and public transit access being concerns.

Planning Considerations

As described in the Wasilla Airport Master Plan, currently the only road access to this area is along Museum Drive, which connects with the Parks Highway about a mile west of the airport. This requires drivers from Wasilla to drive an extra 2 miles to get to the airport. For direct access to Wasilla, a new primary access road needs to connect to Mack Drive at the MUSC, about a mile to the east.

If Mack Drive is eventually extended to Knik-Goose Bay Road, this will provide needed access to the airport for drivers coming from the south. The City of Wasilla is expected to begin the process for preliminary engineering on the South Mack extension in the near future.

A connection due north of the airport to the Parks Highway could be possible but would require crossing the railroad. This connection would benefit a small minority of Wasilla residents, since most of them could access the airport via Museum Drive or Mack Drive. The Alaska Railroad would probably insist on a separated grade crossing, which would increase the cost significantly.

Circulation

- Currently, the planning area has a few high-use facilities. There are limitations on flow that the public would like to see addressed soon, and as development increases it will need well thought-out corridors to ensure easy circulation.
- The public desire for appealing destinations in the area (e.g. recreational trails, hotels), as well as commercial use, has implications for the design of traffic flow.

Connectivity & Accessibility

- Connectivity between the airport and all parts of Wasilla is a primary concern for residents; considering alternative modifications and construction to improve access is likely to be a planning priority. Better access will facilitate every other aspect of the vision for the area.
- Residents would like to see public transit between the airport and Downtown locations; including the MUSC and museums. Such a system might be of great benefit to the public.

Parking

- If the City adopts landscaping ordinances for parking areas, these could apply within the Airport and Transportation Museum Area planning area as well, although in long-term parking areas, vegetation can obstruct visibility, making vehicles more susceptible to theft and vandalism unless there are fences or other security measures.
- Future airport parking might incorporate a multi-modal terminus for use by personal vehicles, taxis, charter buses, trains, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.

AIRPORT & TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION GOALS

The goals for transportation and circulation within the planning area are in agreement with goals for the other areas and for Wasilla as a whole, namely: safe, well-marked arteries designed for efficient flow of traffic; premium design for pedestrian safety and convenience; and, seamless integration of multi-modal transportation.

Recommendations

PLANNING

Adopted and current plans can ensure the vision of the community is developed.

facility next to the transportation museum, which might also house commuter rail; a multi-modal facility supporting Park'n'Ride, west of Church Road and north of Aviation Avenue; and, improving safety at the Church Road railroad crossing (intersection of Church Road and Parks Highway) by creating separated grade crossings with a tight diamond interchange.

- Existing plans identify specific facilities and transportation upgrades for this area. These should be considered and evaluated. They include: a railroad maintenance

MULTIMODAL

Multimodal linkages connect air, road, rail, and trails to increase transport efficiency of goods and people.

- Shuttles and other public transit connections between the airport and Downtown could be encouraged.

ZONING

Zoning guides the type and intensity of land uses in an area, reduces land use conflicts and ensures that area resources remain intact for the enjoyment of all users.

- Look at zoning ordinances to cluster the heavier transport and freight facilities, and to encourage sub-regions by use within the planning area.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Consider the *aesthetic values* inherent in Wasilla's identity as an Alaskan town as well as the community's pride in its small-town charm.

- To maintain the aesthetic appeal of facilities such as parks, recreational trails, and even hotels and restaurants, planners may wish to consider making sure that major vehicle arteries go past scenic areas at a little distance, rather than through them. For instance, a major road placed well away from a lake or waterway allows for more secluded and inviting recreational and hospitality uses of the water's edge, whereas a major road hugging the shore of the same body of water will usually degrade its appeal for other uses. The same principle applies to woodlands and fields.
- The City should employ multiple tools to protect its character as development and growth occur, including: zoning ordinances that integrate with large and small road planning; locating major arteries away from nature destinations; vegetation ordinances for road construction projects; and parking lot ordinances.
- Parking lot ordinances can vary by planning area, and by type of development. For instance, a large box store in a primarily rural area with large land parcels may require a great deal of parking, but requiring vegetation and shade trees to be incorporated into the design can greatly soften the effect. Requiring a larger vegetation buffer per every certain acreage of pavement can make the difference between a large facility blending into its surroundings and feeling like a clear-cut.

Public Facilities and Utilities

Overview

Downtown houses several public facilities, including City Hall, the Wasilla Public Library, Police Department, Post Office, and the Dorothy Page Museum, a private non-profit serving the general public. To realize the vision of a thriving, inviting Downtown that is truly the center of civic life in Wasilla, the public has expressed desire for a larger library, additional parks, trails, and a greenbelt to connect the lakes. In addition, some facilities are not currently compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). General issues related to Downtown public facilities include repair needs, limited space, a lack of elevator access, and insufficient parking.

Downtown offers public water and sewer service for nearly the entire area within the boundaries. There is no indication at this time that these utilities are in need of upgrades; however, connectivity and capacity to individual parcels may be an issue. Sewage is handled in a Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) system, further integrated into a wastewater treatment facility. Downtown water needs are met by the City's core water system, which draws from the Spruce Avenue well and Bumpus municipal wells. The East Susitna well will soon be added to the City's core water supply system.

Planning Considerations

Public Facilities

Accessibility

- Accessibility of public facilities includes, at minimum, ADA compliance. The Wasilla public library meets ADA standards, but inconveniently.

City Hall fails to meet ADA standards, most notably due to lack of elevator access. Both these facilities, as well as the Post Office, have accessibility constraints due to inadequate parking.

There are a couple of terms that bear definition here. The ADA sets clear legal accessibility standards that public facilities in the US are required to meet. *Barrier-free access* is a term used in other countries to describe legal requirements, and used here to describe any access consideration oriented to removing or preventing obstacles for patrons of any capability level. *Universal design* is the concept of designing products and environments (from the start) to be usable by all people. The principles of universal design are gaining in use, and deserve careful consideration:

Universal Design Definition:

The design of products and environments to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

1: Principle One: Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

2: Principle Two: Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

3: Principle Three: Simple and Intuitive

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

4. Principle Four: Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user’s sensory abilities.

5. Principle Five: Tolerance for Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

6. Principle Six: Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

7. Principle Seven: Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user’s body size, posture, or mobility.

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The Center for Universal Design has also developed 29 guidelines that further explain the above principles. While aesthetic appeal is not one of the principles of universal design, employing universal design principles can improve the aesthetics of public environments, because ADA compliance—and accessibility considerations above and beyond ADA—are built-in and become integral to the overall design. The universal design tenet of providing the same means of use for all users whenever possible means that rather than providing special accommodations for people with disabilities, every part of the built environment functions as inclusively as possible. This in turn leads to an overall cohesion in the look and feel of the facility.

Capacity

- Are the current facilities meeting the needs of the public? City Hall will not hold all the offices and functions that the City would ideally house there, and the building is in need of repairs. The library, too, is felt to be too small for current use, let alone increasing use in a growing community. The Post Office continues to be overcrowded, and contributes to Downtown traffic congestion.

Utilities

Connectivity

- Downtown utilities service the entire Downtown area.

Capacity

- Downtown utilities are currently adequate to meet needs. There are plans for expanding the sewage system, however, this would apply to areas not currently serviced; Downtown would remain on the STEP system. Concerns have been identified with the City’s water supplies in relation to back-up and emergency provisions, rather than capacity (City of Wasilla 2001) These are discussed in Appendix A.

DOWNTOWN PUBLIC FACILITY & UTILITIES GOALS

As the center of Wasilla civic life, Downtown will have universally accessible public facilities, in good repair and adequate to the needs of an expanding population. Utilities will be in good repair, have ample provision for system repair, temporary shutdowns, and emergencies.

Recommendations

UNIVERSAL DESIGN/BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

Universal design promotes barrier-free access, which focuses on removing or preventing obstacles and designing user-friendly environments accessible for all users.

- Conduct accessibility audits of public facilities, and make self-audit materials available to business owners and developers.
- Prioritize actions to address accessibility issues at facilities.

UTILITIES INVENTORY/PLANNING

Inventoring existing utilities and their capacity helps to identify and plan for future needs and determine deficiencies.

Complete a utilities inventory and update current and future level of service needs for each.

- Prioritize actions for meeting future level of service needs.
- Implement action items in utility plans such as the Sewer Master Plan, and the Water Systems Facilities Master Plan and update in prescribed regular intervals.

FACILITIES INVENTORY/PLANNING

Inventoring existing public facilities will help identify and plan for future needs.

- Complete a public facilities inventory and evaluate ADA compliance.
- Prioritize actions for addressing ADA

compliance deficiencies and upgrading facilities to meet the demands of the growing population.

- Implement action items in facility plans such as the Trails Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (currently in progress) and update in prescribed regular intervals.

PARTNERSHIPS

Good partnerships are beneficial to all parties and can help achieve difficult goals.

- Partnerships with community and regional nonprofit organizations, governments, and private entities can help the City fund and acquire land for public facilities and upgrades to public facilities.

Public Facilities and Utilities

Overview

There are no public facilities currently located in South Wasilla Heights. Currently the area is supplied with water by city water mains on the north, along Knik-Goose Bay Road on the west, along the Palmer Wasilla Highway on the south, and along the east side adjacent to the new Home Depot. A 16" sewer main bisects the area, coming south from the City core area, and heads east to the sewage treatment plant. It is currently the responsibility of developers to connect with these utilities.

Planning Considerations

Public Facilities

Accessibility

development Downtown, the City has an opportunity to decide whether ADA compliance is a sufficient accessibility standard for Wasilla, or whether it wishes to set its own.

- As the area is developed, the public would like to see a multi-use trail and park areas incorporated into overall development. As with new

Capacity

- At present this topic is not applicable, since there are not public facilities in the area.

Utilities

Connectivity

Heights, and whether it is practical to construct the new system in sections or modules as various areas are developed, or whether there is a primary grid/network that ought to be laid all at once.

- The single sewer main connects to the core area system. Consideration should be given to how the system would be expanded in South Wasilla

Capacity

Capacity is a consideration as utilities are extended into the area. Ideally, the water and sewer systems would be constructed in a manner that minimizes initial costs, but is adaptable to being connected into over time to the highest projected capacity or need.

- Capacity is a consideration as utilities are extended into the area. Ideally, the water and sewer systems would be constructed in a

SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS PUBLIC FACILITY & UTILITIES GOALS

Public facilities in South Wasilla Heights will include a multiple-use trail, and both indoor and outdoor spaces will be fully accessible to people of all abilities. Utilities will be provided in a manner that allows and encourages development of the area, while balancing public vs. developer costs.

Recommendations

UTILITIES INVENTORY/PLANNING

Inventoried existing utilities and their capacity helps to identify and plan for future needs and determine deficiencies.

- Plan a utility grid in the area to minimize developers' connection costs to encourage development that meets City priorities.
- Complete a utilities inventory and update current and future level of service needs for each.
- Prioritize actions for meeting future level of service needs.
- Implement action items in utility plans such as the Sewer Master Plan, and the Water Systems Facilities Master Plan and update in prescribed regular intervals.

FACILITY INVENTORY/PLANNING

Inventoried existing public facilities will help identify and plan for future needs.

- Coordinate with a local land trust to evaluate options for land acquisition for parks and/or green belts that are identified in the Trails Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (currently in progress).
- A municipal land bank (described in more detail in the Land Use Plan Elements and in Section 5) can be a valuable tool for purchasing key parcels identified by the community for parkland.
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine the economic viability of a convention center in the South Wasilla Heights area.

PARTNERSHIPS

Good partnerships are beneficial to all parties and can help achieve difficult goals.

- Partnerships with community and regional nonprofit organizations, governments, and private entities can help the City fund and acquire land and easements for parkland, community centers, and a potential convention center.

Public Facilities and Utilities

Overview

The public facilities in this area are the MUSC and the airport. The MUSC opened in 2004, and is already a tremendous resource for recreation and gatherings. The MATI is a private non-profit that serves the general public. The Wasilla Municipal Airport provides a radio-controlled runway, onsite fuel and repair, tie-downs, and air taxi service.

This area currently is not supplied with city water and sewer, and relies on wells for water. This area is identified as the Southwest Area under the 2000 City of Wasilla Water Master Plan. The plan assumed a use of 185,400 gallons per day (GPD) in this area in 2015. A 16 inch ductile iron pipe water transmission main was anticipated. The 2002 Wasilla Airport Master Plan also discusses the need for improved water and sewer facilities in the area, including transmission mains and necessary pump/lift stations. Development in this area will need to coincide with the installation of sewer and water mains into the area.

Planning Considerations

Public Facilities

Accessibility

- As in other planning areas, the City has the option of adopting its own standards of accessibility, as long as these meet the ADA requirements at minimum. Since this area is largely undeveloped, there is great opportunity to ensure accessibility in future developments. Planning considerations include all those listed above. The public is interested in seeing more trails and recreational use in this area. Accessibility is being creatively addressed in many places when it comes to recreational development.
- As examples, in the Anchorage area, the Potter Marsh boardwalk incorporates wide areas to make it accessible to wheelchair users and anyone who might wish to be temporarily out of the flow of foot traffic. The new trailhead at Bird Ridge includes a paved section of trail with overlooks and interpretive signs, and an outhouse, after which the more strenuous hiking trail continues up the ridge. Thus, the area is an enjoyable outdoor destination for people of many levels of physical ability.

Capacity

- The present facilities in the planning area have the capacity to meet current needs. In the case of the MUSC, the facility is likely to continue to meet expanding needs for a long time to come. The board of the MATI makes decisions regarding this facility. The Airport Planning Board coordinates with the City Council.

Utilities

Connectivity

- Utilities in this area are not connected to the rest of Wasilla (with the exception of the MUSC, and of electricity at the MATI and airport). Considerations include how best to meet service needs in this area when the time is right to do so.

Capacity

- At present, capacity is not an issue for utilities in this planning area. As demand for development in the area emerges, careful consideration will need to be given to projected needs vs. the costs of meeting them. At some point, the City will be looking for a balance between encouraging development and making sure that development eventually covers the cost of public services.

AIRPORT & TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES GOALS

Public Facilities in the Airport and Transportation Museum area will continue to be well-maintained civic use areas, including the MUSC, parks and trails, and the airport. As the area becomes more developed commercially, the infrastructure / utilities to support that development will be built.

Recommendations

FACILITY ACCESS

Moving users between existing economic centers and multi-use facilities and parks within the community can help increase use and promote growth in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area.

- Prioritize multimodal linkages that connect the MUSC and the airport to Downtown and surrounding residential areas.
- Prioritize development and maintenance of park areas and trails near the MUSC.

UTILITIES INVENTORY/PLANNING

Inventorizing existing utilities and their capacity helps to identify and plan for future needs and determine deficiencies.

- Update current and future level of service needs for public utilities.
- Prioritize actions for meeting future level of service needs.
- Update utility plans, such as the water and sewer master plans, at prescribed intervals.
- Existing utilities and facilities plans should be reviewed and updated as the community changes and grows.

AIRPORT PLANNING

Adopted and current plans can ensure the vision of the community is developed.

- acquisition/annexation that will accommodate supporting services near the airport.
- The Airport Master Plan should be reviewed and updated as the community changes and grows.

PARTNERSHIPS

Good partnerships are beneficial to all parties and can help achieve difficult goals.

- Evaluate City-wide priorities for economic development and infrastructure development.
- Identify priority properties for
- Partnerships with community and regional nonprofit organizations, governments, and private entities can help the City fund infrastructure expansion.

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5 IMPLEMENTATION

FOLLOW-THROUGH WITH IMPLEMENTATION action items determines the success of a plan. To achieve the goals and objectives articulated in Section 3, there must be a comprehensive understanding of the implementation tools and mechanisms. In addition, the City and its partners must identify:

1. Actions and projects to accomplish
2. Lead and supporting partners and individuals
3. Timeframe for completion of actions and projects
4. Annual review process to assess progress in implementing the plan

The Wasilla Area Plans represent a snapshot in time developed as a combination of perspectives from the participating community. Public and private entities, citizen groups, and individuals share responsibility with the City of Wasilla to put the elements of this plan into action. With a cohesive effort, we can achieve our goals and build a stronger community with a vibrant economy.

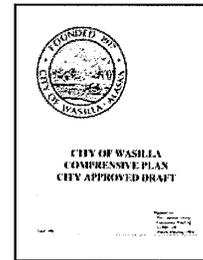
IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS AND MECHANISMS

Implementing the Wasilla Area Plans can be accomplished through changes to existing regulations and practices, and through development of new management tools and procedures. The recommendations listed below are initial suggestions that will require more detailed consideration by the City and its implementation partners.

Existing Tools and Mechanisms – City of Wasilla

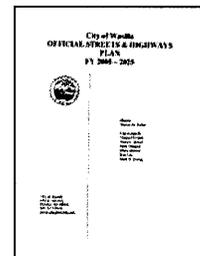
City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan

The first step in implementing the Wasilla Area Plans is to adopt this document as an amendment to the 1996 comprehensive plan. Adoption will allow the Wasilla Planning Commission, Wasilla City Council, and City staff to use and cite the document as a basis for making decisions, such as identifying capital project priorities and considering applications for rezoning. The City should update the entire comprehensive plan as soon as funding is available, due to tremendous changes in the community since 1996.



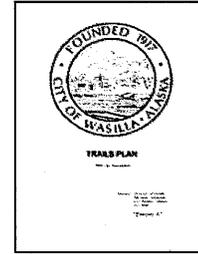
City of Wasilla Official Streets & Highways Plan

The Official Streets and Highways Plan serves as a planning guide for the Planning Commission, City Council, and other agencies to use as the basis for decisions on street development and improvement in Wasilla. The Wasilla Area Plans document should be consulted when updating the Official Streets and Highways Plan and setting transportation capital project priorities.



Wasilla Parks & Recreation Commission

Wasilla has a Trails Plan, and is in the process of preparing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. City staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission should consult the Wasilla Area Plans document during plan preparation and updates to ensure that the plans are complementary and adequate direction is incorporated in parks and recreation decision-making.



Economic Development Department

The City of Wasilla has an economic development department that actively markets Wasilla as a business location and works to grow locally-owned businesses. The Wasilla Economic Development Department can use this document to promote economic development and help implement the Wasilla Area Plans.

City of Wasilla Land Development Code

Application of the Wasilla Area Plans to the **existing** land development code and processes include the following:

Overlay Districts – The City could consider creating overlay districts within each of the areas. A special purpose overlay district can be applied to a specific geographic area in order to provide additional specific guidance or requirements to the underlying zoning district. It does not modify any of the general zoning district allowed uses or density and dimensional requirements as defined in the Wasilla Land Development Code. In creating an overlay district, it will be important to define the purpose of the overlay district and specific rules of the district. As an example, an overlay district in Green Bay, Wisconsin allows structures to share parking areas and receive credits for available parking stalls within a certain distance of the structure.

Rezoning – Actions related to rezoning include both municipal review of requests for rezoning, and rezoning that could be initiated by the City of Wasilla. City staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council should refer to this document when considering approval of requests for rezoning. If the proposed rezoning does not appear to be compatible with the direction set forth in this planning document, the request could be modified or denied for approval.

For property that is currently owned by the City, or property that may be required to encourage consolidation of small lots and infill development, the City could institute a request for rezoning to encourage specific uses compatible with the direction of this planning document. The size of potential rezoning and compatibility with surrounding uses should be considered to avoid conflicts and the appearance of “spot zoning”.

Changes to Approved and Conditional Uses – Approved and conditional uses are currently defined in City Code for each zoning district; the City has some leeway in approving conditional uses. City staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council should

refer to this document when considering approval of requests for conditional uses. Approval of a conditional use may promote the goals and objectives of this planning document. If the proposed request does not appear to be compatible with the direction set forth in this planning document, the request could be modified or denied for approval.

When revising the City Land Use Code, the City could institute changes in approved and conditional uses to encourage specific uses compatible with the direction of this planning document. This could also be addressed if designing overlay districts.

Variations – A variance is a relaxation of density, setback, height, or other standards set forth in the Wasilla Land Development Code, and requires both a pre-application conference with City staff and a hearing before the Planning Commission. City staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council should refer to this document when considering approval of requests for variances. If the proposed request does not appear to be compatible with the direction set forth in this planning document, the request could be modified or denied for approval.

Planned Unit Developments – PUDs are intended to allow flexibility in regulation, design, and placement of buildings and uses of open space, and allow modification of specific zoning district requirements. It typically can accommodate a higher population density, or increased intensity or mix of uses than is permitted in a specific zoning district. City staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council should refer to this document when considering approval of requests for PUDs. Approval of a PUD may promote the goals and objectives of this planning document. If the proposed request does not appear to be compatible with the direction set forth in this planning document, the request could be modified or denied.

Landscaping Standards - The purpose of the City of Wasilla Landscaping Standards Ordinance includes “enhancing the community environment and visual character, providing attractive and functional separation and screening between uses, and to attract visitors and tourists to the City for the economic benefit of everyone in the community. City staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council should refer to this Wasilla Area Plans document when implementing the Landscaping Standards Ordinance.

Taxes, Fees, & Other Economic Incentives

The City of Wasilla currently offers quick permit processing times and reduced permit fees as potential incentives for economic development. Without a tax abatement, the ability to offer tax relief is limited. However, the City could look at reductions in other fees, such as utility hookups, on a case by case basis to encourage the types of development recommended by the plan.

Existing Tools and Mechanisms – Mat-Su Borough

Platting Actions

The Mat-Su Borough is responsible for regulatory, planning, and programming processes that can be used to implement the Wasilla Area Plans.

The Mat-Su Borough is responsible for subdivision of land within the City of Wasilla. Subdivision dimensional requirements and other aspects of approval are influenced by existing plans and ordinances such as the Wasilla Land Development Code. The Mat-Su Borough should refer to this document when considering approval of requests for subdivision of the three planning areas. If the proposed request does not appear to be compatible with the direction set forth in this planning document, the request could be modified or denied.

Mat-Su School District

The School District is responsible for locating, planning, and constructing new school facilities, and for programming improvements to existing facilities. There are a number of recommendations in Section 3 of this plan that should be considered by the School District.

Taxes, Fees, & Other Economic Incentives

The Mat-Su Borough can provide a number of economic development incentives, including tax deferrals and abatements, issuing revenue bonds and providing fast track permitting. The City of Wasilla and the Mat-Su Borough should discuss potential uses of these tools to promote plan implementation.

Existing Tools and Mechanisms – State of Alaska

Transportation Capital Project Programming

State funding for major transportation projects is programmed through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and is usually guided by recommendations from the City on their transportation priorities. The City should work with state transportation planners to incorporate plan recommendations into transportation priorities.

Property & Facility Investments & Decision

The State of Alaska makes decisions on the location and leasing of state office buildings, disposition and use of state properties. The City should work with state facility planners to incorporate plan recommendations into facility decision-making.

New Tools and Mechanisms – City of Wasilla

Downtown Business Improvement District/Redevelopment Authority

Establishment of a Downtown business improvement district and/or Redevelopment Authority can provide a means of encouraging infill development and sharing the cost of infrastructure improvements. It can also

help the City promote catalytic development projects such as public office buildings and mixed use development complexes, and organize special events that bring people Downtown.

A Business Development District can be run as a voluntary association of a formal organization with bylaws. Typically, a formal business improvement district is funded by a special tax assessment, with revenues dedicated to supporting activities within the district. There are a number of models and guidelines that can be investigated should this be of interest to the City and Downtown property and business owners.

Municipal Land Bank & Revenue Bonds

Municipal Land Bank programs are used to acquire lands for a variety of public purposes, including lot acquisition and consolidation for public facilities or

resale to private parties for development. Resale could be used to encourage mixed use and higher density residential development. Options for initial funding of land acquisition include an investment of general revenue funds, use of revenue bonds similar to those used by utilities, and state and federal grants. Ultimately, sale of lands under the program would cover the majority of program costs.

Gateway Committee

Some communities form citizen committees to help develop community branding and tools for “wayfinding” – directing residents and visitors to

community events, attractions, and facilities. This could be accomplished as a subcommittee to the Wasilla Chamber of Commerce, or as a special committee of the Parks and Recreation Commission or Planning Commission.

South Wasilla Heights Policy Advisory Committee

The number of property owners and the development potential of the South Wasilla Heights planning area lend to formation of a development advisory

committee similar to the Downtown Improvement District. This advisory committee could include property and business owners and representatives of City Commissions, with the intent to explore incentives and development options that would maximize development potential in a manner that incorporates the South Wasilla Height’s views and open space opportunities.

Actions and Responsibilities

Actions

Actions are projects undertaken to achieve the objectives. They can be monitored and evaluated for success. Specific implementation actions that have been recommended to address issues, goals, and objectives are presented in Section 3 of this document, and are listed as ongoing actions or short-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for implementing actions is what makes a planning effort successful, and cannot fall to the City alone. Implementation will require a partnership between government (City, Mat-Su Borough, and state), businesses, community organizations, and landowners to attain the goals and objectives of this plan. Specific recommendations for implementation responsibility to address issues, goals, and objectives are presented in Section 3 of this document. It will take leadership among the recommended partners to convene a group to address the recommended policy actions.

Annual Review

Monitoring progress of the Wasilla Area Plans is an important element of implementation. Each year, these plans will be reviewed to recognize our progress on meeting our goals and objectives. The Planning Department will coordinate this annual review with all City departments, and as appropriate, with other entities that have been identified as a partner to accomplish the goals and objectives.

Annual Review Goals

- ✓ Identify successes
- ✓ Identify problems and obstacles
- ✓ Review the level of activity and the availability of resources
- ✓ Reassess relative priorities
- ✓ Maintain and verify departmental accountability
- ✓ Generate recommendations to improve the quality and effectiveness of the area plans

The annual review will consist of a questionnaire or work session with input from each department director or organization head. Topics will include the goal, objective, and actions related to the department or organization. The progress report should include the following:

Progress Report

- ✓ Current status of the project
- ✓ Any changes made to the project
- ✓ Major milestones accomplished
- ✓ Schedule for future action
- ✓ Problems encountered and strategies to overcome them
- ✓ Recommendations for changes to the plan
- ✓ Whether or not the project has helped achieve the goals/objectives in the plan

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FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS AND POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

To achieve the visions outlined in the Wasilla Area Plans, the City may have to explore new avenues of funding to implement priority projects. A summary table of potential federal, state, and private funding sources was assembled to assist the City with the task of identifying potential options. The state also produces an Economic Development Resource Guide which lists funding options for municipalities. In addition, the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) – Division of Investments and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) provide loans and assistance to small businesses.

These tables offer a starting point for organizing efforts to pursue potential funding sources. These tables should be updated regularly. There may be additional funding sources available that are not included in these tables, but may be added in the future.

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PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
FEDERAL							
Emergency Watershed Protection Program	U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service	Assists in relieving imminent hazards to life and property from floods and products of erosion due to natural disasters (technical and financial assistance).	There must be an unusual event, cannot be an ongoing problem. Funds may be used for erosion control but not relocation; intended only as a temporary solution. Assistance must be requested within 60 days of natural disaster.	Anchorage NRCS Field Office (907) 271-2424	75% cost share to restore watershed functions. Technical assistance can also be applied for.	N/A	City of Wasilla
Economic Development Technical Assistance	U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration	Project grants to support local technical assistance programs. This is a very flexible resource targeted at local economic development efforts.	Applicants may be municipalities, public entities, non-profits and Alaska Native village entities. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.	Berney Richert and staff U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration 550 W. 7 th Ave., Suite 1780 Anchorage, AK 99501 (907) 271-2272 (907) 271-2274 (fax) brichert@eda.doc.gov	Grants are typically in the \$15,000 to \$40,000 range.	N/A	City of Wasilla
Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG)	USDA Rural Development	Grants may be used for: 1) acquisition and development of land; 2) construction, conversion, enlargement and repairs of buildings, equipment, streets, and pollution control and abatement facilities; 3) start-up operating cost and working capital; 4) technical assistance for proposed grantee projects; 5) reasonable professional fees and charges; and 6) to establish a revolving fund which can be used to provide financial assistance to third party recipients.	Public entities, such as cities, boroughs, federally recognized Alaska Native Village entities and private nonprofit corporations. The project must be located in a rural area or city of less than 50,000 people. Application must show how small business development or expansion is likely to occur as a result of the grant, and cannot be passed through to private business.	Dean Stewart USDA Rural Development 800 W. Evergreen, Suite 201 Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 761-7722 (907) 761-7793 (fax) dean.stewart@ak.usda.gov http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tbs/busp/fbeg.htm	No maximum amount, but priority is given to smaller projects. During fiscal year (FY) 2007, approximately \$40.8 million is available for the RBEG program.	N/A	City of Wasilla
Business & Industrial Loans	USDA Rural Development	Assist in obtaining quality loans for economic development. Funds must be used for business enterprise.	Project must be in a rural area or city of less than 50,000 population, borrower must obtain a loan commitment before borrower and lender jointly apply for a loan guarantee; one-time 2% loan guarantee fee.	Frank Muncy or Dean Stewart (907) 745-2176 http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tbs/busp/b&i_gar.htm	The total amount of Agency loans to one borrower must not exceed \$10 million. Exceptions for loans of up to \$40 million under certain circumstances can be made.	N/A	Business owners, federally recognized tribal groups, a public body, or an individual.

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
Rural Business Opportunity Grants	USDA Rural Development	Grants may be used for these purposes: 1) to identify and analyze business opportunities that use local resources, 2) to establish business support centers or businesses, 3) for economic development planning, 4) to pay reasonable fees and charges for professional services necessary to conduct the technical assistance, training or planning functions, and 5) to identify, train and provide technical assistance to existing or prospective entrepreneurs.	Grants are available to rural areas other than a city or town with a population of greater than 50,000. Eligible organizations include rural public bodies; rural non-profit corporations; rural Indian tribes on federal reservations and other federally recognized tribal groups; and cooperatives with members that are primarily rural residents.	Dean Stewart USDA Rural Development 800 W. Evergreen, Suite 201 Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 761-7722 (907) 761-7793 (fax) dean.stewart@ak.usda.gov http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/feedback/buspr/rbog.htm	The maximum grant for a project serving a single state is \$50,000.	N/A	Business owners, non-profit corporations, Indian tribes, and rural cooperatives.
Community Facility Loans and Grants	USDA Rural Development	Loans for public entities in rural areas to construct, repair, improve or expand community facilities for health care, public safety and public services.	Applicants must be unable to obtain needed funds from other sources at reasonable rates and terms; have legal capacity to borrow and repay loans; be financially sound and able to manage the facility effectively. Available for communities with populations less than 10,000. Interest rates on loans vary. Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as non-profit corporations and tribal governments.	Frank Muncy or Dean Stewart (907) 745-2176 http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/bp/7.0.1/0.1Q?maxid=BUSINESS_DEVELOPMENT&parentnav=RURAL_DEVELOPMENT&maxtyp=RI	Alaska's FY97 allotment was \$750,000 for direct loans and grants up to \$750,000 in loan guarantees. Grants up to 75% of development cost. Loans repayable over 40 years.	N/A	City of Wasilla
Water and Waste Disposal Loans and Grants	USDA Rural Development	Loan and grant funds to construct, repair, improve or expand water or sewer systems, storm sewer facilities, sanitary landfills, incinerators, and necessary equipment.	Public entities such as cities, boroughs, federally recognized Alaska Native Village entities and non-profit corporations are eligible. Applicants must be unable to obtain funds from other sources at reasonable rates and terms. The maximum term for all loans is 40 years; however, no repayment period will exceed state statutes or the useful life of the facility.	Dean Stewart USDA Rural Development 800 W. Evergreen, Suite 201 Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 761-7722 (907) 761-7793 (fax) dean.stewart@ak.usda.gov http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fd/pubs/pa1806.pdf	Grants are made, in some instances, for up to 75% of eligible project costs.	N/A	City of Wasilla

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
Airport Improvement Program	Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	Provides funding to improve the safety, capacity, security and environmental concerns of public use airports. Grants are provided to public agencies and certain private owners.	Eligibility is based on type of sponsor and type of activity that needs funding. Does not include improvements to hangers, terminals or non-aviation development. Eligible airports must be included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems.	James Lomen Airports Program Specialist U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) FAA 222 W. 8th Ave, Room #36A Anchorage, AK 99513 (907) 271-5816 http://www.faa.gov/airports/airtraffic/airports/regional_guidance/alaskan/aip/	For large and medium primary hub airports, the grant covers 75% of eligible costs (or 80% for noise program implementation). For small primary, reliever, and general aviation airports, the grant covers 95% of eligible costs.	N/A	City of Wasilla (note: the City is already receiving these grants)
Major Capital Investments Program (New Starts and Small Starts)	Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Provides capital assistance for three primary activities: new and replacement buses and facilities, modernization of existing rail systems, and new fixed guide way systems (New Starts).	Eligible recipients for capital investment funds are public bodies and agencies (transit authorities and other state and local public bodies and agencies thereof) including states, municipalities, other political subdivisions of states; public agencies and instrumentalities of one or more states; and certain public corporations, boards, and commissions established under state law.	Office of Program Management (202) 366-4020 http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3590.html	Funding match is 80% federal, 20% local.	Application deadlines are posted in Federal Register	City of Wasilla MASCOT
Rural and Small Urban Areas	FTA	Provides formula funding to states for supporting public transportation in areas of less than 50,000 population.	Eligible recipients are state and local governments, non-profit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups), and public transit operators.	Office of Program Management (202) 366-4020 http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_355.html	Federal share maximum is 80% (90% in some cases) The maximum federal share for operating assistance is 50% of the net operating costs. The local share is 50%, which shall come from an undistributed cash surplus, a replacement or depreciation cash fund or reserve, or new capital.	Contact Bruce Wells at the Alaska Department of Transportation (ADOT) for local application information (907) 465-6991	City of Wasilla

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
Rural Transit Assistance Program	FTA	Provides a source of funding to assist in the design and implementation of training and technical assistance projects and other support services tailored to meet the needs of transit operators in non-urbanized areas.	Funds are apportioned to state, but eligible recipients are states and local governments, and local transit operators.	Office of Program Management (202) 366-4020 http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3610.html	\$65,000 plus an amount based on un-urbanized population to state of Alaska. There is no federal requirement for a local match.	Contact Bruce Wells ADOT for local application information (907) 465-6991	City of Wasilla
Job Access and Reverse Commute Program	FTA	Grant program to develop transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and low income individuals to and from jobs and to develop transportation services for residents of urban centers and rural and suburban areas to suburban employment opportunities. Emphasis is placed on projects that use mass transportation services.	Eligible recipients are local governmental authorities and agencies and non-profit entities.	Office of Program Management (202) 366-4020 http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3624.html	Match not to exceed 50% in USDOT funding. Other 50% may be derived from other federal programs where eligible, states, and localities.	Email Debbi Howard, ADOT Transit Coordinator for application information debbi_howard@dot.state.ak.us	City of Wasilla
New Freedom Program	FTA	Grants for new transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) to assist individuals with disabilities with transportation needs.	Recipient will be required to certify that projects selected were derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan and that the plan was developed through a process that involved individuals of the public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers.	Office of Program Management (202) 366-4020 http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3549.html	Funds are apportioned among the states based on the number of individuals with disabilities. The federal share for the net project capital cost of a project may be up to 80%, and not more than 50% of the net operating cost of a project.	Email Debbi Howard, ADOT Transit Coordinator for application information debbi_howard@dot.state.ak.us	City of Wasilla

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
STATE Mini-Grants Assistance Program	Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development DCCED, USDA Forest Service; Denali Commission	Competitive grants to fund economic development projects that support business or community development activities. Mini-grant program funding is a combination of the USDA Forest Service Community Assistance program and Denali Commission funds, appropriated for the program.	Eligible applicants include municipalities, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations applying on behalf of a community that has a population of 10,000 or less. Community consensus for proposed projects is a key element in funding consideration.	Jill Davis, Grants Administrator, DCCED, Division of Community Advocacy 211 Cushman St. Fairbanks, AK 99701-4639 (907) 451-2717 (907) 451-2742 (fax) Jill_Davis@commerce.state.ak.us http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/grt/minigrant.htm	Maximum \$30,000 per community per fiscal year	Funding for current year is uncertain. Website will be updated when/if funding is allocated.	City of Wasilla
Municipal Water, Sewerage and Solid Waste Matching Grant Program	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Division of Facility Construction and Operation	Provides grants for water, wastewater, and solid waste processing facilities. Funding amount available is limited to 100% of eligible costs. Funding does not cover operation, maintenance, repair, or construction of storm sewer systems.	Alaska municipalities are eligible. Application is made through an online questionnaire.	Mike Lewis (907) 269-7616 mlburns@envirocon.state.ak.us http://www.dec.state.ak.us/vwater/minigrant/index.htm	Contact Mike Lewis for more information.	Contact Mike Lewis for more information.	City of Wasilla
Rural Energy Programs	DCED, Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA), Alaska Energy Authority (AEA)	Two types of grants: 1) to continue activities, procurement of materials, and equipment that would be used to prevent power plant related emergencies and disasters statewide; 2) provides follow-on funding for correction of hazards that are existing or pose a possible threat to life, health and safety in rural communities. Wherever possible, funds will be used to leverage local matching funds.	Inquire with AIDEA	Kris Noonan Program Manager (907) 269-4697 knoonan@aidea.org	Contact Kris Noonan for more information.	Contact Kris Noonan for more information.	City of Wasilla
Small Business Economic Development Loan Program	AIDEA	To provide private sector employment by financing the start-up and expansion of businesses that will create significant long-term employment.	Companies must be a small business as defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA). Applicants are required to match loan funds with cash or other private, non-public financing.	Division of Investments (907) 465-2510	Maximum loan amount is \$500,000.	N/A	Small businesses

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
Community Development Block Grant	Department of Community and Regional Affairs, Municipal and Regional Assistance Division	Provides financial resources to Alaskan communities for public facilities and planning activities which address issues detrimental to the health and safety of local residents and to reduce the costs of essential community services. The program may also fund Special Economic Development activities which result in the creation of jobs for low and moderate income persons.	Any Alaskan municipal government is eligible to apply.	Jo E. Grove, Block Grants Program Manager, DCED, Division of Community Advocacy 211 Cushman Street Fairbanks, AK 99701-4639 (907) 451-2716 (907) 451-2742 (fax) Jo Grove@commerce.state.ak.us http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/grt/blockgrants.htm	Maximum of \$850,000 per community	December or January	City of Wasilla
Beneficiary and Special Needs Housing Program	Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)	Grants to non-profit service providers and housing developers for construction of housing for the Alaskan special needs populations, primarily the beneficiaries of the Alaska Mental Health Trust.	Applicants restricted to local governments, non-profit organizations, and tax-exempt organizations.	Bob Pickett, Planner P.O. Box 101020 Anchorage, Alaska 99510-1020 (907) 330-8273 (907) 338-2585 (fax) bpickett@ahfc.state.ak.us http://www.ahfc.state.ak.us/grants/beneficiary_snhg.cfm	\$100,000	4:30 p.m., Friday, September 21, 2007	City of Wasilla
HOME Investment Partnership Act	AHFC	Funding is available to develop new affordable rental housing through new construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition and rehabilitation. HOME funds are typically grant funds but may also be loaned to project sponsors.	Applicants are restricted to for-profit organizations, non-profit organizations, and regional housing authorities.	Corrine O'Neill P.O. Box 101020 Anchorage, AK 99510-1020 (907) 330-8275 (907) 338-2585 (fax) conell@ahfc.state.ak.us http://www.ahfc.state.ak.us/grants/home.cfm	\$50,000	4:30 p.m., Friday, September 21, 2007	For-profit organizations, non-profit organizations, and regional housing authorities.
Senior Citizens Housing Development Fund	AHFC	Provides housing for persons who are 60 years of age and older and whose incomes are in the low to moderate ranges. Acquisition, rehabilitation, accessibility modification, and new construction of senior housing as well as pre-development activities are all eligible for grant awards.	Applicants are restricted to for-profit organizations, non-profit organizations, and regional housing authorities.	Elaine Mello P.O. Box 101020 Anchorage, AK 99510-1020 (907) 330-8236 (907) 338-2585 (fax) emello@ahfc.state.ak.us http://www.ahfc.state.ak.us/grants/schdf.cfm	\$100,000	4:30 p.m., Friday, September 21, 2007	For-profit organizations, non-profit organizations, and regional housing authorities.

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
Homeless Assistance Program	AHFC	Funds are awarded competitively to homeless service providers for emergency or transitional housing or to prevent homelessness through payment of arrearages.	Applicants are restricted to municipalities, regional housing authorities, non-profit organizations or any partnerships thereof.	Kris Duncan, Planner AHFC P.O. Box 101020 Anchorage, AK 99510 (907) 330-8276 (800) 478-2432 (907) 338-2585 (fax) kduncan@ahfc.state.ak.us http://www.ahfc.state.ak.us/grants/homeless_assistance.cfm	Yet to be determined	November 6, 2007	City of Wasilla
Child Care Grant Program	Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), Division of Early Development	Funding for facility salaries, substitute care, health and safety related items, and education and training of staff related to child development.	Applicants must have a current Alaska Child Care License and Business License, participate in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and willing to accept children funded through the CCAP.	Program Manager, DEED, Division of Public Assistance, Department of Health and Social Services 619 E. Ship Creek Ave., Suite 230 Anchorage, AK 99501 (907) 269-4500 (907) 269-4536 (fax) ccpo@health.state.ak.us http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/ccare/care_grant.html	Amount is determined geographically and by attendance	N/A	Child care providers
Recreational Trails Grant Program	Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR)	Grants are available for the development and maintenance of trails and related facilities. Funding is also available for some safety and education projects.	Municipalities, public agencies, Native organizations and non-profits are eligible. http://www.alaskatrails.org	Grants Administrator (907) 269-8709 http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/grants/trails.htm	Maximum \$50,000 Program offers 80/20 federal matching funds	October 1	City of Wasilla
Snowmobile Trails Grant Program	DNR, DPOR	Reimbursable, matching grant funds are available for trail easement acquisition, development and maintenance of trails and trail-related facilities for snowmobile use. Funds are also available for snowmobile safety and educational programs. Development, maintenance, and acquisition projects require a 75/25 match. Safety and education programs do not require matching funds.	Applicant may not apply for additional funding for a project receiving funding from the DPOR. Businesses and individuals are ineligible.	Alaska DPOR Grants administrator 550 W. 7th Ave., Ste. 1380 Anchorage, AK 99501-3561 (907) 269-8699 http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/grants/snowmoit.htm	Safety and education grants provide between \$1,000 and \$15,000 Development and maintenance grants provide a minimum of \$2,500, with no maximum Grantee must provide a 25% match of the total project cost	August 1	City of Wasilla non-profit organizations and public agencies

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants	DNR, DPOR, National Park Service (NPS)	Provides partial funding for the acquisition of outdoor recreation lands and/or development of outdoor recreation facilities. 50% local match is required. DNR provides notification of program availability.	<p>For acquisition and development money, the state, cities and federally recognized Tribes are eligible.</p> <p>Qualifying criteria include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Project type must be identified as a community priority in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. 2) Applicant must have authority to provide outdoor recreation services on public lands. 3) If development project, land must be owned by sponsor. 4) All past compliance problems must be solved. 5) Applicant must have current Section 504 Self-Evaluation and Transit Plan, or be willing to prepare one prior to receiving grant. 6) Project development must be accessible to persons with disabilities. 7) Federal share requested must be between \$100,000 and \$500,000. 	<p>Kristy Gray Alaska State Parks 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1380 Anchorage AK 99501-3561 (907) 269-8692 (907) 269-8907 (fax) Kristy_Gray@dnr.state.ak.us http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/pa/aks/grants/lwcf.htm</p>	<p>For the FY'06 funding cycle, applications of no less than \$100,000 and no more than \$500,000 federal share were accepted.</p>	<p>Federal FY'08 • funding for this grant program will be tentatively available in March 2008. It is expected that a grant round will be in the spring.</p> <p>When funding becomes available, all entities listed in the Municipal Officials Directory will be notified via letter.</p>	City of Wasilla
PRIVATE							
Rasmuson Foundation	Rasmuson Foundation	Two award levels are available: Tier 1 awards are for capital projects and Tier 2 awards are for capital projects and the expansion or start-up of innovative projects that address issues of broad community or statewide significance. Capital projects are defined as furnishings, buildings, audio and video equipment, books, medical equipment, computers, art supplies, sports equipment, musical instruments, vehicles, etc.	<p>Alaskan organizations that have received 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service and are classified as "not a private foundation" under section 509(a) of the U.S. Code are eligible.</p>	<p>Rasmuson Foundation 301 W. Northern Lights Blvd. Suite 400 Anchorage, AK 99503 (907) 297-2700 (877) 366-2700 (907) 297-2770 (fax) rasmusonfdn@rasmuson.org http://www.rasmuson.org/ind-ex.html</p>	<p>Tier 1 awards: less than \$25,000 Tier 2 awards: exceeding \$25,000</p>	<p>N/A</p>	City of Wasilla other organizations

Economic Development Resource Guide lists funding options in Alaska
www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/edrg/EDRG.htm

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The following identifies some public and private sources that are organized to provide technical and financial assistance to both new and established businesses.

<p>DCED Division of Investments 550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1650 Anchorage, AK 99501-3568 (907) 269-8150 (907) 269-8147 (fax) http://www.dced.state.ak.us/investments/index.cfm</p> <p>The Division of Investments offers loans for commercial fishing, fisheries enhancement, and small business economic development, as well as assumptions on existing loans under a number of loan programs.</p>	<p>AIDEA 813 W. Northern Lights Blvd Anchorage, AK 99503 (907) 269-3000 (888) 300-8534 (toll-free AK only) (907) 269-3044 (fax) www.aidea.org</p> <p>AIDEA is a public corporation of the state that provides capital to finance economic growth in Alaska through a variety of financing assistance programs. Projects financed by AIDEA range from working capital loan guarantees for small businesses to multi-million dollar ports.</p>
<p>Small Business Administration (SBA) Anchorage District Office 510 L St., Suite 310 Anchorage, AK 99501-1952 (907) 271-4022 (907) 271-4545 (fax) www.sba.gov/ak/</p> <p>SBA helps entrepreneurs form successful small businesses. SBA's program offices in every state offer financing, training, and advocacy for small firms. The SBA works with thousands of lending, educational, and training institutions nationwide.</p>	<p>Women'SFinances YWCA of Anchorage 245 W. 5th Ave. P.O. Box 102059 Anchorage, AK 99510-2059 (907) 274-1524 (907) 272-3146 (fax) ywcaak@alaska.net</p> <p>Alaska's only SBA designated Women's Business Center, is a full-service small business and micro-enterprise development organization assisting women (and men) as they start and grow businesses in Alaska.</p>
<p>Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) – Branch of Credit and Finance P.O. Box 25520 Juneau, AK 99802-5520 (907) 586-7103 (800) 645-8397 (907) 586-7037 (fax)</p> <p>The BIA's Loan Guarantee Program offers either 80% or 90% guarantees on loans made by a commercial bank to an Alaska Native, American Indian, tribe, or Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporation. The ceiling limit for an individual is \$500,000 and for tribes and ANCSA Corporations, the limit is \$5.5 million.</p>	<p>USDA Rural Development 800 West Evergreen, Suite 201 Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 761-7705 (907) 761-7783 (fax) http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ak/ dean.stewart@ak.usda.gov</p> <p>USDA Rural Development's mission includes three separate agencies: Rural Business – Cooperative Service; Rural Utilities Service; and Rural Housing Service. The agency has a variety of programs available to support economic development in rural areas, including guarantees, direct loans, and grants. These programs include Business and Industry Loan Guarantees, Business and Industry Direct Loan Program, and Rural Business Enterprise Grants.</p>

<p>Alaska Business Development Center, Inc. 3335 Arctic Blvd., Suite 203 Anchorage, AK 99503 (907) 562-0335 (800) 478-3474 (907) 562-6988 (fax) www.abdc.org</p> <p>The Alaska business Development Center, Inc. currently received funding from the Alaska Division of Investments to provide one-on-one technical assistance statewide to commercial harvesters and small business participants or potential participants in the Alaska fishing industry. This service offers assistance for those who desire expanded opportunity and employment in the industry, or who are in financial trouble. This program specifically targets projects that promote value-added fish processing or increased product quality.</p>	<p>Alaska Small Business Development Center (SBDC) 430 W. 7th Ave, Suite 110 Anchorage, AK 99501-3550 (907) 274-7232 (800) 478-7232 (907) 274-9524 (fax) www.aksbdc.org</p> <p>The SBDC was designed to provide small businesses with the practical assistance they need to survive, grow, and prosper. The SBDC works with both established businesses and individuals that are planning to go into business, and is committed to strengthening the Alaskan economy through growth and stability in small businesses.</p>
<p>DCED Division of Community Advocacy 550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1770 Anchorage, AK 99501-2341 (907) 269-4580 (907) 269-4539 (fax) www.dced.state.ak.us/dca/</p> <p>DCED offers business assistance and support through various programs (including the Division of Community Advocacy referenced above).</p> <p>DCED publishes the Economic Development Resource Guide. This guide contains over 100 programs that provide funding assistance or support for businesses and communities. The resource guide can be found on the Internet at: http://www.dced.state.ak.us/dca/edrg/EDRG.htm.</p>	

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Historical and Regional Context

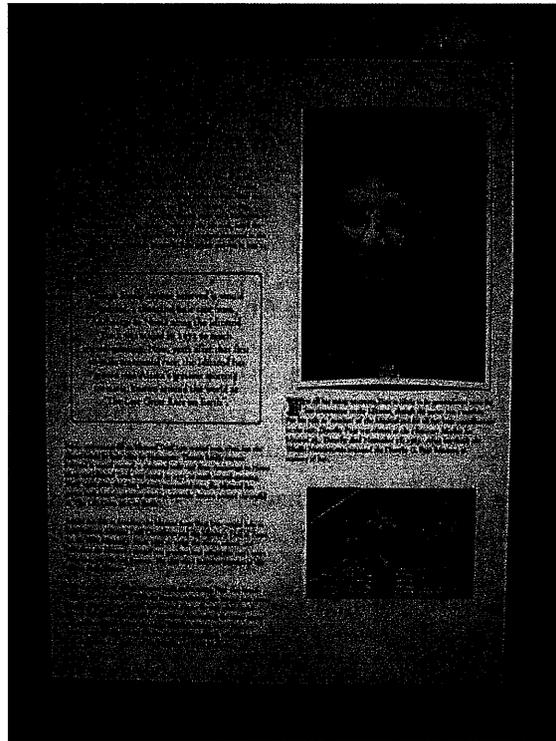
About 12 miles north of the Knik Arm of Cook Inlet, Wasilla lies in a lake-rich plain between the Matanuska River, and the Susitna River. The Dena'ina (Tanaina) Athabascan Indians called the area Benteh, meaning 'among the lakes' (Cook and Norris 1998). Areas of frequent use along these rivers and in the Talkeetna Mountains were historically connected by Native trails and winter routes (Fall 1981).

The original townsite of Wasilla was named after Chief Wasilla, a local Dena'ina chief and shaman (City of Wasilla 2007a). There are various opinions regarding the meaning of Wasilla and the origin of the naming of the community by some historians' accounts. In the Dena'ina dialect the word "Wasilla" means "breath of air," a perfect name for the town nestled between two beautiful lakes. However, some assert the name descended as a variation of the Russian name "Vasili." Likely after Vasili Melakoff, who explored the area in the 1830s (Potter 1978).

The productive lakes and streams that characterized Chief Wasilla's home made the area a popular wintering ground and the site of small, semi-permanent Native villages. Local regions such as the Susitna Valley, Talkeetna Mountains, and Matanuska River were historically connected by Native transportation and trade trails. By the late 1830's, smallpox had been introduced in Alaska by the Russian American fur trade. The disease struck many villages in the Wasilla area, killing roughly half of the Dena'ina residents. Measles, tuberculosis, and influenza also took a devastating toll (Cook and Norris 1998).

Knik, the first boom town in the Mat-Su Valley, boasted a population of 500 by 1915 (Potter 1978). The town served the fur trappers and miners working the gold fields at Cache Creek and Willow Creek. The town of Wasilla was established in 1917, at the intersection of the new Alaska Railroad with the Carle Wagon Road (today's Wasilla-Fishhook Road), which linked the Willow Creek mining district with the town of Knik. Wasilla's proximity to the gold fields and railroad service lured Knik residents to relocate, and in a few short years, Knik became a ghost town. Willow Creek was a very active mining area between 1909 and 1950. Incomplete records indicate that at least 623,874 ounces of gold, worth nearly 18 million dollars, were produced at a time when gold was valued between 20 and 35 dollars an ounce. Wasilla was a supply base for gold mining, and for coal mining, through World War II (City of Wasilla 2007a).

Wasilla is home to the headquarters of the Iditarod Trail Committee. The Iditarod sled dog race commemorates the heroic transport of life-saving serum to combat a diphtheria epidemic that broke out in Nome, on the Bering Sea Coast, deep in the winter of 1925, when planes were



Dorothy Page was the "Mother of the Iditarod." Along with Joe Redington, Sr., she was responsible for bringing the Iditarod to Wasilla.

grounded due to cold. The original serum run began with rail transport from Anchorage to Nenana, north of Fairbanks, where the rail line ended. From there, teams of dogs and mushers relayed the serum to Nome. The annual race, hugely popular in Alaska and with a following nationwide, covers the entire distance by dog team.

As road construction and upgrades have improved access to Anchorage, vacation homes and commuting between Anchorage and Wasilla have become more common. In particular, the Parks Highway segment into Wasilla, finished in the 1970s, allowed hundreds of workers to begin the 45-minute drive to Anchorage and back each day. Hundreds of new residents were drawn to the area, creating a great demand for new services. Wasilla incorporated in 1974 as a First Class City (Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development 2007).

Major growth occurred in Wasilla during the Alaska oil boom and pipeline development of the 1970s and 1980s. By 1984, Wasilla had again become the commercial heart of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and for a time was the fastest growing city of its size in the United States. Many people are attracted to the Valley and to Wasilla for the rural setting, affordable housing and a family-oriented community. While the commercial and residential development patterns have obscured much of the frontier town setting, Wasilla residents still identify strongly with the town's roots in the first days of non-Native settlement of Alaska, when the era's pioneers established a hub of commerce and initiative in the young territory.

Location and Setting

Wasilla provides residents an ideal location that offers access to a multi-use year round playground with some of Alaska's most sought after vacation spots just a short scenic drive from home including the Matanuska and Knik glaciers, Hatcher Pass, several state game refuges and recreation areas, world-class fishing rivers, and Denali National Park and Preserve. Within the City, residents can enjoy Lucille and Wasilla lakes, Cottonwood and Lucille creeks, and several smaller streams (ADCCED 2007 and City of Wasilla 1996). Figure A1 illustrates Wasilla's location and setting within Alaska.

Wasilla covers approximately 13 square miles of land and about 1 square mile of water in the southern reaches of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The City is anchored between the Talkeetna Mountains and the Knik Arm and flanked by the Matanuska and Susitna valleys in southcentral Alaska. The main line of the Alaska Railroad runs through town, and local roads, the George Parks Highway, and the Glenn Highway provide direct links to Anchorage, as well as other destinations throughout Alaska and Canada. Anchorage is a manageable commute approximately 45 miles south of the City, while Fairbanks is about 315 miles north (ADCCED 2007; City of Wasilla 1996; and City of Wasilla 2005).

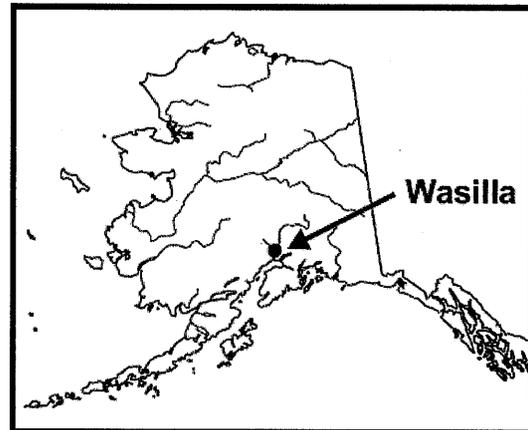


Figure A1. Location and Setting

Vegetation and Wetlands

Existing Conditions

Vegetation is diverse in the Wasilla area and characteristic of boreal forest vegetation as depicted in Figure A2. Treed areas consist mostly of three types of forest cover; needleleaf, broadleaf, and a mixture of the two. Needleleaf forests have a canopy of mainly white spruce in dry areas and black spruce in wetland areas. The understory consists of species such as alder, willow, devil's club, shrub birch, blueberry, cranberry, and mosses. The canopy of the broadleaf forests are made up of paper birch, aspen, and cottonwood, and the understory may consist of Labrador tea, blueberry, rusty Menziesia, prickly rose, species of horsetails, and fireweed. Mixed broadleaf and needleleaf forests can have a canopy of white and black spruce, paper birch, aspen, or cottonwood. In addition to most of the understory species found in either broadleaf or needleleaf forests, mixed forest understory may also consist of dwarf dogwood and lady fern (City of Wasilla 1996 and Lakehead University 2007).

Other types of plant cover in the Wasilla area include tall and low shrubs (alder, devil's club, lady fern, and horehound), dwarf shrubs (dwarf birch and heath species), dry and moist herbs (grasses, sedges, mosses, and lichens), wet and aquatic herbs (sedges, mare's tail, buckbean, pond lilies), agricultural areas (grazing and grain fields), and developed areas (mostly weedy species).

Wetlands in Wasilla and the surrounding areas include Lake Lucille, Wasilla Lake, Cottonwood Creek, and Lucille Creek. These water bodies provide important habitat for freshwater and anadromous fish species as described in the *Fish and Wildlife* section. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has mapped two systems of wetlands in accordance with the Cowardin wetlands classification system in the Wasilla area including the palustrine and lacustrine systems (USFWS 2007).

The terms *bog*, *swamp*, and *marsh* are all common terms for the palustrine system of wetlands. These wetlands are a freshwater system "dominated by trees, shrubs, emergents, and mosses or lichens" (Cowardin et al. 1979). In Wasilla this system is characterized by emergent, forested, and scrub-shrub vegetation types (USFWS 2007). Emergent persistent wetlands are dominated by erect, rooted, perennial plants adapted to growing in water (Cowardin et al. 1979).

Vegetation in the palustrine forested wetlands is typically dominated by white spruce-black spruce hybrids (Viereck et al. 1992). The understory shrub layer consists of both low and tall shrubs such as willow, Labrador tea, lowbush cranberry, and bog blueberry. Common ground cover includes peat mosses, herbaceous species like field horsetail, a few flowered sedges, and a variety of forbs (Viereck et al. 1992 and Reed 1996).

Scrub-shrub wetlands typically are found within and around bogs or fens. Vegetation in palustrine scrub-shrub wetlands is typically dominated by shrubs including those found in forested wetlands, as

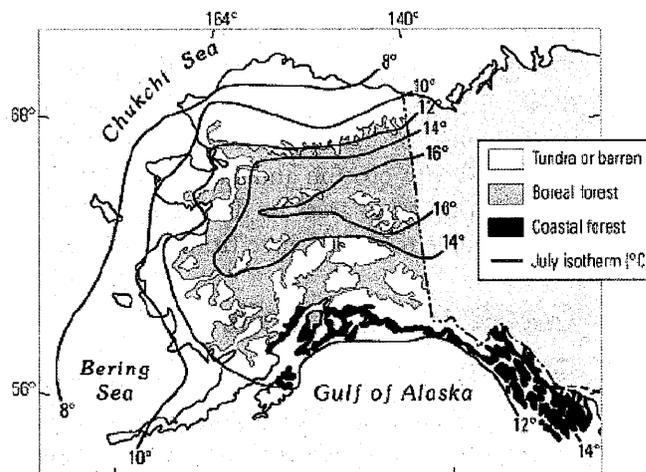


Figure A2. Major Vegetation Types of Alaska.

Source: Ager, T.A. and Carrara, P.E. 2006.

well as sweet gale, leatherleaf, and dwarf birch. The ground cover is similar to that of forested wetlands, with bluejoint reedgrass also being typical (Viereck et al. 1992; Reed 1996).

Implications for Development

Development of land in the Wasilla area may have a variety of effects on wooded and wetland areas. Certain detrimental effects on wildlife are tied to alteration of wetland and forested areas. Some of these, discussed in *Fish and Wildlife* section, may include exclusion of animals from areas normally used, habitat loss, and disturbance. Additionally, fish can be affected by changes in water quality associated with erosion and run-off, and they can be cut off from migration routes to spawning grounds or rearing areas by diverting or blocking streams or draining wetlands. The vegetation itself is susceptible to disturbance from development due to filling wetlands and deforestation.

Geology and Soils

Geology

The Matanuska Valley is characterized as a glacial-drift and loess mantled topographic and structural trough surrounded by the Chugach Mountains to the south and the Talkeetna Mountains to the north. The mountains consist of igneous and metamorphic rocks of Mesozoic age topped with Tertiary sedimentary rocks. Glacial and stream deposits reflect the highly varied geological characteristics of the area (Muhs et al 2004).

The Matanuska Valley was glaciated most recently by the Naptown glacial event. The youngest terminal moraine created by this glaciation, the Elmendorf moraine, lies between 15 to 40 kilometers beyond the Matanuska Valley and is estimated to have been deposited between 13,700 and 11,700 years ago (Muhs et al 2004).

The Wasilla area is generally free of permafrost (NRCS 2002). However, some isolated masses are present locally (Selkregg 1974). The Matanuska Valley is on the southernmost portion of Alaska's zone of discontinuous permafrost (Muhs et al 2004). Permafrost becomes more prevalent to the north and east of Wasilla.

Another noteworthy geologic feature of the Matanuska Valley, and especially to the City of Wasilla, is the Castle Mountain Fault. This fault runs east-west from Sutton to beyond Houston and is a right lateral, strike-slip fault approximately 200 kilometers long (Bunds 2001). The fault occurs within 10 miles northwest of Wasilla and travels through the center of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Documented magnitude 6 and 7 earthquakes have ruptured the Castle Mountain Fault about every 700 years over the last 2,800 years (FTA and ARRC 2005).

Soils

The Wasilla area consists of four main soil types or 'series'. The *Kashwitna* and the *Knik* are most suitable for development. The *Kashwitna* series is found north of the Parks Highway and west of Lake Lucille and occurs within glacial outwash plains and hills (NRCS 1998). The *Knik* series is found mostly north and south of Lake Lucille and Wasilla Lake as well as in downtown Wasilla. *Knik* soils consist of shallow, well-drained soils formed in silty loess over gravelly glacial drift and extremely gravelly coarse sand. *Kashwitna* soils are also well-drained soils formed in silty loess over gravelly glacial drift and extremely gravelly coarse sand and occur at greater depths than the *Knik* series (NRCS 1998). *Knik* series soils are the most suitable and most commonly used for land development, excluding areas along wetlands. However, areas of compacted silt and surficial

depressions associated with these series can contribute to problems with drainage and frost heaving events.

Associated with the *Kashwitna* soil series, are the *Kichatna* and *Deception* soil series. Similar to the *Kashwitna* series, these two soil types occur at greater depths than the shallow *Knik* series. The substratum of the *Kichatna* and *Kashwitna* series is extremely gravelly coarse sand, while the *Deception* series' substratum consists of a very gravelly loam or very gravelly sandy loam (NRCS 1998).

Implications for Development

Frost heaving, slope, and a high water table have implications for local development potential. Drainage and frost heaving occur in localized pockets of the *Knik* and *Kashwitna* series; however, these series are typically suitable for development, particularly the *Knik* series.

Valuable mineral deposits are not currently known to exist within the City of Wasilla; however, large amounts of gravel and sand provide a local and ready source of material for road construction and concrete applications. Several trainloads of gravel are exported to Anchorage daily, during heavy construction seasons. Marl, a lime-rich deposit, is used on a small-scale for agricultural uses (NRCS 1998).

The Wasilla area lies within the Matanuska Valley coal field and contains known deposits of coal (Selkregg 1974). Additionally, coal bed methane (CBM) projects are in place within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The Pioneer exploration unit, established in 1998, includes much of Downtown Wasilla (ADNR 2004). Methane is the primary energy component of natural gas. Because coal has such a large internal surface area, it can store six or seven times as much gas as a conventional natural gas reservoir of equal volume. In relation to a natural gas reservoir, the coal beds are much shallower and less expensive, thus methane is a valuable resource for energy demands (USGS 2000).

Topography and Drainage

Existing Conditions

Topographic elevations within the city limits of Wasilla vary from about 300 to 500 feet above sea level. Downtown and the Airport and Transportation Museum Area are nearly level, while South Wasilla Heights is significantly higher in elevation. A sudden rise of over 100 feet on the eastern and southern edges of South Wasilla Heights adds to the area's prominence in the landscape and its desirable views. The area slopes away more gradually toward the west.

Downtown is directly north of South Wasilla Heights and in between Wasilla and Lucille lakes. This area is relatively flat, ranging from 300 to 350 feet above sea level. The Airport and Transportation Museum Area has a shallow rise in elevation near its center just south of Jacobsen Lake, which slightly exceeds 350 feet above sea level. This area also has some low-lying wetland areas, including a stretch of Lucille Creek along its southern border, where the elevation is approximately 300 feet above sea level (USGS 1992).

Area drainage includes two major streams, Lucille and Cottonwood creeks, and two major lakes, Wasilla and Lucille lakes. Wasilla Lake is part of the Cottonwood Creek drainage system.

Lake Lucille is similar in area to Wasilla Lake, but is very shallow. No permanently flowing streams feed Lake Lucille. Two storm drains on the north shore of the lake collect storm water runoff from the Parks Highway. However, the volume and quality of these waters is unknown. This lake does not experience as much inflow as Wasilla Lake and has consequently become eutrophic, i.e., mineral and organic rich leading to seasonal oxygen deficiency. In 1998 the lake was listed on the Alaska

Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Section 303(d) list of impaired waters for failure to meet ADEC 18 Alaska Administrative Code 70 water quality standards for dissolved oxygen (Oasis 2005).

Historically, there may have been a hydrologic connection between the two lakes, but the construction of the Alaska Railroad line and the Parks Highway separated the two watersheds. Lake Lucille is drained by Lucille Creek into Meadow Creek and then into Big Lake 11.3 miles to the west (ADEC 2002).

Cottonwood Creek's mean flow is estimated at 16 cubic feet per second, depending on seasonal precipitation and snowmelt. Annual mean flow at the Lucille Creek gage is approximately 1.25 cubic feet per second (ADEC 2002).

These waterways are important for supplying water, recreation, subsistence, habitat and intrinsic value. The *Vegetation and Wetlands* and the *Fish and Wildlife* sections further discuss the values of these waterways.

Implications for Development

New development in the three planning areas will have to account for topography and drainage considerations.

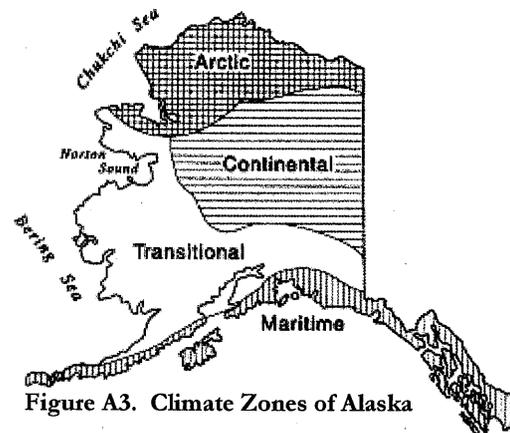
Wetlands in low-lying areas may be susceptible to negative effects from development as described in the *Vegetation and Wetlands* section. Also, flooding may occur in low areas such as along the banks of Cottonwood Creek. Development in more hilly areas like South Wasilla Heights should take into account drainage and run-off patterns of disturbed soils. Slope stability issues may arise, impacting local areas, and further alter runoff and drainage patterns in the area.

These areas may also have important viewsheds, and their maintenance would likely be desirable primarily through the use of regulatory mechanisms such as zoning and landscaping standards.

Climate

Existing Conditions

Situated in southcentral Alaska at approximately 61° north latitude and -149° west longitude, Wasilla has a transitional climate and thus experiences a combination of the mild and wet conditions of the maritime climate as well as the extremes of the continental climate. Being in the transitional climate zone, Wasilla has experienced both the extreme temperatures of the continental climate as well as the heavy precipitation and snowfall characteristic of the maritime climate. Over 29 inches of snow has fallen in Wasilla in a 24 hour period, and strong cold winter winds coupled with excessively cold temperatures have created dangerous wind chills in excess of -45°F (City of Wasilla 2004).



Wasilla is largely protected from the frigid continental climatic extremes by its location in relation to the Alaska Range and the Chugach and Talkeetna mountains as illustrated in Figure A3. Average temperatures range from approximately -33 and 33 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in January and between 42 and 83°F in July. Annual precipitation totals roughly 17 inches, with 50 inches of average annual

snowfall (ADCCED 2007 and Ager 2003). The bitterly cold high winds synonymous with the Matanuska, Susitna, and Knik valleys that gust off the Knik and Matanuska glaciers do affect the community. Annually, high winds are recorded in Wasilla and property damage has occurred (City of Wasilla 2004).

Wasilla is located in an area generally free of permafrost (NRCS 2002). By late March and early April, winter begins to release its grip and the ground starts to thaw. On average there are 115 days without frost, and the first frost of the season typically arrives by the beginning of September. Although daylight is limited to about 5 hours on the winter solstice, the summer solstice brings a 19 hour day (City of Wasilla 1996). Local gardeners reap the benefits of the long days as plants, fruit, and vegetable crops grow quickly in these conditions.

Implications for Development

Future development in Wasilla should consider climate-responsive, northern design principles that account for the low winter temperatures, frequent high winds, extreme daylight variations, and snow removal and storage. The City might consider strengthening and adopting building codes that require additional structural and insulation reinforcements to withstand high winds, heavy snow loads, and low temperatures.

Extreme daylight variations can be incorporated into subdivision and building design by deliberate solar orientation so that sunlight at solar noon is unobstructed and maximized during winter months. This can be accomplished through building orientation on the lot and adjacent lots as well as promoting the use of deciduous trees that will allow more sunlight to penetrate to buildings during the winter months. This could be particularly attractive to residents as energy costs continue to rise. Solar orientation can potentially reduce energy costs and provide more comfortable homes (USDOE 1993).

Snow removal and storage is an ongoing concern for development in a northern city. An implication of this is that new development needs to consider adequate room for storage on streets, sidewalks, parking spaces, and other forms of new development. This requires additional space. New infrastructure needs to be designed to accommodate snow storage, decreased daylight, high winds, and extreme temperatures. Suggestions include a greater number of decorative lighting fixtures, strategically placed windbreaks to prevent snowdrift on pedestrian and transportation corridors, and different roadbed designs and materials to withstand sustained periods of freezing temperatures. Greater density Downtown might also be an option to consider as it would minimize the distance between services, thus reducing the time exposed to inclement weather.

Fish and Wildlife

Existing Conditions

Common animals in the Wasilla area include large and small mammals, a diversity of birds, and several species of fish. Many of these are year-round residents, such as moose, fox, rabbit, and beaver. Several species call this area home on only a seasonal basis, or as a rest-stop along migration routes. These may include loons, Canada geese, and arctic terns, among many others. There are no current threatened or endangered species in the Wasilla area, but the American peregrine falcon and the arctic peregrine falcon were downgraded from the Alaska Endangered Species list (ADF&G 2007).

Moose are abundant throughout Alaska, including the Wasilla area. They spend summer months in the mountains north of Wasilla, where they breed and calve. In the winter months, moose migrate to

low-lying areas including river and stream drainages. At this time, moose forage mainly on bare twigs of willow, birch, and aspen. In spring the moose forage on a wide variety of plants including sedges, equisetum (horsetail), aquatic plants, and grasses. Summer forage options expand to other forbs and vascular plants, including leaves of birch, willow and aspen (City of Wasilla 1996).

Moose are preyed upon by bears and wolves, but many also are killed by humans. Sport and subsistence hunting for moose is an important part of many Alaskans' lives. Approximately 6,000 to 8,000 moose are harvested each year; yielding about 3.5 million pounds of meat (ADF&G 2006). Additionally, as moose inhabit low-lying developed areas during winter months, many are killed each year in collisions with cars and trains.

Black and brown bears inhabit the Wasilla area. Brown bears are not common in this area, but can be found in the surrounding areas, usually at higher elevations. Black bears can be found from sea level to alpine areas and are most commonly found in forested areas (City of Wasilla 1996). As black bears emerge from their dens in the spring, they forage on almost anything they can find, including new green vegetation and carcasses of animals killed over the winter. The bears feed heavily on spawning salmon as they travel upstream in the summer, and berries become important to their diet in the late summer and early autumn (ADF&G 2006).

Habituation of black bears to humans and the urban environment is an issue of some concern. Black bears show great ability to adapt to developed areas and often forage in garbage cans and dumps. With the prevalence of black bears in urban settings, risk of injury to humans or bears increases through interactions. However, bears are also valued wildlife in this area and important for both subsistence and sport hunting.

Other small game and furbearing animals are present in the Wasilla area, including fox, rabbit, coyote, mink, weasel, muskrat, and beaver (City of Wasilla 1996). While these species were frequently trapped for their fur and were a source of income for many residents, they have more recently become important on an intrinsic level and contribute greatly to the wildlife viewing possibilities in the Wasilla area.

Birds are also central figures in Wasilla area wildlife. During the summer this area is home to many nesting and migratory species including the bald eagle, Canada goose, common loon, grebes, and arctic tern. Common birds that use the Wasilla area primarily in winter include black-capped chickadee, great grey owl, Bohemian waxwing, pine grosbeak, and downy woodpecker (ADF&G 2006). Three Species of Special Concern exist in southcentral Alaska, and potentially in the Wasilla area. These include the American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), arctic peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus tundrius*), and olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) (ADF&G 2007). Recreational bird viewing can be a popular activity during the summer and people generally enjoy having birds around throughout the year.

Local waters such as Cottonwood Creek, Cottonwood Lake, and Lucille Creek are home to a variety of important fish species including all five species of Pacific salmon. Additionally, Dolly Varden, steelhead, and cutthroat also use these waters. Cottonwood and Lucille Creeks provide necessary migration corridors for these species, while pools within the creeks and Cottonwood Lake provide habitat for juvenile salmon (City of Wasilla 1996). These species are an important resource for sport and subsistence anglers in the Wasilla area.

Implications for Development

The presence of wildlife populations can have implications for development. Regulations regarding protection of certain species or habitats can slow or stop development in some cases. For example,

bald eagle nests are protected from disturbance under the Bald Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S. Code 668-668d, 54 Statute 250), and buffer zones are required around the nest sites. Bald eagles are known to nest within the City of Wasilla. Other protected and future-protected wildlife habitat, including wetlands, must be addressed in development projects and permits may be required. Due to the presence of bald eagles, other wildlife and their habitats, it is important for developers to conduct bird surveys and obtain necessary permits prior to construction.

Population and Demographics

Population

Wasilla is growing at a much faster rate than is the state as a whole. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Wasilla had a population of 4,028 in 1990 (U.S. Census Bureau 1990). The Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development's (DCCED) estimates Wasilla's 2006 population at 6,775, a 68.2 percent increase from 1990 (Alaska DCCED 2006). The U.S. Census Bureau recorded a total population of 550,043 in Alaska in 1990 and estimates the state's 2006 population at 670,053, which is an increase of only 21.8 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 1990 and 2007). By 2030, the state population is expected to grow by 25 percent and have an estimated total population of 840,000 (Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development [ADLWD] 2007). Neither the U.S. Census Bureau nor the ADLWD provides Wasilla-specific population projections because of the city's relatively small population. If extrapolated from ADLWD projections for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the city would experience a growth rate of 9.3 percent from 2006 to 2010, 26.8 percent from 2006 to 2015, and 78.4 percent from 2006 to 2030. Figures A4 and A5, respectively, present graphic representation of Wasilla's population from 1920 to 2006 and Wasilla's estimated future population growth based on ADLWD growth projections for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

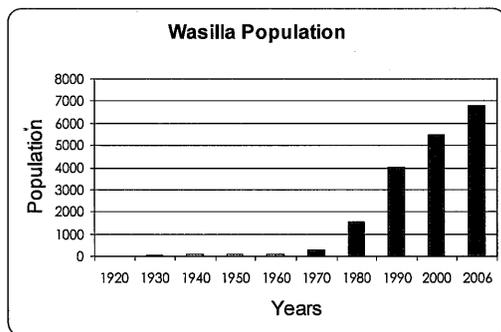


Figure A4. Population 1920-2006

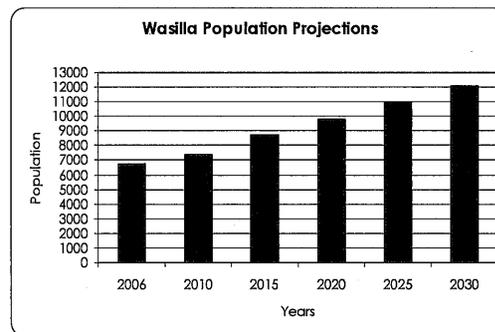


Figure A5. Population Projections

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000; AK DCCED 2006

Gender and Age Composition

According to 2000 U.S. Census Bureau demographic information, the gender and age composition of Wasilla is similar to the state of Alaska; however, females slightly outnumber males in Wasilla, the city's median age is slightly younger than that of the state population, and a greater percentage of Wasilla residents are 65 years or older. Table A1 presents city and state gender and age information and Figure A6 presents a breakdown of the Wasilla population by age category.

Table A1. Gender and Age

	Wasilla	Alaska
Percent Males	49.9	51.7
Percent Females	50.1	48.3
Median Age	29.7	32.4
Percent 5 years and under	8.8	7.6
Percent under 18 years	33.6	30.4
Percent 18 years and over	66.4	69.6
Percent 20 to 24 years old	7.1	6.4
Percent 25 to 44 years old	30.8	32.5
Percent 45 to 64 years old	19.1	22.3
Percent 65 years and over	6.7	5.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

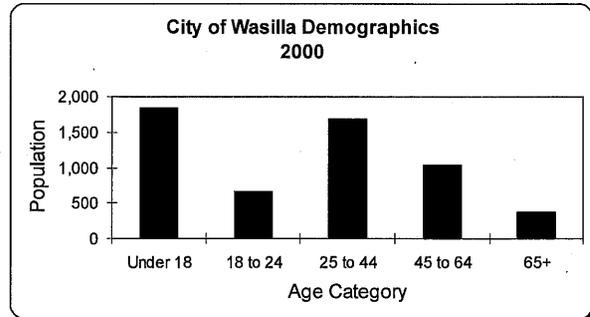


Figure A6. Wasilla Demographics 2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Racial Composition

Compared to state census data, Wasilla has low minority populations. The 2000 U.S. Census racial composition data for Wasilla and Alaska are presented in Table A2.

Table A2. Wasilla Racial Composition

Race	Number of Wasilla Residents	Percent of Wasilla Population	Percent of Alaska Population
One Race	5,144	94.1	94.6
White	4,674	85.5	69.3
Black or African American	32	0.6	3.5
American Indian and Alaska Native	287	5.2	15.6
Asian	72	1.3	4.0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	7	0.1	0.5
Some other race	72	1.3	1.6
Two or More Races	325	5.9	5.4
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	201	3.7	4.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Educational Attainment

Of the 3,091 Wasilla residents 25 years of age or older in 2000, an estimated 89 percent had graduated from high school and approximately 13 percent had a bachelor's degree or a higher level of education. When compared to census statistics for the entire state of Alaska, a greater percentage of Wasilla residents had graduated from high school and earned associate degrees. A smaller percentage, however, had earned bachelor's or graduate degrees. Table A3 presents a more detailed look at this age group's educational attainment.

Table A3. Education Attainment

Education Level	Number of Wasilla Residents	Percent of Wasilla Population	Percent of Alaska Population
Less than 9 th grade	121	3.9	4.1
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	225	7.3	7.5
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,003	32.4	27.9
Some college, no degree	1,023	33.1	28.6
Associate degree	326	10.5	7.2
Bachelor's degree	224	7.2	16.1
Graduate or professional degree	169	5.5	8.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Economic Statistics

As shown in Table A4, the 2000 census economic statistics for Wasilla are similar to those for the state of Alaska. Wasilla, however, had a lower unemployment rate, a smaller percentage of families below the poverty level, and a greater percentage of residents in the labor force.

Table A4. 2000 Census Economic Statistics

	Median Household Income (1999 dollars)	Per Capita Income (1999 dollars)	Families Below Poverty Level	Individuals Below Poverty Level	In Labor Force (≥16 years old)	Employed	Unemployed
Wasilla	\$48,226	\$21,127	5.7%	9.6%	70.8%	62.8%	7.9%
State of Alaska	\$51,571	\$22,660	6.7%	9.4%	71.3%	61.5%	6.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Housing

Existing Inventory and Condition

Wasilla had an estimated 2,119 housing units in 2000 (City of Wasilla 2007a), and there have been additions in recent years. The majority of housing in Wasilla can be characterized as single-family homes situated on large lots in a semi-rural area. Wasilla also has a proportion of small multi-family units (four, six and eight unit residential buildings), which are often interspersed within single-family neighborhoods. Wasilla housing units have an occupancy rate of 93.4 percent, and owner occupied housing accounts for 55.8 percent of all units (Table A5). Generally, the major residential areas are located north of the Parks Highway and near Lake Lucille. The majority of subdivided land is platted into lot sizes of 40,000 square feet or larger.

Table A5. Housing characteristics for Wasilla compared to the Mat-Su Borough, Anchorage, and the State.

Type of Housing	Wasilla	Mat-Su Borough	Anchorage	Alaska
Total No. of Housing Units	2,119	27,329	100,368	260,978
No. of Occupied Units	1,979	20,556	94,822	221,600
No. of Vacant Units	140	6,773	5,546	39,378
Seasonal, Recreational, Occasional	34	5,244	1,107	21,474
Percent of Occupied Housing	93.4%	75.2%	94.5%	84.9%
No. of Owner-Occupied Units	1,104	16,218	56,953	138,509
No. of Renter-Occupied Units	875	4,338	37,869	83,091
Percent of Owner-Occupied Units	55.8%	78.9%	60.1%	62.5%

Notes: No. = Number

Source: City of Wasilla website, Community Profile: Housing (http://www.cityofwasilla.com/profile/profile_06.asp)

Most residential structures (71 percent) were constructed between 1970 and 1989, and 69.8 percent have between 3 and 6 rooms. Over half (53.4 percent) are 1-unit detached homes, and 20.1 percent are 3 or 4-unit structures. All but 1.3 percent have complete plumbing facilities and only 1.0 percent do not have complete kitchen facilities. Table A6 presents more housing details.

Table A6. Residential Structure Detail

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
UNITS IN STRUCTURE			HEATING TYPE		
1-unit, detached	1,130	53.4	Utility gas	1,754	88.8
1-unit, attached	72	3.4	Bottled, tank, or LP gas	35	1.8
2 units	178	8.4	Electricity	122	6.2
3 or 4 units	425	20.1	Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	59	3.0
5 to 9 units	128	6.0	Wood	5	0.3
10 to 19 units	62	2.9			
20 or more units	53	2.5			
Mobile home	57	2.7			
Boat, RV, van, etc.	13	0.6			
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT			SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS		
1999 to March 2000	41	1.9	Lacking complete plumbing facilities	26	1.3
1995 to 1998	289	13.6	Lacking complete kitchen facilities	20	1.0
1990 to 1994	162	7.6	No telephone service	15	0.8
1980 to 1989	1,014	47.9	Specified owner-occupied units	834	100.0
1970 to 1979	489	23.1			
1960 to 1969	92	4.3			
1940 to 1959	31	1.5			
1939 or earlier	0	0.0			

Table A6. Residential Structure Detail (Continued)

ROOMS	Number	Percent	VALUE	Number	Percent
1 room	69	3.3	Less than \$50,000	45	5.4
2 rooms	125	5.9	\$50,000 to \$99,999	108	12.9
3 rooms	296	14.0	\$100,000 to \$149,999	367	44.0
4 rooms	501	23.7	\$150,000 to \$199,999	216	25.9
5 rooms	351	16.6	\$200,000 to \$299,999	85	10.2
6 rooms	329	15.5	\$300,000 to \$499,999	13	1.6
7 rooms	190	9.0	\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	0.0
8 rooms	131	6.2	\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0
9 or more rooms	126	5.9	Median (dollars)	137,700	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Planned Improvements/Development

Wasilla is a young community, with most housing units (71 percent) less than 40 years old. Currently, there are no known large-scale (e.g., subdivision-wide) planned improvements for housing in the City. However, there are residential developments occurring throughout the City. Yenlo Square, a planned unit development is currently in Phase III, and scheduled for completion in 2010. This is a mixed-use development that will include approximately 150 residential units, some for single families and others for seniors and people with special needs (Architects Alaska 2004). Table A7 provides a summary of development permits issued by the City of Wasilla between 2002 and 2006 for residential housing.

Table A7. Development Permits Issued by the City of Wasilla

Year	Single Family	Duplex	Multi Family	Total Dwelling Units
2002	42	24	110	176
2003	43	28	35	106
2004	48	34	60	142
2005	75	22	11	108
2006	41	34	34	109

Source: City of Wasilla 2007b

Public Facilities and Schools

Existing Facilities and Condition

Airport

Wasilla Municipal Airport was constructed by the State of Alaska to replace the old airport that was located in Downtown Wasilla. The new airport was constructed in 1992 on 370 acres of City-owned land and opened in 1993 (City of Wasilla 1996 and 2002). It is approximately 15 minutes from Downtown in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area and has year-round operations. The 3,700-foot paved runway is approved for general aviation aircraft and was paved in 1999 (City of Wasilla 2002). The airport's amenities and services include a radio-controlled runway, taxiway and security lighting, onsite engine and airframe repair, onsite fuel service, and air-taxi services. Lease lots, spaces, and tie-downs are available.

The City is responsible for year round operation and maintenance of the Wasilla Municipal Airport. A five-member Airport Advisory Commission advises and provides recommendations to the City for airport operations and maintenance, site locations and development plans for airport lease lots,

and for specific proposals for development at the airport (WMC 2.68.010). The Wasilla Airport Master Plan includes a capital improvement plan and describes the anticipated projects to be completed through 2022.

Aurora Cemetery

The Wasilla Aurora Cemetery is located at mile 1.1 Wasilla-Fishhook Road outside of the planning area boundaries. The City has maintained the cemetery since 1980. There are approximately 500 plots and no plans to expand the cemetery through land acquisition (City of Wasilla 1996). The City assumes the powers of the cemetery and sells the remaining lots and will maintain the cemetery in perpetuity. The Department of Parks and Recreation maintains the cemetery, and the City Clerk administers the records. Funds acquired from the sale of cemetery lots are held in a nonexpendable trust fund. The interest from the trust fund is used for maintenance, operation of and capital improvements construction in the cemetery. General operations of the cemetery are paid for through the City's general fund.

City Hall

City Hall, built in 1934 and located Downtown, is one of the oldest buildings in Wasilla located on the corner of Knik Street and Herning Avenue. The structure was originally built to function as a school. The state owned the building when the Mat-Su Borough bought it in 1973; the City did not have title to the property until 1981 (City of Wasilla 1996). The following functions operate at City Hall:

- Mayor and Administrative Offices
- City Council Chambers
- City Clerk
- Finance
- Public Works
- Planning
- Economic Development

Some city departments are not located there due to lack of space. City Council, Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Airport Advisory Commission and meetings are hosted here as well.

Currently, the building is not compliant with the American Disabilities Act, nor is the parking for the building. There are a sufficient number of parking spaces available for the 25 staff. However, there limited ADA-compliant parking spaces available for the public building. Coupled with an aging electrical system and capacity issues, City Hall is in need of upgrades and expansion. However, at this time there are no existing plans for modifications to the building.

Dorothy Page Museum and Historic Town Site

The Dorothy Page Museum, established in 1967, is Wasilla's first museum. It is located Downtown, near the Wasilla Public Library and museum and library patrons vie for approximately 20 available parking spaces in the shared lot. The main museum building, a National Historic Landmark, was originally constructed as the Wasilla Community Hall in 1931 and served as a forum for social gatherings and sporting events such as basketball games. Although the exhibits are on display mostly in the main building, the museum is comprised of 10 structures, including Wasilla's first school,

which is also a National Historic Landmark. Home to an extensive collection of Wasilla artifacts, the museum also offers rotating exhibits each summer. These exhibits are on loan from the state museum and differ from year to year. Every April, a Borough archaeologist presents one to two lectures at the facility in celebration of Archaeology Month. On Fridays, museum entry fees are waived for all Mat-Su residents. In fiscal year 2007, a total of 6,162 people visited the museum - a dramatic increase from the previous year's visitor total of 4,528. The City of Wasilla operates the museum. Currently there are no plans for expansion; however, the Visitor's Center will be fitted with a Halon-type fire suppression system this winter (Neel 2007).

Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are provided to the City of Wasilla by the Mat-Su Borough. Wasilla is served by the Central Mat-Su Fire Department, which has seven stations. Station 61 is located in Downtown Wasilla at 101 West Swanson Avenue in the Central Public Safety Building. This station is the first to respond to an emergency in the City. Other stations have the capacity to assist with response efforts if needed. The facility is 5 years old and is the first station to have built-in living quarters, which includes 17 beds, a dayroom, kitchen, and a workout room. Fire and EMS positions are on-call and respond via pager. The following positions are staffed at this station:

- 4 full-time fire fighters (includes 2 chiefs)
- 2 secretaries
- 6 paramedics (staffing 2 ambulances; staffed around the clock at this station)
- 1 paramedic supervisor (staffed around the clock at this station)
- 2 fire code officials
- 1 public educator/fire trainer
- 2 fire service area helpers

Station 61 houses the following equipment for response:

- 2 engines
- 1 pumper tanker to carry extra water
- 1 ladder truck with a 100 foot aerial ladder
- 1 heavy rescue truck
- 1 hazardous materials decontamination trailer
- 4 ambulances
- 2 command vehicles (for 2 chiefs)

This facility also has two training rooms available for use that include a TV, VCR, DVD, and multi-media projector. The rooms have an adjoining collapsible wall and together can accommodate up to 300 people. These rooms are available to both government and non-government users.

Library

Wasilla Public Library, located in the Downtown Planning area, is the fourth busiest library in the state. It receives funding from the City of Wasilla and the Mat-Su Borough. The library is open daily, Monday through Saturday. Parking is limited at the facility with merely 11 available spaces; however, there is supplemental parking available at the corner of Boundary Street and Swanson Avenue. Library cards are free to Mat-Su residents or landowners in the Mat-Su Borough, and are available for a charge to others. Beginning January 1, 2008, non-City residents will be charged either \$10 for a 3-month library card or \$35 for a full-year library card. Cards are valid at all Mat-Su Library Network branches.

The Wasilla Public Library offers multiple services. The library participates in the state interlibrary loan system. It has six computers connected to the Internet. One computer station has Microsoft® Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and Adobe® Reader. The library offers free Internet access and other computer resources, such as printing and disk purchase for downloading. The staff includes 12 part-time and full-time employees. There are approximately 55,000 items in the library's collection, including circulating and reference books, audio books, periodicals, and videos. The library catalog can be searched online.

The facility is a key destination in downtown Wasilla, and one that faces some challenges. Parking is extremely limited, and while the building does have handicap access, this is minimal and inconvenient for patrons with disabilities.

Friends of Wasilla Public Library, a non-profit organization, is currently trying to raise funds and support for a new library facility. According to the organization, the current library is too small and requires too much maintenance because of its age; a new facility will provide much needed additional space, more parking, and easier access for people with disabilities. The City has hired an architect to prepare initial design documents, but funding for final design work has not been secured.

Multi-Use Sports Complex (MUSC)

The Wasilla Multi-Use Sports Complex, located at 1001 South Mack Drive, opened in March 2004. This facility is located in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. This indoor sports complex has four primary activity areas: an ice arena, an indoor artificial turf court, a running/walking track, and three community meeting rooms. Ice skating, skate rentals and lessons, and ice rentals are offered to the public for a fee at the Curtis C. Menard II Memorial Ice Arena. The turf court is available for rental for birthday parties, sports team practices and games, or other events, and a for-fee "Turf for Tots" program is offered midday three days a week during the summer. Patrons can use the running/walking track by paying as they go, purchasing punch cards, or 3-month passes. Each of the approximately 650-square-foot meeting rooms will accommodate about 30 people. They can be rented by the hour or by the day. Audio/visual equipment and other presentation items are available at additional costs. Some events held at the complex in 2007 include the Iron Dog Snow Machine Display and Vendor Show, the Alaska Youth Hockey State Tournament, the Valley Home Builder's Show, and several high school graduation ceremonies. There are currently no formal plans for expansion of this facility, however, there are plans to construct a new kitchen in the building.

Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry

The Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry (MATI) is a private, non-profit corporation (501(c)(3)) with a volunteer board of directors and is located in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. While it is not a publicly owned facility, it serves the public of the City of Wasilla and

visitors, and is important to include in the overview of facilities. Its stated mission is "...the collection, conservation, restoration, exhibition, and interpretation of artifacts relating to Alaska's transportation and industrial history." The museum receives no government funding, relying solely on admissions, gift shop sales, and donations to cover costs.

The museum is open from May 1 through September 30. Operating hours are 10:00 am to 5:00 pm Tuesday through Sunday. The entry fee is \$8.00 for adults and \$5.00 for senior citizens. Parking is free, sufficient to support the number of daily visitors, and spots for recreational vehicles are provided.

The museum was originally established in Anchorage in 1967 as the Air Progress Museum. It operated at this location until 1973, when a fire closed down the facility. In 1976, the remaining museum pieces were moved to 3 acres on the Alaska State Fair grounds. The museum, renamed "The Transportation Museum of Alaska" and later the "Alaska Historical and Transportation Museum," remained at this location for 15 years before being moved to its present location in 1992.

The museum sits on over 20 acres of land and includes a gallery, a train yard, an exhibit hall, and numerous outdoor artifacts. The artifacts on display include items donated by individuals and on-loan items from the military and other organizations. This summer, the museum relocated a 1935 barn to the museum grounds; they plan to restore the building for display. According to museum staff, approximately 8,000 people visited the museum in 2006. There are no formal plans to relocate the museum or to upgrade current facilities.

Police Department

The Wasilla Police Department (WPD) headquarters is located at 1800 East Parks Highway. The Mayor appoints the police chief who manages the department. Established in 1993 with only 8 commissioned officers, the WPD has grown to include 23 commissioned officers as of 2005. The WPD serves the entire population of Wasilla. The department also provides services as needed to surrounding area residents and many seasonal visitors that stop in or pass through the City to shop or recreate. The Wasilla Youth Court is also located in the Police Department building. It is unknown if there are formal plans to upgrade or renovate the current facility.

Post Office

The Wasilla Post Office is located in Downtown at 401 North Main Street on the corner of Swanson Avenue and Main Street. This is the only post office servicing Wasilla residents located wholly within the City boundaries. The 1996 comprehensive plan spoke about a replacement facility because of the inadequacies of the existing facility. The post office continues to be overcrowded and a contributing factor to traffic congestion.

Schools

Table A8 lists schools within the Downtown Planning Area, as well as other schools that are commonly used by Wasilla residents. No schools are located in the Airport & Transportation Museum Planning Area or the South Wasilla Heights Planning Area.

Table A8. Select Schools Serving Wasilla Residents

School	Grades	Enrollment	Portables	Space adequate
Within Downtown planning area boundaries				
Wasilla High School	7-12	1,284	6	No, very crowded
Wasilla Middle School	6-8	756	6	Yes, with portables
Iditarod Elementary	K-5	469	4	Yes, with portables
Correspondence Study School**	K-12	1,031	—	not applicable
Twindly Bridge Charter School	K-12	157	—	Yes
Outside of the planning areas but within Wasilla or are commonly used by residents				
Burchell High School	9-12	238	1	Yes
Colony High School	9-12	1145	0	No
Palmer High School	9-12	912	0	Yes
Mat-Su Career and Technical High School	9-12	Opens Fall 2007	0	Yes
Teeland Middle School	6-8	629	0	Yes
Cottonwood Creek Elementary	K-5	490	2	Yes, with portables
Tanaina Elementary	K-5	492	0	Yes
Midnight Sun Family Learning Center	K-10	168	—	Yes

Sources: Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District 2007; Alaska Department of Education and Early Development 2007; City of Wasilla 2007a

The Correspondence Study School is commonly referred to as the “home-schoolers school.” The school was established to help parents with curriculum and is a support network. This school offers teachers to advise parents, a small library (primarily stocked with materials passed down), and a training room for special events. The school district leases the current space.

There are no formal plans for expansion of any of the listed schools. Wasilla High School is in the process of renovating sections of the school, and Wasilla Middle School is in the process of renovating the cafeteria. However, neither of the renovations will add square footage.

Utilities

Sewer Service System

Wastewater Collection System

The City wastewater treatment system was constructed in the mid 1980s with a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency that covered 93 percent of the cost of construction. The system

is “a community drain field with individual septic tanks connected by force mains that pump the effluent” (City of Wasilla 1996).

The existing Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) system was reported in overall good condition during the 1999 master plan assessments. The assessment provided that the main service line consisted of a high density polyethylene (HDPE) piperun with fused joints, that was in good condition and could be expected to last many years without overly aggressive maintenance activities. Auxiliary system components, including septic tanks, individual STEP pumping stations and piping, were also reported to be in overall good condition. It was anticipated that many of the septic tanks would reach the end of their service lives within the next 20 years and would need repair or replacement. The main HDPE piperun was approximately 15 years old during the time of the investigation and was estimated to have approximately 35 years of remaining service life, or 27 years remaining as of 2007 (City of Wasilla 1999).

Additionally, no major capacity overages had been identified as of December 1999. Minor capacity overages were identified; however, these systems are subjected to more frequent maintenance intervals, to reduce downtime and potential system failures (City of Wasilla 1999).

Planned Improvements/Development

The state has been granted \$500,000 for the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Sewer Extension (Alaska Department of Community Advocacy [ADCA] 2007a).

Growth of the current service area supplied by the STEP system is limited due to the City of Wasilla’s plans to utilize a more efficient and cost effective gravity feed system that would support a more long term expansion of the area. The area currently serviced by the STEP system would likely continue, as complete conversion to a gravity feed system is not economical. However, areas outside of the service radius of the STEP system would be best served by a gravity system (City of Wasilla 1999).

Wastewater Treatment Facility

The current wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), located at 2900 Jude Street, consists of the following organizational structure: septic effluent from individual customer on-site septic tank treatment systems is pumped through a pressure main to the treatment plant. The effluent flows through an aerated lagoon system consisting of four lagoon cells, through an air handling building, a pump building and into a clarifier and valve vaults that feed nine active percolation beds. Flow measurement weirs are located at the influent and effluent of the lagoon, to measure real-time flows through the system (City of Wasilla 1999).

Only septage (Biosolids) from the STEP system is received by the WWTP. Septage is discharged into the digester along with clarifier sludge, where they are digested in a batch mode with a batch duration of approximately one year. Treated septage sludge is discharged to sludge drying beds and allowed to dry and finally is collected for spreading into the percolation beds. Septage received by the system varies from 20,000 to 130,000 gallons per month with between 100,000 to 200,000 gallons of sludge delivered to the drying beds per year. It was estimated that the inflow would increase from 200,000 gallons per day in 2000 to nearly 450,000 gallons per day in 2007 (City of Wasilla 1999). Currently the wastewater treatment facility handles approximately 400,000 gallons per day and adequately serves the needs of serviced customers (Becker 2007).

Planned Improvements/Development

Alternatives provided in the 1999 master plan investigation included modification to the current system to increase efficiency, including upgrades of lagoon aeration systems and percolation beds, addition of treatment systems for lagoon effluent, modifications for extended lagoon aeration, and disposal of effluent by overland irrigation. Expansion of the current treatment facility would be limited to the land availability in the immediate plant area. As of 1999, regulators had not determined whether nearby surface water bodies and streams were suitable for receiving treated effluent (City of Wasilla 1999).

Water Service System

The City supplies approximately 35 percent of the city's residents with water through the operation of three public water systems (Harvey 2007). Two are small residential systems associated with subdivisions: Lacy Laine and Mission Hills. One much larger system serves the core area of Wasilla, including Downtown, several nearby residential areas, and commercial developments along the Parks Highway (City of Wasilla 2001).

The Lacy Laine and Mission Hills water systems are dependent on a single production well and neither has a backup well for use in emergencies. Water from the Lacy Laine well is stored in 10 pre-pressurized tanks inside a well house, and the tanks have a total approximate withdrawal capacity of 160 gallons. The Mission Hills well water is stored in a 6,000-gallon tank inside a well house (City of Wasilla 2001).

The City's core water system is presently dependent on two primary production wells, the Spruce Avenue well and the Bumpus municipal wells. The East Susitna well will soon be added to the City's core water supply system. Aboveground reservoirs provide storage for this system. The main reservoir, the Spruce Avenue reservoir, is located adjacent to the primary production well and has a usable water volume of 1.2 million gallons. The Iditarod reservoir has a usable water volume of approximately 977,000 gallons (City of Wasilla 2001) and the Bumpus reservoir has a capacity of approximately 1 million gallons (Giddings 2007). The East Susitna reservoir will soon be added to the core system, providing an additional capacity of approximately 850,000 gallons.

In 2001, deficiencies that were identified included the following:

- No adequate backup water source to the Spruce Avenue well.
- Existing water system could have serious supply problems under emergency flow conditions if the production well at the Spruce Avenue reservoir site were taken out of service.
- If a large fire were to occur, low pressure conditions, which can cause backflow of possible contaminants, would take place on water mains at the higher elevations on the system.
- There is a lack of redundancy in the water piping system that connects the Spruce Avenue reservoir to the majority of core area users (City of Wasilla 2001).

Currently, the water system is adequate for City needs. The current system serves all of Downtown and only the MUSC in the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. Main water lines surround South Wasilla Heights, providing accessible hook-ups for developers. However, developers are responsible for the cost of hook-ups and extensions to specific locations (Becker 2007).

Planned Improvements/Development

The City of Wasilla has completed the engineering for a Mission Hills water line extension with a \$500,000 grant from the state of Alaska. Funding is still needed for construction of this water line. The state has been granted an additional \$500,000 for the Palmer-Wasilla Water Improvement Phase 3 and Bumpus Well Number 2 project (Alaska Department of Community Advocacy [ADCA] 2007a). Currently, there are no formal plans for further expansion of City water lines to the Airport and Transportation Museum Area (Becker 2007).

Storm Drains

Storm drains are not present in all areas throughout Wasilla. Most of the Downtown planning area has storm drains, but not all. The current improvements on Crusey Street are installing storm drains for the first time. Much of South Wasilla Heights is without storm drains, and several gravel ditches suffice as storm drains in this area. In the Airport and Transportation Museum Area, only the airport property has storm drains installed (Harvey 2007).

As Wasilla continues to grow, roads are upgraded, and new roads are constructed, storm drains are included and upgraded as necessary (Harvey 2007).

Solid Waste

The Mat-Su Borough provides solid waste services for Wasilla residents. The Central Landfill is located at 1201 North 49th State Street in Palmer. Curbside pick-up is offered to Wasilla residents through Wasilla Refuse. Central Landfill is a Class 1 Municipal Landfill with the capacity to accept more than 20 tons of solid waste per day (ADCA 2007b).

Parks and Recreation

Existing Conditions

Alaska State law mandates that official park and recreation powers are held by the Borough. However, since 1993 the City of Wasilla has held parks and recreation authority under an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement with the Mat-Su Borough defined in MSB Ordinance Number 93-027 (City of Wasilla 1996). The Mat-Su Borough retains authority over some recreation facilities, which are detailed later in this section.

Parks and recreational facilities are governed through chapter 12.24 of the Wasilla Municipal Code. The City exercises their park and recreation powers through two departments—the Public Works Department and the Recreation and Cultural Services Department.

The Wasilla Parks and Recreation Department falls under the Public Works Department and is responsible for maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department staff consists of one supervisor and approximately 20 seasonal personnel during summer months (Urban 2007).

The Wasilla Recreation and Cultural Services Department is responsible for the programmatic side of parks and recreation and oversees operation of the MUSC, library, museum and recreational programs such as the annual Christmas tree lighting, 4th of July picnic, and City-wide clean-up days. This department staffs a manager, secretary, building supervisor, maintenance personnel, building support personnel, and a facilities coordinator (Urban 2007).

Department responsibilities include: pre-season planning, equipment mobilization, maintenance and storage, gardening and landscaping, weeding and lawn care, trash and garbage removal, vandalism

repair, and post-season winterization. The department maintains 5 parks, 49 facilities and parking lots, 5 ball fields, and 10 miles of trails, a skateboard park, volleyball courts, basketball courts, a BMX track, an outdoor amphitheater, and children’s playgrounds (City of Wasilla 2007).

The Wasilla Parks and Recreation Commission is a five member advisory group, appointed by the mayor. The Commission provides input of park and recreation programs, and formulates policy and management action recommendations for the City Council and Administration (City of Wasilla 2007a). Figure A7 illustrates the organization of Parks and Recreation in Wasilla.

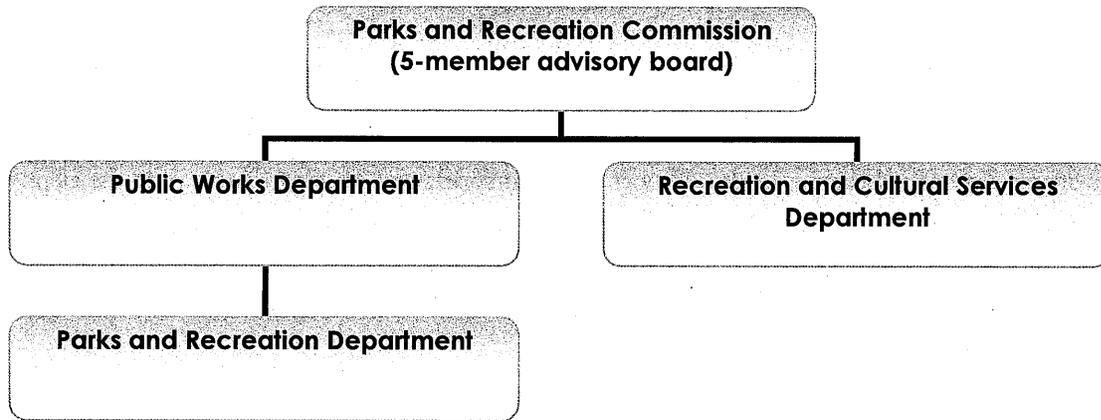


Figure A7. Parks and Recreation Organization

City of Wasilla Parks Recreation Facilities

Bumpus Recreation Complex

This 120-acre site is located off Chlds, soccer fields, an equestrian trail, a central concession stand, associated amenities, and parking. The Mat-Su Softball Association manages the ball fields, and the Parks and Recreation Division is responsible for maintenance (City of Wasilla 1996 and Urban 2007).

Carter Park

Carter Park is used mostly by families with small children. The park is approximately 0.5 acre, located along the eastern shore of Lake Lucille in South Wasilla Heights and provides canoe access to the lake, playground and picnicking facilities, restrooms, and parking. A boat launch is located adjacent to the park at the end of Susitna Street (City of Wasilla 1996 and Urban 2007).

Iditapark

The Wasilla Airport was previously located at this 28-acre Downtown site. This park is an example of redevelopment efforts after constructing a new airport on the west end of town. Iditapark offers activities for every age including:

- a skateboard park
- 3 volleyball courts
- 4 basketball courts
- 2 tennis ball courts
- a BMX track
- an outdoor amphitheater
- various pavilions with BBQ facilities
- a reflection garden with a small covered bridge, pond, and gazebo

Many community events are hosted here during the summer such as the Independence Day Festival, Governor's Picnic, and weekly outdoor concerts. Park benches, restroom facilities, and parking are also available. There is an Honor Garden for Veterans that includes a "Path of Freedom" and "Circle of Honor" is distinguished by flowerbeds. The flags of each branch of the armed forces fly in the Circle of Honor with the American Flag in the center of them.

Bricks and benches have been sold to help fund the project and can still be purchased. There is a path of civilian engraved bricks that leads up to the Circle of Honor, which is reserved for veteran's engraved bricks.

This summer will mark the completion of an outdoor skating park surrounded by Wonderland, the shelter, and the parking lot. Only small landscaping remains to be completed (City of Wasilla 1996 and Urban 2007).

Nunley Park

Nunley Park is a neighborhood park located in Downtown along Swanson Avenue between Willow and Knik Streets. This park was recently expanded by about 1/3 of an acre, increasing its total size to approximately 1.5 acres. Here you will find playground facilities, a picnic area, a fenced tennis court, and restrooms (City of Wasilla 1996 and Urban 2007).

Newcomb Park

Newcomb Park is 2.06 acres in size, located within Downtown along the western end of Wasilla Lake. The park is popular for the picnic and swimming areas, and includes a covered wood pavilion, fenced playground, sand beach, restrooms, and parking. There is not a lifeguard on duty at this park (City of Wasilla 1996 and Urban 2007).

Mat-Su Borough Recreation Facilities within Wasilla

Fritzler Complex

The Fritzler Complex is located off Bogard Road east of Iditarod Elementary School in Downtown. The complex includes little league, Babe Ruth, and softball fields. The Ressler Baseball Fields, which include little league fields, are often associated with this complex (City of Wasilla 1996 and Urban 2007).

Smith Ball Fields

The Smith Ball Fields are located at Mile 2 of the Knik-Goose Bay Road outside of the three planning areas. It is a 40 acre site that includes a soccer field and three to four little league fields. The Wasilla Area Little League holds a long-term lease with the state of Alaska (City of Wasilla 1996 and Urban 2007).

Brett Memorial Ice Arena

Located on the Wasilla Middle School campus in Downtown, this ice arena is owned and operated by the Mat-Su Borough. This is a year round facility featuring opportunities for public skating and hockey (both novice and advanced), private rental, skating lessons, and an adult hockey league. Special events are hosted here throughout the year such as the Hockey for Fun Program, Halloween Party, Wasilla Christmas Show, and the Pep Rally/Skatefest. Staff of the arena also maintains an outdoor ice arena located behind the Wasilla Middle School. About 4 years ago, new locker rooms and an office replaced two portable buildings that were used for those purposes. The two portable buildings are currently used as additional locker rooms (MSB 2007a and Marcott 2007).

Lake Lucille Campground

This park is located outside of the three planning areas near the Iditarod Headquarters at Mile 2.4 of Knik-Goose Bay Road. Lake Lucille Park is an 80-acre regional park with 64 spaces available to tents or RVs for overnight camping and non-motorized day access to Lake Lucille. There are several amenities including restrooms, potable water, day use area, trails, two soccer fields, amphitheatre, a fishing dock, a boardwalk, a group camping area that accommodates up to 100 people, and pavilions available for reservation. The MSB plans to add an RV dump station in the future. There will also be an Alaska Botanical Gardens located at the front of the park that will provide history of the area. Camping fees are \$10 and the park is open from Memorial Day weekend through freeze-up in the fall (MSB 2007b and Templin 2007).

Wasilla Swimming Pool

The Wasilla Swimming Pool facility is located in the Wasilla High School and is suitable for hosting local competitions. The facility also includes a hot tub, slides, and dive boards. It is operated by the school during school hours and by MSB after hours with a lifeguard on duty at all times. Wasilla and Colony High Schools swim and dive teams practice and host meets here. The facility offers swim lessons, lap times, open swims, and adult physical fitness classes offered throughout the week. The facility is also available to rent for private events up to 105 people (MSB 2007b).

Other Private Parks

There are small unnamed residential and private parks that neither the City of Wasilla nor the Mat-Su Borough manage or maintain. Some of these include Snider Park, Dinkel Botanical Park, and areas within Ravenswood and Wasilla Estates Subdivisions (City of Wasilla 1996 and Urban 2007).

Applicable Plans

City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan (1996)

The comprehensive plan provides the most complete historical description of Wasilla parks, including recommendations for each park facility. Further, the document lists a number of general parks and recreation recommendations, grouped by 1) Organization and Programs; 2) Land Acquisition, Development, and Upkeep; and 3) Facilities and Improvements.

City of Wasilla Trails Plan (1999)

This document provides basic planning and policy framework to guide trail development and maintenance within Wasilla. Trail priorities are provided.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2008 anticipated)

This master plan will examine and inventory community recreation needs and establish maintenance and land acquisition priorities for recreation and trail use. The plan will also develop goals and objectives to guide management and design.

Implications for Development

Parks within the City of Wasilla serve as long-term strong-holds for open space, family friendly environments, and recreational opportunities. The three planning areas do not have a large amount of park space and the public has expressed a desire for more citing reasons such as increased quality of life and increased healthy lifestyles. There are currently private subdivision parks that have been established as a condition of development. The new Creekside Town Center is an example of a

developer setting aside land to add protection to a natural resource—Cottonwood Creek. These types of “pocket” parks could become more of a trend with permitting conditions of new subdivisions and developments in Wasilla.

Land Use

Applicable Ordinances and Codes

Title 16 is Wasilla’s land development code, and was adopted to achieve the goals and implement the policies of the Wasilla Comprehensive Plan. Title 16 also ensures that the City’s growth is within the values of its residents, ensuring public involvement in permitting, and that growth managed by type, design, and location. Areas covered by Title 16 include:

- Administrative Procedures (such as annexation and neighborhood planning)
- Zoning Districts
- Density and Dimensional Requirements (including parking)
- Signs
- Landscaping Standards

Zoning Districts

Zoning is the process by which a local government regulates the use of privately and publicly owned land within its jurisdiction (Oxford University Press 2005). Various land uses are authorized or restricted within each zone. The City of Wasilla is divided into seven zoning districts, which include:

1. *RR, Rural Residential District.* Very low-density rural residential and agricultural uses, with appropriate low-density development trends, transportation systems, and physical features.
2. *R1, Single-Family Residential District.* Low-density, quiet residential areas on large lots. Ample storage area should be provided for vehicles, boats and other recreational equipment.
3. *R2, Residential District.* Higher residential density than either the RR or R1 districts. This zone may have some multifamily and a higher density of different uses but is generally a residential area with neighborhood commercial, and some larger commercial uses.
4. *RM, Residential Multifamily District.* The multifamily district is the highest density residential development. Other compatible uses that are commonly associated with higher density residential areas may be allowed.
5. *Commercial District.* The intent of the commercial district is to protect areas of existing commercial development and provide areas for the continued growth of commercial enterprise.
6. *Industrial District.* Productive industrial areas, typically served by major highways or collector streets, Alaska Railroad, airport, and public or community water or sewer. This designation must contain specific provisions for traffic circulation and buffering of nearby non-industrial areas and uses from traffic, noise, dust, vibration, glare, pollution, and unsightly uses or activities.
7. *Public District.* The public district is intended to provide for and protect areas of public lands for public uses.

Detailed zoning district definitions can be obtained from the Wasilla Municipal Code (WMC 16.20.010). The required standards of review for proposed uses within each zoning district are categorized as: administrative approval, use permit, conditional use, excluded, and no city approval needed. Refer to the WMC (16.20.020) for more information regarding review standards and appropriate zone uses.

Landscaping Standards

Revised landscaping standards were adopted December 11, 2006 as part of Title 16. The purpose of the revised standards “are to stabilize soils, reduce dust and erosion, protect natural vegetation, sustain fish and wildlife, protect shorelines, reduce runoff, facilitate groundwater recharge, reduce noise, enhance the community’s environment and visual character, provide attractive and functional separation and screening between uses, and to attract visitors and tourists to the city for economic benefit” (WMC 16.33, Ordinance 06-47 (AM)). Additional landscaping standards for parking areas in residential and commercially zoned lots are defined in Title 16: Parking (WMC 16.24.040). Landscaping within parking areas includes requirements for planting beds, fences, walls, and landscaping islands.

Applicable Plans

City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan (1996)

The Wasilla Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1996 and is a general guide for growth and development for the City of Wasilla. The plan was amended in 1999 to include the City of Wasilla Trails Plan, in 2004 to include the Wasilla Alaska Railroad Relocation Reconnaissance Study, and in 2005 to include the Wasilla All Hazard Mitigation Plan Phase I – Natural Hazards (WMC 2007). This comprehensive plan is intended to aid civic decision makers and citizens regarding issues of land use, growth, development, and quality of life within Wasilla.

City of Wasilla Trails Plan (1999)

The volunteer Wasilla Trails Advisory committee was formed in 1997 to address the community needs for a trail system that allowed cross-town access to existing routes used for recreational purposes. The Trails Plan provides a basic planning and policy framework from which to guide trail development and maintenance within the City of Wasilla.

Wasilla Sewer Master Plan (1999)

This document inventoried the existing collection and treatment system and provided the City of Wasilla with a 15-year plan for future expansion and upgrade of its collection and treatment infrastructure (LCMF Inc. 1999).

City of Wasilla Water Systems Facilities Master Plan 2000 – 2015 (2001)

This document serves as an update to the 1977 Water Facilities Master Plan. The goal of the master plan is to provide for future growth of, and modifications to, the City of Wasilla water system, which is operated and maintained by the Department of Public Works.

Wasilla Airport Master Plan (2002)

The purpose of the Wasilla Airport Master Plan is to guide development and operation of the Wasilla Airport for a 20-year planning period (2002 through 2022). The goal is to provide a safe and economically-viable airport that is consistent with the Federal Aviation Administration's standards, and has adequate capacity to serve the area's air transportation needs.

City of Wasilla Official Streets & Highways Plan FY 2005 – 2025 (2005)

The Official Streets and Highways Plan serves as a planning guide for the Planning Commission, City Council, and other agencies to use as the basis for decisions on street development and improvement in Wasilla. The goals of the Official Streets and Highways Plan are (1) to provide for a street and highway network that provides mobility, connectivity and access to the City's present and future residents and (2) to develop a street and highway network that supports economic development and growth.

Mat-Su Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2006)

This document updates the 2000 Mat-Su Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The Mat-Su Borough experienced rapid growth and change from 2000 through 2006. Accordingly, the update required nearly a total rewrite of the 2000 document. The Mat-Su Resource Conservation & Development Council was the regional economic development organization responsible for creating this document.

Wasilla Main Street Traffic Study (2006)

The purpose of the Main Street Traffic Study was to determine what improvements may be necessary for Main Street and the adjacent Wasilla core area to accommodate existing and future traffic needs.

City of Wasilla Hazard Mitigation Plan (2004)

The purpose of the City of Wasilla Hazard Mitigation Plan was to analyze the level of risk to population and infrastructure vulnerability from natural and technological hazards that affect Wasilla and develop goals, objectives, mitigation actions, and a mitigation implementation strategy that decrease the City's vulnerability.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2008 anticipated)

This master plan will examine and inventory community recreation needs and establish maintenance and land acquisition priorities for recreation and trail use. The plan will also develop goals and objectives to guide management and design.

Existing Land Use and Spatial Distribution

Wasilla is the largest incorporated city in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and has experienced major retail growth due to a large and growing population outside the city boundaries. The presence of large national retail companies, lumber yards, medical services, food and storage facilities, shopping malls, real estate and financial service centers, and dozens of small specialty businesses, make Wasilla the commercial hub of the Mat-Su Borough (Mat-Su Resource Conservation and Development Council [RCDC] 2006). The City of Wasilla spans approximately 13 square miles (8,458 acres), and the land area is dominated by private ownership (Table A9).

Table A9. Wasilla Land Ownership

Owner Type	Area in Acres	Percentage of Total Area
City	700	8%
Borough	150	~2%
State	140	~2%
University of Alaska	40	<1%
Private	7,428	88%
Total	8,458	

Source: City of Wasilla website, Community Profile: Wasilla Facts
(http://www.cityofwasilla.com/profile/profile_14.asp)

Wasilla land use includes residential, commercial, public and semi-public facilities, light industrial, and vacant land. Current acreages for each land use are unavailable at this time. The following table represents the acreage of each land use in 1991 and provides an approximate idea of the distribution of land uses throughout Wasilla. Approximately 50 percent of the land area is undeveloped, largely due to wetlands or other unsuitable and expensive areas to develop. The second largest land use is residential areas, covering approximately 1,091 acres or 15 percent of the community (City of Wasilla 1996). Table A10 summarizes land use characteristics within Wasilla by category. The total acreage for land use in Wasilla differs from the total acreage for land ownership because updated numbers for land use are not available at the time of this plan. Much available information on Wasilla land uses is over ten years old; data should be updated in the next Comprehensive Plan process.

Table A10. Wasilla Land Use

Land Use Category	Area in Acres	Percentage of Total Area
Single-Family Residential (occupied and vacant subdivided areas)	1,091	15%
Multi-Family Housing	77	1%
Mobile Homes	2	< 1 %
Commercial/Business/Services	198	3%
Industrial	150	2%
Wasilla Municipal Airport	386	5%
Public Lands (e.g. schools, parks)	340	5%
Semi-public Lands (e.g. churches)	55	< 1 %
Lakes & Streams	750	10%
Vacant Land (including streets)	4,311	59%
Total Land Use:	7,360	100%

Source: City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan (1996)

Many business and commercial uses in Wasilla extend along the Parks Highway due to the benefits of higher traffic volume and maximum visibility. Commercial developments are generally characterized by a combination of strip shopping malls, high-volume retail businesses, and small businesses. A large proportion of commercial developments in Wasilla are located on the north side of the Parks Highway. The most active commercial area south of the Highway is located along Knik-Goose Bay Road. The Palmer-Wasilla Highway is also a developing commercial strip between the two adjacent communities. The small percentage of industrial use in Wasilla is made up of the airport, the Alaska Railroad right-of-way, and sewage treatment facility.

Transportation

Highway and Road Systems

The road system in Wasilla provides the primary method of transportation in Wasilla and the surrounding area. As of 2005, the City was responsible for maintenance of approximately 30 miles each of paved and gravel streets; and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities was responsible for an additional 18 miles of roadway within Wasilla. There are five classifications of roads in Wasilla based on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) functional classification guidelines, which are grouped by the level of service they provide (City of Wasilla 2005 and FHWA 2007).

- *Arterial streets* are main thoroughfares that emphasize mobility and are designed to move large volumes of vehicles between destinations at intermediate to high speeds. Examples include Knik-Goose Bay Road, Palmer-Wasilla Highway, and Wasilla-Fishhook Road.
- *Major collector streets* function as access streets to arterial streets, allow inter-city movement, and movement to and from residential areas. Collector streets have a lower degree of mobility than arterial streets. Examples include Bogard Road, Crusey Street, and Lucille Street.
- *Minor collector streets* move traffic from large residential areas to major collectors, arterial streets, and highways. Examples include Church Road, Lucas Road, and South Mack Drive.
- *Commercial streets* emphasize access more than mobility and allow movement between business, industrial, retail, and other commercial areas. Examples include Aviation Avenue, Herning Avenue, and Swanson Avenue.
- *Local/residential streets* also emphasize access and have low operating speeds, moving traffic from individual properties to collector and arterial streets. Examples include Lee Trevino Avenue and Pinion Drive (City of Wasilla 2005 and FHWA 2007).

The Parks Highway, an arterial street, runs through the middle of Wasilla for approximately 5 miles in an east-west direction. Other arterials and collector streets stem off of this road providing access to other areas of the City. The Airport and Transportation Museum Area and South Wasilla Heights have limited road access and internal road networks.

Railroad

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) has a long history in Wasilla, as the City started as a rail town. The railroad has greatly influenced development patterns in Wasilla. The rail line is roughly parallel with the Parks Highway, thus bisecting the City. There are six at-grade railroad crossings in town, and the City is responsible for paying ARRC for maintenance. New crossings are difficult and expensive to obtain, which is an issue when planning for additional roads to add efficiency to the transportation system in Wasilla (City of Wasilla 1996).

As the population continues to increase in the Mat-Su Borough, the Parks Highway becomes more congested. At the same time, ARRC business has expanded, increasing the number of daily trains, which contribute to traffic congestion in the area. ARRC continues to evaluate realignment and crossing elimination options to work with the City to determine alternatives to provide safe and efficient transportation corridors that provide the greatest possible mobility. The City and ARRC share safety concerns about at-grade crossings and have identified at-grade crossings that will need grade separation in the foreseeable future (ARRC 2007).

The preferred alternative for a safe solution to road/rail traffic congestion is to construct a multimodal corridor bypassing the City. The City of Wasilla, ARRC, the Mat-Su Borough, and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities have signed a cooperative agreement to plan for and develop a multimodal corridor within Wasilla and the Mat-Su Borough. While necessary regulatory compliance documents are completed for a multimodal corridor, ARRC and the City continue to investigate grade separation options (ARRC 2007).

ARRC does not offer passenger service to or from Wasilla. Train traffic passing through Wasilla is seasonal and on average, 4 trains per day pass through Wasilla during the winter months (October through May); between 8 and 10 trains pass through the City during the summer months. Trains carry passengers and freight and travel between 45 and 49 miles per hour. There is one stretch of about 1 mile where trains slow their speed to 25 miles per hour (Carr 2007).

Airport

The Wasilla Municipal Airport is discussed in the *Public Facilities and Schools* section in this appendix. The Wasilla Airport is one of two airports in the Mat-Su Borough with a paved runway. ADOT&PF classifies the Wasilla Airport as a Community Class Airport, which means the airport provides general aviation, and commercial and light cargo needs for the Mat-Su Borough. Regular users of the airport include air taxis, cargo, and back-country pilots. To date, regular passenger service has not been provided by the Wasilla Airport, although the City would welcome such service. Notable users of the Wasilla Airport include the Army National Guard and the Alaska Division of Forestry (City of Wasilla 2002).

The airport's service area is considered to be Wasilla, Meadow Lakes, and Knik/Fairview with a total service population of approximately 17,200 (City of Wasilla 2002).

Public Transportation

Mat-Su Community Transit (MASCOT) is a private nonprofit corporation established in 1999. After a brief pilot program showed success, full service began in August 1999 with five vehicles. MASCOT now operates fixed route, commuter, and paratransit services between Palmer, Wasilla, and Eagle River. There are seven separate bus lines offering local and commuter fixed route services, and although there are established routes, the buses may deviate up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off a particular route. There are also five, 20-passenger vans with lifts utilized for fixed routes (MASCOT 2007).

MASCOT fares can be purchased per trip, daily, or monthly. Seniors ride free of charge. One-way connection transfers are available to Eagle River and MASCOT/People Mover passes are also available per trip or monthly. Each year ridership has steadily increased and in 2006, annual ridership was more than 72,000 (Friend 2007 and MASCOT 2007).

Paratransit services are also offered with three wheelchair accessible vehicles and Alaska Valley Cab transportation for transport of Medicaid patients to medical appointments. MASCOT is an active contributing member of the community and works closely with other non-profit organizations, schools, and state human service agencies to provide regular, semi-regular, and/or coordinated transit services. The organization is governed by a board of directors and currently employs four office staff and 11 full-time drivers (Friend 2007 and MASCOT 2007).

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Pedestrian and bicycle travel satisfy a minor portion of the transportation needs in Wasilla. Downtown has 5-foot wide sidewalks along some streets that are in good condition. However, pedestrian facilities along Main Street are in poor condition, with American Disability Act compliant

curb ramps in poor condition at the Parks Highway and nonexistent at other intersections. Recently paved pathways have been installed that connect City streets from the Parks Highway to the east, Wasilla Fishhook Road to the north, and Knik-Goose Bay Road to the south. A pedestrian tunnel was recently constructed under the Parks Highway at Crusey Street; this is the only north-south connection of pedestrian facilities across the Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad at this time. Aside from this pedestrian tunnel, a direct connection for pedestrians does not exist between the South Wasilla Heights and Downtown.

Economic Development

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is the fastest growing area in the state. Wasilla's population has increased more than 64 percent since 1990; this high growth rate has spurred robust economic growth. The city is largely a residential area for workers employed in other parts of Alaska, with Anchorage by far the largest commuter destination. According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, more than 34 percent of Wasilla residents commute to Anchorage daily. Others work in remote areas, such as the North Slope or Red Dog Mine (Fried 2003).

Figures from the 2000 Census can be useful in gaining an understanding of Wasilla's current economy. The total potential work force (age 16 or older) of Wasilla in 2000 was 3,893, with 11.2 percent unemployment. The median household income was \$48,226, and 9.6 percent of residents were living in poverty. These indicators were slightly less robust than those in Anchorage, where unemployment was at 6.8 percent, median household income at \$55,546, and 7.4 percent of residents were living below the poverty level. The gap is not great, and Wasilla's economy is growing with its population.

The Alaska Department of Workforce and Labor Development predicts that the Mat-Su Borough will continue to attract more of the Anchorage workforce, and estimates that, from 18 percent of the Anchorage/Mat-Su area population in 1999, by 2018, the Mat-Su Borough is likely to house 26 percent of the region's people. This ongoing shift translates into rapidly increasing investments in housing, consumer goods, businesses, and services for Wasilla and other Mat-Su Borough communities.

Wasilla is the retail hub of the Mat-Su Borough. In its biennial budget, the City reports that it provides services for approximately 76 percent of the Mat-Su Borough's population. Retail and service sectors are expected to continue to expand rapidly as the area's population continues to grow (City of Wasilla 2006).

Affordable housing is a key factor in the migration from Anchorage to Wasilla and other parts of the Valley. In 2002, the average price of a single family home in the Mat-Su Borough was \$169,404, 22 percent below the average single family dwelling in Anchorage, and well below the statewide average of \$185,735 (Fried 2003). The City of Wasilla reports that surveys show that the Mat-Su Borough's more rural lifestyle and availability of larger pieces of land also play into the area's appeal to homeowners. As the state continues to invest in transportation infrastructure between Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough, and particularly if a Knik Arm crossing becomes reality, these factors may play an even greater role. (City of Wasilla 2006 and Fried 2003)

Compared with Anchorage, Wasilla and the Mat-Su Borough have a wealth of developable land. As with affordable housing in the residential sector of the market, space for buildings and infrastructure is already beginning to draw commercial-sector ventures that serve the entire South Central region. Car dealerships are a prime example. Retailers of goods or services that are major or one-time purchases can afford to be at a greater distance from consumers in the Anchorage area, and still

compete. As transportation between Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough continues to become easier, the types of goods and services that can be regionally competitive will continue to expand.

The 2000 Census lists the following industries in Wasilla, grouped here by estimates of number of people employed in each sector:

- Education, Health and Social Services (525) – These vital public services are key to Wasilla’s health and appeal as a community.
- Retail Trade (387) – Wasilla is the retail center of the Mat-Su Borough.
- Public Administration (261) – Wasilla provides services for a great proportion of the Valley’s residents, and has the staff and infrastructure to do so. Thriving public services like the library can in turn draw more regional residents to visit Wasilla often, which then boosts retail and service business.
- Construction (254) – Growth in population and the business sector spur a healthy construction industry.
- Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities (196) – Wasilla has long been a hub of Alaskan commerce, and continues to build on that role.
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services (181) – Not only for visitors, but providing “extras” in life for Valley residents represents a growing part of Wasilla’s economy.
- Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management (109) – These jobs are both internally focused, serving Wasilla residents, and externally focused, supporting area and regional ventures.
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing (104) – As a growing community, Wasilla continues to develop its own financial marketplace.
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, Mining (96) – Resource extraction and agriculture continue to be a part of Wasilla’s economy, and an area ripe for expansion, with growing markets for local agricultural products, and opportunities for adding value to raw resources.

In City of Wasilla and Chamber of Commerce descriptions of local industry, two important points emerge that are not covered in the previous break-down:

- Tourism is an element of Wasilla’s economy that intersects with many of the industries or occupations listed above. One of the leading economic opportunities across the State of Alaska comes from its natural beauty and recreational opportunities. Wasilla’s current tourist attractions include: the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry; the Dorothy Page Museum; Matanuska-Susitna Convention and Visitors Bureau; Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race Headquarters; Knik Museum and Mushers Hall of Fame; Hatcher Pass/Independence Mine State Historical Park (nearby wilderness recreation); and the Veterans Wall of Honor. A local developer is considering developing a train and vehicle destination Iditarod Village that would incorporate a pond and Alaskan wildlife. In addition, recreational opportunities abound in and near Wasilla, including rockhounding, berry picking, boating, fishing, bird watching, and waterfowl hunting. Any of these activities could be further tapped as draws for tourism and regional recreation. (Wasilla Chamber of Commerce 2007).

- The service sector of the economy includes increasing convenience and affordability in the growing population buying goods and services locally, rather than outside the community. In addition, telecommunications and the internet open up possibilities for non-area-dependent services, such as call centers. The migration of some of the region's population to the Valley has encouraged some Anchorage-based businesses to open offices in Wasilla, which keeps commute time down and keeps more support and service work in Wasilla as well.

In summary, Wasilla enjoys a strong and growing economy. The City has an energetic Economic Development program, working with the public and with developers, and has identified principles and tools to foster a diversified economy that can be applied municipality-wide and in each planning area. With careful attention to public vision, and by using this period of rapid growth to establish an economic base that is diverse and possessed of solid local foundations, as well as capitalizing on the city's role as a regional hub, Wasilla should continue to thrive as a vital Alaskan community.

Municipal Finance

The services provided by the City of Wasilla are funded from a number of sources, with the largest contribution being from a municipal sales tax. In the City's 2007–2008 Biennial Budget, Mayor Dianne Keller outlined the philosophy behind Wasilla's municipal finance:

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the City of Wasilla to provide optimum service levels to the public as cost effectively as possible to ensure a stable and thriving economy, promote a healthy community, provide a safe environment and a quality lifestyle, and promote maximum citizen participation in government.

Major Issues

For several years now, Wasilla has been one of the fastest growing communities in the United States, and it is a real challenge for the City government to keep up with this growth. The increasing demand for services due to this growth must be met at the same time we are seeing both an increasing number of unfunded mandates and decreased funding from both the federal government and state of Alaska. ...

One of our main goals is to prioritize and focus expenditures on much needed infrastructure improvements and public safety needs. Due to our ability to achieve a level-funded budget, we will transfer over \$1,534,776 to the Capital Improvement Project budget in FY 07 and \$1,248,276 in FY 08 to fund these infrastructure projects. We will also be able to transfer \$343,141 (a 4.75% increase) to the Library Special Revenue Fund. By "holding the line" on spending, we are able to present a General Fund budget including transfers that is only 2.94% higher than last year.

Revenue and Expenses

Revenue for the City of Wasilla has come from a relatively steady number of sources over the past several years. The forecast model used by the City increases both revenue and expenditures at proportional rates. Figure A8 depicts revenue breakdown for fiscal year 2007 (City of Wasilla 2006a) illustrates the revenue contributed by each source.

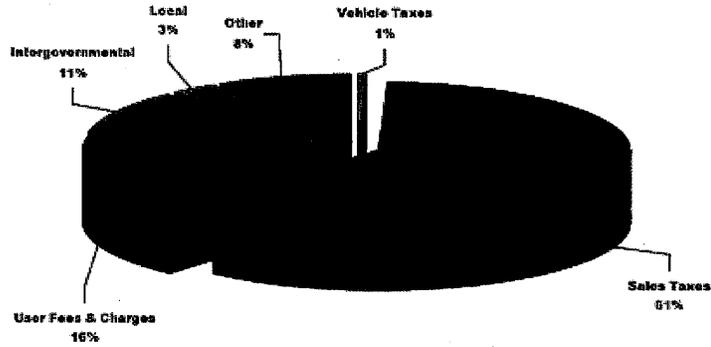


Figure A8. OPERATING EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORY (ALL FUNDS) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

Figure A9 presents actual and forecast revenue for the City of Wasilla over the span of a decade (City of Wasilla 2006b).

City of Wasilla Historical and Projected Revenue Sources

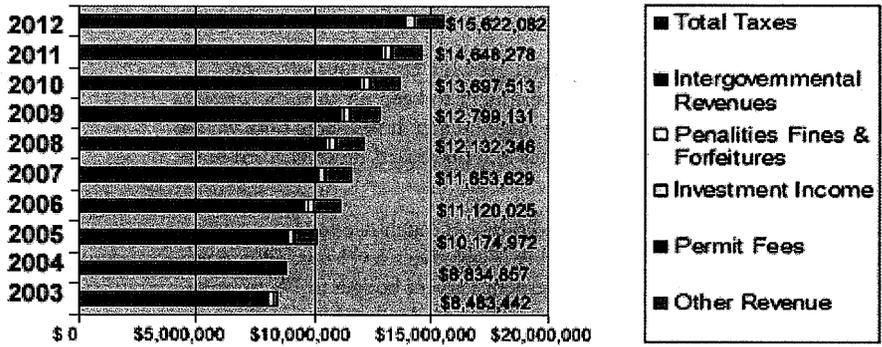


Figure A9. Historical and Projected Revenue Sources

Similar to the case with revenue, spending by the City has remained roughly proportional over the past several years. In 2004, the City added Economic Development to its expenditures, and forecast models retain this expense. Figure A10 displays the expenditure breakdown for fiscal year 2007 (City of Wasilla 2006a) is a good illustration of how the City is allocating its funds.

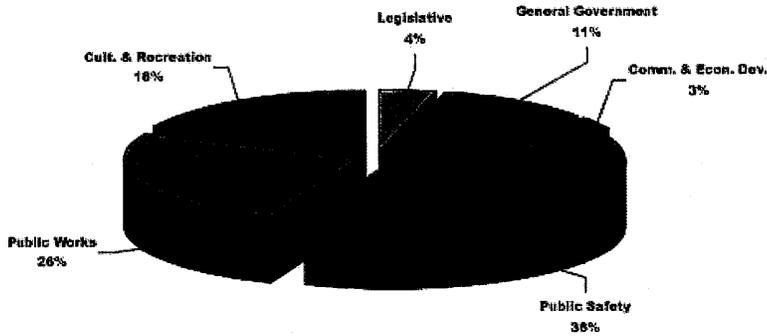


Figure A10. Operating Expenditure Breakdown by Category (All Funds) for Fiscal Year 2007.

Comparing total revenues and expenditures over time shows that the City of Wasilla is consistently in the black; providing services for residents, and some that are enjoyed by the region (thus drawing more business into the community), in a manner in keeping with income. The City is living within its means, and has been able to put away money for long-term and capital improvement projects. City officials are actively managing the fiscal well-being of the community, and are considering options for how to maintain the healthy balance in the city budget should some revenue sources (such as shared State of Alaska revenues) decrease in the future. Figure A11 shows the comparison of total revenues and expenditures, both historical and projected, between the years of 1995 and 2012.

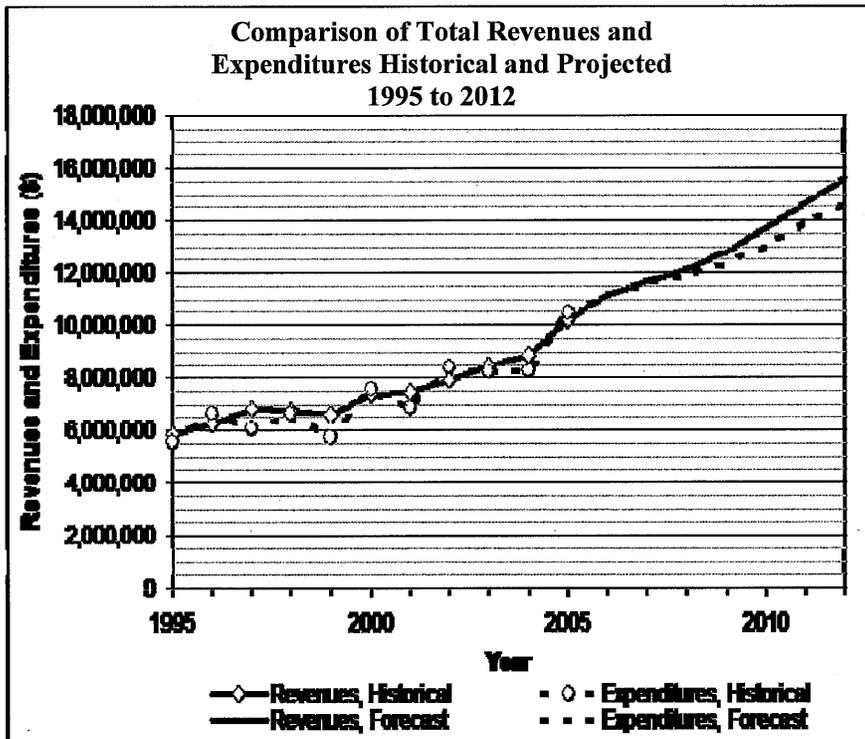


Figure A11. Comparison of Total Revenues and Expenditures

References and Further Sources of Information

This overview of municipal finance was drawn from the following sources, to which the reader is directed for more detailed information.

- City of Wasilla Biennial Budget, 2007-2008
- Fiscal Forecast Model, Final Report, City of Wasilla 2006

Planned Improvements

As Wasilla continues to grow, infrastructure and facilities are quickly outgrown and residential and commercial needs increase. Some of the foreseeable improvements planned for construction within the City are discussed here.

Yenlo Square

This mixed use neighborhood center is the first planned unit development (PUD) of its kind in Wasilla. The developers of Yenlo Square seek to centralize housing, goods, and services for those who do not have automobiles. The PUD includes a variety of housing choices including flats and row houses, single-family and coach houses, loft apartments, and special needs housing. Yenlo Square will also have dedicated open space, boulevard and parking lot plantings, and a playground.

This development will be completed in 5 phases, the first of which will be completed by the end of October 2007. Phase 1 completes three buildings that include housing and mixed use (residential and commercial). Once completed, Yenlo Square will cover 7.5 acres and have an average density of 20.66 residential units per acre (Architects Alaska 2004).

Creekside Town Square

The Creekside Town Square is designed to be a lifestyle center that will include large and medium sized nationwide retail chain stores and small shops. The development will be situated on approximately 30 acres adjacent to Cottonwood Creek in an area that is in the process of being annexed into the City boundaries (Meritage Development Group 2005).

Retail and Commercial Development

High demand retail and commercial businesses are in the preliminary stages of site selection and permitting with the City.

City Water and Wastewater

The Wasilla Public Works Department is currently conducting a feasibility study to analyze the City's future needs for water and wastewater. The City received two \$500,000 grants in 2007 from the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development for the Palmer-Wasilla Highway sewer extension and the Palmer-Wasilla Water Improvement Phase 3 and Bumpus well number 2. While the City also has funds remaining from another \$500,000 grant to complete the Mission Hills water line extension, additional funds are needed to complete the project.

Wasilla Municipal Airport

The 2001 Airport Master Plan identified a variety of projects to improve and expand the airport over a 20-year timeframe. Some of the improvements and expansion projects have been completed. In the near future, the airport runway will be expanded from 3,700 to 5,000 feet. Connecting to city water lines is another improvement that airport proponents would like to see considered to

accommodate future growth and needs at and near this facility. For a complete list of improvements considered for the airport, please refer to the Wasilla Airport Master Plan published in 2002.

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