

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historic and Regional Context .....	A-1
Location and Setting .....	A-2
Vegetation and Wetlands.....	A-3
Existing Conditions .....	A-3
Implications for Development .....	A-4
Geology and Soils.....	A-4
Geology .....	A-4
Soils.....	A-4
Implications for Development .....	A-5
Topography and Drainage .....	A-5
Existing Conditions .....	A-5
Implications for Development .....	A-6
Climate .....	A-6
Existing Conditions .....	A-6
Implications for Development .....	A-7
Fish and Wildlife .....	A-7
Existing Conditions .....	A-7
Implications for Development .....	A-8
Population and Demographics.....	A-9
Population.....	A-9
Gender and Age Composition .....	A-9
Racial Composition .....	A-10
Educational Attainment .....	A-10
Economic Statistics .....	A-11
Housing .....	A-11
Existing Inventory and Condition.....	A-11
Planned Improvements/Development .....	A-13
Public Facilities and Schools.....	A-13
Existing Facilities and Condition.....	A-13
Utilities .....	A-18
Sewer Service System.....	A-18
Water Service System.....	A-20
Planned Improvements/Development .....	A-21
Storm Drains .....	A-21
Solid Waste.....	A-21
Parks and Recreation .....	A-21
Existing Conditions .....	A-21
City of Wasilla Parks Recreation Facilities .....	A-22
Mat-Su Borough Recreation Facilities within Wasilla .....	A-23
Applicable Plans .....	A-24
Implications for Development .....	A-24

Land Use.....	A-25
Applicable Ordinances and Codes.....	A-25
Zoning Districts.....	A-25
Applicable Plans.....	A-26
Existing Land Use and Spatial Distribution.....	A-27
Transportation.....	A-28
Highway and Road Systems.....	A-28
Railroad.....	A-29
Airport.....	A-30
Public Transportation.....	A-30
Pedestrian and Bicycle Access.....	A-30
Economic Development.....	A-31
Municipal Finance.....	A-33
Revenue and Expenses.....	A-33
References and Further Sources of Information.....	A-36
Planned Improvements.....	A-36
Yenlo Square.....	A-36
Creekside Town Square.....	A-36
Retail and Commercial Development.....	A-36
City Water and Wastewater.....	A-36
Wasilla Municipal Airport.....	A-36
References.....	A-38

## 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).

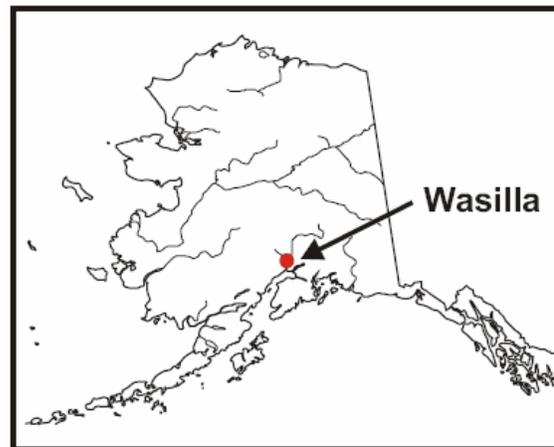


Figure A1. Location and Setting

# 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).

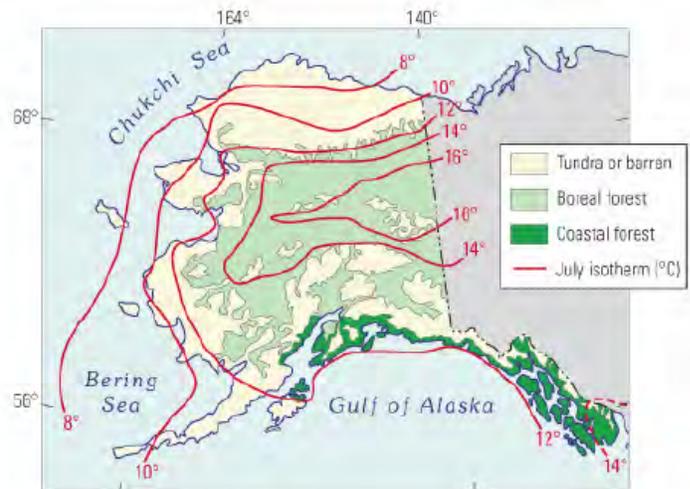
Other types of plant cover in the Wasilla area include tall and low shrubs (alder, devil's club, lady fern, and horestail), dwarf shrubs (dwarf birch and heath species), dry and moist herbs (grasses, sedges, mosses, and lichens), wet and aquatic herbs (sedges, mare's tail, buckbean, pond lilies), agricultural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

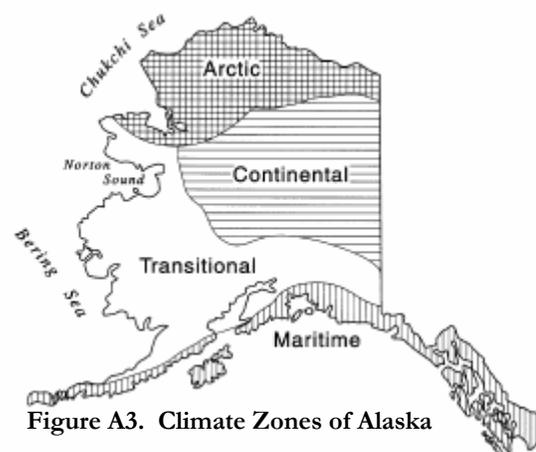
These areas may also have important viewsheds, and their maintenance would likely be desirable primarily through the use of regulatory mechanisms such as zoning and landscaping standards.

## 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.

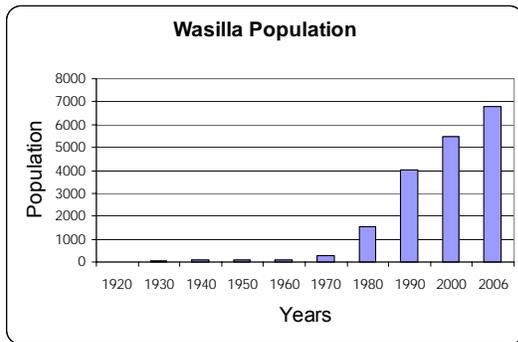


Figure A4. Population 1920-2006

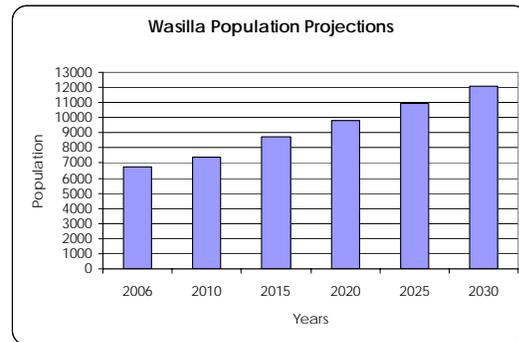


Figure A5. Population Projections

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

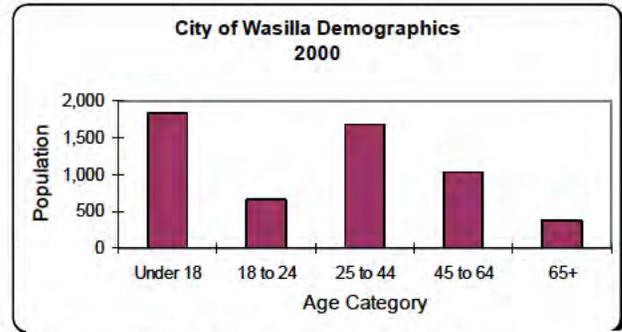


Figure A6. Wasilla Demographics 2000

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 <sup>th</sup> grade	121	3.9	4.1
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> 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
<b>Wasilla</b>	\$48,226	\$21,127	5.7%	9.6%	70.8%	62.8%	7.9%
<b>State of Alaska</b>	\$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](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
<b>UNITS IN STRUCTURE</b>			<b>HEATING TYPE</b>		
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			
<b>YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT</b>			<b>SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS</b>		
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
<b>Within Downtown planning area boundaries</b>				
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
<b>Outside of the planning areas but within Wasilla or are commonly used by residents</b>				
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 49<sup>th</sup> 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, 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

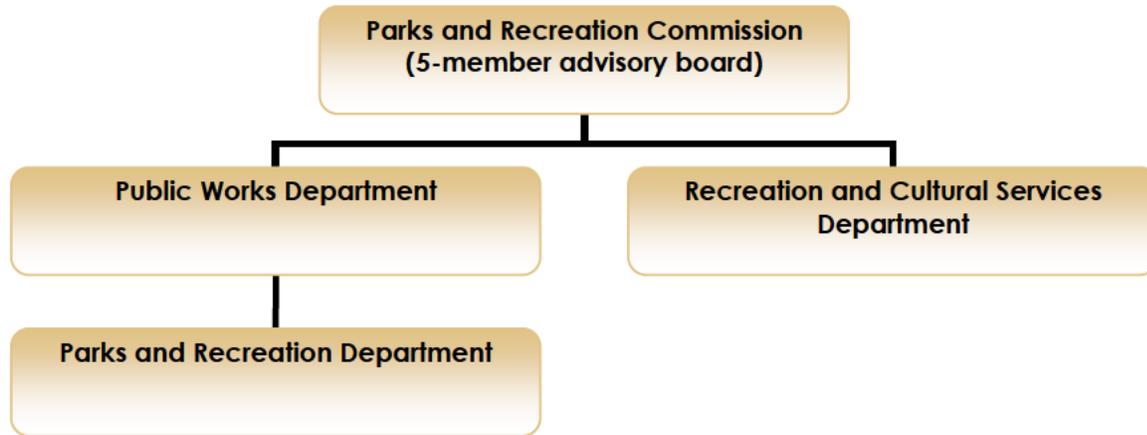


Figure A7. Parks and Recreation Organization

## 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](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 Musers 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.

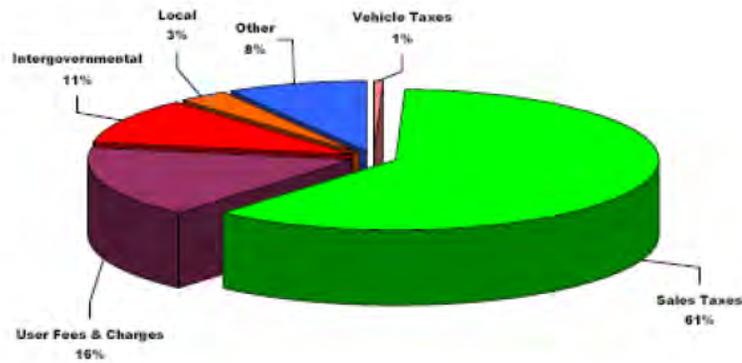


Figure A8. OPERATING EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORY (ALL FUNDS) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

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

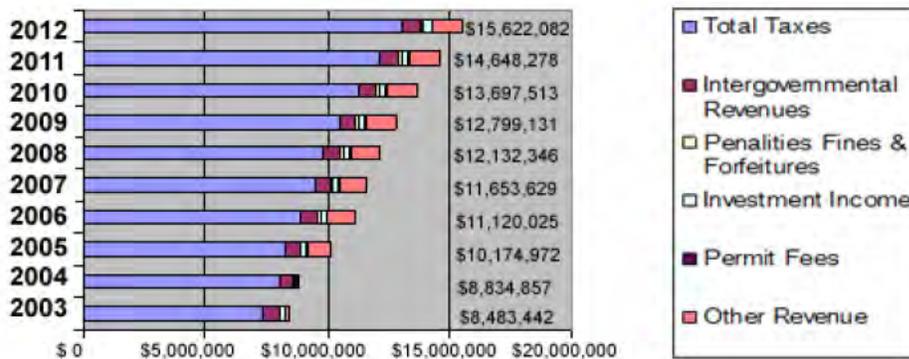


Figure A9. Historical and Projected Revenue Sources

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.

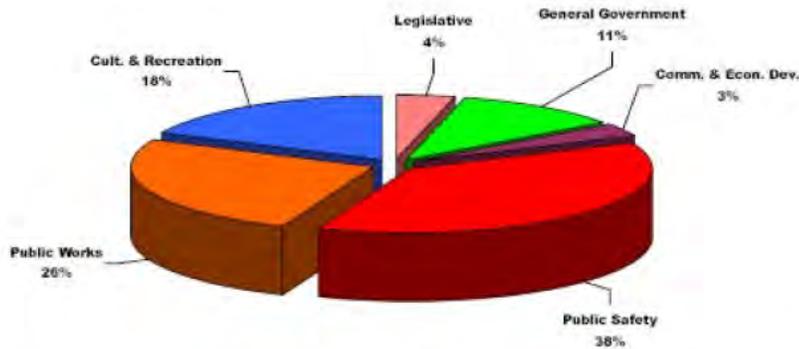


Figure A10. Operating Expenditure Breakdown by Category (All Funds) for Fiscal Year 2007.

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.

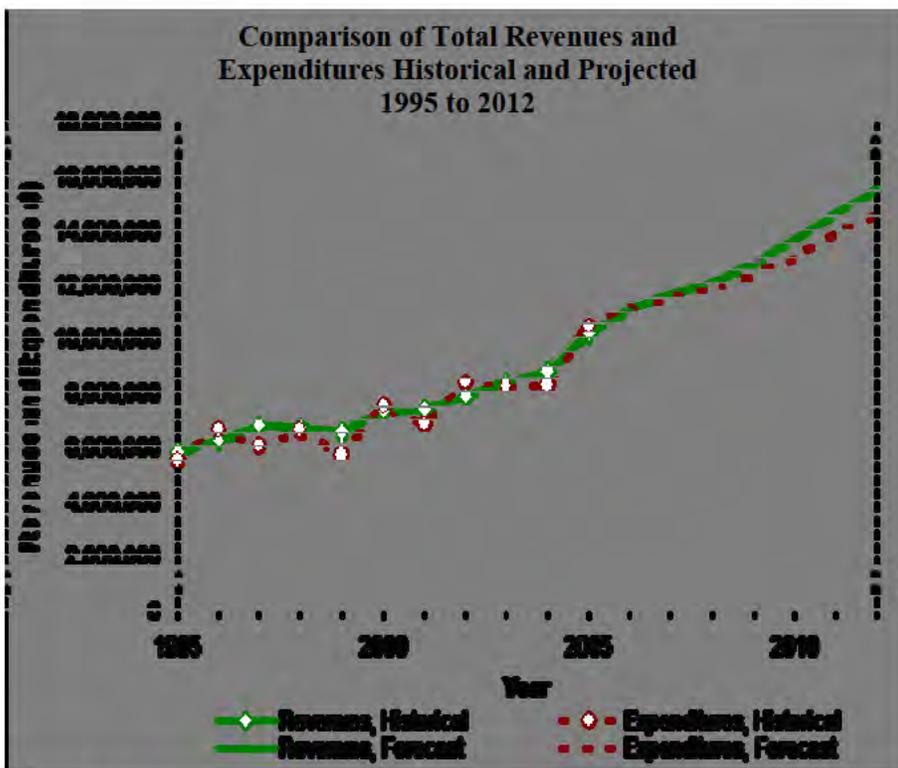


Figure A11. Comparison of Total Revenues and Expenditures

## 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.

## REFERENCES

- Ager, T.A. 2003. *Late Quaternary vegetation and climate history of the central Bering land bridge from St. Michael Island, western Alaska*. Accessed online July 24, 2007, at:  
<http://esp.cr.usgs.gov/research/alaska/PDF/Ager2003QR.pdf>.
- Ager, T.A., and Carrara, P.E., 2006. *Latest Wisconsin deglaciation and postglacial vegetation development in the Turnagain Arm area, upper Cook Inlet, south-central Alaska: 36<sup>th</sup> Arctic Workshop Program and Abstracts*. Accessed online July 24, 2007, at:  
<http://esp.cr.usgs.gov/research/alaska/turnarm.html>.
- Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (ADCCED). 2006. *Wasilla 2006 population from Community Database Online report for Wasilla*. Accessed online July 5, 2007, and July 26, 2007, at:  
[http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF\\_BLOCK.cfm](http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF_BLOCK.cfm).
- Alaska Department of Community Advocacy (ADCA). 2006. *Alaska Community Database, Wasilla commuter information from Community Database Online report for Wasilla*. Accessed online July 5, 2007, at: [http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF\\_BLOCK.cfm](http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF_BLOCK.cfm).
- ADCA. 2007. *Alaska Community Database, Community Information Summaries, Wasilla*. Accessed online at [http://www.dced.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CIS.cfm?Comm\\_Boro\\_name=Wasilla](http://www.dced.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CIS.cfm?Comm_Boro_name=Wasilla).
- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC). 2002. *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Dissolved Oxygen in the Waters of Lake Lucille in Wasilla, Alaska*. February 11.
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). 2006. *Wildlife Notebook Series*. Accessed online at:  
<http://www.adfg.state.ak.us/pubs/notebook/notehome.php>.
- ADF&G. 2007. *State of Alaska Species of Special Concern*. Accessed online at:  
<http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=concern.main>.
- Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. 2007. *Media Release: Labor Releases State and Regional Population Projections for 2007 through 2030*. Accessed online August 1, 2007, at:  
<http://labor.state.ak.us/news/2007/news08-05.pdf>. July 30.
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR). 2004. *Enforceable Standards for Development of State Owned coalbed Methane Resources in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough*. December 2004.
- Alaska Energy Authority. 2006. Weather station wind resource summary for Wasilla New Airport, AK. 3-16-2006. Accessed July 25, 2007 online at:  
[http://www.aidea.org/aea/PDF%20files/Wind%20Resource%20Assessment/WasillaNewAirport\\_StationSummary.pdf](http://www.aidea.org/aea/PDF%20files/Wind%20Resource%20Assessment/WasillaNewAirport_StationSummary.pdf).
- Architects Alaska. 2004 Yenlo Square, Wasilla, Alaska - A Planned Unit Development for Valley Residential Services.
- Bunds, Michael P. 2001. Fault strength and transpressional tectonics along the Castle Mountain strike-slip fault, southern Alaska. *Geologic Society of America Bulletin*, July.
- City of Wasilla. 1992. *City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan*. October 1992. Prepared by B & B Environmental, Inc. Community Planning
- City of Wasilla. 1996. *City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan: City Approved Draft*. April 1996.

- City of Wasilla. 1999. Wasilla Sewer Master Plan. Prepared by LCMF Incorporated and GV Jones & Associates, Inc. December 1.
- City of Wasilla. 2001. City of Wasilla Water System Facilities Master Plan. Prepared by Gilfin Engineering and Environmental Testing, Inc. and MWH. July.
- City of Wasilla. 2002. Wasilla Airport Master Plan. Prepared by LCMF Incorporated. August 15.
- City of Wasilla. 2004. City of Wasilla Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- City of Wasilla, 2005. City of Wasilla Official Streets & Highways Plan FY 2005-2025.
- City of Wasilla. 2006a. Biennial Budget for Fiscal Years 2007 through 2008. Adopted by the City Council June 26.
- City of Wasilla. 2006b. City of Wasilla: Five-Year Fiscal Forecast Modal. Prepared by Northern Economics, Inc. November.
- City of Wasilla. 2007a. City of Wasilla website. Accessed online at: <http://www.cityofwasilla.com/>.
- City of Wasilla. 2007b. Information from graph titled Residential Permits Wasilla 2002 – 2006. Provided by the City of Wasilla.
- Cook, Linda and Frank Norris, 1998. Kenai Fjords. *Chapter 2, "Living on the Outer Kenai Peninsula," in A Stern and Rock-Bound Coast: Historic Resource Study. National Park Service, Anchorage, Alaska.* Accessed online August 22, 2007, at: <http://www.nps.gov/archive/kefj/hrs/hrs2.d.htm>.
- Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of wetlands in deepwater habitats of the United States. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. Jamestown, ND: Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center Home Page. Accessed online at: <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/wetlands/classwet/index.htm>. (Version 04DEC98).
- Fall, James A. 1981. Traditional Resource Uses in the Knik Arm Area: Historical and Contemporary Patterns. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence. Accessed online August 22, 2007, at: <http://www.subsistence.adfg.state.ak.us/TechPap/tp025.pdf>.
- Federal Transit Administration and Alaska Railroad Corporation. 2005. South Wasilla Track Realignment, NEPA Environmental Assessment. August.
- Fried, Neal. 2003. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough. In *Alaska Economic Trends*. Joanne Erskine, Editor. Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Vol.23, Number 1.
- Friend, Louis III. 2007. Personal Communication. September 18.
- Giddings, Archie. 2007. City of Wasilla Director of Public Works. Personal Communication. October 26.
- Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce. 2007. About Wasilla, Alaska: Attractions. Accessed online July 9 and August 31 at: <http://wasillachamber.org/wasilla/attractions.htm>.
- Knik Arm Crossing Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, August 30, 2006.
- Lakehead University. 2007. Maintained by the Faculty of Forestry and the Forest Environment of Lakehead University. Ontario, Canada. Accessed online September 5, 2007, at: [http://www.borealforest.org/world/herbs\\_shrubs.htm](http://www.borealforest.org/world/herbs_shrubs.htm). Last Modified June 17, 2005.

- Marcott, Kerry. 2007. Brett Memorial Ice Arena Specialist. Personal Communication. August 27.
- Mat-Su Borough (MSB). 2007. Brett Memorial Ice Arena. Accessed online August 27, 2007, at: <http://www.matsugov.us/RecServices/BrettRink.cfm>.
- Mat-Su Resource Conservation and Development Council. 2006. Mat-Su Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. June 2006 update.
- Meritage Development Group. 2005. Gateway Crossing and Creekside Town Square, Wasilla, Alaska
- Muhs, Daniel R. et al. 2004. Holocene loess deposition and soil formation as competing processes, Matanuska Valley, southern Alaska. United States Geologic Society. April.
- National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). 1998. *Soil Survey of Matanuska-Susitna Valley Area, Alaska*.
- NRCS. 2002. Permafrost Zones. Map retrieved online July 25, 2007, at: [http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/ak/permafrost8\\_02.pdf](http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/ak/permafrost8_02.pdf).
- Oasis Environmental, Inc. (Oasis). 2006. 2005 Lake Lucille Water Quality Monitoring Report, Wasilla Alaska. April 12.
- Potter, Louise. 1978. *Early Days in Wasilla*. Roger Burt Printing. Hanover, New Hampshire. First printed in 1963.
- Reed, P.B., Jr. 1996. National List of Vascular Plant Species that Occur in Wetlands: 1996 National Summary. Available online at: <http://www.fws.gov/nwi/bha/list96.html>.
- Selkregg, Lydia. 1974. *Alaska Regional Profiles: Southcentral Region*.
- Templin, Warren. 2007. Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Personal Communication. August 22.
- The Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court of the United States, Oxford University Press, 1992, 2005. <http://www.answers.com/topic/zoning>, accessed July 03, 2007.
- Tryck Nyman Hayes, Inc. 2006. Wasilla Main Street Traffic Study. Project Number STP-0525(12)/54302. Prepared for the State of Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities. July 26, 2006.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 1990. City of Wasilla and State of Alaska 1990 total populations. Accessed online August 1, 2007, at: <http://factfinder.census.gov>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. Demographic information for the City of Wasilla and the State of Alaska. Accessed online July 5, 2007, at: <http://factfinder.census.gov>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2007. State of Alaska 2006 population estimate. Accessed on August 1, 2007, at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/02000.html>. May 7.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2007. National Wetlands Inventory. Retrieved from Wetlands Mapper at <http://wetlandfws.er.usgs.gov/wtlnds/launch.html> on August 26. Last modified July 20, 2007, at: 10:47:25
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). 1992. Anchorage (C-7) SW quadrangle, Alaska. 1:25,000 series topographic map.
- USGS. 2000. *Coal-Bed Methane: Potential and Concerns*. USGS Fact Sheet FS-123-00. October.

- Urban, Bruce. 2007. City of Wasilla Recreation and Cultural Services Manager. Personal Communication. July 6 and August 22.
- U.S. Department of Energy. 1993. *Tomorrow's Energy for Cities and Counties: Solar Access: A Winning Strategy*.
- Viereck, L.A., Dyrness, C.T., Batten, A.R., and K.J. Wenzlick. 1992. The Alaska Vegetation Classification. General Technical Report PNW-GTR-286. USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. Portland, OR.
- Wasilla Municipal Code. 2007. Current through Ordinance 07-30, adopted May 14, 2007. <http://www.codepublishing.com/ak/wasilla.html>, accessed July 03.



## Appendix B Public Involvement

Public Involvement was a critical component of the development of this plan. This appendix chronologically compiles the notes from each public participation opportunity and also includes the newsletters that were distributed to Wasilla residents for this planning project.

The page numbers in this appendix are not in keeping with the remainder of the document because this section includes the original notes that were widely distributed throughout the planning process.

In the order of appearance, documents in this section include:

- Newsletter, September 2006
- Summary of Comments Received During Saturday Visioning Committee Workshop, November 18, 2006
- Focus Group Summary Notes: Arts, Culture, History, Volunteers, Faith Community/ Parks and Recreation, Outdoor Interest Groups, January 24, 2007
- Focus Group Summary Notes: Real Estate, Developers, Architects, Designers/ Property Owners, January 25, 2007
- Focus Group Summary Notes: Business Community and Transportation Industry, January 27, 2007
- Charrette Summary Notes, March 31, 2007
- Public Meeting, May 1, 2007



# Wasilla Area Plans

September 2006

## Wasilla's Vision: We want to hear from you!

The City of Wasilla is developing area plans for Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and Airport and Transportation Museum area. These plans will define a vision for each area and help to guide decisions for future growth and development. Additionally, policies will be developed to help realize the community vision. The City has formed a *Vision Steering Team* to guide and review the planning process. The team is composed of community residents from various stakeholder groups who will work to represent all interests in the process including youth, seniors, minority groups, business and visitor interests, environmental groups, educators, developers, art and cultural groups, and other diverse community perspectives. Three *focus groups* will be used to address four specific questions regarding areas of pride, regret, community trends, and major issues.

### Why are area plans needed?

The City provides residents a distinctive rural Alaskan lifestyle with urban amenities. Wasilla has many local assets, including two museums, a multi-sports complex, a library, great schools, convenient access to higher education, and multi-modal transportation connections. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, with year-round recreation opportunities, abundant wildlife, a mild coastal climate, educational opportunities, and a rapidly growing economy that promotes small business. The City's most valuable assets today may be location and available space. As Wasilla continues to grow, these plans are needed to maintain the value and utility of Wasilla's many assets, while creating new opportunities.

There are challenges to maintaining Wasilla's values, assets, and resources. With continuing growth, the attributes that originally drew today's residents to the area could be transformed as additional land is developed. Early planning and citizen involvement is crucial to maintaining the quality of life that drew us to this community.



*Wasilla residents enjoy the local parks and open space.*

### Where are the three planning areas?

The City has identified three specific areas where existing and future growth need guidance from the community. The following boundaries are *preliminary guidelines* for discussion purposes, and may change based on public input.

**Downtown** – This area is the oldest part of Wasilla and is situated between Crusey and Lucille Streets to the east and west, Nelson Street to the north, and Park Avenue to the south. It is an area of mixed use, without a specific identity or vision.

**South Wasilla Heights** – The Palmer-Wasilla Highway extension, the Parks Highway, and Knik-Goose Bay Road frame the South Wasilla Heights area. Home Depot is located along the eastern boundary of this area. Currently this area is mixed use, with both commercial and rural residential development.

**Airport and Transportation Museum** – This industrial section of Wasilla is located around the east side of South Mack Drive, the Alaska Railroad right-of-way, Aviation Avenue, and Lucille Creek. The Multi-Use Sports Complex, Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry, and the Wasilla Airport are located in this planning area.

## What will the plans do?

The community area plans will help guide Wasilla's future development and growth. The planning process will provide a means for residents and other stakeholders to share their opinions and to develop the community's vision—or future idea—for each area. The plans will identify issues, goals, objectives, and priorities for implementation. The plans will also aim to provide policies for decision-making that will ultimately achieve the community's vision for the future.

Key topics to be addressed include:

- Growth
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Community Character

Wasilla's population grew more than 35 percent between 1990 and 2000. This growth is placing increasing pressure on transportation systems, water and sewer systems, and other public services. Continued growth will inevitably transform Wasilla's suburban character to a more urban setting. It is important to establish a vision for our community now, to provide guidelines for future development, and to build upon our natural assets.

Many cities throughout the country have found a balance of residential and commercial development that fits their needs and desires. Wasilla residents will be asked how they visualize this balance. What is the best way to accomplish that balance through realistic goals and objectives? How can Wasilla retain its natural character and still have a strong economy? How do residents envision the design and distribution of future subdivisions, businesses, and parks?

## Who can participate in the process?

You! The City of Wasilla Community and Economic Development Department, Planning Commission, and City Council will guide the process. The primary participants are the residents of Wasilla whose needs and suggestions must be addressed by the plan. Other participants will include various community business and interest groups, such as the Homebuilders Association, Chamber of Commerce, real estate and resource development interests, Knik Tribal Council, City volunteers, local organizations and merchants, the senior community, and the Mat-Su Visitor and Convention Bureau.

We also plan to directly involve the City's high

school students in the planning process. When today's high school students enter the workforce and become part of the local leadership, the area plans will be in effect. We hope to increase students' awareness of local government and incorporate their visions for their community into the plans. Their future will be shaped by decisions made today.

## When are the opportunities for public participation?

The schedule below outlines our expectations for the planning process. We will provide notices of public meetings in the Anchorage Daily News and the Frontiersman. Flyers will also be posted on local bulletin boards in the Post Office, Carrs, and Wal-Mart. Planning updates will be available on the City of Wasilla website:

<http://www.cityofwasilla.com/planning/>. You can use the comment sheet in this newsletter, or directly contact the Wasilla Community and Economic Development Department at (907) 373-9020 or e-mail [sgarley@ci.wasilla.ak.us](mailto:sgarley@ci.wasilla.ak.us).

Action	Schedule
Establish Steering Team and focus groups	Aug – Sept 2006
School Project	Sept – Nov 2006
Public Workshops	Oct – Nov 2006
Newsletters	November 2006, January 2007
Draft Plans for Public Review	February 2007
Public and Internal Workshops	February 2007
Final Plans	April 2007



*Business development continues to grow in Wasilla.*



# Wasilla Area Plans

August 2006

## SHARE YOUR COMMENTS, IDEAS, AND QUESTIONS

What are the most important issues and needs in the Downtown area?

What are the most important issues and needs in the South Wasilla Heights area?

What are the most important issues and needs in the Airport and Transportation Museum area?

Comments or questions for the planning team:

*Please add additional pages if necessary.  
To mail, fold so that the City Planning Department address is visible.*

Please keep me informed of opportunities to participate in the planning process. 

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

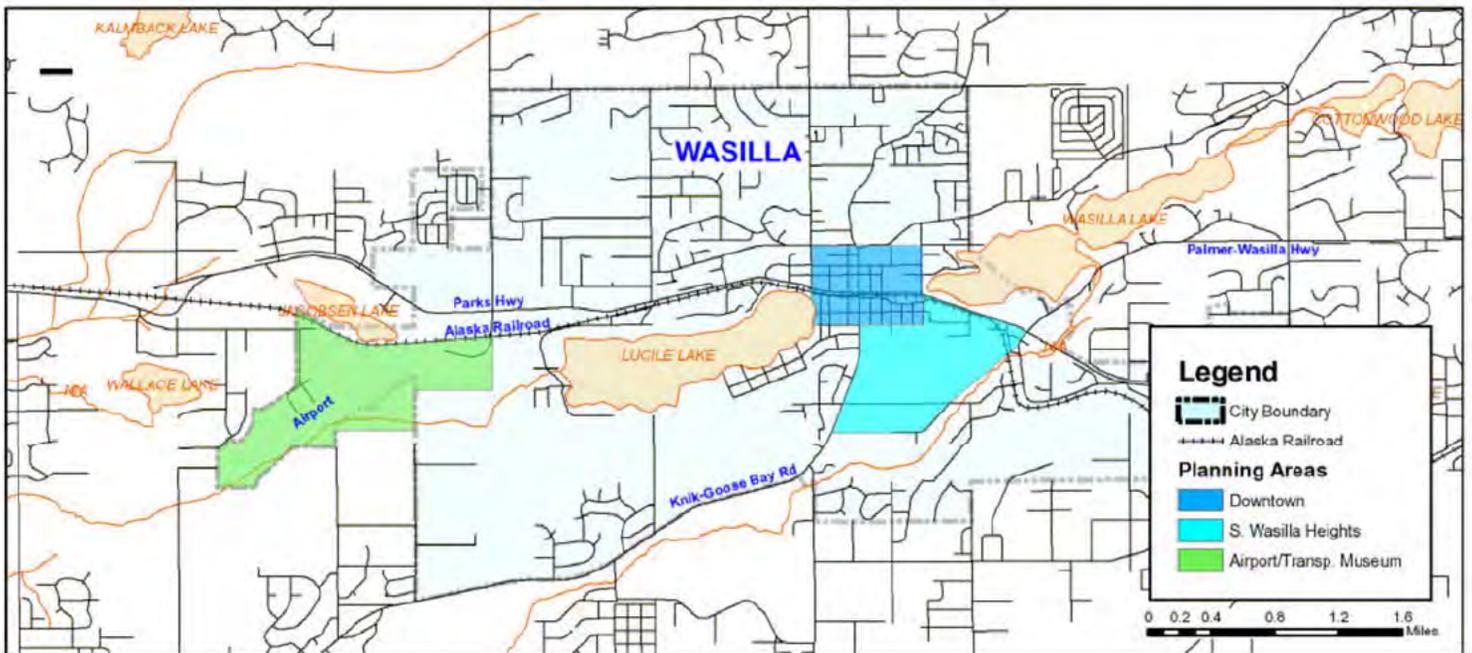
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

I am most interested in:  Downtown  
 South Wasilla Heights  
 Airport and Transportation Museum

Place  
stamp  
here

Sandra Garley, Deputy Administrator  
City of Wasilla  
290 East Herning Avenue  
Wasilla, AK 99654-7091



Ms. Sandra Garley, Deputy Administrator  
City of Wasilla  
290 East Herning Avenue  
Wasilla, AK 99654-7091

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT ###  
ANCHORAGE, AK

## WASILLA AREA PLANS

### SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING SATURDAY VISIONING COMMITTEE WORKSHOP NOVEMBER 18, 2006

#### In Attendance:

*Visioning Committee:* Bill Bear, Laura Bedard, Bob Fassino, Louis Friend, Josh Fryfogle, Theodore Garcia, Debbie Harrison, Stan Hooley, Taffina Katkus, Dan Kennedy, Greg Koskela, Phil Lockwood, Michael Norton, Alex Rakhmanov, Kristi Shea, Chas St. George, Berkley Tilton, Dave Tuttle, Ron Wendt, Steve Glos, and Dick Wilson

*City Planning Team:* Sandra Garley, Deputy Administrator; Jim Holycross, City Planner; Casey Reynolds, Economic Development Planner; Jill Carricaburu, Planning Clerk

*Facilitators and Planning Team:* Dick LaFever, Crossroads Institute; Jon Isaacs, Joan Kluwe, and April Brehm, URS Corporation

#### Purpose:

The City of Wasilla has formed a Visioning Committee to guide and review the planning process for development of the area plans within the City of Wasilla. The Committee is composed of a broad cross-section of community residents who will work to represent all interests in the process (e.g., a teacher, a former airport manager, and developers).

The session opened with a discussion of the purpose of the workshop, including addressing, "Why are we here? What will the plans accomplish?" Group responses included:

- Establish a vision
- Action, Wasilla is a bright spot
- Residents follow through on plans and commitments
- Develop goals/objectives/actions
- Analyze infrastructure needs
- Identify preferred land uses
- Recommend actions and follow-up
- Develop community awareness
- Learn from others' mistakes
- "Just make something happen"
- Develop a road map
- Prepare for growth responsibly – Let's not come back in 5 years and say, "*how did that happen?*"
- Conserve resources
- Create something we can be proud of that will encourage our youth to remain in the community and raise their children
- Be proactive instead of reactive
- Do something to make people see Wasilla as a destination

## **Introductions:**

All participants in the workshops introduced themselves, including name, job, and special area of interest in Wasilla (Downtown, Airport and Transportation Museum, South Wasilla Heights). Participants also described their overall vision for the city.

Committee members shared common visions and concerns for Wasilla. Recurring themes included:

- Growth
- Communication
- Cooperation
- City enhancement
- Transportation, access and infrastructure
- Public safety
- Community strengths

Members felt that there are changes occurring in the community that are both positive and negative. The community is growing and has great potential for continued growth, including industrial and economic growth. Planning and growth that will bring quality to Wasilla and encourage the children to stay in the community was mentioned by most Committee members. One person thinks that the community is outgrowing its government and infrastructure from within and outside the community. Some think that annexation needs to be examined as a possibility. Some people want to see more growth drawn to the Valley.

Communication was a theme that was touched on by some Committee members. One person expressed that the media needs to be based in the community to speak from the perspective of the Valley. A broader definition of communication was suggested to include transportation in the form of roads, air, and rail. Many people spoke of the need for cooperation. The city boundaries sometimes create obstacles for leadership. Cooperation with the Mat-Su Borough (MSB) and surrounding communities could remove some of these obstacles. For instance, Palmer and Wasilla seem to compete for services, when they should cooperate. Also, incorporating the FireWise program into appropriate aspects of the city could be beneficial.

Several Committee members expressed that they would like to see the city enhance services. Many would like to see Wasilla become an attractive, full-service community that is a destination and not just a “pass-through” city. By creating aesthetic qualities, services, and hospitality (e.g., parking and shopping), it is possible that Wasilla will expand tourism and have a way to keep tourists in the community. Along these same lines, many transportation, access, and infrastructure issues could be resolved to encourage tourism and to create the feeling that Wasilla is a destination. Many people think that Wasilla needs to be a user-friendly community that is easy to navigate. Suggestions were made for improved sidewalks and public transportation within the core area and improved public transit to move residents inside and outside of the city and region. These comments highlight the need for road, rail, airport, and infrastructure plans to address issues such as traffic and construction impacts.

There were also concerns about public safety, increases in crime, and the potential for gangs to form and become a problem in Wasilla. People want safe communities that

include safe sidewalks and streets. Many Committee members emphasized the strong points of the community that should be built upon, including historic attributes, a unique downtown, great trails and natural areas, youth potential, and sports and recreation opportunities. Wasilla is a community to be proud of with tremendous momentum politically and a potential for investment.

*The Committee was asked if there were any additional thoughts or comments.*

Concern was expressed that the 3 to 4 large property owners of undeveloped property in South Wasilla Heights and Kevin Baker, a large property owner in the airport area, are not part of the Committee. It is important to have these property owners as part of the discussion because they have development plans for these areas. In addition, the downtown planning area should include areas west of Lucile Street and the Swanson and Kennedy addition. The biggest obstacle to development is the small lots and hooking up to the city sewer, which is extremely cost prohibitive for developers. The Downtown area is fractured and in order to accomplish infill, infrastructure is needed.

Dick LaFever and Jon Isaacs explained that there will be focus groups assembled that will be made up of specific stakeholders. These key property owners will be asked to be a part of the plan.

One Committee member thinks it would be helpful if the Committee had access to older plans (i.e., development plans such as the Iditarod Park Plan) in addition to the official planning documents that the planning team has reviewed.

*The Committee was asked how can we add strength to this planning process and increase the success of the plans?*

- > Set specific priorities and milestones. It is often overwhelming to see such a broad range of goals, objectives, strategies, and projects.
- > Lay out growth implications
- > Provide options for addressing

### **Questions and Comments from the Committee:**

Will the MSB be an obstacle in implementing these plans, because parts of Wasilla are outside its official city boundaries?

What are the procedures for annexation?

Neil Fried predicts that by 2045 the core area of Wasilla will outgrow Anchorage. What we do today will play a big role years from now.

Less tax is paid within Wasilla City boundaries than outside the boundaries. Generally the perception is the opposite.

It is important for us to look at what is currently working, and what types of businesses Wasilla wants to attract.

There was concern that the terms “Core Area,” “Wasilla,” and “Small Town” are being tossed around, and that these terms are applicable now, but may not be later. We cannot think of Wasilla and plan for it as a small town, if in as little as 40 years Wasilla could be larger than Anchorage. Wasilla currently has a great sports complex that will not meet the needs of the community in 30 to 40 years.

How big is Wasilla going to be? We need to think bigger than we have in the past. For example, the Airport Master Plan should have addressed more issues and prepared Wasilla for jet service.

We need a regional vision because all roads lead to Wasilla. How can we capitalize on our location? There will be a golden triangle if the bridge is constructed. Mack Avenue needs to be rerouted so traffic is not going through two residential subdivisions, instead traffic should route through by the Multi-Use Sports Complex (MUSC).

Before beginning the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, the boundaries for the Downtown area were roughly defined for this exercise. For the SWOT exercise, Downtown will include Nelson Avenue and southward, including Swanson Avenue, excluding the residential properties to the north.

**SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats):**

For each area, the Committee was asked to provide their thoughts regarding the particular area’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The outcome of the exercise is summarized in the attached tables.

**Closing Remarks and Comments:**

It was requested that the planning team provide a list of resources for the Committee.

The Committee was asked to help determine appropriate focus group topics (e.g., borough, community council, land owner focus groups) and gather names for focus groups by mid-December. The planning team will then populate and schedule the focus groups.

The Committee was encouraged to plan to attend the upcoming focus group meetings, which are planned for January.

After the focus groups meet and the school project is underway, the planning team intends to reconvene the visioning Committee (likely in February) to review the results. After this, the charettes will be held.

It was suggested to reach out to the Boy Scouts for involvement in the school project that is planned as a component of the planning process.

The planning team identified its next steps as:

- Write up today's product
- Establish Focus Groups – expect to hold focus groups in January/February 2007, so names are needed in early December
  - Identify who should be involved (names)
  - Group compositions (such as land owners)
  - Recommend vision Committee attendance
- Implement school project
- Distribute results of focus groups to vision Committee in late February
- Public charettes/workshops

*The Committee was asked to rate this process on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 indicating great)?* Mostly '5's were given. Reasons shared for this rating were that public involvement is crucial and it has begun; and there was open exchange with a lot of participation today.

The '4' ratings were given because there is a thought that the footprint (i.e., planning area) needs to be expanded. Also, there is cautious optimism with bringing this Committee together and beginning the process.

The '3' ratings were given because 1) there is a lack of confidence that it will be done right; 2) there are limited areas of Wasilla being planned for; 3) planning needs to move faster because South Wasilla Heights has a huge number of development proposals at once.

Sandra Garley explained that the planning areas are limited now because these plans will lead into the update for the comprehensive plan and will help guide decisions in that plan.



WEAKNESSES: DOWNTOWN							
Traffic	Parking	Access	Pedestrian Access	Parks & Trails	Identity and Appearance	Existing Structures	Other
Traffic	Parking	Access	Lack of sidewalks	No travel ways for snow machines and ATVs from north of city (outside) to south of city (outside)	No theme	Outgrowing library and post office	City water issues
Poor traffic flow, too many stops	Limited and lack of parking	Ease of accessibility	Not pedestrian friendly	Parks not connected	No architectural appeal	Move library	Fees and water and sewer hookup costs for small lots
No traffic plan	No parking and access	Access to library museums, parks, post office	Difficult for pedestrian movement	Lack of trails	Not well planned	Move post office	Limited hours/days to Dorothy Page Museum
The non-Parks Highway east-west connections are only partially set up for commercial through streets	A parking garage would be excellent, centrally located in downtown area, close to historic town site	Connectivity of businesses and services		Nunley Park is in the wrong area	Lack of "want to be there" feel	Library is too small and outdated	
	Lack of parking outside of Carr's, D&A Grocery, and around Crusey Street	Too spread out; must move your car for every stop			Can't identify feeling or place which is "downtown"	Historic buildings are taking prime real estate	Level playing field for downtown businesses
					Unattractive, uninviting, dirty	The old museum is taking up prime real estate; the museum should be moved to a site near the Transportation Museum	
					Condition/appeal of Carr's Mall		
					Too many car lots/used car lots		
					Not a good representation of the citizens and skills in one given area: craftsmanship, doctors, architects, artists, vendors		

OPPORTUNITIES: DOWNTOWN							
Potential Facilities/Services	Themes	Landscaping	Promote Tourism	Traffic and Roads	Pedestrian Access	Development Incentives	Other
Library/new library location	There is potential to develop marketing themes (e.g., Solvang, CA)	Beautification with landscaping	Tourist destination as historic "Old Town"	Accommodate growing traffic problem to better serve business growth	Foot traffic between businesses	With incentives the smaller lots could be developed for smaller businesses that want to be in the town center	City has to expand borders, mainly to the west to be more effective in new growth direction
Theater					People-friendly sidewalk availability		
New civic center	Opportunity to create a focal point which would involve starting (almost) over	Use of landscaping to capitalize on strengths	Directory to valley tourist sites	Bypass for Fairbanks traffic		Incentives for enhancements	Shape the area for the future needs; plan for growth
Transit center							
Urban renewal grants for community assets like a new library/cultural arts center/theater/community rooms	Downtown is encapsulated: take advantage of this in creating the big picture	Beautify into park-like setting intertwined with residential and commercial	Tourist stop; become sightseeing rest stop	Smaller area can be easier to control traffic with one way streets			Technology/electronics could get more people involved from home or business
Convention center for artist and event performances							Greater diversity
Small unique shops and stores, activities							Wasilla is young
Visitors from out of state/special speakers							
Blend of commercial and residential							
More registered historic sites							
New parking if historic buildings are relocated							
Lake recreation							
Continued development of park area							
Develop an outdoor amphitheater							
Identify park as heart of family-friendly downtown							

THREATS: DOWNTOWN				
Transportation and Parking	Lack of Public Support and Cooperation	Lack of Vision and Planning	Existing Structures	Other
Traffic flow; people avoid downtown	Not able to annex; not enough public support	Building out of necessity, rather than through planning	Buildings that block the view	Need for new/different city government structure
Poor access; congestion	Lack of support for change	Lack of planning	What already exists – a lack of continuity	The number of subdivisions are large for Borough approval
Traffic congestion; too much traffic on limited roads	Not enough cooperation between public and City Council/local government	Lack of vision	Limited by pre-existing structures to develop a more attractive destination	Trying to compete with other areas
Frustration with traffic, which will/may divert businesses elsewhere	Protectionist view of the temporary location of the Dorothy Page museum	If there is not a common vision, it will be hit or miss; there must be a complete buy-in from the city	Too congested to re-mold into a more accessible area	Crime
Development of the Parks Highway as a "throughway"	Lack of involvement from residents; preconceived ideas about processes	Unable to keep pace with growth		Noise
Train tracks (Parks Highway & Main Street)	Unwillingness to think about new concepts	Not putting a plan into action or not meeting basic community needs		
Railroad/highway bypass may decrease potential as a tourism destination				
Lack of parking				
Lack of pedestrian access				
Current land ownership and physical structures limit cost effective additions of sidewalks south of the tracks in the downtown, as well as on-street parking				
Post office parking facility is too small				

<b>STRENGTHS: South Wasilla Heights</b>			
<b>Location and Access</b>	<b>Development Potential</b>	<b>Commercial Potential</b>	<b>Other</b>
Central location/good access/off the Parks Hwy	Almost a clean slate; room for development and to grow – large complexes Road system easily promotes growth	New economic hub Commercial Home Depot saves trips to Anchorage	Great infrastructure: utilities, power and water extension Develop and tie in Mack Road to Airport Museum complex Knik Museum, Lake Lucille Park, Iditarod Home New planning – we have the power to have less mistakes, create new, and do it right the first time Close to Senior Center

<b>WEAKNESSES: South Wasilla Heights</b>			
<b>Roads</b>	<b>Private Land Ownership</b>	<b>Aesthetics</b>	<b>Other</b>
No north/south road interconnection to south side of downtown area; get roads plan Traffic problems are a major feature	Small group of developers Not knowing current developers' plans	Clear cutting does not feel friendly Could be ugly or very attractive	Utilities/water (need big pump) Tight soils and high surface water table
Roads needed Bypass already needs upgrades (more lanes) Two-lane road is small for large businesses	Land is in the hands of the private sector Present land owners will dictate development		Not enough room to develop commercially over the long term Money and local government zoning Residential versus commercial area

<b>OPPORTUNITIES: South Wasilla Heights</b>			
<b>Commercial Potential</b>	<b>Planning Potential</b>	<b>Coordination</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>
Good place to invest in Room for shopping center Pay Costco to build a warehouse here	Still a chance to do it right Time to plan	Small group of developers Few property owners for undeveloped land	Geography lends itself to gravity-fed sewer system; less expensive Better emergency access: more traffic options for getting around Wasilla if Mack Road was constructed
Commercial core Could be commercial hub To have a unique and beautiful commercial area	Could work for long-term vision		

<b>THREATS: South Wasilla Heights</b>			
<b>Development Standards</b>	<b>No Action</b>	<b>Other</b>	
Possibility of haphazard development Just another concrete and asphalt eyesore Lack of ordinances requiring "aesthetically pleasing" development	Non-action considered action Just sit back and have no vision or planning	Over regulation Limits to growth Public opinion Traffic congestion	

<b>STRENGTHS: Airport &amp; Transportation Museum Area</b>		
<b>Development/Expansion Potential</b>	<b>Attractions</b>	<b>Assets</b>
Area available for hotel, restaurant, etc. to compliment the museum, airport, sports complex, rail	Sports complex is of professional quality and is something to be proud of and a great asset and a potential anchor for growth	MATI has road, rail, and air access
Open area, room and land to grow and develop, expandable	The MATI is a unique place, a gem	Modern
Development options; potential space for local markets – Saturday market and visitors' stop	MATI is gaining national and world recognition	Properly regulated
Enough space to move historical buildings and consolidate	Something for everyone at MATI	Slow encroachment of residential
Move Dorothy Page Museum so it can expand; move to the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry (MATI)	Field trip for school kids	Still an opportunity to plan
Greatest potential for tourism destination focal point	Live steam train	Proximity to downtown
Industrial potential	Railroad; if able to convince to locate a depot	Centrally located in the fastest growing areas: Knik-Goose Bay, western Wasilla, and Meadow Lake
Expandable runway	Trailheads and good community activities	

<b>WEAKNESSES: Airport &amp; Transportation Museum Area</b>			
<b>Roads and Access</b>	<b>Airport Facilities and Access</b>	<b>Location and Communication</b>	<b>City Limits</b>
Poor road access to museum and airport	The airport needs a 6,000-foot runway	Communication with users; perception problems	Expand all city boundaries; include more residents in the City of Wasilla
Poor signage for the airport from the highway	No float plane access; need for float strip	Not enough signage and advertising	Area not considered "part" of Wasilla
Surface access	Approach lanes – Instrument	Hidden	Out of city limits
One way in, one way out	No jet service	Location	
In case of emergency or evacuation, there is no access to airport from Knik Goose Bay Road	Need tower for bigger planes	Awareness of all its facilities/businesses	
Museum road should not be through a residential subdivision	Please expand airport		
No bike path access to the museum	Should have designed or planned for larger facility; need to expand to the south and west	Too close to Anchorage to attract commercial flights	
Mack Road not built	Airport should be expanded by aggressive annexation west to Vine Road, south to Knik Goose Bay Road and Settler's Bay		
No accessibility from Mack Road and Knik Goose Bay Road	Southern access		
Need better access, promotion, and planning			
Current road access			
Access – open Mack Road			
Needs traffic light at Parks & Museum Drive			
			2002 master plan fell short in meeting the longterm needs of the area
			Need better planning
			Lack of community support/unequal funding
			Limited museum income

OPPORTUNITIES: Airport & Transportation Museum Area					
Transportation Potential	Tourist Destination Potential	Development Potential	Outdoor Recreation	Access	Other
Airport could become a regional hub; should be coordinated with Borough air traffic study	Railroad could stop here as a destination tour	Room to develop sports complex	Chance to develop outdoor recreation to accompany indoor activities	Extension of Mack Road	Local farmer's market/Saturday market for locals
Become an FAA-regulated regional airport with eventually a control tower	Increase tourism	Expansion to Phase II for sports complex	Trails in and around the area	Access should be from a new major intersection by connecting Fairview Loop across Knik Goose Bay Road to Patks Highway	City needs more industrial area; the area south of the airport should be rezoned as industrial
Could make transportation hub: railroad/airport	Ability to create a sports/cultural tourist destination	Room for growth, potential for development	Outdoor sports park		Light industrial area to be planned on the annexed expansion south of the airport
Commuter service	Visitor destination	Restaurant			Growing need for facilities
Attract air travel/cargo/private jets; huge economic development opportunity	Opportunity to be world destination with rail, air, and road access	More parking room (aircraft and auto)			Investors and historical societies
Jet service					Revenue stream for the city
Float plane base					More jobs for locals

THREATS: Airport & Transportation Museum Area			
Airport Expansion	Support	Noise	Other
Residential development fills up now vacant land and brings in nay-sayers for expansion	Division in community, e.g. our area more important than yours	Noise	Desire for less regulation
Airport is too small	Not enough leadership to develop		Funding depends on federal regulatory compliance
Room for expansion	Public opinion		More traffic on Museum Drive
Limited for development of airport	Lack of action from process		Competitors make it easier to choose them shuttles (to Anchorage)
Too close to residential neighborhoods			
Residential encroachment			

This page intentionally left blank.

**CITY OF WASILLA AREA PLANS FOCUS GROUPS**  
**ARTS, CULTURE, HISTORY, VOLUNTEERS, FAITH COMMUNITY / PARKS AND RECREATION,**  
**OUTDOOR INTEREST GROUPS**  
**Wasilla City Hall**  
**Wednesday, January 24, 2007**  
**7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**Purpose**

The City of Wasilla has formed focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of community attitudes and opinions and gather information and constituent perspectives. The focus groups will meet only one-time and have no formal decision-making or advisory authority; however, the results will be incorporated into the planning process. The results will help shape area concepts, which will be presented to the community during the mini-charrettes. Originally, five focus groups were proposed. However, due to participant availability, the focus groups were collapsed into three:

- Real Estate, Developers, Architects, Designers / Property Owners
- Arts, History, Culture, Volunteers, Faith Community / Parks, Recreation, and Outdoor Interest Groups
- Business Community and Transportation Industry

**INTRODUCTIONS**

All participants introduced themselves, including name and special interests. Participants were also asked to complete the following phrase:

*In 10 to 15 years, I see Wasilla (as)...*

- a more walkable community.
- more attractive for tourism.
- youth friendly.
- a great place to see concerts.
- youth and family friendly.
- with quality growth in the general downtown community.
- with four times the population it currently has.
- the most wonderful community in Alaska.
- a tourism hub for day trips.
- larger with more parks.

- a hub, a destination with quality involvement with citizens.
- a center of recreation for the Borough.
- with more trails connecting parks and family friendly.
- integrating parks into subdivisions.

For each area, the participants were asked to provide their thoughts regarding the particular area's strengths and weaknesses, as well as provide responses to six specific questions. The outcome of the exercise is summarized in the following tables.

<b>DOWNTOWN: STRENGTHS</b>			
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Shopping &amp; Services</b>	<b>Connectivity</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Dorothy Page Museum	Shopping	Potential to be pedestrian friendly	Feels like a community
Old Wasilla townsite	Restaurants	Walkable—easy to get around	Some attractive landscaping
Historical buildings / attractions	Lack of chain restaurants—unique local venues	Sidewalks throughout downtown	Cultural center, including the Valley Performing Arts
The history	Mix of services and businesses		
Parks (e.g., Iditapark)	Development on many streets, not on a strip		
Playgrounds	Core area for general services (e.g., Post Office, government, police, fire, general shopping)		
Lake and Park on Crusey			
Library			

<b>DOWNTOWN: WEAKNESSES</b>				
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Access / Parking</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Boundaries</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Need a better traffic plan	No parking near library and historic attractions	Need something like the sports complex to showcase the arts	Unidentifiable / no signage to welcome residents to the downtown area	Lack of planning
Need more stop lights	Limited parking	Need something more youth friendly	Boundary should extend to Lucas	Small lot size
Traffic congestion	Need better sidewalks		Boundary should extend as far as the sidewalks go	Not enough trees
Potential for accidents				Cluttered / too much going on in the same areas
Bad traffic (e.g., 4-way stop by the Post Office and Library)				
Roads are too wide, making them unsafe to cross				
Traffic / safety hazard with rail				
Public transportation				

<b>DOWNTOWN: WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN WASILLA THAT MAKES THIS AREA SPECIAL AND UNIQUE?</b>		
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Social Aspects</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
History	Still has a small town feel (i.e., we still have a personality and can express it unlike people in Anchorage or the mass volume of New Yorkers)	Close proximity to parks, post office, grocery store
Old townsite	Friendly and caring people	Unique eateries
Original buildings	Close knit community	4 <sup>th</sup> of July Parade
Museum	The long time residence of many people provides an opportunity to run into friends at Carr's and chat for a while	
Library	Local community	
Parks (i.e., Wonderland)	Connection / interaction	

<b>DOWNTOWN: ARE THERE SPECIFIC PLACES WITHIN THIS AREA THAT ARE SPECIAL TO YOU AND THAT YOU LIKE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWN VISITORS?</b>			
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Shops/Services</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Parks</b>
Rail Depot	Teeland Building	Live community theatre (6 shows per year is a wonderful idea if the weather is poor)	Carter Park
Wasilla Museum		Summer outdoor events	Iditapark Complex (in particular Wonderland Park)
Old Townsite		Farmer's Market	Nunley Park

<b>DOWNTOWN: ARE THERE SPECIFIC PLACES WITHIN THIS AREA THAT YOU AVOID AND DO NOT LIKE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWN VISITORS?</b>	
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>General Areas</b>
Library	Parks Highway through town (treeless)
	Main Street (too congested)
	Downtown traffic
	Williway subdivision (not in current boundaries).
	Areas with limited parking

<b>DOWNTOWN: WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC PLACES IN THIS AREA WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES?</b>		
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Shops/Services</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Library	Teeland building/Valley Bistro	Historic townsite
City Hall	Area churches	Farmer's Market
Fire Station	VFW	
Schools		

<b>DOWNTOWN: WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE ROLES OF PARKS, ARTS, HISTORY, ETC. IN THIS AREA?</b>	
<b>Parks</b>	<b>Arts (i.e., Valley Performing Arts)</b>
Recreation opportunities	Activities for the community
Relaxation and fun	Entertainment
Family-oriented	Growth and development for our youth
Positive place to be	
	All
	Gathering places

<b>DOWNTOWN: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE PLANNING PRIORITIES IN THIS AREA?</b>				
<b>Access</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Regulatory</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Provide safe and walkable access to services	Traffic	Landscaping	Secure funding for land acquisition for parks and trails	Turn library into a parking lot
Provide connectivity by sidewalks making easier access to destinations	Roads	Create a greater sense of community by requiring trees and sidewalks	Parks	Signage and identity for area—make it feel like a downtown
Consider pedestrian friendly areas	Better traffic plan		Open spaces	
			Create a community center that is focused on families, youth and the arts	
			Build a structure that matches the quality of arts and culture existing in the Valley	

<b>SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: STRENGTHS</b>		
<b>Land</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Large available lots	Close to Palmer-Wasilla Highway and Knik Road at the intersection	Attractive landscaping in median on Glenwood
Undeveloped space to build on	Conveniently located retail and stores	
Prime land for positive expansion (e.g., movie theatre)	Area is accessible by several ways	

<b>SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WEAKNESSES</b>		
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Connectivity</b>	<b>Land</b>
Needs more roads within the area other than the Palmer-Wasilla Highway alternate	Out of the way from the Parks Highway; area seems to be detached	Limited public land
Potential to have excess traffic patterns if not developed with traffic in mind		No parks or trails
Needs better traffic pattern		There is not a central meeting place that is affordable.
Public transportation		Not enough schools.
		Strip of retail—two-dimensional feel

<b>SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN WASILLA THAT MAKES THIS AREA SPECIAL AND UNIQUE?</b>	
<b>View</b>	<b>Parks / Open Space</b>
Viewshed	Still undeveloped
	Trail and green belt potential
	Convenient bypass for traffic to Knik Goose Bay and Palmer-Wasilla Highway

<b>SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: ARE THERE SPECIFIC PLACES WITHIN THIS AREA THAT ARE SPECIAL TO YOU AND THAT YOU LIKE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWN VISITORS?</b>	
<b>View</b>	<b>Shops / Services</b>
To see the view	Home Depot
View of Pioneer Peak	

<b>SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: ARE THERE SPECIFIC PLACES WITHIN THIS AREA THAT YOU AVOID AND DO NOT LIKE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWN VISITORS?</b>		
<b>General Areas</b>	<b>Shops / Services</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Industry site on north edge, along the Parks Highway	Home Depot	This area is not really a visitor mecca
Intersection of Parks highway and Palmer-Wasilla alternate		

<b>SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC PLACES IN THIS AREA WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES?</b>	
<b>Shops / Services</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
Home Depot	Senior Center
Alaska Club (outside current boundary)	

<b>SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE ROLES OF PARKS, ARTS, HISTORY, ETC. IN THIS AREA?</b>	
<b>Parks / Trails</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Have the potential to connect together as well as shopping and restaurants	Family recreation and meeting through retail or commercial development (e.g., shopping, theatres, imaginariums)
	Affordable
	Accessible
	Available

<b>SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE PLANNING PRIORITIES FOR THIS AREA?</b>			
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Regulatory</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Parks / Open Space</b>
Roads	Controlled retail growth	Central meeting facility	Secure funding for land acquisition for parks and trails
	Landscaping	#1 city gathering place for large groups	Trails
	Rezone to include some residential in this area	Community center	Greenbelts
			Parks
			Schools
			Miscellaneous
			Provide an identity for the area

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: STRENGTHS</b>			
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Land</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Sports complex	Space to develop	Close to transportation (i.e., airport, railroad, and major highway)	Mixes the old (museum) with the new (sports complex)
Museum of Alaska Transportation Industry	Lots of land	Variety of transportation options	Industrial
Potential to host sporting events / competitions	Undeveloped tracts	Out of the way for transportation growth	Beautiful scenery
	Large lots		

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: WEAKNESSES</b>			
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Access</b>	<b>Parks / Open Space</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Public transportation	Limited access	Trails	Too far from downtown
Roads	Lacking roads and access from Knik Road and better access from Parks Highway	No greenbelts or trails and sidewalks	Not enough schools
	Out of the way		No landscaping
	Narrow roads do not provide easy access because of traffic		More community input and help
			No solid plan for growth for air and rail transportation

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN WASILLA THAT MAKES THIS AREA SPECIAL AND UNIQUE?</b>	
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Sports complex	A lot of natural open space
Transportation museum (history involved with, and the live steamers)	
Major size bush type airport	

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: ARE THERE SPECIFIC PLACES WITHIN THIS AREA THAT ARE SPECIAL TO YOU AND THAT YOU LIKE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWN VISITORS?</b>	
<b>Sports / Recreation</b>	<b>Museum</b>
Sports complex	Museum of Alaska Transportation Industry
Hockey games at the sports complex	Live steamers
Iditarod re-start	

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: ARE THERE SPECIFIC PLACES WITHIN THIS AREA THAT YOU AVOID AND DO NOT LIKE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWN VISITORS?</b>	
<b>Recreation</b>	<b>General Areas</b>
The woods	Taking left hand turn to cross over traffic

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC PLACES IN THIS AREA WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES?</b>	
<b>Facilities</b>	
Sports complex	
Museum of Alaska Transportation Industry	



## **CLOSING REMARKS AND COMMENTS**

Overwhelmingly, parks and lakes are important to this sector of the community, although many are located outside of the current planning boundaries.

It may be helpful to have a winter vision and a summer vision, particularly when speaking of parks because activities are limited in the winter. Perhaps there could be designs developed that accommodate winter activities.

The City should not focus so much on single vehicular transportation. There should be a focus on “green parking lots.”

The City should provide incentives for green building, especially when large businesses come in.

The planning team identified its next steps as:

- Write up today’s product
- Continue implementation of school project
- Distribute results of focus groups
- Public charrettes/workshops (March)
- Draft area plans (spring)
- Public review of draft plans (early summer)
- Release of final plans (late summer)

**CITY OF WASILLA AREA PLANS FOCUS GROUPS**  
**REAL ESTATE, DEVELOPERS, ARCHITECTS, DESIGNERS / PROPERTY OWNERS**  
**Wasilla City Hall**  
**Thursday, January 25, 2007**  
**7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**Purpose**

The City of Wasilla has formed focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of community attitudes and opinions and gather information and constituent perspectives. The focus groups will meet only one-time and have no formal decision-making or advisory authority; however, the results will be incorporated into the planning process. The results will help shape area concepts, which will be presented to the community during the mini-charrettes. Originally, five focus groups were proposed. However, due to participant availability, the focus groups were collapsed into three:

- Real Estate, Developers, Architects, Designers / Property Owners
- Arts, History, Culture, Volunteers, Faith Community / Parks, Recreation, and Outdoor Interest Groups
- Business Community and Transportation Industry

**INTRODUCTIONS**

All participants introduced themselves, including name and special interests. Participants were also asked to complete the following phrase:

*In 10 to 15 years, I see Wasilla (as)...*

Someone asked the question: As if things remain on the path they are now or how I would like things to be?

- a 25 to 30 mile strip mall (if trends continue down the path they are now).
- a town that is spread out more.
- with clusters of mixed development for young and old—walkable.
- with developed cross streets.
- with a central business district.
- with more north/south roads.
- with another “downtown” that is pedestrian-friendly—maybe in South Wasilla Heights.
- with a small hotel out by the Airport and Transportation Museum area.
- more walkable.

- with major roads that tie into the area.
- with a transportation corridor running south would be nice.
- with a larger airport including a 6,000-foot runway that would accommodate jet service and a hotel.
- with a rail spur connecting to Port MacKenzie.
- with a prison.
- the economic engine for south central Alaska.
- competing with Fairbanks for arts and trade shows.

Additional comments that were shared include:

- the town is too spread out, particularly from the perspective of mail delivery
- a bypass through the city would be nice (e.g., such as the one through Fairbanks).

For each area, the participants were asked to provide their thoughts regarding the particular area's strengths and weaknesses, as well as provide responses to six specific questions. The outcome of the exercise is summarized in the following tables.



<b>DOWNTOWN: WHAT CAN THE CITY DO TO PROMOTE GOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THIS AREA?</b>				
<b>Regulations</b>	<b>Building Standards</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Parks / Open Space</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Zoning	Require builders to leave a lot of trees	Good sewage	Park improvements	Reduce loss of tax revenue by restricting additional churches
Make sure zoning is specific for the area	Don't mix apartments and single-family homes without requirements in place for upkeep of yard	Road improvements		Require drivers of ATVs and snow machines to have valid drivers license and insurance
Require building permits	Get rid of dead cars and junk in yards and property	Underground utilities		Protect viewsheds
Require valid inspections	No more box stores			Event themes

**DOWNTOWN: SHOULD SPECIFIC PARTS OF THIS AREA BE OFF-LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT?**

Nothing identified

<b>DOWNTOWN: WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC PLACES IN THIS AREA WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES?</b>	
Library	
City Hall	Cottonwood Creek Mall (outside of current planning boundaries)
Fire Department	

<b>DOWNTOWN: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE PLANNING PRIORITIES IN THIS AREA?</b>			
<b>Connectivity</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Sidewalks	Larger streets	Funding	People's perception of this being their town— <i>home</i>
Walking and bike paths			Preserving the integrity of our state beauty

SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: STRENGTHS			
Aesthetics	Zoning	Land	Infrastructure
Elevation	Light commercial	Empty, undeveloped can be used for planning	Highways
Viewsheds	Light industrial	Vacant open land	Utilities

SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WEAKNESSES			
Aesthetics	Access	Funding	Planning
Junk and major clear cuts (of vegetation)	North / south roads	Funding	Lack of planning
	Needs streets, not dead end roads		

SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WHAT DRAWS YOU TO THIS AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT/BUILDING?	
Shops / Services	Growth
Home Depot	Potential for growth

SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST IN THIS AREA THAT ARE NOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF?	
Views	Planning
Views	Needs streets in overlay blocks to make this area into a great business district
	Develop a centralized area with city and public offices with a park before it is industrialized

<b>SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WHAT CAN THE CITY DO TO PROMOTE GOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THIS AREA?</b>			
<b>Building Standards</b>	<b>Regulatory</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Require builders to leave a lot of trees	Zoning	Good sewage	Reduce loss of tax revenue by restricting additional churches
Don't mix apartments and single-family homes without requirements in place for upkeep of yard	Zoning (same to fit area)	Better infrastructure	Require drivers of ATVs and snow machines to have valid drivers license and insurance
Get rid of dead cars and junk in yards and property	Building permits	Provide roads and utilities	Hotel and restaurants with view
No more box stores	Offer incentives (e.g., higher density or height restrictions lifted in exchange for open space)		

**SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: SHOULD SPECIFIC PARTS OF THIS AREA BE OFF-LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT?**

**Open Space**

Bluff edges; do not block views of countryside and mountains

**SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC PLACES IN THIS AREA WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES?**

Nothing identified

**SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE PLANNING PRIORITIES IN THIS AREA?**

Funding	Parks/Opens Space	Transportation	Regulations	Miscellaneous
Funding	Community park	Streets	Zoning	People's perception of this being their town— <i>home</i>
		Wider roads		Preserving the integrity of our state beauty
		Traffic flow		Diversified business district

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: STRENGTHS</b>			
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Airport	Transportation	Industrial zoning	Room for capitol in this area
Rail	Potential for transportation hub		Potential for cultural area
			Can start from scratch in this area

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: WEAKNESSES</b>			
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Access</b>		<b>Funding</b>
Airport	Needs good highway access		Funding
	Access to this area is needed		

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: WHAT DRAWS YOU TO THIS AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT/BUILDING?</b>	
	<b>Facilities</b>
Sports complex (it's a venue for sporting events and has potential for conferences and meetings)	
Museum	

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST IN THIS AREA THAT ARE NOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF?</b>			
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Access</b>	<b>Parks / Open Space</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Airport facilities	More access roads—not just turn offs from the Parks Highway	Parks	Restaurants and hotels
Parks			

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: WHAT CAN THE CITY DO TO PROMOTE GOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THIS AREA?</b>		
<b>Regulations</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Require builders to leave a lot of trees	Good sewage	Reduce loss of tax revenue by restricting additional churches
Don't mix apartments and single-family homes without requirements in place for upkeep of yard	Sewer and water	Require drivers of ATVs and snow machines to have valid drivers license and insurance.
Get rid of dead cars and junk in yards and property	Roads not on Parks Highway	Hotel and restaurants with a view
No more box stores	Underground utilities	Increase runway length
Zoning		
Protect viewsheds		

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: SHOULD SPECIFIC PARTS OF THIS AREA BE OFF-LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT?</b>		
<b>Parks/Open Spaces</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Bluff edges; do not block views of countryside and mountains	No areas should be off-limits	

<b>AIRPORT &amp; TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC PLACES IN THIS AREA WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES?</b>	
<b>Facilities</b>	
Sports complex	

**AIRPORT & TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE PLANNING PRIORITIES IN THIS AREA?**

Funding	Infrastructure	Access / Transportation	Services	Miscellaneous
Funding	Sewer / water	Get road structure and access off the Parks Highway	Hotel	People's perception of this being their town— <i>home</i>
		Enlarge airport	Restaurant	Preserving the integrity of our state beauty
				Preserve bluff views (e.g., through building height limits)

## **CLOSING REMARKS AND COMMENTS**

There is an RS2477 Trail in the Airport and Transportation Museum area commonly referred to as Wet Gulch Trail.

What is the zoning downtown? There are businesses and now there are apartments or condos going up on Yenlo Street. What's up with that?

There is a lack of an art district in Wasilla.

Building permits are needed to gauge growth and plan for infrastructure.

The City should take advantage of existing assets to promote the arts.

The City should consider inviting more events to take place here (e.g., buying the rights to Fur Rondy).

The planning team identified its next steps as:

- Write up today's product
- Continue implementation of school project
- Distribute results of focus groups
- Public charrettes/workshops (March)
- Draft area plans (spring)
- Public review of draft plans (early summer)
- Release of final plans (late summer)