

# Wasilla Area Plans

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT  
August 2008



Prepared by

URS Corporation  
2700 Gambell, Suite 200  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
907. 562. 3366

D

## Dear Citizens of Wasilla:

The City of Wasilla is expected to experience robust growth and development over the next fifteen years. This increased development offers both benefits and challenges including increasing economic opportunities for our residents and businesses as well as additional pressure on our transportation systems and community infrastructure. Amidst the changes brought by this growth, we are striving to maintain the character of our community and the quality of life that we value.

We have been working with our residents and businesses for over a year to plan for the future of our community. Together, we have defined a vision for three areas of Wasilla: the Downtown area, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum areas.

Our planning team has synthesized and summarized the issues for each area and paired them with goals for the future, objectives to attain the goals, and priorities for implementation. These plans will help to guide our decisions regarding future growth and development.

***Pride.*** Wasilla residents are proud of our community. We look forward to and actively support projects that add to the quality of life here. We are committed to making Wasilla a great place for residents and business alike. I am proud to serve as the Mayor of Wasilla and to assist our citizens, businesses, and City staff to achieve the visions that have been set forth in this document.

***Energy.*** In character with the energy of our community, participation has been both creative and invaluable in developing our plans. A diverse group of interested citizens, business owners, retirees, students, teachers, and community



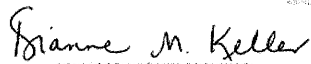
leaders have shared their time and ideas to help create this document. The area visions reflect our community's input and values. It is our sustained commitment to Wasilla that will bring these plans to life.

**Partnerships.** As we move forward with plan implementation, we will look to our citizens for partnerships and suggestions to realize these goals. I am eager to continue working with all interested Wasilla citizens, businesses, land owners, developers, students, teachers, and City employees as well as those Matanuska-Susitna Borough participants who have contributed. Together we will shape a thriving Downtown area that reflects our identity as a community.

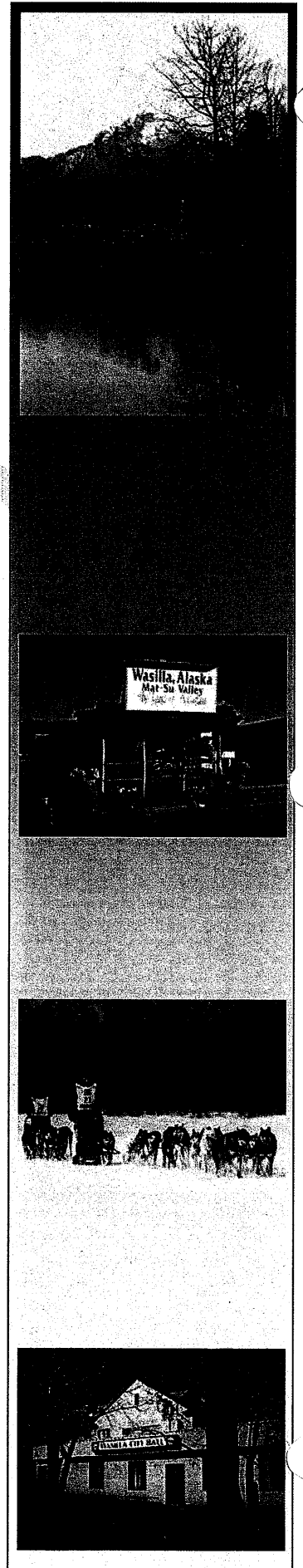
South Wasilla Heights will evolve into a diverse mixture of business and residences with parks, green spaces, and trails that connect to Downtown Wasilla. The Airport and Transportation Museum planning area will grow into a multi-modal transportation hub that supports appropriate commercial and industrial growth in Wasilla and the surrounding region, while continuing to meet the community's recreation needs.

Thank you to everyone for your contributions to making Wasilla the community we love. I look forward to working with you to attain our vision for the future of Wasilla.

Sincerely,



Dianne M. Keller  
Mayor



## Acknowledgements

---

### MAYOR

Dianne M. Keller

### DEPUTY MAYOR

Dr. Kristopher Larson

### DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

Marvin Yoder

### CITY PLANNER

Jim Holycross

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNER

Casey Reynolds

We also would like to extend gracious appreciation to former City Staff, City Council, and Planning Commission members.

### CITY COUNCIL

Stephanie Massie

Doug Holler

Steve Menard

Marty Metiva

Diane Woodruff

Dr. Kristopher Larson

### PLANNING COMMISSION

Greg Koskela

Dorothy (Peaches) Hamilton

Howard O'Neil

Jessie Elkins

Stan Tucker

Alvah Clark Buswell, III

Robert Webb

### VISIONING COMMITTEE

Bill Bear	Terina Lochner
Laura Bedard	Phil Lockwood
Bruce Carr	Randy Martin
Jack Elkhorn	Marilyn Maguire
Bob Fassino	Don Moore
Louis H. Friend, III	Michael Norton
Josh Fryfogle	Judy Patrick
Theodore Garcia	Alex Rakhmanov
Gary Hall	Kristi Shea
Peaches Hamilton	Chas St. George
Dave Hanson	Berkley Tilton
Debbie Harrison	Dave Tuttle
Stan Hooley	Karen Walton
Taffina Katkus	Rob Wells
Dan F. Kennedy	Ron Wendt
Greg Koskela	Tom Westall

### FOCUS GROUPS

Jordan Anderson	Mike Price
Kevin Baker	Kathleen Rugge
Michael Burns	Mary Shampine
Tammy Bruce	Arnie Stoltenberg
Kevin H. Cochran	Dave Tuttle
Colleen Cottle	Bruce Urban
Louis H. Friend III	Kathy Wells
Josh Fryfogle	Tom Westall
Jack Fuller	Dick Wilson
F. LeRoi Heaven	
Margaret Heaven	
Dan F. Kennedy	
Phil Lockwood	
Gary LoRusso	
Karl Lund	
Christine Manning	

## **Youth Involvement**

Dwight Probasco, Principal of Wasilla High School  
Sandy Aschenbrenner, Teacher at Wasilla High School  
Wasilla High School students who participated in the project

## **Consultant Team**

### *URS Corp.*

Jon D. Isaacs, Senior Planner, Project Manager  
Joan Kluwe, Senior Planner, Deputy Project Manager  
April Brehm, Planner  
Cynthia Monore, Graphic Artist & Technical Editor  
Ian Dickson, Environmental Scientist  
Ryan Rapuzzi, Environmental Scientist  
Jarod Blades, Environmental Scientist  
Tonya Messier, Word Processor

### *Crossroads Leadership Institute*

Dick LaFever, Principal

### *Tryck, Nyman, Hayes, Inc.*

Norm Gutcher, Senior Transportation and Infrastructure Consultant

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	ES-1
Section 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Purpose of the Wasilla Area Plans .....	1
Process: Preparation and Content of the Plan .....	5
Relationship to Existing Plans .....	9
Key Responsibilities & Stakeholders .....	11
Section 2: VISION .....	13
Downtown.....	14
South Wasilla Heights.....	21
Airport & Transportation Museum Area .....	28
Section 3: ISSUES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES .....	33
Section 4: PLAN ELEMENTS.....	77
Land Use .....	78
Economic Development .....	94
Transportation & Circulation .....	104
Public Facilities & Utilities .....	113
Section 5: IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	121
Section 6: FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOURCES .....	129

### LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Downtown Issues, Goals, and Objectives .....	38
Table 2	South Wasilla Heights Issues, Goals, and Objectives .....	52
Table 3	Airport and Transportation Museum Area Issues, Goals, and Objectives .....	66
Table 4	Potential Funding Sources .....	130
Table 5	Small Business Development Resources .....	138

### LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Wasilla Planning Areas .....	3
Figure 2	Public Participation Timeline .....	7
Figure 3	Wasilla Planning Documents .....	10
Figure 4	Community Vision .....	13
Figure 5	Downtown Planning Area .....	18
Figure 6	Downtown Planning Area .....	19
Figure 7	Downtown Planning Area .....	20

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<b>Page</b>
Figure 8 South Wasilla Heights Planning Area .....	25
Figure 9 South Wasilla Heights Planning Area .....	26
Figure 10 South Wasilla Heights Planning Area .....	27
Figure 11 Airport/Transportation Museum Planning Area.....	31
Figure 12 Airport/Transportation Museum Planning Area.....	32

## LIST OF APPENDICES

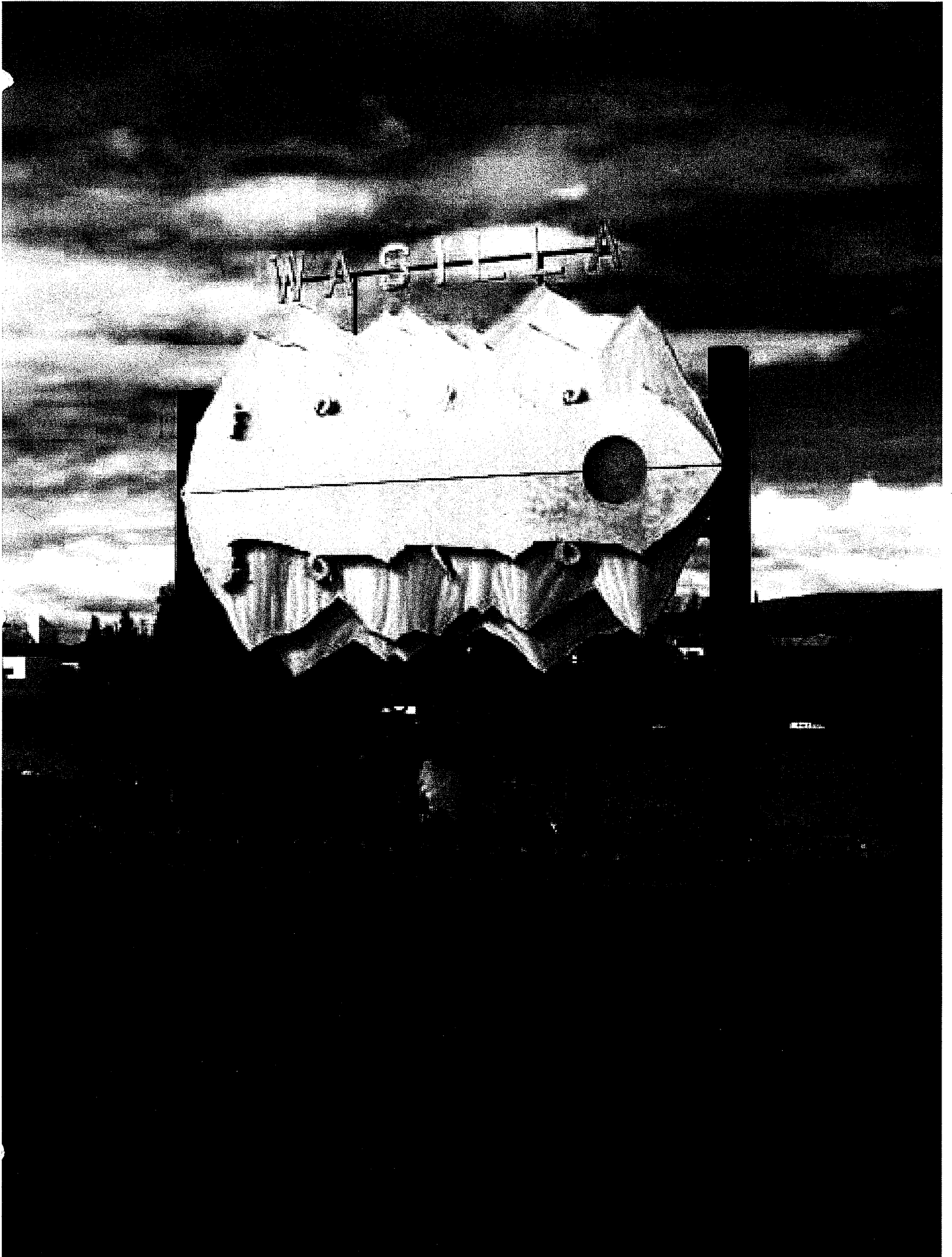
Appendix A:	Background Information
Appendix B:	Public Involvement
Appendix C:	School Project

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADCA	Alaska Department of Community Advocacy
ADOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
ADT	average daily traffic
AIDEA	Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority
CIP	Capital Improvement Project
DCCED	Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development
GPD	gallons per day
MASCOT	Mat-Su Community Transit
MATI	Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry
Mat-Su Borough	Matanuska Susitna Borough
MUSC	Multi-Use Sports Complex
PUD	planned unit development
STEP	septic tank effluent pumping
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program



This page intentionally left blank.



## INTRODUCTION

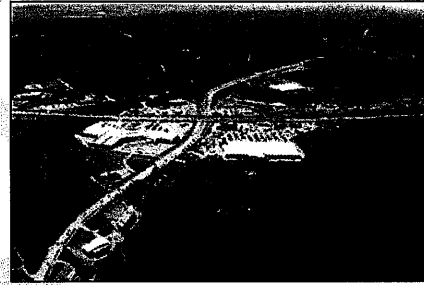
**T**HE WASILLA AREA PLANS will assist to shape the future of Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. They provide a vision of the future that is a reflection of those who live and/or work in Wasilla daily.

Community values, preferences, and concerns are documented, as well as opportunities to improve the quality of life.

City Departments, the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Airport Advisory Commission, and the City Council will refer to these documents so they can:

- make informed decisions concerning future growth and development
- plan for projects more efficiently
- assign appropriate resources to community needs
- identify needs for new or revised zoning and/or development authorities
- identify infrastructure priorities

The plans will also guide individuals and private companies when making investment and development decisions, or whenever questions affecting development within the community arise. While the plans will assist to guide community changes, the plans will be updated over time to reflect the changing needs of the community as new developments and trends occur.



Section 1: Introduction provides more information on the purpose, preparation, and content of the plan, and answers the questions of what plans do, how the Wasilla Area Plans relate to existing plans, and how the community will be involved.

### Planning Area Overviews

**DOWNTOWN** is a key gathering place for Wasilla residents and the business community. The area is zoned almost exclusively commercial but has a few pockets of residential areas. Vacant lots are interspersed throughout Downtown, providing opportunities for infill development. Existing development includes parks, schools, artistic and historic venues, a performing arts facility, local specialty shops and restaurants within strip malls, and several City government offices. Residents cited the foremost challenges for this area to include: traffic congestion, a lack of overall connectivity to multiple destinations, inadequate parking for existing facilities, and a general lack of landscaping to provide aesthetic appeal.

**SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS** offers an extraordinary perch for views of Pioneer Peak and other nearby mountains. The primary commercial development in the area is The Home Depot, which is surrounded by large vacant lots. As a relatively undeveloped area, South Wasilla Heights is a great community asset that offers a canvas for planned growth able to benefit the lives of residents and cater to visitors. This area is zoned primarily commercial, with only six parcels carrying the rural residential designation. The primary challenges facing further development in this area are infrastructure installation and construction of an internal network of roads.

**THE AIRPORT AND TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA** hosts a variety of recreation and light industrial activities. The Wasilla Municipal Airport, Museum of Alaska Transportation and

Industry (MATT) and Multi-Use Sports Complex (MUSC) are located at the western-most reaches of the City. The area is predominately zoned industrial, with a cluster of 12 leased lots within the Wasilla Municipal Airport boundaries that are zoned commercial. There are two privately owned parcels that are situated in the southeast corner of the planning area that have an industrial zoning designation in the top portion of the parcels and a rural residential zoning designation in the bottom portion of the parcels. The primary challenges facing this area include indirect access, retaining buffers for growth, and facilitating compatible land uses and developments.

### Area Vision Summaries

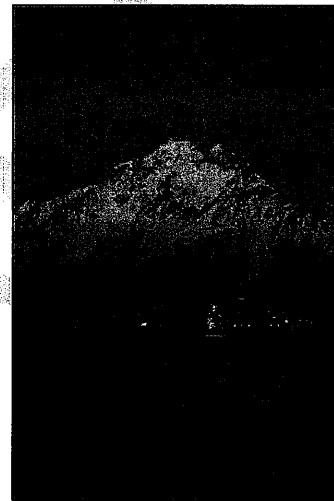
In a community plan, a vision is a positive outcome or an ultimate condition that a community desires to move toward. It may build upon community strengths and address community weaknesses. The vision is a significant aspect of a community plan because it is an expression of local desires for quality of life and future development, which will guide residents, land owners, and City decision-makers. The vision should inspire and motivate the community to achieve their picture of the future. It should be used as a filter for future development proposals. When new development is considered, decision-makers and residents will need to ask the questions, *“Does this fit with our stated vision?”* *“Will this help us to achieve our vision?”* *“Are modifications needed?”*

The following visions were developed for the three planning areas of Wasilla. The visions are elaborated upon further in Section 2: Vision.

**DOWNTOWN** is the cornerstone of Wasilla’s small town charm. It is a community crossroads where neighbors and friends stop to say hello and chat for a while at local businesses and parks. Residents congregate at the grocery store, the post office, parks, and plazas. Downtown is a center of public services, arts, and education. The community character that attracts people is maintained and enhanced. Residents value the quality of life and community bonds that flourish here.

**SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS** is defined by its expansive views, undeveloped land, and burgeoning commercial growth. This area is delineated by three major thoroughfares—the Parks Highway, Palmer-Wasilla Highway, and Knik-Goose Bay Road. The Home Depot is a key landmark in the area. South Wasilla Heights is accessible and a prime location for a diversified business district with professional offices and a variety of commercial services to offer Wasilla and outlying areas. Residents value the area for the natural environment and the convenience of the commercial services currently provided.

**THE AIRPORT AND TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA** is nestled south of the Parks Highway and hosts light industrial and recreation activities. Public infrastructure is expanded to support anticipated light industrial development and compatible uses. Residents value the area’s three predominant assets—a premier MUSC, Wasilla Municipal Airport, and a transportation and industry museum. The area is a shipping and transportation hub that draws residents and surrounding communities. The Airport and Transportation Museum

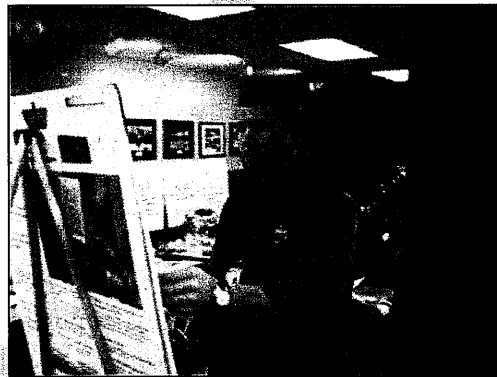


Area continues to transform the landscape of Wasilla, integrating sustainable development with visitor attractions and services that contribute to the community's growth.

### Overview of Issues, Goals, and Objectives

Community members helped identify assets and challenges for each planning area throughout the planning process by taking part in various exercises in public workshops and meetings, focus group sessions, and written comments. These exercises assisted the planning team to identify issues for each of the areas, goals for future conditions, and objectives to achieve the goals. The area plans provide summary tables for each area, organized by category. Issue categories included:

- community character
- land ownership, platting, and zoning
- economic development
- recommended land uses
- infrastructure
- transportation and connectivity
- funding



The tables, found in Section 3: Issues, Goals, Objectives, also identify potential leads and/or participating partners for initiating actions or strategies to accomplish objectives and achieve associated goals.

### Overview of Plan Elements

Section 4: Plan Elements expands upon the goals and objectives identified for each area. Plan elements include land use, economic development, transportation and circulation, and public facilities and utilities. Each plan section addresses planning considerations, goals, and recommendations for implementing the Wasilla Area Plans.

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS include:

- design standards to establish an identity
- promoting infill development
- making changes to the zoning code to facilitate development
- obtaining platting authority for the City
- establishing a land bank to manage parcels for future targeted land uses
- developing partnerships to achieve challenging goals
- developing and revising plans to address the changing needs of the community
- evaluate City annexation options to reduce future land use conflicts
- improving public communication
- establishing committees and programs to involve citizens in implementation

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS include:

- establish economic development incentives, such as tax abatements or deferrals, variances, business improvement districts, partnerships, and others
- establish economic development projects or programs

- improve public communication and support
- evaluate City annexation options to retain future economic development options

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION RECOMMENDATIONS include:

- continue traffic planning for the community
- climate sensitive design
- design for pedestrian access and multi-modal transportation
- evaluate the feasibility of public transportation options
- improve parking options and aesthetics
- utilize zoning to cluster heavy transport and freight facilities in the City
- preserve rural character of the community and enhance aesthetics in transportation projects



PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS include:

- improve barrier free access to public facilities; incorporate universal design standards
- conduct facilities inventory
- implement action items from existing plans
- identify utility expansion priorities to facilitate development

### Overview of Implementation

Follow-through with implementation action items determines the success of a plan. To achieve the goals and objectives articulated for each area, there must be a comprehensive understanding of the implementation tools and mechanisms. In addition, the community must identify:

1. Actions and projects to accomplish
2. Lead and supporting partner and individuals
3. Timeframe for completion of actions and projects
4. Annual review process

Implementation tools and mechanisms are outlined in the plan, as well as actions and responsibilities (Section 5: Implementation Tools & Mechanisms).

### Overview of Funding Sources

To achieve the visions outlined in the Area Plans, the City may have to explore new avenues of funding to implement priority projects. A summary table of potential federal, state, and private funding sources was assembled to assist the City with the task of identifying potential options (Section 6: Funding Recommendations and Potential Funding Sources). The state also produces an Economic Development Resource Guide which lists funding options for municipalities. In addition, the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) – Division of Investments and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority provide loans and assistance to small businesses.

# 1 INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THE WASILLA AREA PLANS

---

**T**HE WASILLA AREA PLANS are a tool for growth in the next 15 years in Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum Area. The plans provide a vision for the future that is a reflection of those who live and/or work in Wasilla daily. It communicates their community values, preferences, and concerns, and identifies opportunities where the City can capitalize on its assets and improve the quality of life.

These plans provide guidance to City Departments, the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the City Council so they can:

- make informed decisions concerning future growth and development
- plan for projects more efficiently
- assign appropriate resources to community needs
- identify needs for new or revised zoning and/or development authorities
- identify infrastructure priorities

The plans are also an important guide to individuals and private companies when making investment and development decisions, or whenever questions affecting development within the community arise.

Wasilla is a dynamic city and municipal decision-makers are forced to respond quickly to growth. The City views planning as a continual process in which the community implements and builds on prior plans, updating the plans as conditions change. This planning document is a living document based on information available at a particular time. The needs of the community will change as new developments occur, and the area plans will be updated accordingly.

## Where are the Planning Areas?

This planning document examines three planning areas in Wasilla distinguished by unique assets and challenges—Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum Area.

### Downtown

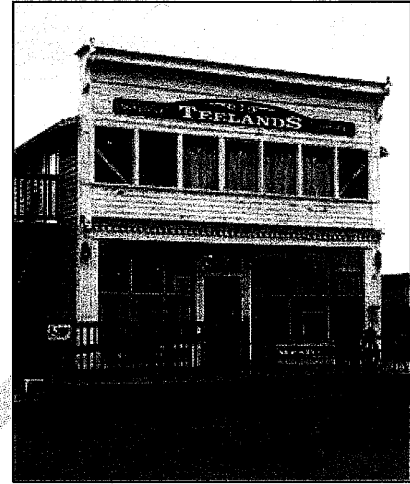
In 1917, the first buildings in Wasilla were constructed in present-day Downtown. These buildings were the beginning of a city that residents continue to be proud of. Many of the original buildings still exist and are included on the National Register of Historic Places—notably, Teeland's Country Store and the Dorothy Page Museum. This is an historic area

of Wasilla that set the stage for transforming the City to its present day character.

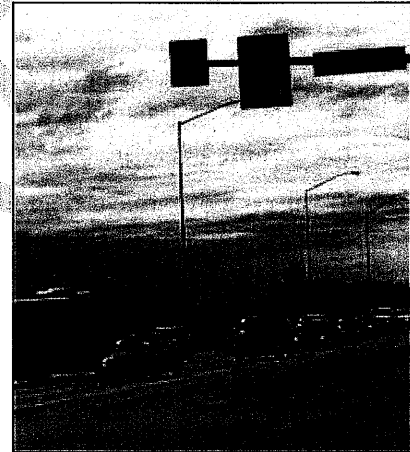
Downtown is zoned almost exclusively commercial but has a few pockets of residential areas. The area has vacant lots interspersed with developed lots that are ideal locations for infill development. In Downtown you will find parks, schools, art and history, a performing arts facility, local specialty shops and restaurants within strip malls, and several City government offices.

This area is challenged with traffic congestion, a lack of overall connectivity to multiple destinations, and inadequate parking for the facilities located here. Residents feel that additional landscaping would improve aesthetic appeal.

The lack of a distinct identity for Downtown is also a great challenge. Residents have grappled with the question, “What makes a downtown?” They have identified characteristics such as a community meeting place, an area that fosters a sense of place and a sense of pride, and a place that represents the values and the history of the area. While the architecture and the infrastructure are important in a downtown, the activities that occur in the area are vitally important as well.



*Historic Teeland's serves as a community gathering place.*



*Traffic in Downtown.*



*Meta Rose Square has aesthetic appeal and additional landscaping would add to that.*

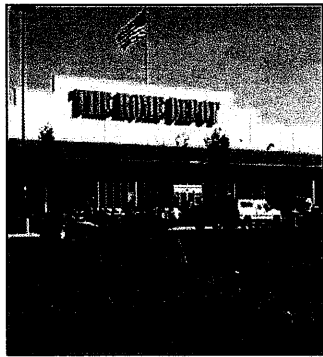


### South Wasilla Heights

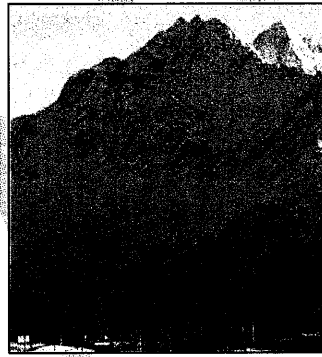
South Wasilla Heights offers extraordinary views of Pioneer Peak. The primary commercial development in the area is The Home Depot. As a relatively undeveloped area, South Wasilla Heights is a great community asset that offers a canvas for planned growth able to benefit the lives of residents and cater to visitors.

This area is also zoned primarily commercial, with only six parcels carrying the rural residential designation. The core South Wasilla Heights area is bounded by Knik-Goose Bay Road, the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, and a steep slope to the north. There is a South Wasilla Heights *subarea* between the railroad right-of-way and Susitna Avenue, and between Roberts Street and Lake Street. This subarea includes the old Alaska Railroad Depot (now the Chamber of Commerce), and several residences and commercial businesses. Although the subarea has infrastructure in place, the rest of South Wasilla Heights lacks infrastructure and an internal network of roads.

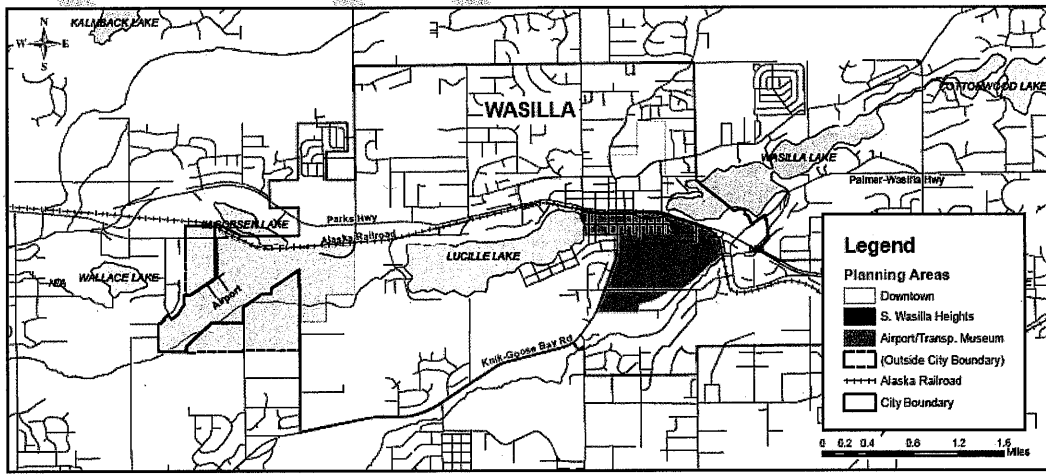
Figure 1 illustrates the planning area boundaries for each area.



*The Home Depot is the only development in South Wasilla Heights.*



*South Wasilla Heights offers extraordinary views of Pioneer Peak.*



**Figure 1 Wasilla Planning Areas**

## Airport and Transportation Museum Area

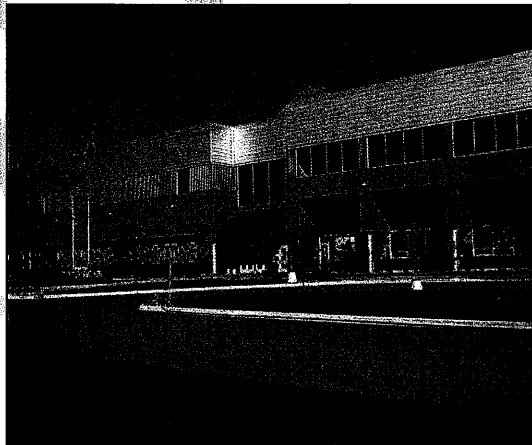
Once a quiet and largely forested area with one small subdivision, the landscape of the Airport and Transportation Museum Area has changed drastically in the past 15 years. In 1992, the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry (or MATI) was relocated to this area of town on 20 acres. The following year, the Wasilla Municipal Airport was completed on 370 acres of municipally owned land. In 2004, the Multi-Use Sports Complex (MUSC) opened its doors to the public. This facility sits on 60 acres.

The area is located at the farthest reaches of the City on the south side of the Alaska Railroad and centrally located amidst quickly growing areas: Knik-Goose Bay, western Wasilla, and Meadow Lakes. The area is predominantly zoned industrial. There is a cluster of 12 lots within the Wasilla Municipal Airport boundaries zoned commercial, which are leased lots. MATI sits on three parcels, one of which is zoned commercial in the far northwest corner of the planning area. There are two privately owned parcels that are situated in the southeast corner of the planning area that have an industrial zoning designation in the top portion of the parcels and a rural residential zoning designation in the bottom portion of the parcels.

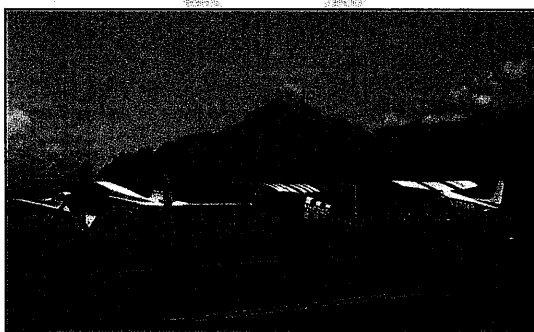
The primary challenges facing this area include indirect access, retaining buffers for growth, and facilitating compatible land uses and development.



*The Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry has been at its present location since 1992.*

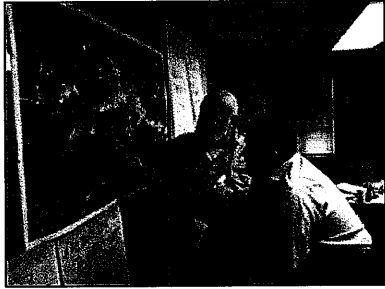


*The Multi-Use Sports Complex is the premier indoor sports complex in the Mat-Su Borough, also offering meeting rooms and facilities for community events.*



*The Wasilla Municipal Airport is one of only two airports in the Mat-Su Borough with a paved runway.*

## PROCESS: PREPARATION AND CONTENT OF THE PLAN



*Members of the Visioning Committee discuss ideas for the Airport and Transportation Museum Area.*

The Wasilla Area Plans are an agenda for action that will serve as a reference and guide for decision-making. Public participation was critical for development as well as implementation of this plan. It provides the “real-world” perspective of those who have the most at stake—the residents, property owners, and business owners. Successful public participation reaches out to those who have grown up and raised their families in this community

for decades, and to those who are now choosing to raise their families here because of the quality of life Wasilla has to offer.

The public identified community issues, goals, objectives, and priorities for implementation. This document puts forth the groundwork for initial steps the City and all stakeholders to take to achieve their visions and bring them closer to their stated goals.

### BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

A common misconception is that Wasilla does no planning and zoning is nonexistent. To the contrary, Wasilla has completed or regularly updated more plans than most communities in Alaska, and zoning has long been in place through the City’s Land Development Code. The first step in this planning effort was to review existing plans, reports, ordinances, and community surveys. This step provided the planning team with:

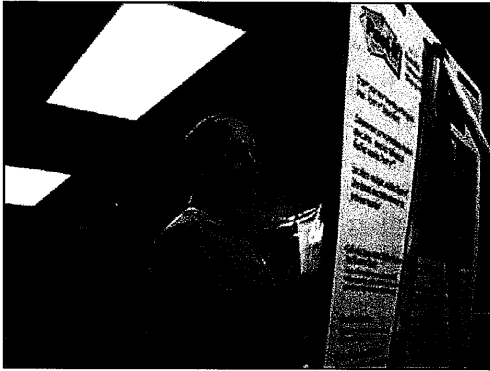
- an inventory of previously identified issues and assets
- a determination of the relevance of issues
- a log of background information

Each plan was reviewed and issue statements were developed to provide a base of issues to compare against issues identified in public meetings. The goal of this step was to capture all unresolved issues, regardless of origin.

#### REVIEWED DOCUMENTS AND MAPS

<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Water Systems Facilities Master Plan</i>
<i>Trails Plan</i>	<i>Airport Master Plan</i>
<i>Sewer Master Plan</i>	<i>Official Streets and Highways Plan</i>
<i>Hazard Mitigation Plan</i>	<i>Main Street Traffic Study</i>
<i>Community Survey Report</i>	<i>Wasilla Municipal Code</i>
<i>Zoning Map</i>	<i>Five-Year Fiscal Forecast Model</i>
<i>Mat-Su Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy</i>	

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



*Community members had the opportunity to share their ideas and values throughout the planning process.*

Community involvement kicked off in August 2006 when the planning team presented an overview of the planning process at a Wasilla Planning Commission meeting. Shortly following, a newsletter was mailed to Wasilla residents and business owners introducing them to the goals of the planning process, the planning areas, and opportunities for participation. The newsletter also included a form for recipients to submit comments and questions to the planning team.

Throughout the planning process, the public was asked to share their most important issues, needs, and vision for each of the three areas. Community

input shaped the entire plan. Planning boundaries were amended, based on public comments. The area visions are centered on information gathered in the public sessions. Planning issues and the related goals and objectives all stem from public input.

The City hosted the first Visioning Committee workshop in November 2006. This committee (a subcommittee of the Planning Commission) was developed by the Mayor, City Planning Department, and Planning Commission and convened stakeholders and leaders of Wasilla. Next, three focus group sessions were hosted. The focus groups represented a full spectrum of interests, spanning arts and cultural to business and transportation industry interests.

Participants of the Visioning Committee workshop engaged in a SWOT Analysis—an exercise where participants are asked to identify the community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The focus group sessions posed targeted questions about community values and the strengths and weaknesses of each planning area.

The Visioning Committee workshop and three focus group sessions included the most formal process of identifying the visions. During these participation opportunities, attendees were asked to finish the sentence, “In 15 years, I see Wasilla as....” Participants in these sessions were guided through exercises to focus on the future of each of the three planning areas.

Presentations were given to the Wasilla Rotary Club and the Wasilla Chamber of Commerce to provide an overview of the goals of the planning process and to present a synopsis of the results from the Visioning Committee workshop and focus group sessions.

A day-long mini-charrette was then held to offer the public an opportunity to collaborate with one another and illustrate their ideas and visions. Large maps of each planning area were provided for groups and individuals to record their ideas for preferred land uses and development emphases.



*City planning staff was available to the community to hear their thoughts on how Wasilla should grow.*

Shortly following the mini-charrette, a public meeting was organized to review the products of the planning process to date, answer questions, and solicit additional comments to incorporate in the planning document.

Another facet of the public participation program was the school project. Youth involvement provides an opportunity for students to offer a unique perspective to the planning team and fosters community pride and commitment. We designed a curriculum that meets the Alaska State Education Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations that outlined exercises and materials for teachers to integrate in specific classes. The curriculum was provided to teachers in December. In May, students were asked to participate in a small scale design workshop where they brainstormed ideas for potential land uses in Downtown, sketched on maps the locations for suggested land uses and boundaries for the Downtown planning area. Figure 2 illustrates the public participation timeline.

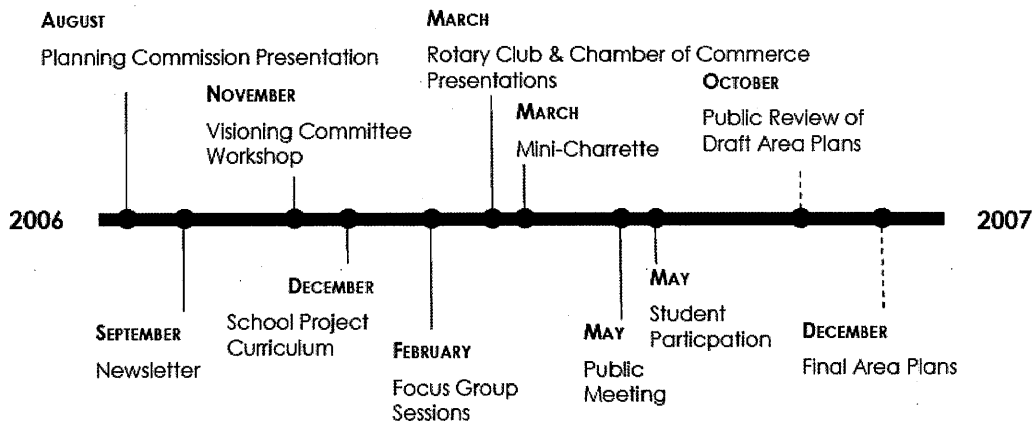
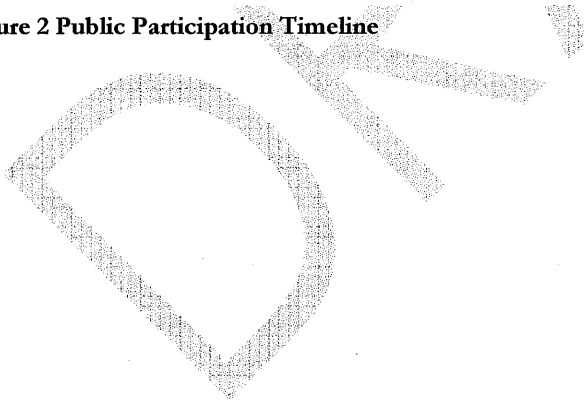
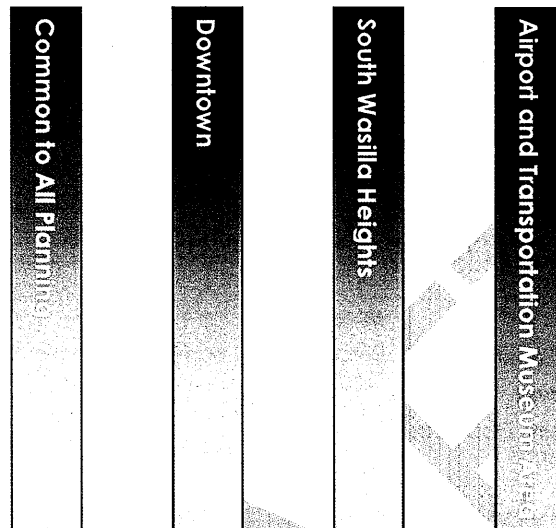


Figure 2 Public Participation Timeline



## WHAT IS IN THIS PLAN?

The Wasilla Area Plans are combined in a single document that addresses each of the three areas. The document has been organized in a color-coded fashion to easily identify the section and area being discussed. The following sidebar colors are used to identify each area:



This plan is organized into the following sections:

- Section 1: Introduction: furnishes an overview of the planning process and planning contents.
- Section 2: Vision: describes the values that the community wants to see retained and new ideas for future life in Wasilla.
- Section 3: Issues, Goals, and Objectives: provides a synopsis of each planning area's assets and challenges, as well as goals and objectives that address community-identified issues and can help strengthen each area.
- Section 4: Plan Elements: discusses the vision, planning considerations, goals, and recommendations associated with land use, economic development, transportation and circulation, and public facilities and utilities for each planning area.
- Section 5: Implementation: examines new and existing tools and mechanisms that can be used or modified to achieve goals identified for each planning area. This section also identifies a responsible entity for each implementation action and a reasonable schedule for completion of the action.
- Section 6: Funding Recommendations and Potential Funding Sources: provides an inventory of funding recommendations and potential funding sources for the actions identified.
- Area Profile – Appendix A: provides background information and inventories existing conditions in Wasilla.
- Public Involvement Summary – Appendix B: provides notes from community involvement meetings and workshops and the newsletter(s).

- School Project – Appendix C: provides the developed curriculum, summary notes from the sessions with students, and map outputs.

**RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS**

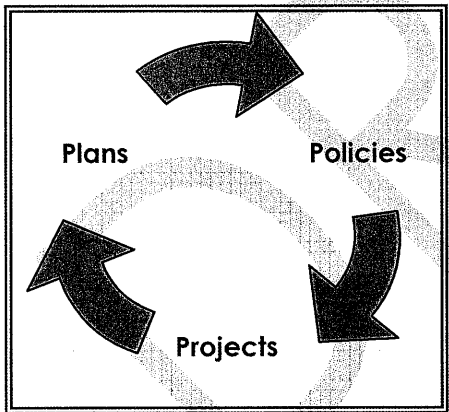
**WHAT DO PLANS DO?**

Plans, in general, focus on characteristics within the community that can be strengthened. They also focus the community vision to guide policies for specific elements such as land use, economic development, transportation and circulation, and public facilities and utilities.

Policies connect the vision to what actually happens. They are developed by the Wasilla City Council, commissions, and City departments in the form of land development regulations (e.g., landscaping standards and sign ordinances, and zoning designations) and building codes. Policies guide the development of future projects in Wasilla.

Projects are derived from the plans and other sources, which are prioritized and included on the City’s capital improvement projects list. These projects are implemented in accordance with specific policies defined by the City. Projects may be funded by the public, private entities, or public-private partnerships.

The Wasilla City Council, commissions, and various departments are responsible for enforcing policies that guide development and projects using tools such as permits, approvals, and other administrative procedures.



Plans are dynamic and constantly inspiring change within a community. With each new plan or plan update, policies must be updated to reflect changing needs and adjust to a redefined community vision. Projects identified in plans are guided by policies of the community. As projects continue to be identified and the community grows, plans will be updated and the cycle continues.

## HOW DO THE WASILLA AREA PLANS RELATE TO EXISTING PLANS?

Title 16, the land development code of Wasilla, encourages areas to develop neighborhood plans for inclusion as an amendment to the City comprehensive plan. Although one document, the Wasilla Area Plans include three neighborhood, or area, plans. Wasilla has several plans that relate to the area plans. The Wasilla Area Plans are compatible with and complement existing community and regional plans that guide growth. Figure 3 inventories the plans in Wasilla and illustrates the relationship of plans beginning with the comprehensive plan, which provides broad direction for the entire city. Element focused plans complement the broad plans, providing specific guidance for things like wastewater treatment systems and trails. Area focused plans further round out policy planning documents by furnishing details for a distinct area within the City. All of these documents include implementation actions, which are later carried out through a variety of mechanisms and entities.

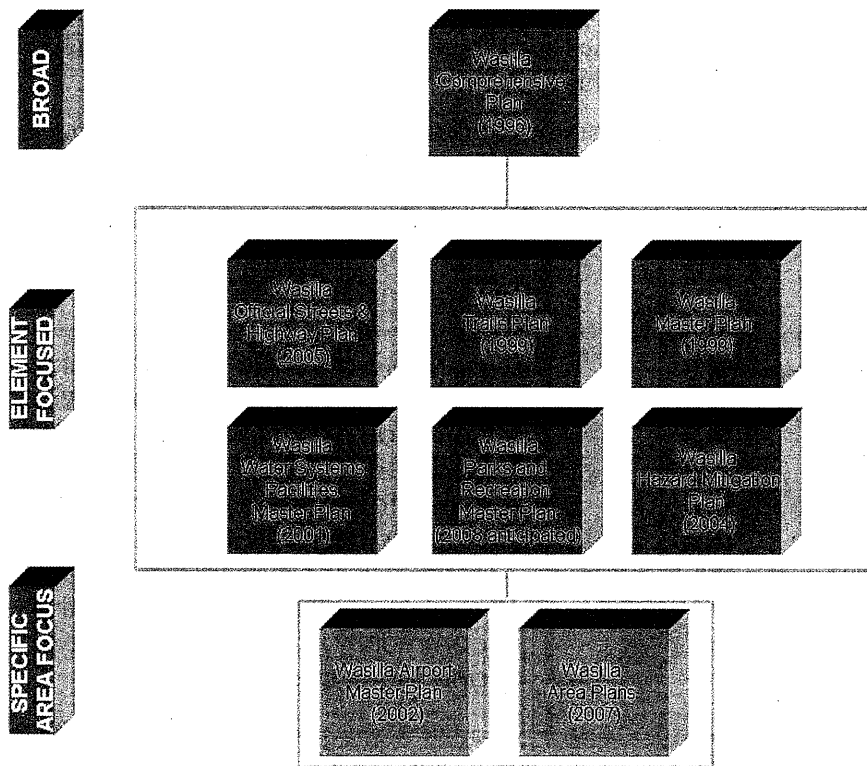


Figure 3 Wasilla Planning Documents



## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

---

### HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY BE INVOLVED?

Plans often fail because responsibility for implementing actions is unidentified in the plan. This document identifies potential responsible parties while still giving the City flexibility for changes if necessary. Continued public support and enthusiasm along with suitable and realistic implementation mechanisms are crucial to the success of these area plans. Everyone must work together for these plans to come to fruition.

In Section 3: Issues, Goals, Objectives, and Responsible Parties are identified to lead and assist in the implementation of objectives to reach the goal. These entities are not all-inclusive and can change as dynamically as the City is changing. Most importantly, these area plans represent the visions of people who are invested in Wasilla. As such, it will take not only City Council, the Planning Commission, and City staff to help implement these ideas, but those who helped develop and identify these ideas as well as current and future residents. These plans will achieve the greatest success if everyone who resides and works in Wasilla is committed to taking part in implementing the visions laid out in these plans.

DRAFT

DRAFT

This page intentionally left blank.